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Saigon Tells 8 Journalists To Leave

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From News Dispatches

SAIGON, June 4—South Vietnam's new government has ordered eight foreign newsmen, including three Americans, to leave the country Thursday.

A government official told Paul Vogle and Chad Huntley of United Press International and Associated Press bureau chief George Esper Tuesday that they would have to leave by chartered plane for Laos.

He said in each case the expulsion was to reduce the number of foreign correspondents in South Vietnam.

Reporting from Saigon dropped sharply when the bulk of the foreign press corps left South Vietnam on May 24 on a charter flight arranged by the new government.

The 80 reporters who came out said that, aside from not being able to get their stories out during the first week after the new government came to power, there was little censorship and they had been permitted to travel and report freely.

Since then, however, newsmen still in Saigon have complained to authorities that they were not being given access to government officials and that their movements were being restricted.

On May 26 Matt Franjola of the AP was expelled and an official said his stories and pictures went against the new government.

Ordered out at the same time was French author Jean Larteguy. It is believed that the government objected to the tone of several books he has written about Indochina.

The newest expulsion order leaves only three American news persons in Saigon—Alan Dawson of UPI; Frances Starner, who supplies material to

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AP; and Dan Rodill, who has filed stories to CBS and the Long Island, N.Y., paper Newsday.

About 20 foreign journalists will be left in South Vietnam.

The other journalists told to leave Tuesday are three Japanese and a West German, Dieter Ludwig, a free-lance photographer who has been working for Time magazine and CBS.

Reports reaching Saigon, meanwhile, said eight Americans and four other foreigners captured during the first attack of the Communist offensive last March are all alive and well under detention in the Central Highlands.

The reports identified the Americans in detention as Jay Scarborough, a student; Paul Struharik, U.S. provincial representative in Banmethuot; missionaries John and Carolyn Miller and their 6-year-old daughter, Luanne; Richard and Lillian Phillips, and Betty Mitchell.

Also being held are Canadian missionaries Norman and Joan Johnson, Australian radio technician Peter Whitlock and Filipino community development worker Enrique Tolentino.

The detainees were reported well fed and able to write letters from their camp at Thanhhan, a district capital in Pleiku Province, 230 miles north of Saigon.

In another development, an official of the new government has confirmed reports that soldiers of the former South Vietnamese army are resisting the new regime and hiding out in areas north of Saigon.

Duong Van Day, a member of the executive committee of the Revolutionary Youth, told 1,500 Saigon youths beginning a political indoctrination course Tuesday:

"What is important now is the task of eliminating reactionary elements, the servants of Americans who are still living in hiding and who intend to cause trouble to us."

He did not elaborate, but the holdouts are believed to be operating only in small groups and are not considered a major threat to the new regime.

The government indicated

several days ago that an operation had been launched to root them out, and stocks of weapons had been seized.

In what may be a related move, military police today intensified their search for civil, military and police officials of the former regime. The deadline for the registration of such officials was Tuesday.

Part of the search took the form of identity checks in Saigon's streets. The military police were stopping virtually everyone, including Provisional Revolutionary Government soldiers.

[The U.S. State Department termed "ironic" an offer Tuesday by North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong to normalize relations with the United States if Washington lives up to its pledge in the 1973 Vietnam agreement to assist in the reconstruction of North Vietnam.]

[Department spokesman Robert B. Anderson would not discuss in detail the U.S. attitude toward the North Vietnamese offer, other than to say the North Vietnamese had committed "at least wholesale violations" of the 1973 agreement. Referring to Dong's offer, Anderson declared: "It seems to us rather ironic."]