

Saigon Ousts Its Top Man On the Truce Commission

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By JOSEPH B. TREASTER FEB 12 1973
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 11—The Saigon Government has abruptly replaced the head of its delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, a military spokesman said tonight.

Lieut. Gen. Ngo Dzu, who has headed the delegation since the commission was organized shortly after the start of the cease-fire two weeks ago, was replaced by Lieut. Gen. Du Quoc Dong, a former commander of South Vietnam's elite paratroop division.

The spokesman said that General Dzu had been removed last night because of his "physical condition," and he would not elaborate. There had been, however, no recent reports that the general's health was failing and newsmen who have seen and talked with him in the last few days say he appeared to be fit.

In the summer of 1971 General Dzu, who was then commander of South Vietnam's Military Region II with headquarters in the Central Highlands, was accused by Congressman Robert H. Steele of Connecticut of being "one of the chief traffickers" in narcotics in Southeast Asia.

The general was dismissed as commander of the military region in 1972 after troops under his command lost a series of key defensive positions, gravely endangering the provincial capital of Kontum. The Government also cited health reasons when the general was relieved of his command then.

When General Dzu was appointed to head the South Vietnamese delegation to the military commission, informed diplomats and South Vietnamese officials said that President Nguyen Van Thieu had done so to show that he did not take the commission seriously.

The President had named as General Dzu's deputy Brig. Gen. Phan Hoa Hiep, who had been dismissed as commander of the South Vietnamese Second Division after a series of

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*The opposite is implied in version of this report carried by SFChronicle 12 Feb, over.

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combat defeats and had been sent to Saigon without being given a new assignment.

In the days since the start of the cease-fire the Four-Party Joint Military Commission—made up of delegations from South Vietnam, the United States, North Vietnam and the Vietcong Provisional Revolutionary Government—evolved as the most significant single body in carrying out and overseeing the Paris agreement.

The leaders of the International Commission of Control and Supervision—comprising representatives of Canada, Poland, Hungary and Indonesia—have said that their monitoring of the cease-fire depends on assistance from the military commission.

The international commission is to observe the exchange of prisoners scheduled, but it has been the military commission that has been working out the detail of the exchange.

The Communist delegations to the four-party commission have complained that they have been receiving poor treatment from the Saigon Government. They have said that they are being subjected to nearly prison-like living conditions and that their food has been below standard. They have said that they would like to meet with the foreign press, but they have been blocked from doing so, and foreign newsmen who have tried to reach the Communists have been arrested.

Last Friday a group of Communist members of the four-party commission were stoned by tribesmen as they arrived with some Americans at the city of Ban Me Thuot in the



Associated Press

Lieut. Gen. Du Quoc Dong, new head of the Saigon delegation to the joint military commission, talking to newsmen.

Central Highlands, and there were charges that the Government had not provided adequate security.

In a broadcast two days ago, the Hanoi radio criticized General Dzu personally for shoddy treatment of the Communists and said that he had been obstructing the commission's progress.

In the few instances where General Dzu and the Communists have appeared in public, he has worn a grim and unfriendly expression. The Communists, on the other hand, have been smiling and outgoing. In photographs that have been transmitted around the world, members of the Communist delegations have attempted to shake hands and pat on the back their counterparts in the South Vietnamese Government delegation.