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Saigon

Appeal one

Saigon--The political arm of the Communist guerrilla movement ~~HR~~ here has appealed to South Vietnamese soldiers and officers to "swing your guns around and join the people in resisting the U.S.-Dienists."

According~~y~~ to reliable reports reaching here, the appeal was made by Nguyen Huu To, ⁴⁴⁰cha rman of the ~~National~~ Central Committee of the National Liberation Front for South Viet Nam. The ~~Front~~ front is the main political mouthpiece of the Communist (Viet Cong) guerrilla organization.

The important appeal was carried in a Vietnamese language broadcast from Radio Hanoi on September 9. A day later, the New China News Agency in a Radio Peking broadcast in English to Asia and Europe further publicized the National Liberation Front appeal.

The appeal was made five days after the Vietnamese commander of Cambodian origin induced his whole Civil Guard company to defect from the government ranks, on ~~September 4~~ in a province sixty miles southeast of Saigon. Thirtyseven men in the company later returned but still missing are twenty seven men, seventeen carbines, eighty grenades, one radio, one automatic ~~rifle~~ rifle and one Thompson submachinegun. Provincial authorities have been unable to persuade the remainder to return to the government side.

(More)

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The Hanoi broadcast appealed to the soldiers and officers--which it referred to as "dear friends"-- to "make up your mind to abandon the enemy ranks. Swing your guns around and join the people in resisting the U. S.-Diemists in order to save yourselves and the nation."

The broadcast continued; "Certainly now you have understood fully the regime for whose sake you are obliged to carry guns and die. You must think it over, dear friends. Standing before your gun barrels are citizens who do not want to endure shame and lose their fatherland to the enemy, religious persons who request nothing but religious equality, and students and pupils who want democratic freedom. Your relatives are among all these people people."

The appeal was interpreted here as an attempt to drive a wedge between the regular armed forces and the Vietnamese government of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Many observers here believe that ~~the government~~ President Diem can be overthrown only by dissident elements in the regular armed forces in the Saigon area.

A more significant aspect of the appeal, however, would result if it should capture the emotions of the paramilitary units in the provinces. These paramilitary units--called the Self Defense Corps and the Civil Guard--live in their home hometowns, bear the brunt of Viet Cong attacks on small hamlets in the provinces and are more frequently barraged by Viet Cong propaganda. While the ~~appeal~~ Viet Cong appeal was not directed to the paramilitary units, if they should defect in large numbers with their weapons and ammunition, many observers believe it would be a significant change in the war effort.

The number of government desertions is classified. However, some troops have been known to desert their unit to rejoin their family, but not to join Viet Cong.