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command 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, AUGUST 15--The Viet Cong High Military Command has undergone a shakeup of major magnitude since the Communists' unsuccessful May offensive, informed sources report.

The shakeup of its top leadership has been confirmed by Allied intelligence sources on the basis of prisoner and defector interrogations, these sources said.

The ~~shake~~ shakeup is considered of far greater relative significance than the much-publicized changeover in the American command from General William C. Westmoreland to General Creighton W. Abrams.

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command 2 (normass/deepe)

The recent personnel shifts in the Viet Cong military leadership are considered significant here because more Northern-born or Northern-trained generals have, in effect, usurped more command authority and responsibility from native Southern officers. The changes may also indicate Hanoi's dissatisfaction with military developments in the South since the May offensive; or they might indicate Hanoi's desire to increase the calibre and quality of leadership, particularly around Saigon, during what ^{it} ~~they~~ frequently ~~describes~~ describes as a decisive period.

In addition, at the lower military echelons, a number of regimental and battalion commanders have also reportedly been ~~changed or~~ demoted because of poor performance of their units during the May offensive. An appreciable number of these lower-ranking unit commanders have also been captured by Allied forces or voluntarily defected to the Vietnamese government side because of increased battlefield pressure.

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command 3 (normass/deepe)

In short, the Communists' "war of liberation" is increasingly being fought and lead by imported Northern troops and generals instead of "homegrown" Southerners.

IN RESPONSE Within South Vietnam, the Communist military structure is divided into two unequal commands. *COMMAND* The northern two-thirds of South Vietnam is under almost exclusive military control and *DIRECT* command of North Vietnam ~~directly~~ with a North Vietnamese command running most of the major operations, North Vietnamese generals commanding the ~~North Vietnamese~~ main-force units composed predominantly, if not exclusively, of North Vietnamese troops. [But, the ~~South~~ southern one-third of the country is still under control of the Viet Cong High Command, which was some years ago ostensibly lead by Southerners. Now, it is becoming more Northern in leadership as well as troop composition. The Viet Cong High Command is the military section of the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN)--which is the supreme military and political headquarters of the Communist Party for this southern third of *VIETNAM* the South. The Viet Cong military structure, also called the People's Liberation Armed Forces, contains both military commanders, as in the West, and political commissars, the latter being more important on over-all conduct of the war.

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command 4 (normass/deepe)

The history of the Viet Cong military shakeup begins last year, when General Nguyen Chi Thanh had ~~sev~~ served since 1965 in the dual-~~all~~ ^{TOP} all-powerful capacity of both commander-in-chief and political commissar of the Viet Cong armed forces. The 52-year-old General Thanh was one of ^{two} North Vietnam's ^{ESF} ~~two~~ four-star generals, the only other one being commander-in-chief of the North Vietnamese Army, Vo Nguyen Giap. Last year, Radio Hanoi announced that Thanh had ~~it~~ died of a heart attack; but some Allied sources here have ^{SAID} ~~it~~ stated they believe he was killed ^D in a B-52 raid.

After his death, the top military position was split. ^(One-STAR) Brig. Gen. TRAN DO assumed the political commissar responsibilities; ^(Two-STAR) Maj. Gen. Tran Van Tra ^{BOTH} took over as commander-in-chief. ^{DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE} They served until after the Communist May offensive, which the Communists acknowledge in captured documents of having been pretty much of a dismal failure. Two new personalities then arrived to fill these two top positions. Maj. Gen. Hoang Van Thai, ^{HERNICK} ^A ~~HERNICK~~ became commander-in-chief of the Viet Cong, while replacing ~~Gen~~ Maj. Gen. Tra, ^{A SOUTHERN REGROOPER} who became his deputy commander. ^{FOR HERNICK} Pham Hung replaced ~~if~~ Gen. Tran Do, who returned to his previous position as deputy political commissar.

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comma nd 6 (normass/deepe)

Tran Do was demoted to his future post previous post of deputy political commissary commar commissar.

General Thai, as commander-in-chief of the Viet Cong armed forces, is roughly analogous to General Abrams ~~omx~~ as American commander here or to General Cao Van Vien who is in charge of the Vietnamese government armed forces.

Now 62 years old, General Thai was born north of the 17th parallel and has long been acknowledged as one of the senior military chiefs of North Vietnam. He is reputedly a brilliant strategist. He was trained as a schoolteacher, but soon turned to the task of becoming a Communist revolutionary military organizer. In the early 1960's, before coming to the South he served in the North Vietnamese Army as vice-chief of staff, ^{FWD} vice-minister of defense. He was also a member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (North Vietnamese Communist) Party. He then sent southwards to command the North Vietnamese military actions in the northern sections of South Vietnam ^{particularly} along the demilitarized zone. Then, in mid-1968, he was promoted to be commander-in-chief of the Viet Cong armed forces.

