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options 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, AUGUST 14--Despite official predictions of another Communist offensive, the Johnson Administration is known to be closely eyeballing and carefully weighing other alternate interpretations of the current military lull in South Vietnam.

Informed sources report that one of the explicit, ~~unofficially stated~~ *although* unannounced missions assigned to General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., commandant of the U. S. Marine Corps, during his recent visit to Vietnam was to attempt to appraise personally the "significance of the ground lull in Vietnam."

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options 2 (normass/deepe)

President Lyndon Johnson and senior Administration officials have publicly interpreted the significance of the ground lull as simply ^{a prelude,} giving the Communists time to re-wind for another military assault on Vietnamese urban centers.

But, other assessments are being made here ^{BV} in informed political circles. These assessments indicate that North Vietnam still maintains a high degree of flexibility of ~~actions~~ potential actions.

"The Communists can exercise a series of options and none of the indicators are conclusive to show which one Hanoi is pushing for," one ~~source~~ knowledgeable source explained.

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options 3 (normass/deepe)

"Hanoi still holds a series of options and various combinations of options," he continued. "It's hard at this point to say what is most likely. The indicators for a military attack are formidable, but they have maintained freedom of action to move in other ways."

Knowledgeable political observers here believe Hanoi has probably decided the American Presidential elections do not offer a prospect for a major change in American foreign policy or a totally new approach from the Johnson Administration in settling the Vietnam war. However, many senior Vietnamese government officials are known to believe the North Vietnamese regime will use ^{the dates of the} the Ameri Detm Democratic Convention late this month or the Nov November Presidential election as timing for another major th military thrust.

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options: 4 (normess/deepe)

Knowledgeable sources here believe the extreme options available to Hanoi range from a major military offensive on the one hand to the other alternative of not attacking and making explicit that the current ground lull is a deliberate--if not permanent--action of de-escalation and serious restraint. This broad spectrum of options hence runs from heavy predominant emphasis on military action to the other extreme of heavy emphasis on political action in the international arena as well as internally.

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options 5 (normass/deepe)

In between these two extremes arise a series of other options consisting of murky mixes and combinations of military and political actions of varied intensities, speeds and forms.

Of the two extreme options, the bulk of the official American judgment here and the bulk of the intelligence evidence suggests another military thrust. "The indications are not that Hanoi is not going to attack and will propagandize their explicit military lull as de-escalation, one informed source explained. "But this is still one option which Hanoi has not yet lost." *are Rejected.*

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options 6 (norma ss/deepe)

Some neutralist diplomats here with ~~access access~~ to Hanoi's stated intentions ~~believe~~ believe ~~in~~ North Vietnam has already shown deliberate restraint by subduing the military actions ~~in~~ in the South. But, in South Vietnam, Hanoi's words are still taken with an enormous degree of bitter ~~spe~~ ^{of} skepticism, if not disdain. Americans and Vietnamese alike ~~to~~ remember too well the surprise and magnitude of the Communist Tet offensive when the Viet Cong ^{HAD} officially declared a unilateral truce-- and then used the holidays as a time ^{to} of launch an offensive. Few persons outside South Vietnam can probably appreciate the traumatic shock created here by the Tet attacks; it ^{WAS} is an emotional reaction of bitterness and ~~war~~ ^{war} anguish which will not soon be forgotten by ^{IT} American and Vietnamese officials here and will probably remain, even in diplomatic circles a ~~detracting factor~~ ^{factor} in Paris, ^{as} as a factor ~~detracting~~ from ~~inhibiting~~ ^{inhibiting} moves towards mutual trust between the Allies and the Communists.

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options 7 (normass/deepe)

American military sources here have said they traditionally judge such situations on the basis of "enemy capabilities" instead of second-guessing "enemy intentions." These officials maintain the Communists still maintain the military capab capability of launching some kind of military action in Saigon, despite relatively heavy casau casualties their units have the taken in the oukir outskirts recently and as well as significant losses of cached supplies. Many of the other Vietnamese urban centers, mainly isolated provincial and district capitals, have long been considered vuler vulnerable to enemy ground attacks and a number of then them have been regularly, although relatively lightly subjected to recent Communist rocketing and mort mortar attacks, often called "harrassing by fire."

