

has received numerous complaints from the four parties alleging violations of the cease-fire. In a number of cases investigations have been ordered but, at this early stage, we have been obliged to settle for investigations of a more limited scope than that envisaged in the agreement, debate within the commission over what the commission is empowered to investigate and at whose request, delays on the part of the four-party joint military commission in establishing itself in the field, and the conditions of insecurity prevailing in the countryside as a result of continued hostilities--all these have militated against the commission's ability to take decisive action in investigating most cease-fire violations. After receiving a series of general complaints alleging cease-fire violations, the commission issued a strong appeal to the parties to respect the cease-fire. This appeal on February 16 predated by one day an appeal by the four-party joint military commission to the same effect.

The delay in the four-party joint military commission in becoming fully effective has presented the International Commission with serious problems in meeting its obligations with respect to the deployment of teams in the field. The Commission's regional headquarters teams were deployed on February 5, several days after the deadline imposed upon us. On February 20, the commission decided to deploy its teams at the subregional level. In addition, the commission has decided to deploy its teams to points of entry into South Viet Nam to control the import of armaments and other military material, as well as four teams to observe the withdrawal of United States forces and other forces allied with the Republic of Viet Nam, from South Viet Nam. Every effort is being made by the Canadian delegation to ensure that teams in the regions and at points of entry are deployed within the deadline established by the agreement, that is to say, by February 27. Whether we succeed in meeting this deadline will depend--as everything will depend on the ability of the four parties to afford the necessary cooperation. We have however taken the position that the inability of the four party joint military commission to function smoothly should not necessarily be permitted to bring a halt to the attempts of the International Commission to meet its obligations.

We have been pleased to note the progress of the exchange of prisoners-of-war and foreign civilian personnel. This has been an operation in which the four parties, despite some initial difficulties, have exhibited an ability to cooperate and coordinate their activities. We can only hope that the cooperative spirit that has characterized this operation will be extended to the implementation of all other provisions of the agreement.

Simultaneously with its attempts to deal with substantive issues and to deploy its field machinery, the commission has been engaged in setting up its headquarters in Saigon, establishing its procedures, securing support facilities, and organizing a secretariat. This has been a complex and lengthy process which has not yet been completed, despite concentrated effort. Among the difficulties the commission has encountered in this area of its work is the fact that neither the agreement nor its protocols made provision for a secretariat, even though the necessity of establishing one was obvious. Personnel additional to the ceilings established in the protocol will be required if delegates are to be in a position to staff the secretariat adequately.