

Terrorism

ATTN ENNEX UPI SPECIAL FOR GANBY GANDY BY BEVERLY DEEPE SAIGON DECEMBER 04180 (UPIs)--The blasting of an American billet here Saturday by a Viet Cong suicide squad was long expected. More frequent and far bloodier terrorist incidents are anticipated by officials in the coming months in this jittery city of more soldiers but less security.

Reliable sources note that the ~~ter~~ terrorist incident signifies a general escalation of the war on all fronts--instead of a de-escalation to solely terrorist tactics of Phase One, which American officials had previously predicted.

Within the context of this week of the war, the bombing incident occurred as the Viet Cong Communists launched a record number of incidents in the provinces--totalling 1036 last week--won a substantial victory in which Vietnamese government troops suffered some of the heaviest casualties of the war and increased the number of political demonstrations by Vietnamese civilians in the provinces.

"This war is a bitter cocktail--a mixture of everything," one Western diplomat explained. "There's a neat blend of terrorism, big battles and political agitation. And there's bigger and bigger shots of every ingredient going into the brew."

Commonly acknowledged that "there's no total security in Saigon," the highest ranking officials admit that even the ~~resident~~ residence of American Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge could be easily mortared or attacked by suicide squads and that the thousands of American GI's living in apartments, villas, billets and hotels are particularly ~~vunler~~ vulnerable to terrorism on either a mass ~~mass~~ or individual scale.

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Since security in Saigon is limited, an increasing number of American civilians advocate moving masses of American military personnel out of Saigon city--a plan proposed by Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, but yet to be achieved.

Observers here expected the terrorist incident to reinforce arguments in Unistates calling for stiffer American airstrikes against North Vietnam--a feeling that was partially shared here. But ^{at} to other Americans here--particularly civilian officials--the incident produced mounting criticisms against the American decision-makers in the Military Assistance Command, headed by General William C. Westmoreland. These American civilians had long criticized the American military officials for not trying to move the increasing numbers of American military personnel into massive ~~contan~~ cantonment areas on the outskirts of Saigon where they could be secured to the hilt.

"The whole billeting problem ~~size~~ of the American GI's is a ~~symbol~~ symbol of the unplanned war," one American official, speaking privately, explained. "American GI's are living all over Saigon in villas, brothels or slums. How can they ever be secured. [?] Housing has been scarce in Saigon for three years; the American generals could easily have predicted that the influx of Unistates combat ~~us~~ elements would have made it acute.

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"The American generals could have built a large cantonment area outside of Saigon three years ago," the source continued. "But they didn't. They could have ~~immediately~~ crashprogrammed the building of prefabricated houses near the Saigon airport. But they didn't. Instead they allowed the renting of villas ~~all over~~ ^{OUTSIDE} this town--and paid two years rent in advance so they could ~~outbit~~ the American civilian agencies. The result is that one American agency hiked up the price on another American agency."

These critics point out that in Korea, many of the American military personnel were based in a specially constructed compound on the outskirts of the capital of ~~Seoul~~ ^{Seoul} Seoul, but that the ~~s~~ solutions to the problems in Vietnam are even more crucially needed because the war is such a convoluted mixture of political-economic-social ~~reals~~ ^{social} factors as well as military. ~~2~~

~~Reliable~~ so Reliable sources indicate that American military officers are in such desperate need of billeting for incoming GI's that they frequently contract Vietnamese civilians to build villas-- and begin payment of one-third of the two-year advance sum ~~sum~~ when the ~~the~~ builder has but laid the concrete foundation of the house. When the house is completed the owner is given the two-year advance rent-- which more than ~~pays~~ ^{pays} pays for his expenses ~~xxx~~ and costs of the house. ("It means that the Americans gave him the villa," one Vietnamese explained.)

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While the American-contracted ~~has~~ villas are to meet certain ~~specific~~ construction ~~in~~ specifications, such as designated amounts of structural steel, reliable sources indicate that the Vietnamese ~~s~~ builders seldom bother meeting these requirements. "So, if a bomb is placed ~~in~~ on the ground floor of any of these houses, ~~the~~ the whole place collapses like a crackerbox," one reliable source explained.

Observers here consider that the acute housing problem, caused ~~by~~ largely by the influx of American troops, is one of the concrete factors creating ~~friction~~ friction for the rising tide of anti-Americanism now being experienced in Saigon.

The Americans, with more money ~~and~~ than other population groups, sparked a round of inflation on housing as the demand temporarily peaked during the past six months. Western diplomats complained they couldn't rent homes—except at \$2000 ~~repeat~~ ^{Vietnamese} two thousand dollars a month rent from wives of government ~~high~~ officials. Vietnamese complained that the Americans soaked up even slum housing by paying sixhundred percent more than the other competitors. Low-class Vietnamese showing growing contempt against those Vietnamese who have made "fabulous profits" by ~~sell~~ ^{or} building houses and renting villas to the Americans. The low-ranking American GI was also bitter. If he was lucky, he could find a room in a brothel which he could share with three to nine other GI's for \$13 ~~repeat~~ thirteen dollars a night in ~~a~~ brothel—with or without a girl. End of deep.