

SFChronicle
A Move to Pressure Saigon

POW'S

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Viet Reds Pull Out of Missing-Men Talks

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The Viet Cong withdrew yesterday from talks designed to exchange information of men missing in action.

The move apparently is intended to bring pressure on the South Vietnamese government to restore the Communists' access to the foreign press.

In a radio broadcast, the Viet Cong's Provisional Revolutionary Government announced

that it will not attend meetings of the four-party joint military team until Saigon restores the delegation's diplomatic privileges and immunities.

Last month, the Saigon government ended the Viet Cong's weekly news conference, stopped liaison flights to the Communist administrative headquarters at Loc Ninh and cut the delegation's telephone lines, leaving the Communists isolated

within their fenced-in compound on Tan Son Nhut air base at the edge of Saigon.

Saigon had found annoying the Viet Cong's ease in communicating its version of military events to the press. A bother that grew suddenly into an embarrassment on the occasion of the fall of a South Vietnamese base known as Tong Le Chan.

The Saigon government told a dramatic tale of valiant defenders finally over-

whelmed by tanks and troops. The Viet Cong insisted that its forces had simply walked into an empty base after a well-executed retreat by the South Vietnamese. That version was later confirmed by Saigon government sources.

The Saigon government not only severed the Communists' access to the press, but also withdrew from political talks being held in a Paris suburb. The Viet Cong

later removed its delegation from the talks, withdrew from the two-party joint military commission in Saigon pending restoration of press access, and has now left the four-party team.

The four-party team — made up of North and South Vietnam, the Viet Cong and the United States — has only one remaining official function: to facilitate the search for the missing.

New York Times