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# Saigon Government Cracks Down On Newsmen Covering Communists

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SAIGON, Feb. 27 (AP)—Displaying increasing sensitivity to the presence of Vietcong and North Vietnamese officials in its midst, the South Vietnamese government is carrying out an apparent crack-down on Western newsmen trying to report on the Communists' activities.

The government served notice on an American television reporter over the weekend that he was not welcome in Vietnam, and secret police confiscated from a photographer his film of Communist officials.

The reporter, Ronald Nessen of the National Broadcasting Co., was told his visa would not be renewed and that he would be denied any future entry visa to South Vietnam. Saigon claimed Nessen had "distorted" and falsely attributed the remarks of a military spokesman.

On Sunday, Vietnamese police briefly detained and confiscated film and credentials from another photographer, a Canadian taking pictures of Canadian truce observers attending church.

Earlier, a French journalist

was advised privately that he cannot return to South Vietnam, apparently because of a story about a visit to a Vietcong-controlled area.

The actions stem from a strict new press policy put into effect Feb. 7. The rules said newsmen could face punitive action for what an official spokesman called "un-Vietnamese activities."

Western newsmen face the threat of expulsion, but Vietnamese reporters, interpreters or photographers could go to prison. The government reminded them that it is illegal for them to go to Communist-controlled areas.

Although irritated by the reports from Vietcong-controlled areas, the government has been toughest on newsmen trying to cover the Vietcong and North Vietnamese delegates to the four-party Joint Military Commission set up under the Paris peace agreement.

Repeatedly, newsmen have been chased away from the prison-like compound housing Communist delegates at Tan Son Nhut air base. Dozens of reporters have been detained and many have had their press credentials confiscated. Most recently, newsmen have been barred altogether from the base with a warning that they risk being shot.

With the Communist delegates themselves expressing interest in meeting with reporters, the South Vietnamese now say the press is not permitted to cover the Joint Military Commission or any of its delegations until the body works out jointly its own "press arrangements."

Many newsmen here feel the Americans, one of the commission's fourth delegations, have failed to try to pressure the South Vietnamese to ease their restrictions.