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SAIGON---The Red Noose---a Communist stranglehold---
is tightening around this nervous capital city.

~~Intelligence~~ ^{Intelligence} sources indicate that the Viet Cong Communists plan to utilize what they described as the "tactics of Mao Tse-Tung plus those of Lenin" in their long-range battle plan for Saigon. This plan combines Mao Tse-Tung's tactics of using armed guerrillas to seize the villages and then to encircle Saigon plus the street-fighting and people's uprising within the inter-ring of Saigon city, similar to the way in which the Communists seized power in the 1917 revolution in Russia.

Military intelligence sources also indicate that the equivalent of a battalion of Viet Cong--organized into suicide squads, ~~and~~ ^{and} murder teams, ^{and} sabotage commando units-- have already penetrated within the city limits of Saigon, ready to strike when the Communist command orders are received.

Outside of Saigon, the Viet Cong have established a double ring of regular forces, organized under two regimental co-ordinating commands. The one regiment, called the "Capital Regiment Headquarters", comprised of three regular "light" battalions, is known to operate close to Saigon within Gia Dinh province. The second regiment, comprised of four regular "light" battalions, operate in a larger circle surrounding the area of responsibility of the Capital Regimental Headquarters. ^{an eighth Battalion is} ~~currently under training and will complete the regiments up~~ ^{to full strength.}

In short, the Viet Cong have Saigon doubly encircled with two separate rings of troops. ^{these} intelligence sources report the Communists late last year established the two regimental coordinating commands for Saigon--Cholon--Gia Dinh. On December 13, 1965, at a special meeting, Viet Cong leaders for the ~~capital~~ capital region established and named one of the commands the "Capital Regiment Headquarters." The name of the second regiment is currently unknown, according to intelligence sources. The Capital Regiment Headquarters has under its control ~~three batta~~ only three "light" battalions: the 3rd Battalion situated northeast of Saigon, the 4th Battalion Southeast of Saigon, the 6th Battalion southeast of Saigon. The 5th Battalion is under training--to be completed next month--and is to be assigned northwest of Saigon, according to military intelligence sources.

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These seven "light" battalions controlled by the two regimental headquarters each have ~~four~~ four companies of roughly 150 men per company, or roughly 600 men per battalion--which is numerically stronger than a Vietnamese government regular Army battalion.

These seven Viet Cong "light" battalions are considered to be hard-core regulars, recruited in their local villages and provinces. They operate in addition to the local village and regional guerrillas--part-time farmers and part-time fighters.

During a seven-day, 8,000-man operation from Jan. 8-15, American paratroopers and Australian troops cracked the main base area of the Viet Cong Saigon-Cholon-Gia Dinh Committee, killing 151, capturing 91, carrying off tons of documents and weapons, which were hidden in a complex honeycomb of tunnels, cement blockhouses and underground defenses. While the allied forces disrupted the headquarters, the Viet Cong are expected to move back into the infamous Ho Bo woods area at a later time.

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This week the noose around Saigon visibly grew tighter when, within a 20 hour period, in the doughnut province of Gia Dinh, which surrounds Saigon, an unknown number of Viet Cong placed small arms fire on a village ten miles southwest of Saigon, ^(x) (jan. 16th) six hours later a Viet Cong company six miles southwest of Saigon mortared a Vietnamese airborne battalion which was stationed to protect one of the largest military oil depots and American ~~and~~ ammunition unloading bases in the capital area. The next day the Viet Cong simultaneously mortared and attacked the Thu Duc Infantry and Armored School, which is situated between Saigon and a division-plus of American combat forces in the Bien Hoa airbase area, only twelve minutes drive from Saigon.

During this last attack, Saigon generals, businessmen and peons ~~passed~~ ^{tossed} in their beds as first the soft patter of Viet Cong machine gun fire was heard, then ^{the} whomp-ing reaction of the instant artillery--and seconds later the sharp whistle of American jets rushing to the battle area.

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The Capital Military Region comprises Saigon and it's Chinese twin-city of Cholon (total pop. 1,641,000) covering 30 square MILES, ~~kilometers~~, plus Gia Dinh province covering 77 square miles. American military commanders have classified Gia Dinh province as "pacified" but the number of Viet Cong armed attacks have steadily been rising within the province; district headquarters barely out of site of the neon lights of Saigon city are consistently mortared. Almost nightly now, Saigon diners from rooftop restaurants can witness flaredrops and jet/strafing runs.

"Almost every night we drop flares right at the end of the big runway," one American airman at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport explained. "We've got battalions of Viet Cong right around this airbase. We have firefights three times a week at the bomb dump right on the edge of the runway. Nobody goes down by that bomb dump unless he has to. American crew chiefs have to guard all-night their individual aircraft parked down near there--but they know they're just sitting ducks." [American pilots often land at night at Tan Son Nhut without any lights on the plane because they feel they are less conspicuous targets for the Viet Cong snipers at the end of the runway.

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Military intelligence sources indicate the Viet Cong commander of the Saigon area uses the alias of Muoi Tri--Spirit No. 10. Formerly a member of the gangster-pirate Binh Xuyen group, he was captured by the French during the Indo-China War, then was sent to North Vietnam when they country was divided by the 1954 Geneva Agreements. He has since re-infiltrated to the Saigon area.

These sources indicate that the Viet Cong specialist on commando raid attacks within Saigon is named Cao Pha--which means Superman--who fought in North Vietnam during the French Indo-China War. The Viet Cong specialist for sabotage is named Hai Den--an alias meaning Black No. 2.

The Saigon murder teams operate under the command of La Van Lien, a Chinese name. This specialist in pistol assassinations gained fame in Saigon for killing the French official in charge of security throughout Indo-China during the Indo-China War. He too was sent to North Vietnam after the 1954 Geneva Agreements, but has since re-infiltrated into the Saigon area. The Vietnamese government has recently put a one million piastre (US \$10,000) price on his head. The Viet Cong political advisor to the Saigon area operates under the alias of Chin Dung (Courage No. 9).

More American and foreign civilians have been killed in Saigon by sabotage and terrorism than in all other parts of Vietnam combined, according to reliable sources.