

**DOWNING OF COPTER
PROTESTED BY U.S.**

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 16 (AP)—The United States protested to the Communist side today the shooting down of an American helicopter on a peace-keeping mission. One of the five injured crewmen was reported in critical condition with burns.

Brig. Gen. John A. Wickham Jr., deputy chief of the United States delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission, delivered the protest in person.

The CH-47 was the first United States aircraft downed in Vietnam since the cease-fire officially began Jan. 28. Three helicopters were hit by Communist fire during the first three days of the truce and one American was killed and four were wounded.

The United States command said the helicopter was hit by small arms and automatic weapons fire this morning and crashed and burned north of Saigon near An Loc, where it had dropped off supplies for

the commission. The five crewmen were taken to the Army hospital in Saigon. Four were reported in satisfactory condition.

A command spokesman said the helicopter did not bear markings of the military commission, although it was on a mission for the commission.