

Red Drive Reported Contained

SF Examiner

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Adm. Thomas Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported today that the North Vietnamese thrust into South Vietnam has been contained, according to congressmen who attended a closed hearing.

As fresh North Vietnamese troops moved into the battle, posing a threat to Hue and the northernmost U.S. firebase at Phu Bai, there was no elaboration either from congressmen who heard him or from the Pentagon on Moorer's assessment of the situation.

"He told us that the invasion had been contained," said one representative following a two-hour meeting. "I would say he was guardedly optimistic."

New Targets

The admiral briefed members of the House Armed Services Committee on the military options still open to the United States in the event the current level of U.S. support for the South Vietnamese did not prove adequate.

Those alternatives, according to one lawmaker present, would include bombing deeper into North Vietnam and hitting at targets such as Haiphong harbor.

Another possibility mentioned by the Congressmen, who declined to say whether Moorer brought it up, was a South Vietnamese commando raid on the north.

Finally, it was said that the United States could step up in intensity and quantity

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its air and firepower support.

Moorer apparently left the clear impression that one option not being considered was reintroducing U.S. combat ground combat troops to South Vietnam, sources said.

More Big Battles

A Pentagon spokesman, however, predicted that "we face several more weeks of major engagements" in the North Vietnamese offensive against South Vietnam.

Spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim made this prediction at a briefing in which he reported the South Vietnamese army is doing "very well" against invading regular North Vietnamese forces.

At the same time, Friedheim once again sought to knock down reports from various places in the United States suggesting that this country is preparing to recommit ground troops to Vietnam.

He accused some groups of attempting to sow confusion.

"I know of no alerts for the 82nd Airborne Division or the 101st Division," Friedheim said when pressed about rumors that these two Army units are being prepared for possible shipment back to Southeast Asia.

Assessing the battle situation, Friedheim said things are relatively static in the sector below the Demilitarized Zone and that enemy activity in the military region near Saigon is "in the nature of probes rather than all-out attacks."

Reflecting growing official optimism, Friedheim said reports reaching the Pentagon indicate "a situation in which the South Vietnamese forces appear to be doing very well, inflicting casualties on the enemy and destroying significant numbers of tanks."

Asked whether there have been any defections by South Vietnamese army troops to the other side or acts of disloyalty by South Vietnamese civilians to aid the North Vietnamese, Friedheim replied:

"I have not seen any mention of defections or desertions."

There have been no reports of any popular uprisings and no significant Viet Cong guerrilla activity accompanying the offensive, Friedheim said, adding that the engagements seem to be between regular army units of South and North Vietnam.

So far as any further movements from North Vietnam, Friedheim said he has seen no mention in reports of any additional North Vietnamese units coming across the DMZ.

An antiwar coalition, meanwhile, said that at least 15,000 troops were "on their way to the war zone surrounding Indochina" from U.S. bases.

Friedheim said its reports are erroneous.

"The only movement of ground personnel are those personnel coming home from Vietnam," Friedheim said.

Alert Claimed

Friedheim refused, however, to divulge the number of planes and ships that have been ordered to beef up the

American air and naval units in Southeast Asia.

The group said in Cambridge, Mass., that in addition, numerous Marine, Army, Navy and Air Force units stationed both state-side and overseas had been put on alert.

About 400 infantrymen were flown northward from the big U.S. base at Da Nang today to the northernmost U.S. outpost in South Vietnam, Phu Bai, 50 miles or less from the battle line.

Officials stressed however that they would not be put in active combat and that their purpose was to protect the base if necessary.

One of the units involved, the reports said, had been standing down in preparation for redeployment under President Nixon's troop withdrawal program which is supposed to cut U.S. strength in Vietnam from about 90,000 to 69,000 in the next three weeks.

More B52s Due

The Washington Post reported today that another squadron of U.S. B52 bombers had been ordered to Southeast Asia.

The squadron, which would include about 20 of the eight-engined heavy bombers, was the second ordered to the fighting in the past week.

Its arrival would boost the U.S. B52 bomber force in Southeast Asia to over 100 planes — the highest of the war.

The United States has increased the number of its aircraft carriers operating off Vietnam from two to four. The carrier Midway has sailed from California and the Saratoga left today from Florida.

Laird said the dispatch of additional air and sea forces was "the additional needed insurance showing the determination of the United States as this massive invasion... has been undertaken by the enemy."

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