

Saigon Confidential

NOV 10 1972

Over New Talks

No Crossing

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SAIGON, Nov. 9—While Hanoi continues to push military supplies down through North Vietnam and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, U.S. intelligence sources here report there has been "no significant movement of major units" across the Demilitarized Zone into South Vietnam recently.

These sources discounted reports from Washington last week claiming that Hanoi had sent a fresh armored regiment with about 100 tanks and 100 armored personnel carriers across the buffer zone into South Vietnam's northernmost province. (7 Nov)

According to intelligence sources here, a North Vietnamese armored unit, apparently including about 3,000 men and 72 tanks, has moved southward within North Vietnam. But its current position is still "well above" the DMZ, according to these sources.

News reports from Washington last Saturday, citing senior U.S. military advisers as the source, said that the armor had already moved across the DMZ into South Vietnam's Quang Tri Province.

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These reports appeared at the same time as the full dimensions of the U.S. effort to rush additional arms to South Vietnam prior to any cease-fire became known.

The Pentagon has made known that it is sending 120 F-5 fighters borrowed from South Korea, Taiwan and Iran and about 32 C-130 transports to bolster the South Vietnamese air force.

The Defense Department is also sending, over the next several weeks, as many as 90 A-37 fighter-bombers, light attack jets which are the backbone of the South Vietnamese air force. The U.S. Air Force has also begun turning over all of its remaining A-1 propeller-driven planes in Thailand to South Vietnam.

Some observers here speculate that the movement of an armored unit across the buffer zone at this time would expose

it to massive aerial bombardment for little military gain.

Many Tanks Lost

While there are no reliable figures on the number of North Vietnamese tanks knocked out during Hanoi's seven-month-old offensive, military sources estimate that as many as 650 of the estimated 750 tanks brought south by Hanoi were probably destroyed, mostly by air strikes.

Another possibility is that Hanoi may want to strengthen its position near Laos and the DMZ or that it may seek to slip armored units into the South just before a cease-fire is actually agreed to, hoping to reduce the chance of heavy losses due to air attack.

On the other hand, U.S. intelligence source here said earlier that there were indications in September and early October that Hanoi had already alerted at least some of its units in South Vietnam's northernmost provinces—where the bulk of the North Vietnamese forces are concentrated—that they might be pulled out as part of a forthcoming cease-fire.

The Thieu government in the South has demanded withdrawal of all North Vietnamese forces as part of any settlement. There are some indications that a private agreement on this point involving may be in the making or may already have been reached between the United States and North Vietnam.

Meanwhile, fighting continues in South Vietnam, though at a reduced rate from last week.

U.S. B-52 bombers continue to fly dozens of missions against Communist supply routes and storage areas around the DMZ, but military analysts here view the overall level of fighting in the South as remaining at a low level.

Yesterday, Communist initiated incidents reported by the South Vietnamese fell to about 65, roughly half the number announced about 10 days ago when maneuvering began as a result of a cease-fire the Communists expected on Oct. 31.