

## A New Call to End Viet Fighting

### Saigon

The four-party joint military commission called today for a real end to the fighting that has persisted in South Vietnam despite the Paris peace settlement last month.

The commission, composed of U.S., Viet Cong and North and South Vietnamese military officers, urged all commanders to issue orders to troops to stop the fighting and adhere "strictly" to the cease-fire agreement.

It specifically reaffirmed the cease-fire agreement's ban on armed flights. The South Vietnamese command said last week it was still firing 100 to 200 air strikes a day against Communist positions it said were set up after the January 29 cease-fire agreement was signed in Paris.

"The appeal reinforces the overall agreement," said commission sources. "I'm concerned about the violations. If this thing is going to work, it's going to need the cooperation of all four parties."

### AGREEMENT

The commission statement repeated exactly the original cease-fire agreement ban on armed patrols, aircraft strikes and any other kind of attack, combat operation,

terrorism, reprisals or any other acts that endanger life and property.

Agreement on issuing the appeal was reached yesterday by the commission's deputy chiefs after four days of discussion and it was ratified by the four chiefs today.

"This appeal will be widely spread to all units and fighters," the North Vietnamese delegation said.

Also yesterday, the U.S. protested to the Communists the shooting down of an American helicopter on a peacekeeping mission.

One of the five wounded crewmen was reported in critical condition with burns.

Brigadier General John A. Wickham Jr., deputy chief of the U.S. delegation to the four-party Joint Military Commission, delivered the protest in person to the Communists.

The CH-47 Chinook was the first U.S. aircraft downed in Vietnam since the cease-fire officially began January 28.

The U.S. command said the twin-rotor Chinook was hit by small arms and automatic weapons fire and crashed and burned near An Loc, north of Saigon.

A command spokesman said the helicopter did not carry the orange markings to distinguish it as belonging

to the Joint Military Commission, although it was on a mission in support of the peacekeeping group.

The Defense Department announced that North Vietnam will release 20 U.S. war prisoners ahead of schedule — tomorrow — in a good will gesture following the Hanoi visit of Henry A. Kissinger.

Of the 20, 16 are Air Force men and four Navy men. Their release will raise to 163 the number of American military and civilian POWs freed since Monday under provisions of the Vietnam peace agreement signed in Paris Jan. 27.

It is anticipated another group of 140-150 POWs will be released in North and South Vietnam between February 26-28.

Vietnamese prisoner releases continued yesterday for the fifth successive day. Seven hundred North Vietnamese were freed in Quang Tri Province below the demilitarized zone, the Saigon command said.

Spokesmen said 3814 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong prisoners of war have been freed at Quang Tri and Loc Ninh, 75 miles north of Saigon, since Monday. The Communist side has released 700 South Vietnamese POWs, a spokesman added.

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