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options 8 (normass/deepe)

There is official, but sketchy intelligence information now arriving in Saigon indicating that some Communist units have been attempting to pierce the Saigon perimeter since early this month--but have been turn back by aggressive Allied actions. One of these cases is the 1st Viet Cong Regiment, operating north of Saigon in Communist sub-division 4. It had been ordered to move towards Saigon on August 1, but was unsuccessful because of *being intercepted by allied forces.*

A more recent example was the 506th battalion of Long An province, ~~south~~ directly south of Saigon, which was moving towards the capital last weekend. But, on August 12, the U. S. Army 9th Infantry Division engaged ~~the~~ the battalion in a bunkerline for a battle of nearly ⁴⁸ 24 hour^s duration. *One hundred mid* ¹⁷ ~~Sixty~~ four Communists and 15 ^{today} Americans were killed in that engaged, ^{month} which was officially announced ~~yesterday~~. The Communist deputy battalion commander was also reportedly captured; his interrogation might shed some light on future Communist plans.

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options 9 (normass/deepe)

Other captured documents, prisoners and defections also indicates in some detail that ~~units around~~ Communist units around Saigon are preparing to make a push--^{such} such details include how much ammunition and rice the Communist troops should carry into the attack, how many platoons from other special units--such as anti-aircraft teams--are to join them at specific points. Some documents also carry detailed battle plans of how the Communist units are to maneuver when they attack their designated targets.

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options 1- 10 (normass/deepe)

necessarily Still clear-cut evidence of isolated unit movements does not confirm the intention of Communist strategists to mount a massive, coordinated offensive. Much of the problem involves interpretation of intelligence information, ^{EVEN AFTER} ~~as well as~~ seizing first-hand sources, plus projecting specific details into an ^{POTENTIAL, OVER all} ~~over-all battle plan potential~~ the Communists' ~~potential over-all battle plan.~~

Aside from these two extremes, the Communist options at this time are considered here by knowledgeable sources to include the following:

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options 11 (normass/deepe)

1. Establishing a "coalition" ^g between the National Liberation Front and the Alliance for ~~Nation~~ National, Democratic and Peace Forces; This would be designed to enhance the Communist bargaining position in Paris during the present phase of the bilateral talks, or ^{could} perhaps evolve into their political stance in a broader ~~conference~~ future phase of the conference involving more nations and elements. This effort could ~~be~~ be used to dovetail with the Communist move in the countryside of the South to attempt to establish "revolutionary committees or councils" to function as a Communist administration in ^{some} villages and hamlets.

Informed sources here note a growing ^{P.O. & col. official} inter-play in Communist propaganda from ~~radio broadcasts and from Paris~~ ^{HANOI} between the National Liberation Front, and the ~~the~~ alleged Communist-created Alliance in Communist radio broadcasts and discussions from Paris. From this vantage point, however, the inter-play seems so obscure as to defy any concrete interpretations.

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options 12 (normass/deepe)

2. ^{with} Low-level military attacks on some quarters with some political moves to wipe up dissatisfactions with the present South Vietnamese government. Or simply continuing the Communists can simply continue, or accelerate, their present pattern of terrorism, ~~sab~~ sabotage and kidnappings, as a slow-motion means of attempting to shred ^{to bits} the ~~fa~~ non-Communist fabric of the society and government.

3. Also, to ~~contine~~ continue their present ~~z~~ course of attempting to create divisions ^{among} between the Vietnamese non-Communists, in one instance, and between the ~~currnt~~ current Vietnamese government and the American officialdom in another instance. Any weakening of American support in the present ~~supd~~ political climate, or in light of future steps towards peace, ^{is not crucially} would ~~serv~~ probably critically/weaken the non-Communist cause here. ^{Such} Many observers here believe there are a significant number of stresses and strains among the Vietnamese nationalist groupings-- and between the Vietnamese government and American officialdom here--that ^{now} the Communists are able to exploit the ^{current} situation ~~with ease~~, or develop new divisions with ease.

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