

22
645
25
No.2737/GS(I)
H Q ALF FIC
Dated 22 Oct 45.

To:-

WD

Subject :- ALF FIC INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Ref ALF FIC Op Instruction No.7 para 1.

ALF FIC Intelligence Summary No.1 is forwarded herewith.

Vincent
Lieut Colonel.
General Staff.

Distribution :

As per ALF FIC Op Instruction No.7 dated 21 Oct 45
plus 4 copies to Bdes.

ALF FIC INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY NO. 1.PART I.Summary of Events between 2 Oct and 21 Oct.1. SAIGON - CHOLON

Following engagements in which Allied Troops and Japanese inflicted severe casualties on the Annamite insurgents, in particular in N W SAIGON, and a successful sweep through GIA DINH which demonstrated our ability to move troops out of SAIGON when we wished, the VIET MINH leaders agreed to an armistice to run from 1800 hrs 2 Oct. The following day was quiet and a certain reflux of Annamite population from NORTH of the ARROYO de l'AVALANCHE gave rise to the hope that negotiations would be successful.

2. On the 4th and 5th, however, the truculent attitude of their rank and file gave the lie to the pacific assertions of the VIET MINH leaders. Grenades were thrown at Sappers guarding artesian wells, crowds demonstrated in front of our positions on KHANH HOI island and in the Rue de VERDUN and subversive leaflets were thrown into lines and barracks. By the night 6/7 Oct the evacuation of civilians started again and concentrations of Annamite troops were reported in GIA DINH and to the SOUTH of KHANH HOI. On the 9th the negotiations with the VIET MINH leaders broke down, although they promised to allow undisturbed passage for British troops moving to disarm Japs in the concentration areas. An Annamite band sniped at our troops on TAN SON NHUT airfield, but was quickly dispersed.

3. On the 10th an R.E. recce party NORTH of the airfield was ambushed, the Adjutant R.E., the VCO in charge of his escort and two IOR's being killed, and all the remaining members of the escort wounded. This act indicated clearly enough the hostile nature of the VIET MINH organisation, and attempts to maintain an attitude of non-intervention towards their political struggle were recognised to be no longer possible. On the 10th GIA DINH was therefore occupied by 32 Bde and on the 11th and 12th an advance made and GOVAP occupied after considerable opposition which necessitated the use of armoured cars. On the 12th also THANH MY TAY and a considerable area to the EAST of GIA DINH was cleared by French troops. By the 13th 32 Bde had established itself on all the bridges crossing the R. CHO MOI.

4. In both these actions Japanese individuals were identified as helping the Annamites. Two Air Force officers captured by the French were immediately shot.

5. Meanwhile in CHOLON and KHANH HOI, the Annamites made strenuous attempts (a) to destroy European stores and installations (b) to gather fresh arms for themselves. On the night 13/14 Oct an abortive attempt was made to storm the docks, and an attack was put in against a Jap HQ at PHU LAM. Interrogation reports suggest that the Jap claim to have killed 100 out of 1000 was greatly exaggerated, but they certainly rounded up 329 men, women and children as PW. On 16 Oct a resin factory on KHANH HOI was gutted by fire, and numerous other attempts at arson were reported.

6. The same day an attempt was made to recover a bridge on the 32 Bde perimeter, by a crowd of about 400 who used rifles, spears, bows and poisoned arrows and even a mild type of tear gas.

7. After this, activities in the SAIGON - CHOLON area subsided somewhat, although sniping still occurs from time to time. GIA DINH and GOVAP are still somewhat unsettled and grenades are thrown at troops quite frequently. The local Annamite forces have however learnt their lesson and are now only attempting guerilla warfare.

