

# Reply from Defense Dept.

Fifth Estate Collective

1966

After two months of silence the Defense Department indirectly answered a request for information sent to them by the News Editor of the FIFTH ESTATE. The inquiry, sent June 1, involved a report in the VIETNAM COURIER (published in Hanoi) that a battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division had attempted to desert in the midst of battle. (See article, FIFTH ESTATE, p. 6, July 15, 1966).

After waiting six weeks for a reply from the Defense Department, copies of the correspondence and the article were sent to Cong. Charles C. Diggs (d-13<sup>th</sup> Dist. ) with a request for his assistance in obtaining a response from the government office. On July 18<sup>th</sup> Cong. Diggs received a reply from the Department of the Army which he forwarded to the FIFTH ESTATE. The text of the letter follows:

## Dear Mr. Diggs:

The Secretary of the Army has asked me to reply to your inquiry addressed to the Department of Defense concerning a recent North Vietnamese propaganda item considered of interest by one of your constituents.

The VIETNAM COURIER item forwarded to your constituent alleged a recent refusal to fight by a battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division in Vietnam. The publication is clearly indicated as originating in Hanoi, North Vietnam and cites the so-called "Liberation Press Agency," the Universally recognized propaganda agency of the Viet Cong, as the source of the material.

Normally, the Department of the Army does not either enter into public debate with the enemy on his propaganda organs, or comment upon such matters. The report cited in your constituent's correspondence is patently false.

We appreciate your interest in this matter and the United States Army and trust that the above information will be useful in formulating a reply to your constituent.

## Related

See *Fifth Estate's* Vietnam Resource Page.

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