

WXP Liberation Troops Attacked in Saigon

Manchester Guardian

SAIGON—Armed groups of former South Vietnamese soldiers have attacked the Liberation Forces in Saigon and other parts of South Vietnam, and the military government has been forced to take new measures to deal with them.

In one incident a few days ago, tanks were reportedly sent to a Saigon suburb where an armed group was operating, and there have been several reports on other such incidents.

An outsider's judgment on these incidents and on the possibility of serious resistance to the military authorities must be that they are isolated and the chances of major resistance remote.

Some South Vietnamese welcomed the victory of the Communist forces and the vast majority, including soldiers, are at least thankful for the end of the war and prepared to make a new start. A minority may have decided to fight on clandestinely, but their chances of surviving for any length of time would seem to be nil.

The reports sustain what at first was taken for mere rhetoric—Saigon Radio's recent reference to the continued existence of "counter revolutionary elements." It seems at least possible that some kind of attempt is being made to organize resistance.

It is believed that a number of soldiers in the Liberation Forces have been killed by such groups. The reported fact that bodies have not been robbed suggests a political rather than a simply criminal motivation.

It is believed that there may be some opposition groups operating near Cantho in the Mekong Delta and in the Central Highlands. The former South Vietnamese army was

known to have plans for a "guerrilla resistance" in the event of defeat, but after the total collapse of the army and the flight of most of its officers, few expected that these would be put into effect.

It is difficult to determine how widespread these incidents are and what the balance may be between banditry and politically motivated resistance; but it has become increasingly obvious over the last few days that there is some noncriminal resistance.

Thursday, the Saigon newspaper referred to the summary punishment, interpreted as possibly meaning execution, of former South Vietnamese soldiers in possession of weapons.

New restrictions were imposed Friday, and it is believed that the reason for these, which particularly applied to the movement of vehicles and of foreigners in central parts of the city, was that patrols were searching for arms caches. The military authorities are thought to have been particularly worried because a number of South Vietnamese officers, especially from the paratroopers and the marines, have not turned themselves and their weapons in at registration centers.

In addition, the whole of the South Vietnamese Central Intelligence Agency remains in the country—they were supposed to be evacuated by the Americans but never were—and not many of them have reported to the authorities, either.

Such resistance may well

force the military authorities to drop some of the lenient policies they have pursued thus far and to impose harsher measures, such as house-to-house searches, cordons and incessant checking or ordinary citizens. The resistance could also poison the chance for a smooth political development here.

While anti-Communist armed groups cannot possibly achieve anything, they could cause a great deal of trouble. The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong were powerful enough to destroy Thieu's army, but they are not large enough to police every inch of South Vietnam or even every street corner in Saigon. There are enough tracts of difficult and inaccessible terrain in the countryside for armed groups to survive for some time. In the cities, the same may be true, although for a shorter period.

The Vietcong, it is believed, argued that they should patrol in Saigon unarmed. They did not want to go about with weapons in their own city. But such notions have had to be put aside under the impact first of crime and now of armed groups.

Associated Press correspondent Peter Arnett, in Saigon until he was flown out to Hong Kong over the weekend, reported that Saigon's new authorities are wiping out the lifestyle of the merchant and land-owner classes in South Vietnam.

Property-owners in some Saigon districts are discovering that the new ruling com-

mittees require households to submit inventories of all items. In some districts, receipts are required to maintain possession of items such as electric fans and refrigerators, Arnett said.

"To people who have been poor all their lives—and that category includes most South Vietnamese—the prospect of a noose tightening around property and the property would be of little concern," the AP dispatch continued. "But there are hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who enjoyed having possessions, and who also avoided manual labor."

Rice Handout System In Saigon Revamped

From News Dispatches

Radio Giai Phong (Liberation Radio) announced yesterday that a system to insure "rational and fair" handouts of rice has been established in Saigon and throughout South Vietnam.

The radio said that all "bad elements" that had infiltrated the aid committees had been eliminated and that the rice would be handed directly to needy families.

The radio said several private companies had reopened and that a flour plant, a chemical fertilizer plant and a textile concern were again in operation.

The radio, monitored in Singapore, also announced that telegraphic service had been resumed between North Vietnam's post office and Saigon. Mail service was restored earlier.