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confidence 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, AUGUST 26--Within the past week, an air of profound relief, if not optimistic exuberance, has penetrated the ranks of Vietnamese nationalists in and out of governmental circles.

The new feeling of confidence is based on ~~two~~ ^{THREE} ~~factor~~ these two factors:

First, a sensing that the Allied military commands have successfully, although only temporarily, thwarted the Communist objectives during the past eight days of accelerated and ~~escala~~ te escalated ground fighting in the South. Over this past week-end, the Communists had been expected to make a bold new military move to celebrate the twenty-third anniversary of their August 25th insurrection in Saigon--but nothing spectacular happened. Also, news that the remote Special Forces camp of Duc Lap had held in the face of a North Vietnamese regiment near the Cambodian border ~~spp~~ spiralled the optimism of Vietnamese senior officers.

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ZCZC: SAG

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confidence 2 (normass/deepe)

The second factor is that Vietnamese nationalists and newspaper editorialists have been predicting for weeks that President Lyndon Johnson would stop the bombing of North Vietnam as a means to ^{OUT MANEUVER} influence the non-doves at the Democratic Convention, rather than holding out for firm concessions of de-escalation from Hanoi. Now, the Democratic nomination convention is at hand--and the bombing of the North continues.

The third factor is the Czech crisis. The non-Communist Vietnamese in and out of the government believe the invasion of the small country by Soviet-and-~~sattel~~ satellite troops--has been an enormous setback to the Communists, has peaked the conflict and contradictions within the Communist bloc--and might potentially mean an indirect gain for the anti-Communists here. Internally, even the Vietnamese pro-neutralist and "fence-sitting" politicians, such as some of the militant Buddhist monks and lay leaders, are known to condemn the invasion of the little East European nation--and thus they are now on the political defensive/ ^{HERE} at the same time they have been mapping out ~~their~~ peace plans unacceptable to the Vietnamese government.

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confidence 3 (normass/deepe)

For years, Vietnam's foreign ministers have consistently used the case of Czechoslovakia to point out why South Vietnam would never accept a coalition with the Communists—even a minority of Communists in a government means meant they would eventually seize control of the whole app administration by "liquidation" of the non-Communists. Now, the Vietnamese government officials use the current Czech crisis to prove an even larger point that they have also been arguing for years. Various Vietnamese nationalists here have ~~expressed~~ ~~deplored~~ ³ deplored the ~~the~~ invasion of Czechoslovakia, but President Nguyen Van Thieu, in a television address, summed up the mood in the most ~~a~~ black-and-white terms: ~~the~~ events in Czechoslovakia ~~show~~ "show that freedom is always ruthlessly repressed in a Communist society, because even the timid expressions of freedom represent already a serious threat to Communist tyranny....Another ~~lesson~~... lesson... is that national independence in the Communist world is only a myth, especially when a small Communist country lives next to a big Communist ~~and~~ neighbor. These events reveal the emptiness and the tragic irony of the Communist claims to fight for the 'liberation' of the Republic of Vietnam, by attempting to impose by force a regime obedient ~~of~~ to international Communism..."

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ZCZC sag

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confidence 4 (normass/deepe)

Developments in Czechoslovakia and Chicago would not produce much optimism here, however, if the more immediate problems of the battlefield thus far had not been successfully countered by the Allied commands. Senior Vietnamese officers here still believe that the Communists ~~still~~ have the capability and the intention of launching spectacular drives into major urban centers. However, they believe that the Communists are now forced to postpone these drives for at least another week or two. These sources, not known for any official optimism in the past, believe that the Communists wanted to push their big-unit formations into the major cities—but thus far they have ~~if~~ only been able to achieve small-scale ~~to~~ raiding, commando and terrorist activities in ~~the~~ some ~~of the~~ cities. Thus far, their ~~has~~ big-unit formations have not emerged in a spectacular, coordinated offensive, these sources say, and this ^{is} ED ~~they~~ view as a temporary sign of weakness on the Communist part.

