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Command ~~1~~ 1 (normass/deepe)

Saigon, May 9--The North Vietnamese Army has assumed direct command of local Viet Cong units in the upper two-thirds of South Vietnam, intelligence sources reported today.

The significant move--which means the North Vietnam <sup>ARMY</sup> is ~~virtually~~ AS WELL AS FIGHTING IT running the Communist side of the war there ~~was~~ the subject of a detailed briefing to the highest-ranking members of the American-backed Vietnamese government and armed forces, reliable sources report.

Within the southern one-third of the country, the Viet Cong High Command, ~~reportedly~~ BELIEVED HEADQUARTERS in the jungled ~~stronghold~~ stronghold of War Zone C near Cambodia, still retains control of their own troops, reliable sources report.

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Command <sup>2</sup> Saigon (normass/deepe)

The North Vietnamese Army command stretches from roughly one hundred miles north-northeast of Saigon upwards to the seventeenth parallel, where the bloodied six-mile wide demilitarized zone <sup>n</sup> only ~~once~~ theoretically separates Communist North Vietnam and the southern, American-supported republic. Horizontally, the command reaches from the South China Sea on the east to the north-northeast Laotian-Cambodian land borders on the west. Arcing north of Saigon are the three provinces of Phuoc Long, Lam Dong and Binh Thuan, which are geographically important for containing the foothills to the mountainous northern region along the land borders. They are also historically important for forming the ~~an~~ old French-imposed political division between the Mekong Delta area once called ~~the~~ Cochinchina, and Central Vietnam ~~and~~ (Annam) which ranged ~~northward~~ northward to slightly above the 17th parallel. These regional distinctions are still important, and ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> on some issues, are more important forceful than Vietnamese nationalism. TRAGE North of these <sup>u</sup> provinces the ~~North~~ North Vietnam ~~command~~ Army is in command of the Communist side <sup>of</sup> of the war.

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Command 3 Saigon (normass/deepe)

<sup>H.R.S</sup>  
Intelligence sources said ~~their~~ confirmed information—based on the interrogation of several high-ranking North Vietnamese officers--indicated the Southern-born Viet Cong guerrillas, political cadre and organized units were quickly shifting into the heavily populated areas along the South ~~&~~ China ~~Sea~~ Sea. Here, they are expected to concentrate their fighting against the Vietnamese government armed forces and the crucial pacification (Revolutionary Development) program.

Command CHANGE  
"This ~~significant~~ ~~no~~ significant ~~move~~ means there are now two ~~hot~~ ~~separate~~ separate, hot wars in South Vietna," one intelligence officer explained. "One war is between North Vietnamese and American units. The second is the Viet Cong against the Vietnamese government soldiers and political organizations. It will mean more bloodshed in a spiralling war."

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One of the North Vietnamese officers whose interrogation lead to the confirmation of the major development was named Lt. Col. Huynh Cu, who ~~was~~ formerly head of instruction for the Viet Cong Inter-zone ~~IV~~ repeat five ~~region, com~~ encompassing the five northernmost provinces of the Southern republic. He ~~defected~~ defected to the government side in the spring of this year. Another North Vietnamese officer, working in intelligence for the Communists, was recently captured in Danang and his interrogation also added to the government's knowledge of the Communist change of command.

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Command 5 Saigon (normass/deepe)

The intelligence sources also reported ~~that~~ the new North Vietnamese command responsibility, ~~the~~ is fulfilled by two separate ~~two~~ structures. The one command structure controls the war in the five northernmost provinces of the ~~South~~ South—Quang Tri along the seventeenth parallel, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. The headquarters of this command is ~~is~~ in the ~~at~~ environs of the frequently-bombed city of Thanh Hoa, 300 miles north of the seventeenth parallel in North Vietnam. The sources said ~~the~~ <sup>four</sup> one mission of the ~~is~~ four elements of North Vietnamese divisions in this area was to learn how to counter effectively ~~and~~ American units—especially the American Marines—~~as~~ as future training and strategic planning against ~~an~~ any possibly ground invasion into North Vietnam by Allied troops. ~~The~~ The second command structure covers roughly half of South Vietnam from the perimeter north of Saigon to the southern limits of the ~~the~~ Thanh Hoa command. The headquarters of this second command has not repeat not been ~~disclosed.~~ located yet; sources said.

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Command 6 Saigon (normass/deepe)

The North Vietnamese generals commanding these two headquarters--or the over-all ~~the~~ campaign--are still unknown, sources said. However, the intelligence officers said that two North Vietnamese are confirmed to be present in the South. One of these is Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chi Thanh, once confirmed to be in command of all North Vietnamese units operating in the ~~South~~ South. It is unknown whether he is now one of the generals also commanding the Viet Cong military machine.

