

Army Drops All Beret Charges

Witnesses Are Gagged by CIA

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Army suddenly dropped murder charges today against all eight Green Berets accused of killing a supposed double intelligence agent in South Vietnam.

Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor said in a statement released by the Pentagon without elaboration that the Central Intelligence Agency had decided it would not provide any witnesses for the scheduled trials of six of the Green Berets.

"It is my judgment that under these circumstances the defendants cannot receive a fair trial," Resor said.

"Accordingly, I have directed today that all charges be dismissed immediately. The men will be assigned to duties outside of Vietnam," he said.

Resor said he had been advised only today that the CIA, "though not directly involved in the alleged incident, has determined that in the interest of national security it will not make available any of its personnel as witnesses . . ."

'Fundamental Violation'

"While it is not possible to proceed with the trials, I want to make it clear that the acts which were charged, but not proven, represent a fundamental violation of Army regulations, orders and principles," Resor said.

"The Army will not and cannot condone unlawful acts of the kind alleged."

New York attorney Henry Rothblatt, accompanied by San Francisco attorney J. W. Ehrlich, had cited a long list of legal violations in U.S. District Court in San Francisco this morning in a petition for a writ of habeas corpus to free three of the accused Berets.