

Saigon Harasses Viet Cong's Party

Saigon

A group of foreign newsmen and several senior members of the international peace-keeping commission were barred by South Vietnamese military police yesterday from attending a diplomatic reception given by the Viet Cong.

Among those stopped from attending the party, which was given by the Viet Cong's delegation to the four-party Joint Military Commission, was the Indonesian Ambassador to the International Control Commission, H. R. Dharsono. Dharsono and a Canadian Brigadier General were forced to wait in a police post for nearly an hour before being allowed to leave, Indonesian officials said.

The International Control Commission is composed of Poland, Hungary, Canada and Indonesia.

The action in blocking the diplomats and newsmen was the latest in a series of efforts by the South Vietnamese to isolate the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese delegations to the military commission. The Communist delegates have been living under virtual house arrest in a heavily guarded, ramshackle former U.S. Army compound inside the giant Tan Son Nhut air base.

Several dozen newsmen who had previously tried to visit the Communists at their quarters or offices nearby had been detained by the Saigon military police and had their press credentials confiscated.

Before newsmen attempted to go to the reception, for which they had received printed invitations from the Viet Cong, a Saigon government spokesman had informed them that they were

not allowed to have contact with the Communists.

The spokesman, Lt. Col. Le Trung Hien, insisted that under the Paris peace accord, before any member of the military commission could act, working procedures for that action must be formulated by the unanimous agreement of the four parties.

South Vietnamese officials added, however, that the government's real concern was that "you newsmen are very unfair to us and you always paint a good picture of the communists," as one source put it. "If we let you go out there to talk with the Communists, it would be very harmful to our country," the official remarked.

"The foreign press never believes anything we say, only what the Communists say," he continued.

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