

Witness Says Army Faked Viet Reports

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An intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency testified in United States District Court yesterday American military officials in Vietnam systematically falsified reports on the strength of the Communist forces there during the late 1960s.

Samuel A. Adams, subpoenaed as a defense witness in the Pentagon Papers trial, said that at one point when Communist forces were actually increasing in Vietnam, the official U.S. estimates of their numbers sent to the White House and released to the press—were going down.

This happened, he said, because the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV) deliberately "removed components" of the communist forces from the "order of battle," which is the formal name of the intelligence estimate of opposing forces.

MEETINGS

Adams said it was his impression, after attending meetings on the subject in Saigon, Honolulu and at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., that this was done in 1968 as "a result of political pressures within the military to display the enemy as weaker than he actually was."

He did not say why, but the defense contends that this was done to make it appear that the army was winning the war.

Adams said that the monthly estimates of the enemy's military strength, were so inaccurate that after the enemy's Tet offensive in 1968, two official sets of estimates for the White House had to be put together each month, one by the army, the other by the CIA.

The CIA analyst suggested that General Earle C. Wheeler, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General William C. West-

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moreland, then commander of MACV, had been involved in the falsification of the statistics.

As a result of the falsification, Adams testified, the disclosure by Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo Jr. of top-secret documents containing the "order of battle" would have been "virtually useless" to a foreign nation.

Ellsberg and Russo are on trial here on charges of conspiracy, espionage and theft of government property as a result of their photocopying of the Pentagon papers and other classified material from the Rand Corp. in 1969.

One of the documents mentioned in the indictment against them is a 1968 assessment by General Wheeler of the effects of the Vietnamese communists' Tet offensive.

Lieutenant General William G. DePuy, assistant to the Army vice chief of staff, testifying for the prosecution earlier in the trial, said that the "order of battle" was one of the most sensitive items in that document and that its disclosure may have endangered the U.S. "national defense."

One paragraph in the Wheeler report cited by DePuy said:

"He (the Vietnamese Communists) committed over 67,000 combat maneu-

ver forces plus perhaps 25 per cent or 17,000 more impressed men and boys, for a total of about 84,000. He lost 40,000 killed, at least 3000 captured and perhaps 5000 disabled or died of wounds. He had peaked his force total to about 240,000 just before Tet, by hard recruiting, infiltration civilian impressment, and drawdowns on service and guerrilla personnel."

Adams, shown that paragraph on a courtroom screen yesterday, said that every statistic in it was unreliable.

He explained that the 240,000 figure included only the communists' "regulars," "guerrillas," and "service troops" — and even those at lower than realistic levels.

Left out altogether, Adams added, were the "self-defense militia," "secret self-defense," "political cadres" and "assault youths", all of whom played a role in the communists' war effort. Had they been included, the intelligence analyst said, as he stood at an easel in the middle of the courtroom tallying them up, the accurate "order of battle" would have been at least 440,000.

When he first took the witness stand yesterday morning, Adams turned to the jury and said, "incidentally, I am a researcher, not a spy, which is why I can get up here and talk."