

STALLING CHARGED IN TRUCE INQUIRIES

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Interference in Investigation
Is Laid to Communists

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Feb. 22—American sources on the Joint Military Commission accused the North Vietnamese and Vietcong sides yesterday of stalling the first two field investigations of alleged cease-fire violations that the four-party group has undertaken.

Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward, head of the United States delegation, formally protested to his Communist colleagues over their delegates' actions in one investigation. In identical letters to the North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegation chiefs, he charged their sides had "interfered with the conduct of the investigation" into the sharp fighting at the central coastal town of Thach By.

American delegation sources expressed doubt that the investigation, which was ordered at Communist request, would come about.

In the second investigation, that of the shooting down of an unarmed American helicopter in a contested area near An Loc, north of here, American sources said the Communist delegates did attend an inquiry at the crash site Tuesday but showed little interest.

The sources said the North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegates spent 10 minutes inspecting the wreckage of the transport helicopter, downed Friday on a supply mission for the Joint Military Commission, and then sat around nearly for four hours while the American and South Vietnamese delegates made further inspections.

However, an American delegation spokesman said yesterday that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegates had agreed to attend interviews with hospitalized crew members from the crash in return for agreement by the American and South Vietnamese delegations to a return trip to the crash site to take testimony from people whom the Communist delegates described as witnesses to the downing of the helicopter.

Communist Attend

At the hospital last night, the Communist delegates attended the questioning of the five crew members but did not question or take notes.

Yesterday, the South Vietnamese military command reported continued fighting in all four military regions. A spokesman accused Communist forces

of 228 cease-fire violations in the 30-hour period that ended at noon, bringing the total since the cease-fire to more than 4,000 violations. The number of incidents reported indicates no abating in clashes and exchanges of fire in the 25 days since the cease-fire was to have become effective.

Thach By, where the Joint Military Commission was to have conducted an investigation Tuesday, has been a principal scene of fighting.

The Vietcong delegation requested Monday that a four-party investigating team be dispatched there. The suggestion was adopted, and on Tuesday morning the investigators flew to DaNang, the nearest regional headquarters of the commission. Helicopters stood by to transport them to Thach By.

But the American sources said the Communist delegates spent Tuesday afternoon and yesterday raising further questions about the trip that, according to the sources, had been settled before the investigators left Saigon.

United States officials believe that North Vietnam and the Vietcong have lost interest in the investigation because of a change in the situation at Thach By.

When the Communists submitted the request, according to the officials, their delegates believed that Communist troops held the upper hand in the area and wanted it noted by the commission. This would have given support to the Communists' claim that their side should be recognized as controlling the town and its beachfront, which American and South Vietnamese military sources believe the Communists want to turn into a port of entry for supplies for their forces.

On Tuesday, however, Government troops were reported to have cleared the town and the high ground to the west, and the findings of the investigators would have supported the Government claim that Thachby was theirs.

Reports conflict on who held the district capital at the crucial time of 8 A.M. on Jan. 28, when the cease-fire was declared effective. The night before there had been a Communist attack to dislodge Government troops, who had been

in control. Under the cease-fire terms, troops continue to hold the positions they occupied at 8 A.M. on the 28th.

Well-placed South Vietnamese military sources said today that Saigon would tolerate no Communist territorial acquisitions that followed the cease-fire, and would fight to recapture any point lost.

"We are not Christians who turn the other cheek," an officer said.

The sources were speaking before radio monitors here reported that Premier Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam had accused South Vietnam and the United States of "systematic sabotage" of the cease-fire. The Premier spoke at a special session of the National Assembly in Hanoi.