

Amnesty Group Asserts Saigon Bars P.O.W. Camp Inspection

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LONDON, June 28—Amnesty International said today that South Vietnam had turned down its request to examine prisoner-of-war conditions in the South.

The organization said that the refusal came after the North Vietnamese had tacitly agreed to let the representatives in to prisoner-of-war camps in the North.

Officials of the group, expressing surprise at the rejection, said that South Vietnam had first suggested the inspection. "The idea was that we should visit both halves of the country during one trip," said Sean MacBride, chairman of the International Executive of Amnesty, an international organization, based in Britain that seeks to help political prisoners.

"South Vietnam asked us three times to carry out this mission, never expecting that North Vietnam would let us in," he said. "Now that the North has agreed, they deny they asked us in the first place."

Over the weekend, the South Vietnamese Embassy in London denied that its Government had made the request.

In a statement, Amnesty International said that Do Thieu Liet, a counsellor at the South Vietnamese Embassy here, visited the organization Jan. 22 "to seek the assistance of Amnesty in influencing the North Vietnamese authorities with regards to their prisoners."

Amnesty said that possible visits to North and South Vietnam were discussed, but "doubt was expressed [by Mr. Liet] as to whether the Nor-

thern authorities would agree to a visit.

The international group said that discussions were held with the South Vietnamese on two other dates—March 20 and April 2. "There was no question raised of visa difficulties or of any particular date being unsuitable" for Mr. MacBride's visit to South Vietnam, it continued.

During the same period, Amnesty said, "an assurance was received" through the International Association of Democratic Lawyers that a visa to North Vietnam would be granted to Mr. MacBride. He also conferred in Paris with North and South Vietnamese officials as well as with David K. E. Bruce, the United States Ambassador to the peace talks.

In Amnesty's three-page statement, the group said: "There was considerable delay in receiving an answer from South Vietnam and eventually it was decided to try to reroute the mission to North Vietnam before South Vietnam, although this was considered . . . a regrettable variation in procedure."

"The North Vietnamese Ambassador in Paris then indicated that unless there was an assurance of a visa from South Vietnam, the purpose of the mission for which agreement had had originally been given would be considered to have changed, and he was not therefore able to issue a visa at that time."