

ARRESTS TOTAL 100 IN SAIGON SPY CASE

High Government Officials Among Those Accused of 'Liaison With Enemy'

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 20—Arrests now total about 100 in the month-old crackdown on what is described as an enemy spy ring that penetrated deep into the South Vietnamese Government, police sources said today.

The seizures have doubled in the last two weeks, netting not only high Government officials but also numerous low-level functionaries. Never before in the war have so many people been charged with spying.

Few details about the operations of the accused have been made public. The information void has been filled with rumors and theories that rival those generated by the Green Beret case. Some of the rumors and theories vaguely connect the Government crackdown with the arrest of the eight Special Forces soldiers, who face possible courts-martial in the reported slaying of a Vietnamese intelligence agent.

'Liaison' With Foe Charged

All of the accused have been charged with "liaison with the enemy" and are being held at the headquarters of the national police. South Vietnamese law does not provide for bail during wartime.

The cases may not come to trial for weeks and investigators are still hard at work.

The police indicated initially that a news conference would be held to explain how the alleged agents worked and how they were exposed. But as more and more arrests have been made and as the affair has become more and more sensitive, the prospect of any im-

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mediate explanation has diminished.

From the little information that has become available, it appears that the accused had connections not only with enemy representatives in both North and South Vietnam but also with representatives in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and France.

There are some reports that the accused men were less interested in stealing classified information than in trying to nudge Saigon toward positions favorable to the enemy.

Among the persons seized was Huynh Van Trong, a spe-

cial assistant to the President. As one of President Nguyen Van Thieu's leading advisers, Mr. Trong would have been in a particularly good position to influence Government processes.

President Thieu's political opponents have made a strong effort to keep the arrests in the limelight because Mr. Thieu is re-organizing the Cabinet, possibly with an eye toward giving it a wider political spectrum.

The South Vietnamese Government has denied the report that one of the alleged agents, Vu Ngoc Nha, had been killed by Special Forces soldiers. It insisted that Mr. Nha was alive and in custody.

See also version carried by SFChronicle, this date.