~~Hammerhead~~

~~Considered strongly pro Peking~~  
The 52-year-old general is one of only two four-star generals in the North Vietnamese Army. The other is Commander-in-Chief General Vo Nguyen Giap. ~~who is considered Moscow-trained and oriented.~~ General Thanh, ~~considered to be strongly pro Peking,~~ was former commander of some of the northern provinces of South Vietnam during the French Indo-China War ending in 1954. He is a member of the National Defense Council and a member of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party Politburo and Secretariat in North Vietnam.

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Command 7 Saigon (normass/deepe)

In 1961, he was head of the Political Department of the North Vietnamese Army and later became the Party chief of the Rural Affairs, during the collectivisation of agriculture.

The second North Vietnamese general confirmed to be in the South is Maj. Gen. ~~(XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX)~~ Hoang Van Thai. The 61-year-old three-star general is Vice chief of staff, vice minister of defense, and member of the Central Committee of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party in North Vietnam. A close associate of General Giap in the past, he is considered a brilliant strategist and politically astute officer.

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Command 8 Saigon (normass/deepe)

The major shift in the command responsibility is expected to strengthen the Communists short-term military position for a bloody, significant offensive beginning with the July monsoon rains, sources here believe.

In the long-range future, however, some political sources believe the change may have some disadvantages for the Communists. First, these sources argue, North Vietnamese troops are almost as foreign in the jungled terrain of the South as are American units. Second, the sources believe the move may well accelerate the already-present ill-feeling between the North Vietnamese regulars and the Southern-born Viet Cong. The regional differences are important here; with each <sup>Region</sup> ~~group~~ having a different ~~language~~ language accent and centuries of animosity. Third, some American military commanders have long regarded their Viet Cong units—who operate ~~in the mountains~~ among neighbors in familiar terrain—as more ~~the~~ fearsome enemies than the North Vietnamese units. Now, the decision-making authority on the military side has shifted to the Northerners. Fourth, in the political arena, both internally and internationally, the development seems to give additional, visible evidence to the ~~official~~ <sup>official</sup> American view that the war here is one of aggression from the North rather than ~~is~~ simply a home-grown insurrection of Southern dissidents, some sources argue. From the Communist viewpoint, the command shift would be considered justified in the light of the Allied combat buildup although they have not official announced the change and <sup>PROB</sup>



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Command 9 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Observers here view the change as one of at least four milestone ~~decisions~~ <sup>ABOUT</sup> military decisions made by the Communists ~~in~~ the current present Vietnam war. These four decisions are:

1. In 1959, the Communist decision, based on a study of Southern-born Lao Dong Party member Le Duan, to resort to arms in an attempt to protect their political apparatus and to expand it in~~to~~ confronting the anti-Communist government based in Saigon. This decision was ratified <sup>in 1960</sup> by other Communist bloc countries at the Moscow Conference attended by President Ho Chi Minh and General Thanh. A few months later the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam was officially proclaimed and guerrilla warfare broke out.

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2. In 1962, the Communists set up a "unified" command, pulling together and strengthening their ~~hogue & hogue~~ <sup>SCATTERED</sup> ~~plage~~ guerrilla units under one ~~headq~~ general headquarters. This decision was made several months after the American military command in Saigon was set up. North Vietnamese-born political and military cadre were at that time being introduced; ~~temamamamamamamamamamam~~

3. In 1964, the first North Vietnamese-born combat units were introduced, ~~princiap~~ <sup>FROM HAS UNIT</sup> principally heavy weapons and support units. The first North Vietnamese-born prisoner of war was captured by the Vietnamese government in July, ~~although~~ <sup>the</sup> American military command at that time denied the significance of the capture. Since then, six North Vietnamese divisions have been infiltrated into the ~~South~~ South, reliable sources report.

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4. ~~That~~ In early 1967, the decision to give the North Vietnamese Army command of the war in the upper portions of South Vietnam and command of Viet Cong units.

(Note to Editor: USAID does not have any more available copies of provincial backgrounders. They are attempting to update and reprint new ones, but this will take six months to one year. Sorriest.

Do you want a rather dry, non-controversial, yet I think significant wrapup on the National Liberation Front--how it was formed, how it operations with the population and Hanoi etc--<sup>ABOUT</sup> of ~~minimum~~ of 3000 words? Please advise. I can send it in several days. Thanks).

End Reuter