

Vietcong Says Peace Unit Is Discussed With Saigon

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, March 9—Lieut. Gen. Tran Van Tra, chief of the Vietcong delegation to the Joint Military Commission, has disclosed that the Vietcong's Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Saigon Government have begun discussions of the joint cease-fire body they are to form.

General Tra said he had proposed that the two-party commission should alternate its headquarters between the areas controlled by the two South Vietnamese sides.

The two-party military commission is to succeed the present commission, in which the South Vietnamese parties are joined by North Vietnam and the United States. The cease-fire agreement signed in Paris on Jan. 27, limits the life of the four-member group to 60 days—that is, until March 27.

General Tra's statement was included in written answers to questions submitted to him by The New York Times. It is believed to be the first time that the head of the Vietcong delegation, sequestered from the press by the Saigon Government, has communicated with a newspaper on substantive matters regarding the carrying out of the cease-fire.

General Tra asserted that it was the Provisional Revolutionary Government that took the initiative in the discussion of the two-party cease-fire body.

Because of the relative inactivity of the present four-party group, fears have been voiced that the South Vietnamese foes might not even get around to serious discussion on the formation of its successor. Questioned about this, Genral Tra replied:

"We sincerely desire the early formation of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission. But in the fact of the delaying tactics of the Republic of Vietnam side, we are wondering whether it has a good will to solve this problem."

In an obvious allusion to the restrictions placed by Saigon on the movements of his delegation, General Tra declared:

"When the delegation of the Republic of Vietnam comes to the area under our control, we will grant it all necessary freedoms, insure the safety and satisfy the material needs of its members. We will act in a way that would show our goodwill for reconciliation and national concord, our love for peace, our culture, our noble character and our hospitality which have proved to be the age-old traditions of our nation."

Correspondents Detained

This afternoon four American correspondents were detained by South Vietnamese Air Force military police at Camp Davis, on Tan Son Nhut military air base, where the Vietcong and North Vietnamese delegations are quartered. They were responding to an invitation by General Tra for a press conference.

The journalists were refused access and released but their press accreditation cards were retained by the police. No threat of discreditation was made, however.

The correspondents were Ron Moreau of Newsweek, Thomas W. Lippman of The Washington Post, Jacques Leslie of The Los Angeles Times and Fox Butterfield of The New York Times.

In his written replies, General Tra accused the Saigon Government of refusing to grant to his delegation and that of North Vietnam the diplomatic privileges and immunities called for by the four-party protocol that established the commission.

"The Saigon administration has sought every possible means to hinder normal contacts of our delegation with the International Commission for Control and Supervision and

the press," the general asserted.

He said that in many cases members of the International Commission for Control and Supervision were refused admittance to Camp Davis. The commission is made up of Hungary, Poland, Canada and Indonesia.

Hindrance Charged

General Tra also accused Saigon of frequently cutting off telephone communications, hindering contractors from delivering the "minimum necessities required by our work," and jamming radio communications, presumably between the delegation here and Vietcong headquarters in the jungle.

But in reply to a question whether the Vietcong delegation might return to its base in protest against such hindrance, General Tra contented himself with citing the temporary withdrawal of North Vietnamese officers from some regional and local teams in protest and said that he supported that decision.

Without directly accusing the United States of violations of the agreement, General Tra declared:

"The United States side, because of its well-known relationship with the Republic of Vietnam, can by no means elude its responsibility for that situation."

General Tra charged that the attitude of the Saigon Government had prevented his delegation from performing its tasks and that "delay and deadlock" in the carrying out of the cease-fire had resulted.

Discussing the future political role the United States might play in South Vietnam, the general set as conditions that the United States "seriously and fully" abide by the Paris agreement and "give up its design to impose its neo-colonialist rule on South Vietnam."

"This will usher in a new era in the relationship between Vietnam and the United States, relations based on reconciliation, equality and mutual interests," General Tra said.