

deepe

chicou--1

ja n. 18, 1965

SAIGON--Vietnamese intelligence officials have been receiving an increasing number of unconfirmed reports that Chinese Communist "advisors" are accompanying hard-core Viet Cong Communist guerrilla units.

Both Vietnamese and American military officials, who regularly receive intelligence ~~information~~ information, emphasize that the reports of Chinese Communist "advisors" have not (repeat not) been confirmed by standard intelligence procedures such as ~~capturing a prisoner~~ capturing a prisoner or photographing a Chinese Communist trooper. ~~They emphasize that no (repeat no) American or Vietnamese military men in the field have been able to identify one through binoculars.~~ In the past, American advisors in the provinces have reported seeing Caucasians with the Viet Cong units. ~~However, Vietnamese military officials at the highest echelon--~~ in the High Military Command headquarters--have privately voiced the "probability" that the Chinese Communists have sent non-participating observers or military specialists to aid the Viet Cong guerrillas.

deepe

chicom--2

jan. 18, 1965

^{this} ~~the~~ judgment of ^{one} ~~this~~ high-ranking Vietnamese general at the Saigon headquarters--shared by Vietnamese generals commanding operations in the field--has been accepted by some military experts from Western allies and has been relayed in diplomatic reports to their home capitals.

The basis of the intelligence reports is generally from Vietnamese villagers who have witnessed Viet Cong operations. One Vietnamese general--one of four corps commanders--said he personally interviewed Vietnamese villagers who told him of tall Asian ~~troopers~~ ^{WEARING} soldiers accompanying the Viet Cong ~~who~~ wore Chinese-like uniforms. These reports, which have dribbled into Vietnamese intelligence channels for months, peaked ~~at~~ ² recently after the infamous battle of Binh Gia in which Vietnamese government forces sustained more than 400 casualties in one of the worst defeats of the war.

Following that battle, the Vietnamese High Command received reports from Vietnamese villagers, ~~include~~ ³ including at least one Vietnamese Roman Catholic priest, that Viet Cong units included at least two Asian soldiers per battalion "with closely shaved heads." The villagers reportedly said that they spoke a different language they could not understand, shoved and pushed the Vietnamese villagers rather than treating them diplomatically as ~~the~~ ³ the other ~~units~~ ⁴ members of the unit.

deepe

chicom--3

jan. 18, 1965

One Vietnamese general said that he talked with a Vietnamese Marine Officer ~~who~~ who had escaped injury in the battle of Binh Gia, who said that he had personally heard ~~the~~ ^{BINH GIA} Chinese being spoken during the battle. While some sources question that Chinese language would be spoken during the battle since it would be difficult ~~for~~ for the Viet Cong troops, who speak Vietnamese, to understand, the Vietnamese ~~and~~ general said that it "is probably ~~the~~ true" that there are Chinese Communists serving with Viet Cong units.

This correspondent also talked with a low-ranking American advisor who had participated in the battle of Binh Gia.

"There's absolutely no (repeat no) evidence to prove there are Chicoms with the Viet Cong guerrillas," the American captain explained. "But I know they are there. You can tell by the way they dig their foxholes and their tactics. ~~During that battle~~ ^{during} they started their attack with a bugle blast and ~~they~~ ^{were} were carrying their regimental banner and came wave after wave just like in Korea. When we were retreating ~~at~~ their mortar shells followed in our footsteps down the trails. This is just like Korea."

deepe

chicom--4

Some Vietnamese intelligence sources, acknowledging the lack of proof of Chinese Communist involvement, point out that intelligence reports from villagers about North Vietnamese-born soldiers being present in this southern republic ~~re~~ preceded by months the actual confirmation of the reports. The first North-Vietnamese-born soldier was captured by Vietnamese government troops in mid-July of last year, but intelligence reports of their presence had been received at least six months in advance of the confirmation. Other Vietnamese military sources point out that government troops have been capturing an increasing number of Chinese Communist weapons in South Vietnam.

Some sources are non-committal or openly skeptical of these intelligence reports.

~~Diplomatic sources who carefully watch Viet Cong military and political trends are openly skeptical that Chinese Communist personnel are involved.~~

American military officials at the Saigon command level, speaking privately, say only that there is "no hard evidence" to prove that the Chinese Communists are openly involved with Viet Cong units, but would not ~~venum~~ speculate whether or not they are present.

Diplomatic sources who carefully watch Viet Cong military and political trends are openly skeptical that Chinese Communist personnel are involved.

deepe

chicoms—5

"For years the Viet Cong have been trying to say they are fighting for the Vietnamese people—without involvement from Peiping," one reliable diplomatic source explained. "There's no new weapons or tactics now that would require Chinese Communists to come into the battle. The Vietnamese people traditionally hate the Chinese, who have long tried to dominate them."

An American civilian in close touch with developments in the provinces brushed aside the whole matter.

"The Vietnamese (anti-Communist side) always exaggerate," he said. "When they have a big defeat, they always double the size of the Viet Cong attacking unit—and add Chicom advisors."

Another American advisor in the provinces shrugged without concern as he hopped into his jeep and replied: ~~"Ex~~ "The presence of Chicoms here is not (repeat not) a matter that worries me one way or another. It may be of immense concern to Dean Rusk. But to me, the Viet Cong are fighting very well—with or without their Chicom advisors."