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command ⁶ (normass/deepe)

Viet Cong
The new political commissar is small-framed, 52-year-old Pham Hung.

He was born in Vinh Long province of South Vietnam, ^{WAS RE-GROUPED} but ~~returned to the~~
^{diplomatically DIVIDED} North after the 1954 Geneva Agreements ~~dividing~~ the country. He then
became one of the foremost party figures of the North Vietnamese regime,
serving at various times as first deputy prime minister, member of the Lao
Dong (Communist) Party Politburo and Secretariat, chairman of the state
prices committee and chairman of the board of finance and trade.

His Communist Party membership goes back to the 1930s and he was ^{elect}
to the central committee ~~wh~~ of the ~~Com~~ Lao Dong Party when it was officially
^{ESTABLISHED} re-instituted in 1951.

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command 7 (normass/deepe)

In the ~~light of the Paris~~ current light of the Paris peace talks, it may be significant to note that Pham Hung was head of the cease-fire committee in South Vietnam at the termination of the ^{FRENCH} Indo-China War in July, 1954, ^{HIS} ~~which included~~ ^{INCLUDED} responsibility for the regrouping regroupment of the ~~various~~ ^{BEING} armed forces of the various countries. The following year, as the regroupment process was finalized, he became head of the liaison mission of the Viet Minh High Command in Saigon, which ^{formalized} ~~worked out~~ schemes ^{of} between the pro-Communist and the French forces.

Hung appears to be a close associate of ~~Pr~~ North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, at one time serving on the agricultural board in Dong's office. ^{In mid-1961,} Hung ~~is~~ served as acting Prime Minister during a two months' absence abroad of ~~the Pri~~ Mr. Dong. In 1957, Hung visited Prague and Moscow and he accompanied ~~Ho~~ President Ho Chi Minh to India and ~~Burm~~ Burma in 1958 and to Indonesia the following year. Known as a skilled organizer and administrator, Hung's emergence in the North Vietnamese regime ^{SIGNIFICANTLY} coincided with increasing ^{COMMUNIST PARTY} propaganda urging reunification of North and South ~~Vietnam~~ Vietnam.

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comma nd 8 (normass/deepe)

Other Northerners also serve in prominent positions under the commander-in-chief, General Thai. Serving as ~~chief of staff to~~ as chief of staff since early this year is General Thai is Brig. Gen. ~~Gen. Thang Tan, During...~~ He was a ^{when it} ~~former~~ division commander of the 320th North Vietnamese Division, which took part in the fighting of the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and more than a decade later, ^{the division} fought at the ~~Marin~~ American Marine combat base of Khe Sanh. ^{BRG.} Gen. Tan was ^{REPORTEDLY} once a deputy chief of staff in the North Vietnamese Army.

Serving under the chief of staff Tan ~~are three deputies~~ ^{are three deputy} chiefs of staff, one for regular troops, one for regional forces and one for guerrilla ^{AND} militia forces. The first deputy ~~for regular troops~~ ^{1st BRIGADIER GENERAL} is a Northerner with the alias of Anh Sau, who assumed ~~this position~~ ^{TOOK OVER SAU'S} position early this year when Gen. Tan assumed ~~his former position~~ ^{TOOK OVER SAU'S} ^{JOB AS} ~~to office~~ of chief of staff. Currently, Anh Sau is reported to serve concurrently as ~~for~~ commander of the Communist forward command to attack Saigon. His deputy at the forward command is ~~col~~ Colonel Tran Dinh Xu, a Southerner who ~~used to~~ ^{formerly} command the whole greater Saigon area. ^{ED}

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command ⁹ (normass/deepe)

The other two deputy chiefs of staff are Southerners, but neither have the equivalent state status or rank of that general.

^{HND} Beneath the ~~command headqu~~ High Command level, all of the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese divisions are commanded either by Northern-born generals or else by Southerners who traveled North in 1954 and gained ^{OR OTHER RANKS} their general's stars in the North Vietnamese Army. None of the ^{VIET Cong} ~~division~~ commanders, ^{officers} ~~at~~ including ^{HAVE} ~~predominantly~~ elements, ^{position of division} ~~has been~~ promoted ² ~~up to the~~ through the Viet Cong ranks to the ~~top field position~~; ^{ALL THEY FIELD LEADERS} ~~and~~ have been imported from North Vietnam. Increasingly, more of the ^{once Southern} regimental commanders in the Viet Cong divisions are also ~~being~~ ^{IN} ~~lead~~ by Northerners, or persons ~~trained in the~~ serving the North Vietnamese Army, informed sources report.

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