

Lawyer Scoffs at Case Against All 8 Berets

Saigon

A civilian lawyer for three of the eight Green Berets accused in the reported murder of a Vietnamese double agent said after a hearing yesterday that he expected all eight to be exonerated.

Commenting after two Army witnesses had given testimony at an investigative hearing, the lawyer, Henry B. Rothblatt, said that the evidence presented had consisted of "innuendos, nonentities and guesses."

One of the witnesses was a United States military man and the other a civilian.

The Army will determine after the hearing whether the charges against the members of the Special Forces, should be referred to a general court-martial for trial. Seven officers, including Colonel Robert B. Rheault, former commander of all Special Forces in Vietnam,

and an enlisted man were charged on July 24 with premeditated murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Rothblatt said after the hearing at Long Binh, "the evidence was as weak and as vague as I predicted. If ever I've witnessed a weak case, this is it. So far they have produced no witnesses of the alleged murder."

Rothblatt said he believed the Army had "made an honest mistake of judgment" in the case.

"I think they (the Special Forces soldiers) all will be exonerated together," he added.

"Those men are the most devoted, patriotic men I've ever met and they are all anxious to get back to their duties."

Meanwhile, Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor, arrived in Saigon. The Pentagon said he will receive briefings on the investiga-

tion, which has touched off some controversy in Washington. Resor is scheduled to visit Long Binh today.

Resor will presumably be briefed on the case by General Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, who reportedly ordered the investigation.

Army spokesmen had no immediate comment on reports from Washington that the eight soldiers were confined before the Pentagon was informed.

New York Times