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NEWSMEN DETAINED

AT SAIGON AIR BASE

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SAIGON, South Vietnam,

Feb. 8 — The Government detained 23 newsmen briefly today and seized their press cards when they tried to talk with North Vietnamese and Vietcong members of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

The incident occurred a day after a Government press relations official, Pham Duong Hien, had said that reporters considered by the Government to be acting in an "un-Vietnamese" way faced deportation or loss of their visas.

He said that newsmen could talk to North Vietnamese and Vietcong delegates to the Military Commission at their guarded barracks at Tan Son Nhut air base. When newsmen arrived at the base early today, North Vietnamese officers swung the gates open, but South Vietnamese military policemen barred the way and took 23 newsmen to an office at the edge of the base, where their credentials were confiscated.

The newsmen were then ordered to leave the base. Later, a Government official apologized for the action.

Special to The New York Times

GENEVA, Feb. 8—The International Press Institute said today that restrictions imposed on foreign newsmen by the Saigon Government contravened a provision in the cease-fire agreement guaranteeing freedom of the press. The Zurich-based institute, a private agency, is supported by some 1,700 publishers and editors in 62 countries.