

ASAHI REPORTER ON DRV REFUGEES' CHARGES AGAINST PRC INVASION

DM271146 TOKYO ASAHI SHIMBUN IN JAPANESE 25 FEB 79 MORNING EDITION  
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(BY ASAHI CORRESPONDENT IKAWA)

(TEXT) HANOI, 24 FEB--WITH THE CHINA-VIETNAM BORDER WAR INTENSIFYING, THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES TRAVELING SOUTH FROM THE BORDER AREA IS SHAPRLY INCREASING. MOST ARE FROM LANG SON, CAO BANG, AND HOANG LIEN SON PROVINCES, THE SCENES OF THE FIRECEST ATTACK BY CHINESE FORCES. AMONG THEM ARE MANY MINORITY TRIBESPEOPLE FROM THE HIGHLANDS. HOWEVER, ALMOST ALL HEALTY YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN HAVE JOINED EACH PROVINCE'S REGIONAL FORCES, MILITIA UNITS, NURSING CORPS AND PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES (BORDER GUARDS) TO DEFEND THEIR LOCALITIES.

CIVILIAN CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN VERY SLIGHT IN LANG SON AND OTHER NORTHEASTERN REGIONS BECAUSE RESIDENTS BEGAN EVACUATING 1 OR 2 MONTHS AGO. HOWEVER, A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF NONCOMBATANTS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN KILLED IN CHINESE ATTACKS ON TOWNS AND CIVIL FACILITIES IN LAO CHAI AND OTHER MOUNTAINOUS AREAS WHERE A CHINESE INVATION HAD BEEN LITTLE EXPECTED.

THIS REPORTER STAYED IN HOANG LIEN SON PROVINCE UNTIL 23 FEBRUARY AND HEARD MANY REFUGEES SAYING THAT THE CHINESE SHELLING AND INVATION ACROSS THE BORDER ON 17 FEBRUARY CAME AS A TOTAL SURPRISE. PEOPLE FROM CAM DUONG TOWN SAID THAT THEY HAD WORKED AS USUAL UNTIL 16 FEBRUARY, JUST A DAY BEFORE THE INVATION, LEAVING ALL THEIR PROPERTY AND FURNITURE IN THE TOWN. THEY FLED TO THE PROVINCE'S TEMPORARY CAPITAL, YEN BAI. THEY SAID: "OVER 60 PERCENT OF THE HOUSES IN THE TOWN WERE DEMOLISHED BY CONTINUOUS ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS WHICH BEGAN AT DAWN ON 17 FEBRUARY. THE CHINESE FORCES INDISCRIMINATELY SHELLED SCHOOLS, POWER-TRANSMISSION FACILITIES, DISPENSARIES, MARKETPLACES, AND PRIVATE HOUSES RATHER THAN MILITIA POSTS AND BORDER GUARDS INSTALLATIONS. MANY SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE KILLED."

IT APPEARS CERTAIN THAT THE CHINESE SIDE MOUNTED INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS ALONG THE ENTIRE BORDER FOR ITS GROUND FORCE'S "SURPRISE INVATION" AND CONCENTRATED FIRING UPON NONMILITARY FACILITIES, ACCORDING TO THE UNANIMOUS REMARKS OF REFUGEES, AMONG WHO ARE MEO TRIBESPEOPLE AND OTHER ETHNIC MINORITIES