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confidence 5 (normass/deepe)

While the Communists have seized the initiative in escalating the ground fighting, the Allied forces have reacted quickly and with success—not simply the American and Vietnamese regulars, but also the Vietnamese under-paid and poorly armed regional forces. In Quang Ngai, four companies of regional forces thwarted a Communist drive to seize the provincial headquarters and power station; 39 Communists were killed in the unsuccessful attempt—and no regional force casualties. In the Tay Ninh province attacks, where the escalation of the ground war began on August 18, the regional forces also were instrumental in slowing down the Communist advance, American senior American for sources said. And the civilian irregular forces at the Duc Lap district headquarters and Special Forces camp succeeded in holding out even when the Communist regulars at one time seized half of the defense camp's defense perimeter.

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confidence 6 (normass/deepe)

These Vietnamese military sources believe the current, ~~medium-level~~ pattern of the ground war will continue at least this week--the week of the Democratic convention--and possibly another week, ^{if} ~~before then~~ and ~~Communists~~ ^{would} if successful--then the Communists might be in a ^{more favorable} better battlefield position to launch ^{A SENSATIONAL} ~~sensational offensive~~ big-unit offensive into the major cities.

These officers define the current pattern of the ground war this way:

1. Widespread, low-level, rocket and mortar attacks on Vietnamese cities, ~~myriad~~ ^{many} provincial and district towns the full ~~with~~ ^{width} width and breadth of the country. These are considered the ~~pyrotech~~ ^{pyrotechnics} pyrotechnics of political psychology, rather than demonstrations of military power, with the purpose of wearing down the anti-Communist ~~mora~~ ^{morale} morale of the civilian population. ^{AFTER} During the ~~atta~~ Communist intrusion into Tay Ninh city, ^{HOWEVER} ~~for example~~, the pro-government religious leaders of the Cao Dai Church still remain ^{ED} confident ~~in the allies~~ and believe the Communists failed in their attempts to ~~hold~~ seize and hold for several ² ~~ca~~ days portions of the provincial capital.

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confidence 7 (normass/deepe)

2. A continued effort on the part of the Communists to consolidate their military position in the rural areas before ~~al~~ launching an all-out attack on the cities. They are expected to continue to perfect ~~their~~ the coordination of their rocket attacks and smaller unit ground forces before sending their big-units into an ~~en~~ inter-meshed drive through the thick Allied defense belts around the major urban areas. These sources note that the Communist coordination has improved considerably in scope ~~and~~ ^{still} quality and detail since their Tet offensives in January and May ~~but~~ ^{more of the Communists are to} it must be improved more.

3. ~~Contued~~ Continued emphasis within the next two weeks on "movement warfare" and "lines of communications warfare" by the Communists. During the past eight days of intensified action, the Communists thus far seem to be concentrating on annihilation of small Vietnamese outposts, training centers, continued harrassment of some Special Forces camps, cutting ~~major~~ ^{FND} and sabotaging major roads, blowing up key bridges, harrassing the shipping channel into Saigon port, liberally peppering ~~huge~~ ^{FND small} Allied airbases with indirect mortar and rocket fire ~~and~~ ^{ing} and ~~specific~~ ^{ing} plans to ambush and attack Allied reinforcements and troop movements.

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confidence 8 (normass/deepe)

In short, the Communists seem to be attempting to push the Allied forces into ~~separate~~ geographic pockets or enclaves so that they have freer movement through and more ~~control~~ control over the ~~Vietnam~~ Vietnamese countryside. If they succeed in this ~~endea~~ plan, they are then in a better position to ~~move their~~ catapult their big-unit formations into the urban centers and attempt to hold them for some time. If they ~~fail~~ fail, however, the Allies may have ~~stop~~ stopped their offensive drive before it actually gets rolling.

4. Continued attempts to toss commandoes and raiding units into the urban centers to cause psychological havoc among the civilian ~~popu~~ population and considerable property damage. But, thus far, their main-force units have not ^{LET} ^{ED} succeeding in moving close to many of the major cities. More terrorism, disruption, rocketing and mortaring are es ^{URBAN} ^{QB} predicted for these ~~centers~~ but at this time, ~~the Vietnamese command~~ senior Vietnamese officers believe even if the Allied forces can not ^{Stop} ~~predict~~ the Communist third offensive into the cities, they will successfully smash it once it begins to unroll.

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