

Two Peacekeeping Helicopters Are Shot At

Saigon

Two peacekeeping helicopters were fired at over Viet Cong-held territory yesterday and American bombers pounded Communist troops in Cambodia for the ninth consecutive day.

The helicopter incident in northern South Vietnam generated charges that the Communists have failed to guarantee security and adequate working conditions for the International Commis-

sion of Control and Supervision.

The helicopters were not hit and there were no casualties.

But an exchange of civilian prisoners between the Saigon government and the Viet Cong was suspended, and some members of the four-nation peacekeeping commission proposed closing down three field observation sites.

A Viet Cong communique on the helicopter incident

acknowledged that Communist forces fired on an aircraft below the demilitarized zone in the same area that the two peacekeeping helicopters ran into fire. But the communique said the Viet Cong target was an American reconnaissance aircraft flying through a safety corridor set aside for the peacekeeping helicopters.

There was no immediate comment from U.S. officials, who have, however,

acknowledged American reconnaissance flights over South Vietnam since the cease-fire went into effect January 28.

Ambassador Michel Gauvin, chairman of the Canadian delegation to the peacekeeping commission, called the incident "deplorable."

In Cambodia, U.S. planes bombed Communist positions on the east bank of the Mekong river in an area that the government previously said had been

cleared of rebels.

The attacks made no reported progress in dislodging the Communists, some still reported as close as three miles to the capital.

U.S. B-52s bombed other Communist positions farther from the capital. Officials see no immediate threat to Phnom Penh but fear the Communists may make sporadic thrusts at the capital or occupy key points just outside the city limits.

Associated Press