

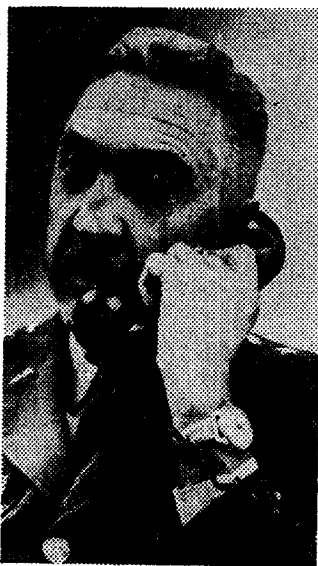
Army Will Review Study Of '68 on Alleged Killings

By ROBERT M. SMITH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—The Army announced today that it had appointed a lieutenant general to "explore the nature and scope" of the original Army investigation into the alleged massacre of Vietnamese civilians by American troops last year.

Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor and the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, said they had named Lieut. Gen. William R. Peers "to determine the adequacy of both the investigation and its subsequent review."

Meanwhile, Representative L. Mendel Rivers announced on the House floor that an investigating panel of the House Armed Services Committee,



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Lieut. Gen. William R. Peers
in his office at Pentagon.

which he chairs, would look into the alleged massacre.

The South Carolina Democrat said the panel would act "as a quasi-grand jury. If we think it deserves further inquiry," he said, "we'll refer whatever we find to the full committee." He said the panel would meet in closed session.

The original Army investigation was conducted by members of the 11th Infantry Brigade in April, 1968—one month after the alleged incident took place. The investigators concluded that no disciplinary action was appropriate and that no further action was warranted.

Death Estimates Vary

Vietnamese civilians have told American reporters that between 370 and 567 of their neighbors were shot by an American infantry unit. American eyewitnesses have confirmed their account, but almost all said the number of villagers killed was smaller. One of them declared that "over 100" Vietnamese had been shot. Another said today about 370 were killed.

The Saigon Government has denied that any atrocity took place at Songmy and said only 20 civilians were killed, by air and artillery bombardment.

In the meantime, two more Senators demanded inquiries. Senator Stephen M. Young, Democrat of Ohio, called for a Senate investigation.

"Americans must know—and the sooner the better—the long-suppressed facts about what certainly has been one of our nation's most ignoble hours," Mr. Young told the Senate today.

Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, urged investigations by both the Pentagon and the Senate. In a speech prepared for delivery at the University of Pennsylvania, he said that the Defense Department "had further aggra-

vated public confidence in the Pentagon by incredibly hiding the facts of the alleged Songmy massacre at the time it occurred, 20 months ago."

The Senator noted that the Vietcong had committed atrocities but said: "Atrocities that are a frequent occurrence for Hanoi and the Vietcong do not justify even one instance of American atrocity."

"We must now have an investigation that is scrupulously honest, fair to the soldiers involved and fair to the truth, no matter how much it hurts."

No Implied Criticism

Both Mr. Resor and General Westmoreland stressed that their appointment of General Peers did not in itself mean that the original investigation and review were inadequate but rather that this was to be determined by the special investigation.

The inquiry that General Peers is to carry out, they said, will be independent of the current Army criminal investigation now taking place. The general is to be assisted by "a small team of legal and investigative experts," including Bland West, the assistant general counsel of the Army.

General Peers is the chief of reserve components of the Army. At the time of the Songmy incident, he was serving as acting commander of I Field Force. The Army pointed out that "his command was not connected in any way with the incident which occurred in the zone of the U.S. Americal Division in the southeastern part of I Corps."

An Army spokesman would not name the persons who conducted the original investigation. He said only that it was "an investigation into allegation made by the Vietcong that American soldiers had killed civilians."

"The investigation failed to support the assertions made by the Vietcong," he said.

The spokesman said that the Army's Criminal Investigation Division had not participated in the original investigation but explained that was not unusual. C.I.D. investigators would have been called in, he said, only if there had been some indication that criminal activities appeared to be involved.