

The CIA's Spy-Drops Into Red Viet

By Beverly Deepe
A Special Correspondent

SAIGON.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency canceled in mid-July its part of a multi-million-dollar contract with a private American aviation company that had the undercover mission of airlifting guerrillas and supplies behind enemy lines in North Viet Nam and Communist-held sections of Laos.

Reliable military sources said that pilots of more than 12 aircraft included Chinese and Turkish nationals, but no Americans, American civilians were used for ground support, administrative and maintenance functions.

The American government, through the CIA, about two years ago, had signed jointly with the Vietnamese government a contract with a private American firm called American Aviation Investors Inc. The CIA broke the contract several weeks ago.

The cancellation of the American co-signature was interpreted here as a rebuke to South Vietnamese Premier Gen. Nguyen Khanh, who has

in recent weeks launched a "Go North" campaign to attack Communist North Viet Nam. Gen Khanh's campaign contradicted American policy at the time. Presumably the American government broke the contract in order to limit his capacity to send Vietnamese Special Forces guerrillas and saboteurs into North Viet Nam and Laos.

UNMARKED

Since the cancellation of the contract, Gen. Khanh has toned down and redefined his "Go North" policy to mean simply a means of finishing the war "instead of letting it drag on." And since then, North Vietnamese PT boats have twice attacked American destroyers in international waters off the coast of North Viet Nam.

The Tonkin Gulf attacks led directly to retaliatory strikes by U. S. planes against the torpedo boats' bases and supply centers—far more drastic action than the clandestine guerrilla operations north of the border. But the U. S. shows no sign of adopting the "Go North" slogan.

The CIA contract with American Aviation Investors Inc. called for a highly mobile undercover air operation involving several helicopters, six to eight C-45 and C-47 transport aircraft, some of them equipped with radar, and L-28 Helio-courier planes. None of the silver-colored aircraft carried identification markings or insignia, except black numbers.

The C-45 and C-47 transport aircraft are often used to drop paratroopers behind enemy lines; helicopters have the capabilities of landing in small jungle clearings and the four-seater L-28 Helio-couriers can land on short clearings and runways.

Other American private aviation companies with missions comparable to American Aviation Investors are presumably still in operation. The American government at times contracts with private firms to implement programs for which the U. S. government officially cannot be held responsible.

When asked about such activities, Gen. Khanh simply smiles and says, "We can not discuss that." American mili-

tary sources confirm that South Vietnamese Special Forces, trained by their American counterparts, are dropped behind enemy lines, but details "are classified."

The wives of South Vietnamese Special Forces troops sent to North Viet Nam also sometimes inadvertently drop information. The wives call the mission into North Viet Nam an "express train to death." Casualties on such missions are considered high, although one Vietnamese Special Forces officer has been dropped into Communist-held sections of Southern Laos six times and has fought his way back to safety.

LANDING

Within the past six weeks, reliable Vietnamese sources confirmed that a South Vietnamese Special Forces unit landed on the South China Sea coast near the North Vietnamese city of Dong Hoi, about 30 miles north of the 17th Parallel separating North and South Viet Nam. They succeeded in sabotaging the city water system.

The most detailed information regarding South Viet-

namese saboteurs and guerrillas operating in North Viet Nam comes from North Vietnamese radio broadcasts and newspapers, but the accuracy of the information is difficult to assess.

On April 22, 1964, the North Vietnamese government reported a "spy trial" in which a Communist military court two days earlier tried a group of seven "spy-commandos of the U. S. and its henchmen in South Viet Nam who had been air-dropped on a mountain region of Cam Xuyen district, Ha Tinh province." The North Vietnamese report listed names and ages of the seven "spies" and their sentences which ranged from three years to life imprisonment.

Duties of the seven were listed as chief of the group, deputy chief, radio operators and psychological warfare expert. The report said that from November, 1962, the seven were directly trained by American officers in spying activities, and were air-dropped into the North Vietnamese province during early morning hours of Oct. 8, 1963.