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focus 6 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, APRIL 15--Late last year, the Chinese Communists sent three infantry divisions and supporting elements--about 50,000 men--~~ed~~ into North Vietnam, in order to fill the vacuum of left ~~hand~~ ^{INFORMED} by North Vietnamese troops streaming south for the Tet offensive, ~~reliable~~ sources here report. These Chinese divisions are an addition to the estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Chinese construction workers who have been in North Vietnam for several years to help the Hanoi government maintain their lines of communication ~~again~~ against American airraids. While precise details are not available here--and are officially denied--^T The Chinese troops are known to be based in the remote areas of the North, removed from the Vietnamese population centers. Sources here believe that in case Hanoi-Washington peace talks and negotiations break down, North Vietnam is prepared to escalate the ground war in the South, with vast increases in number of ~~norther~~ ^{northern} troops--while relying on the Chinese troops to cover their rear in case the United States launches an Inchon-styled invasion ~~into the North~~ from the 7th Fleet.

(Hank: If we could get more details, we'd write this as an news story; ~~hence the additional focus item~~). ^{BUT SINCE UNABLE TO, I'll} REGARDS BEU).

=end reuter