

JACK ANDERSON 4 Oct 69

Special Forces Bungled Killing

WASHINGTON — The grim truth about the Green Beret murder case is that the Special Forces bungled the job. The Central Intelligence Agency would have had more finesse.

A source high in the confidence of the CIA assured this column that assassination sometimes is necessary in the spy trade. On such occasions, the CIA disposes of troublesome enemy agents silently and skillfully.

Indeed, the CIA has a reputation inside the intelligence community for discreet assassinations. This was the

reason, most likely, that the Green Berets consulted the CIA about the treacherous Thai Khac Chuyen. Apparently, he was a "penetration agent," who had worked his way into the trust of the Green Berets while he was on the enemy payroll.



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SOMETIMES IT is important, explained the CIA insider, to eliminate an agent without alerting his contacts. This is quite impossible, obviously, if he is arrested for espionage. Therefore, it may become "necessary" to arrange his demise or disappearance.

The delicate trick, said the insider, is to get rid of the agent in a way that won't arouse the suspicions of his contacts. This, presumably, is what the CIA had in mind when it advised the Green Berets to "get rid" of Chuyen.

According to the Army's charges, they put Chuyen to sleep with morphine, shot him with a pistol, wrapped his body in chains and dumped it

into the South China Sea.

This isn't how the CIA would have handled the problem at all. It would have been more subtle, suggested the CIA source, to have arranged an ambush or a booby-trap, with Chuyen as the only victim. Then he would have appeared to have been a battle casualty, and no one would have asked embarrassing questions.

AS IT HAPPENED, a report of the assassination reached General Creighton Abrams, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, who has strict rules against murdering suspects, prisoners or anyone else in cold blood. He remarked angrily to subordinates that he was going to teach the Green Berets some respect for human life.

That's how the bizarre murder charges happened to be brought against the Green Berets.

Note: Repugnant though it may be to Americans, not only the CIA but other agencies have used murder on rare occasions as an instrument of national policy. During World War II, for example, the Counter-Intelligence Corps was ordered to preserve the integrity of the Manhattan project at all costs. An elderly gentleman, perhaps inadvertently, learned this project was developing an atomic bomb. A former CIC official has now informed this column that CIC agents became convinced the security of the project had been compromised, sadly shot the old man and buried him on the New Mexican desert.

POLITICAL PRISONER

—The Saigon government is quietly arranging the release from prison of Tran Dzu, the peace candidate of the last presidential election. After placing Dzu in prison for "subversive" activities, the government is preparing to release him.

"A few days later the directive from the [CIA] was rescinded, the [informed sources in Vietnam] said, and there was a new order that Mr. Khac — or Mr. Chuyen — should be spared. If anything did happen to him, it was to be reported immediately to Gen. Creighton W. Abrams ..."

Joseph B. Treaster, NYTimes
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