

# Pentagon Not Told of Beret Arrest

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The U.S. Army in Vietnam arrested the eight Green Berets on murder charges without telling the U.S. Army in Washington what it was doing, according to information released yesterday.

Under Secretary of the Army Thaddeus R. Beal, breaking a long official silence in the case in Washington, wrote Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) that "to the best of my knowledge, no official in the Pentagon was informed prior to the arrests being made."

As Rodino released Beal's letter, Army Secretary Stanley L. Resor announced from the Pentagon that he was sending two representatives of his own to Vietnam to look into the murder investigation.

Also, the Army took the eight Green Beret suspects out of their five-foot by even-foot cells in Long Binh—about 18 miles from Saigon—and transferred them to sparsely quarters in an Army barracks.

The related moves indicated that the Defense Department hierarchy in Washington is un-

comfortable over the way the murder case has been handled by the Army in the field.

Resor himself is on his way to the Far East—a trip that a Pentagon spokesman said predated the Green Beret case. But Resor will participate in "a careful review" of the murder investigation when he does arrive in Saigon.

In the meantime, Maj. Robert ComEAU and Capt. Stephen M. Sacks—Army legal officers—are going to Vietnam to monitor the case.

### Effect on Blackout

The Pentagon statement announcing their participation indicated the virtual news blackout on the case would be lifted: "A careful review will be made to determine what information may be made public without prejudicing any potential prosecution, and without compromising the rights of any potential defendants."

The Pentagon spokesman, in explaining why it was necessary to send two liaison men to the field, said details of such murder investigations normally are not sent back to Washington piecemeal.

Daniel Z. Henkin, assistant secretary of defense for public

affairs, did not disclose what prompted the Army to change its mind about the type of confinement for the suspects. He said they are now considered "installation parolees," defined by the Army as prisoners who "require no custodial supervision."

Rodino, who had demanded humane confinement, released the answers to 12 of the 17 questions on the case he had left with Beal. Besides revealing that the Army in Vietnam had not checked with Pentagon superiors before arresting the eight Special Forces troops, the Army's answers added these official details to the case:

- The murder victim was a Vietnamese national named Chu Yen Thap Khac—but the Army's field command has not confirmed his death nor sent information about him to the Army headquarters in the Pentagon.

- "No contact has been made with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam with respect to this case" and only the United States can prosecute the Green Beret suspects.
- The Army does have a policy covering the treatment

of double agents but "this information is contained in classified Army and Defense Intelligence Agency regulations and field manuals." The victim was considered a double agent by the Green Berets.

- "Army staff experience indicates" that the Green Berets were not taking orders from the Central Intelligence Agency or anyone outside the military chain of command.
- The Army suspended the murder investigation Aug. 2 to

give the suspects time to obtain counsel but will resume Aug. 20.

- The arrests were prompted by an Army criminal investigation headed by Col. Ed V. Hendren.