

Hints of a Red Capital In the South

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Saigon

Hanoi has moved officials from its Ministries of Health and Education into northern Quang Tri province in recent weeks, possibly to establish a Communist capital for South Vietnam there, U.S. intelligence sources disclosed yesterday.

A high American intelligence official said there are reliable reports that the Communists plan to set up their capital in the devastated town of Dong Ha, eight miles northwest of Quang Tri city.

The official said he was skeptical that the North Vietnamese would choose Dong Ha, an unimposing and improvised settlement of 5000 before it was obliterated in the Communist offensive last spring.

But he added, "I can't see what else the operating elements from those ministries are doing there but getting ready to set up some sort of administration."

The advantages of Dong

Ha, the official pointed out, are that it would give the Communists unimpeded communications with North Vietnam and it has a small airstrip that could be used to bring in visiting diplomats.

American intelligence analysts also report that Hanoi has given detailed orders to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong units in the south to seize as much territory as possible in the few days between the initialing of the peace agreement and the day of the cease-fire.

These orders are almost identical to the ones Hanoi gave its forces at the end of October, when it originally expected a peace settlement would be reached, the analysts say.

According to captured documents and reports from agents, Hanoi has told its forces to expect a 96-hour delay between the time the agreement is initialed and the time the cease-fire goes into effect.

Officials say that Hanoi has given strict orders that all fighting is to stop as quickly as possible after the cease-fire, and its troops are not to carry out any acts of retribution or terrorism. However, they would be allowed to defend themselves if attacked and can continue for a brief period trying to consolidate any new territory they have seized.

As far as American analysts can determine, the instructions to obey the cease-fire are to stay in effect for at least the first two months and possibly up to five months.

After that period, U.S. officials say, they are not sure what Hanoi will do. "The big problem is that no one can assess the amount of goodwill Hanoi is bringing into the negotiations," one senior member of the U.S. mission said.

In preparation for the expected initialing of the accord, North Vietnamese forces in bases along the Cambodian border north and west of Saigon have already begun moving into South Vietnam during the last few days, one analyst reported. These troops are expected to launch assaults in Binh Duong and Tay Ninh provinces near Saigon, but not to threaten the capital itself.

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