

CIA Ordered 100 Agents Slain: Lawyer

Examiner News Services

SAIGON — The attorney for one of eight Green Berets accused in the slaying of a Vietnamese national said today the Central Intelligence Agency has ordered the killing of more than 100 agents in South Vietnam this year.

George Gregory of Cheraw, S. C., told a news conference at his Saigon hotel that he hoped it would not be necessary to release information of killings but said he could prove his allegations.

He made the statement while telling newsmen that his motion to end the pre-trial jailing of his client, Army Maj. Thomas Middleton, of Jefferson, S.C., had been denied.

The attorney, who claims military authorities are trying to hush up facts of the alleged Green Beret killing, said:

"I know and have evidence to prove the CIA has ordered the killing and effected the killing of over 100 agents in South Vietnam in the past year."

Middleton, 31, and seven other U.S. Special Forces members are being held in connection with the alleged slaying of a Vietnamese near Nha Trang June 20.

Among the accused is Col. Robert Rheault, 43, Vineyard Haven, Mass., the commander of the 5th U.S. Special Forces Group in Vietnam. Seven of the accused are officers. One is a sergeant.

The facts surrounding the alleged slaying have remained veiled in secrecy.

Sources close to the case

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today identified the dead man as Chu Yen Thai Khac, a Vietnamese who worked for the Special Forces as the chief of a team watching North Vietnamese infiltration trails in Cambodia.

The sources said the CIA ordered him killed after films taken secretly in Cambodia exposed him as a double agent. But in about six days the CIA withdrew the order, the sources said.

The man was killed but it was not clear whether the CIA changed its orders before or after the killing.

Sources said earlier the man was shot and his weighted body dumped in the South China Sea.

The body has not been recovered.

"News leaks in Washington said the CIA had given an order rescinding a prior order that could have eliminated the victim," Gregory said. "But just last week, the Army denied any CIA involvement."

Classified

"They (military authorities) are classifying everything in the case, even the charge sheet, because they don't want the American people to know the facts."

Reliable sources said the alleged slaying was decided by the CIA at the Washington level, then transmitted to a secret unit of "killer teams" jointly financed by the CIA and the military, they said.

The killer teams, the sources said, were established under a counter-terror program to "get rid of" Viet



GEORGE GREGORY

Calls case political

Cong political officials the Allies have been unable to capture in conventional ways.

A "courtesy copy" of an after-action report subsequently submitted through military channels caused the problem, the sources said. Sending such courtesy copies is normal for military units serving dual commands.

Enrage Brass

This one, however, enraged certain members of the U. S. military establishment.

The sources said the military intelligence officers took their complaint to the U. S. high command in Saigon. There it was decided to take action on the matter.

As it was first conceived, the operation would probably have remained a top-secret interagency affair, the sources said.

But about two weeks ago, leaks of the episode be-

gan in the United States, forcing the Army to take formal measures, the sources said. What angered the Army? Why should the well-being of a suspected dual agent excite anyone in a place where death is no stranger?

Theories

There were several theories on that:

- Traditional animosity between a ranking general in Vietnam and a former military man now in the CIA leadership.

- The possibility the agent was deliberately infiltrated into the North Vietnamese intelligence corps at the request of U.S. military intelligence.

- The agent had information valuable to the U.S. military.

- A ranking general felt it was repugnant for men wearing Army uniforms to be used as assassins.

The sources said it was unlikely the full circumstances would ever be publicly revealed. National security and the interworking of the U.S. intelligence establishment is too deeply involved, the sources said.

In Washington, meanwhile, Rep. Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) said he had talked by phone with one of the men under arrest, Capt. Robert F. Marasco of Bloomfield, N.J.

"The captain didn't discuss what happened," Rodino said. "The captain said he was only acting under orders."