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Red Truce Violations Drop To Low Level

SAIGON, July 6¹⁷³ (UPI)—
Alleged Communist cease-fire violations dropped to a new low of 47 today but continued heavy fighting was reported west of Kontum in the central highlands.

The South Vietnamese government morning communique reported 47 Communist-initiated incidents in the 24 hours ending at 6 a.m. today (2200 GMT Thursday) the fewest since the so-called cease-fire began Jan. 28.

The previous low was set Thursday when 49 incidents were reported.

Government spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment. But they have consistently declined to attribute any particular significance to previous low points.

The command said 57 Communist troops and two government infantrymen were killed, and 20 infantrymen wounded, in fighting Thursday six and seven miles west of Kontum, which is 260 miles north of Saigon.

In a month of battle west of Kontum, each side has accused the other of taking the offensive and has threatened all-out counter-attacks.

The Viet Cong warned Thursday that "if the opponent attacks us one place we will not only counterattack them but may also strike them at other places."

Military sources reported four incidents Thursday of woodchoppers detonating land mines in Quang Tri province, 320 miles north of Saigon, with four people killed and three injured.

The four-party Joint Military Team (JMT) weekly flight from Saigon to Hanoi and back was canceled today for the third straight week by disagreement between the U.S. and North Vietnamese delegations over safety procedures, the U.S. delegation announced.

The team's mission is to trace missing servicemen and unrecovered bodies. On June 8, a Hanoi delegate's attache case caught fire on the return flight, injuring seven persons.

Since then the U.S. delegation has insisted that all passengers sign a guarantee that they are bringing no incendiary materials aboard. The Hanoi delegation has refused to sign on grounds that this requirement was a unilateral U.S. decision and not a joint one.