8. THU DUC - BIEN HOA - THUDAU MOT. In the absence of reports other than Japanese and from local sources, no very clear picture of events in this area has been obtained. The Japanese view is that only small Annamite forces have been located in these places (except that they complain of continual attempts to rob their ammunition depots in the BIEN HOA area). The local source view is that large forces are collecting in the area between THU DUC and DIAN on the railway, with the intention of opposing our further advance. Tac/R reports have on several occasions noted demonstrations of approx 1000 in THU DAU MOT.
9. The principle adopted in considering these low grade reports is (a) where Japanese and local sources disagree, to disregard the Japs and accept that a proportion of the figure suggested by the local source (usually 10%) is actually in the area as stated; (b) where Japanese and local source reports agree, to accept a rather higher percentage figure for the area. These estimates are shown on the sketch map at Appx 'B'.
10. In the case of reports from the BIEN HOA - THU DUC area, it is rumoured that three train loads of well-armed Tonkinese troops have arrived from NORTH of 16°. While this report is not impossible, it has to be remembered that the main support of the VIET MINH movement comes from the Tonkinese coolies from the plantations, so that any trained bodies of these already in the area may be the occasion for such a rumour - which would of course, greatly encourage the wavering Annamites of Cochin-China, who have never been as active as those from the NORTH.
11. BARIA - CAP ST. JACQUES. The fortifications in this area are still held by the Japanese, who are reported to have been negotiating with the Annamites. An attempt to barter 107 rifles for food appears to have been forestalled by an order from Gen MANAKI that surrender discipline must be maintained.
12. EAST COAST. A party of 1000 Annamites is reported to have arrived about 17 Oct at PHAN THIET, but there is no confirmation on this. The coastal area as a whole is very disturbed as is evidenced by a Jap report that of a patrol from PHAN RANG to DALAT only one man returned (10 Oct).
13. The most important centre of disturbance has been NHA TRANG, where, again, the Japanese attitude towards the Annamites was at first too easy-going. As a result the Annamites adopted a threatening attitude towards the European population. The handing-over of public buildings, including the Pasteur Institute, was demanded. Following orders from SAIGON the Japanese attitude improved but the situation is reported to remain strained, following the landing of 70 French marines to cover the off-loading of food-stuffs.
14. DALAT. The key to interest here is the ownership of the Bank of Indo-China where 100 million piastres is stored. One of the two keys to the safe was seized by the Annamites during disturbances on 14 Oct. The other key was held by the Japanese who were negotiating for the first. They now report that both keys were returned to the Bank Manager on 20 Oct. Accounts of the disturbances referred to are conflicting, but it appears that the Japanese began by being neutral, but on receiving orders from SAIGON quickly suppressed the Annamites, causing and receiving some casualties. The situation is now reported to be quiet, and it is worth noting that Jap reinforcements sent by M.T. from SAIGON to DALAT arrived without incident.
15. TAYNINH. Local reports described this as an area where Annamite insurgents from CAMBODIA were collecting (the figure given was 10,000 assisted by 1000 deserters). Japanese reports (supported by some local sources) say on the contrary that there are only about 500 CAODAIIST troops plus a few VIET MINH regulars and irregulars. The latter report is considered more likely to be correct.
16. PHNOM PENH. There has been little difficulty here in establishing a Cambodian government friendly to the Allies. Both Siamese and Annamite influences are feared here and the only Anti-French influence in the original government was the Prime Minister. Following his arrest there were one or two signs of unrest, mainly Annamite inspired. The railway went on strike for a few days. The Cambodian element very quickly returned to work. The Annamite element in the Police Force has been disarmed and the police placed under the control of the Allied comd.

27
The small Annamite community in the outskirts of PHNOM PENH appeared to have accepted the situation.

17. MYTHO - CANTHO. Japanese reports state that public opinion in this area continues to be excitable. The Japs appear to be acting more vigorously here than in the other districts, and Tac/R confirms that they are removing road blocks on the CHOLON - MYTHO road and guarding the important bridges. Little exact information is available, but in general VIET MINH strength in this area appears to be surprisingly low.

18. Conclusion. The concensus of reports is that the main Viet Minh strength is in the area THU-DUC- BIEN HOA - THUDAUMOT. Whether the forces there are being reinforced from the North of 16° remains to be confirmed. It appears likely however that better disciplined troops will be met there than elsewhere, and an attempt at defence (as opposed to the normal guerilla tactics) may be encountered. The value of Viet Minh forces in other areas may be considered to be that of large bands of brigands.