

~~SECRET-NOFORN~~

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D. Other Recent VC Activities

A recent CAS report concerning a group of VC numbering nearly 1000 men (probably exaggerated) entering a town 3 or 4 kilometers from Ben Tre on January 24 and spending most of the day unmolested, spreading VC propaganda is not the only such report of VC boldness. A similar incident involving about 100 armed VC occurred in Kien Giang Province on September 21. The fact that the VC can, and have on a number of occasions, entered fair sized communities, spent several hours or a day propagandizing the population and then retired without meeting GVN resistance would indicate that the VC have an effective intelligence system.

According to CAS sources, infiltration of the GVN security forces (including ARVN) has been a part of VC planning throughout this period. The GVN suspected that details of the ARVN operation on September 25 and 26 was made known to the VC by persons who had penetrated the government units. Infiltrations have contributed to other VC successes, possibly including the Tay Ninh incident on January 26. The VC, according to a CAS report, have also made a special effort to obtain ARVN uniforms. Reports have been received by CAS concerning encounters by GVN patrols of what was believed to be an ARVN patrol, but which turned out to be VC.

Increased activity was also noted in Central Viet-Nam although the problem there was less intense than in the South. According to CAS VC armed strength in Central Viet-Nam in November was about 300. According to CAS sources the VC in the highlands of Quang Ngai carried out daring attacks during November on the head offices of communal councils and of the NNM. They also destroyed bridges and sections of road in an attempt to sabotage communications. Having gained influence among the Montagnards to the extent of being able to establish bases in the Highlands, the VC were reportedly planning in November to extend their political and military activities to the coastal regions.

Around midnight on November 5, 25 to 30 VC (50-100 by another estimate) armed with automatic weapons attacked a 15 man squad of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Engineer Group guarding a temporary engineer equipment park near Gia Vue (on Highway 5) in Quang Ngai Province. Four members of the squad managed to escape but the remainder were questioned and given a propaganda lecture for 2 hours. One dump truck and 1 grader were burned and 1 tractor was damaged. ARVN casualties were 1 killed and 2 wounded. The VC lost 2 dead left at the scene of action. On the following night the timber decking on an Riffel bridge near Gia Vue was burned by an estimated 60 Montagnard VC. The damage was repaired but the next night the Montagnard VC returned and again set fire to the decking, this time doing sufficient damage to require 3-4 days to repair.