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state 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, APRIL 16--The U. S. State Department in Washington, while pushing for peace talks with Hanoi, has signalled American field commanders to publicly play down the biggest military offensive to date in the Vietnam war.

Informed sources said the State Department was embarrassed that the largest operation of the war had been launched as moves were underway to begin peace talks. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, ~~announced~~ when questioned about the offensive, called it a routine military activity. These sources here said the State Department has also prohibited American press officers to use the English translation of the "Toan Thang" operation-- which means "Complete Victory." The English translation has dropped from the mimeographed information sheets issued daily by the American military command here. More than 10, 100,000 American and Vietnamese regulars and paramilitary troopers are operating in the coordinated offensive in the 11 provinces around Saigon.

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state 2 (normass/deepe)

This move follows one other--and possibly more significant-- recent restrictive measure on American ~~and~~ military officers and men here on what they can not say for public consumption. A classified directive from the American military command in Saigon has ordered American officers and GI's not repeat not to discuss their personal views on negotiations ~~between~~ and talks between Washington and Hanoi. While the directive was issued under the named of the American military command here, sources believe ~~their~~ the instructions leading to the directive were issued from the Washington level.

American
All military and ~~American~~ mission spokesmen have maintained the practice for some weeks of replying replied "no comment" on any questions

pertaining to peace moves. As a result, the Vietnamese government, here are psychologically Vietnamese population and American community ~~is~~ swimming amidst rumors ~~here reuter~~

and distortions, some of which are thought to ~~have been~~ be initiated by the very adept Communist propaganda teams.

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state # 3 (normass/deepe)

As President Johnson's speech came over transistor radios here on April 1, American officers and GI's were ~~advised~~ officially advised: "You are free to say whatever wa~~y~~ you want—but remember you're wearing a military uniform and have a taken a military oath." ~~Sever~~ Several days later the classified directive ~~came~~ was issued, which clamped down on this freedom.

The restriction measures on American military men introduces on a large-scale the spectre of what Western journalists here have feared most—censorship at the source of information, rather than censorship at the telegraph office. They view this as a far more extravagant, awesome and blanket restriction on their potential military sources than ~~the~~ oft-criticized and oft-practices soft-sell^d news management.

But, some senior officials ignore the restriction and voice their

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opinion anyhow. The typical reaction when voiced—~~opposition to~~ is opposition to negotiations. "The only thing that can be negotiated is the freedom of South Vietnam—and I don't consider that negotiable," one source ~~she~~ emphasized.

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state 4 (normass/deepe)

"The State Department passed the word down the line to the military commanders asking in exasperation, 'why did you have to start a big offensive just now'?", one informed source explained. *in U.I.E.T.N.A.m*
"But, I don't know why they jumped on the ~~press~~ military commanders ~~that~~ that operation was approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. All the big operations are. This is the most over-controlled war in history. I remember during the Tet offensive the Pentagon war room called directly down to a platoon commander who was fighting at Tan Son Nhut airbase, asking ~~if~~ *what* what was happening, seeing if they were getting accurate reports."

This "over-control" by ~~the~~ Washington has been a constant complaint *over four* of senior Americans officials, generals and colonels for the past three years of the war.

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state 5 (normass/deepe)

Another source explained: "The State Department is giving the American public the impression there's going to be a military de-escalation ^{Here} here. But, the military commanders—who remember the Tet truce very s/well—see the Communists building up for another push and they're trying to stop it. That's why the State Department told us to keep quiet about the American participation on Toan Thong and ordered us not use the English translation of the offensive."

American military commanders feel the ~~Toan Thong o-e~~ "Complete Victory" offensive is significant, in an attempt to drive the ~~Comm~~ ^{frg} fragmented Communist units away from the Vietnamese population centers.

The operation began ~~At~~ April 8, but was officially announced by the U. S. military command on April 10. During the first seven days, 586 Communists have been announced as killed and 270 captured as prisoners or detained. On^e the Allied side, 85 have been killed (49 American, 36 Vietnamese), 430 wounded (294 American, ~~3~~ 136 Vietnamese). Nearly 150 Communist weapons have been captured.

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state 6 (normass/deepe)

(Hank: there's alot of rumors here about a government shakeup in Hanoi, but we can not get any confirmation here. Can John Hughes or London check it out. ~~Regard to the situation here~~ We'll see tomorrow if anything develops here on it. Regards Bev).

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