

# NEW SAIGON PLEA ON OUTPOST FAILS

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Communists Accused of Not  
Negotiating 'Seriously'

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, April 4—A fresh effort to arrange an end to the siege of a South Vietnamese ranger outpost failed yesterday when South Vietnamese delegates to the two-party Joint Military Commission walked out of a meeting and accused the Vietcong of not negotiating "seriously."

The walkout and a strongly worded warning from Saigon's Foreign Ministry indicated to some informed American officials that the South Vietnamese were preparing a sizable military operation to relieve the base, at Tong Le Chan, 50 miles north of Saigon.

The walkout also posed another threat to the already fragile two-party commission, which was formed only last week with the withdrawal of the Americans and North Vietnamese to replace the Four Party Joint Military Commission.

## Reverse by Saigon

The South Vietnamese had said Monday that they would boycott all further meetings of the commission until the Vietcong stopped their attacks at Tong Le Chan. The Saigon Government reversed itself without explanation and did send its representatives to a meeting of deputy chief delegates yesterday. But a Saigon military spokesman said he expected future walkouts if the siege was not lifted.

"In principle our delegates will attend meetings," said the spokesman, Lieut. Col. La Trung Hien, but "probably in any future meeting the same thing will happen unless the Communists stop their shelling of the base."

Colonel Hien said that the Communist troops who had surrounded the base since Feb. 26 fired almost 500 artillery and mortar shells into Tong Le Chan in the 24 hours ending at dawn yesterday, wounding seven rangers. A total of 15 rangers have been killed and 116 wounded in the siege, Saigon has reported.

## Communists Blamed

In its communiqué yesterday, the South Vietnamese Foreign Ministry said the Government "reserves the right to take appropriate measures to relieve Tong Le Chan base and prevent similar acts of violation from happening again." The communiqué added that Saigon "holds the Communist side entirely responsible for all eventual consequences."

The Foreign Ministry issued a similar warning two weeks ago shortly before the South Vietnamese sent a column of tanks, artillery and infantry to relieve another besieged outpost, nearby at Rach Sap.

South Vietnamese officials denied that any relief operation was under way to reach Tong Le Chan. But an American diplomat said privately "This is a war, you know. What do you expect?"

There are about 600 South Vietnamese rangers, a battalion, at Tong Le Chan, a strategic position astride a traditional Communist infiltration route from Cambodia.

The South Vietnamese apparently walked out of yesterday's military commission meeting after the Communists repeated their demand that the local commanders of the opposing forces at the outpost meet to arrange an end to the fighting.

In another development, the Communist representative at yesterday's session requested that his delegation be allowed to move from the present drab, heavily guarded quarters at Tan Son Nhut Air Base to downtown Saigon. Captain Nam said that the request was in accord with the diplomatic privileges that the Communists were supposed to be given under the Paris peace agreement.

## U.S. Warned on Aiding Saigon

PARIS, April 3 (UPI)—The Vietnamese Communists said today that the United States was "following the dangerous road" and could start the Vietnam war all over again if it gave further military aid to South Vietnam.

They also denounced charges that American prisoners of war were badly treated as "an ugly smear campaign" by President Nixon and said it was aimed at "whitewashing U.S. war crimes."

A Vietcong spokesman, Ly Van Sau, made the statement after another fruitless meeting between Vietcong and Saigon negotiators aimed at setting up a council to organize free elections.

Each side accused the other during the three-and-a-half-hour session of trying to wreck the talks and the Saigon delegation chief, Nguyen Luu Vien, said, "It's like in music—variations on a theme."

They agreed to meet again April 12.

Mr. Sau told newsmen later that the United States "is following the dangerous road it walked down to war after trying to block the 1954 Geneva agreement."

He compared the visit to the United States of the South Vietnamese President, Nguyen Van Thieu, with that of his predecessor, Ngo Dinh Diem, 18 years ago.