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capture 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, JULY 5--Senior Viet Cong field commanders have been reconitering the heart of downtown Saigon, ~~in~~ its suburbs and satellite cities--some of them on flashy red motorcycles--to gain first-hand intelligence information prior to leading their major units into assaulting the areas.

A handful of these ~~sh~~ senior officers ~~has~~ have either been captured ^{B/} ~~or voluntarily defected~~ ^{HAVE SURRENDERED} to the Vietnamese government side, including the ~~most~~ most important Communist officer caught alive since the beginning of the Vietnam war eight years ago. Roughly a dozen more junior officers, such as lieutenants and captains, have also been captured or surrendered to ^N the Allied side ^{IN THE SAIGON AREA.}

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capture 2 (normass/deepe)

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Intelligence sources report ~~at~~ that since many Communist units got lost enroute to their city-battlefields during the Tet offensive, the Viet Cong high command has ordered ~~either~~ ^{its} the deputy ~~reg~~ regimental commanders and battalion commanders, and sometimes even company commanders, to reconnoitre urban areas which are slated to become targets in future Communist attacks. And, ^{SINCE} ~~the~~ more of these senior officers ^{are} roaming around the government-controlled areas, more of them have been captured than ^{DURING} ~~at~~ any previous period of the ~~war~~ war.

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capture 4 (normass/deepe)

Some reliable sources believe that during the Communist Tet attacks in late January and their "second offensive" around Saigon in May, the "middle-echelon" of the Communist military structure around the capital city has been seriously weakened both in troop strength and in command leadership. The result has been more North Vietnamese replacements, increasing "Northernization" at the command level, and increasing frictions between the local Southern Vietnam ^{ce} and the incoming personnel.

"The second floor of the Communists' three-story military house is beginning to crumble," one of these sources explained. "This second story of local, provincial battalions and regiments is vital. It is the link between the Communist guerrilla movement at the base and their regular North Vietnamese units which do not know the terrain or the people. If ~~this middle-echelon~~ this middle-echelon continues to crumble, it could be a key military development affecting the battlefield situation around the capital city."

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capture 4 (normass/deepe)

Vignettes of the capture of some of the senior officers reveal some of the James Bond-like facets of fighting a war like Vietnam.

In late May, a ~~government~~ int Vietnamese government intelligence officer became suspicious about a fortuneteller, in his forties, wearing the traditional long robe and turban, in the ~~the~~ famous Le Van Duyet ~~shrine~~ shrine across the street from the Gia Dinh provincial headquarters. The fortun~~te~~ fortuneteller appeared nervous and kept glancing around the area. The government officer struck up a conversation and began flipping through the fortun~~te~~ fortuneteller's notebook of Chinese characters. A map was found, containing diagrams of the provincial headquarters, nearby prison camp ~~and~~ American advisory officers ^{with HM} and ^{R Radio} communications site. The fortuneteller was arrested and confessed being a Viet Cong lieutenant in charge of a reconnaissance unit.

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capture 5 (normass/deepe)

Then came the capture of Nguyen Chi Sinh, the deputy commander of the fifth Viet Cong subdivision around Saigon, and the highest ranking Communist officer captured ~~to~~ alive to date in the war. His rank was a step higher than ~~lieuten~~ lieutenant ~~colonel~~ colonel, ^{He} but had not yet been appointed full colonel. He had been reconnoitering the Thu Duc area outside of Saigon on a ~~R~~ red Japanese-made Honda, carrying a woman on the seat behind him. By coincidence, Vietnamese government soldiers were conducting a mopping up operation in the area and began checking identification papers and family lists of the villagers. Sinh and the woman were detained as suspects, along with a number of low-ranking local village guerrillas. Sinh's identity papers were not in order; he said he was just visiting the area in hopes of buying some water buffaloes. Under intensive interrogation, one village guerrilla broke down and identified Sinh as a high-ranking officer. The woman was identified as Nguyen Thi Ba, the no. 2 leader of the Viet Cong's Women ^{in South Vietnam} Association. Sinh said he learned to ride his Honda in Bien Hoa city, as he was doing reconnaissance work there earlier. He said he had once hit the child of a Vietnamese government's security officer, had paid the officer five hundred pais piastres (\$5) for hospitalization fees of the child--but he had escaped detection at that time. Sinh operated under a number of aliases; his real name is Le Van Ngot.

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capture 6 (normass/deepe)

The fourth important seizure was Major Huynh Thanh Dong, commander of the third battalion of the Communists' 208th Artillery Regiment, whose rockets had been peppering Saigon in ~~the~~ May and June. He was captured near the Binh Loi bridge on the outskirts of Saigon, along with his eight-man reconnaissance escort team. He refused to say how much reconnaissance work he had accomplished in Saigon proper, but he carried maps and diagrams of the American Embassy, Vietnamese Presidential Palace, Vietnamese Navy headquarters on the waterfront, the Gia Dinh provincial police headquarters, the ~~the~~ Newport shipping complex between Saigon and Bien Hoa—as well as commercial ~~color~~ ^{Picture} post cards ^{IN COLOR} of bridges ~~around~~ around Saigon.

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capture 7 (normass/deepe)A

A fifth important capture developed from the arrest of a Viet Cong village guerrilla, who, under ~~the~~ third-degree interrogation, showed a Vietnamese government intelligence unit, financed by the American Central Intelligence Agency, the hideout of two important Viet Cong taxcollectors, ~~or financial officers~~. The hideout: a tunnel near the gate of the To ~~Chau~~ ^{Chau} repeat ~~Chau~~ ^{Chau} textile factory, situated just off the Bien Hoa highway leading out of Saigon and not far from a Vietnamese government military academy. The opening of the tunnel was camouflaged by a pile of firewood. The government intelligence agents noticed ~~the~~ another person had been living in the tunnel, because of the number of rice bowls. One of the Viet Cong confessed the fourth person was named ^{MAJOR} Nam Mai, who had ridden his ~~black~~ black Japanese-made Suzuki motorcycle to Saigon for reconnaissance work. The next day, the Viet Cong captives, ~~had~~ hiding in a ~~the~~ truck, ^{SCANNED} searched the ~~the~~ highway with binoculars and ~~we~~ when Mai appeared on his black motorcycle, the government forces captured him. He admitted he had been familiarizing himself with the first precinct of Saigon--in the heart of the ~~the~~ downtown area--so he would be prepared to lead in his assault unit, the Dong Ngai Regiment. He was deputy commander of the regiment.

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capture 8 (normass/deepe)

Two other Viet Cong deputy regimental ~~commanders~~ commanders ^{Have} surrender ^{D.}

to the VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT Recently
after their units suffered heavy casualties in engagements with Allied forces.

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