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july 29, 1965

SAIGON--President Lyndon B. Johnson's order to boost American
combat troop ~~and~~ ^{IN VIETNAM} strength was interpreted here as a means to
conventionalize the guerrilla-subversive war, while paradoxically
the Hanoi regime this week appeared to be guerrilla-izing the missile
war.

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After America m fighter-bombers struck the North Vietnamese missile sites this week, an American Air Force general in Saigon implied there wa s no confirmation ~~that that time~~ to indicate the presumably Russian-made missiles had been knocked out. He said that there were no secondary explosions at the ~~missile~~ one of the missile sites, although the official military communique in Saigon said there wa s.

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"All weapons are potentially mobile," he explained at a news conference. "The revetments are there for protection and aren't necessarily to making the sites operational." The American Air Force general used the word "mobile" while the Washington spokesman used the word "semi-mobile."

In response to questions by newsmen, the American general conceded that it was possible for the North Vietnamese--he, like the Washington spokesman, would not said he would not assume the Russians technicians were operating them--to move the ~~missile~~ missiles by truck to as many as twenty different locations--including even jungle clearings. He said is it was possible that the five missile sites encircling Hanoi, which had been announced long ago, weeks ago, could be "decoys"--the sites being built without having having the missiles installed. He indicated that photographic reconnaissance could easily determine a missile site, but because of the network of roads leading to it, but could not reveal whether or not missiles had actually been installed. (Source 1.)

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"Besides hit-and-hide guerrillas operating in the mobile warfare phase within South Viet Nam," one Vietnamese intellectual explained this week, "we ~~h~~ now have on our hands guerrilla-sized missiles conducting ~~hid-and-run~~ a hide-and-seek war in North Viet Nam."

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This ~~week~~² week's missile incident appeared to drive home to the Vietnamese in ~~an~~² this ~~already nervous~~^{already} ~~super~~ super-nervous capital city the ~~grose~~² prospects of a dramatically escalating war in which they would be caught in the middle--with South Vietnamese cities being ~~bombin~~² bombed by enemy aircraft and American missiles rocketing over their heads towards Peking.

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On top of this, the address of President Johnson brought little consolation to the Vietnamese ~~and American~~ in Saigon and ~~and American~~ staunch pro-victory members of the American community. AE

In general, they viewed the address as too little and too late ~~and too~~ and too negative.

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"President ~~Ly~~² Johnson said we must show the Communist we can not be defeated and that they can not win," explained one source close to the highest ranking Vietnamese government officials. (Source 2). "What kind of negativism is that! Nobody is saying that we the anti-Communists can and must and should have a policy for victory."

~~While~~
While the President indicated he would ask the United Nations to assist in bringing about peace to Vietnam, specialists in Hanoi AFFAIRS said this week there appeared to be no evidence that ~~the~~ the Hanoi regime would negotiate.

"The Hanoi regime is digging in for the long haul for victory," one specialist explained. "Fleeting references in their policy statements indicate that if ~~the~~² the industrial targets and river dams around Hanoi and Haiphong are bombed, it still won't matter. Hanoi's propaganda is already preparing the North Vietnamese people for these hardships." (Source 3).

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Regarding the increase of American combat troops to number 125,000, on ²Amer one American who has traveled widely in Vietnam explained, "Recently, a high-ranking Communist official ~~is~~ predicted that before this war was over, there would be two million American troops in Vietnam.

"But the Communist leader was fifty per cent off. It will take ~~four millions~~ four million American troops. We'll have to have an American Marine behind every tree in the country to win this war."
(Source 4.)

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One non-American counter-insurgency expert explained, "Yes, we must have American troops--we should have had them a year ago when we caught the first North Vietnamese-born prisoners. But now is the time ~~Washington~~ Washington should be bringing in a competent political ~~apparatus~~ apparatus to administer and govern the country. By the time they get ready to do that it will be a too late--the Vietnamese government is already on the verge of collapse." (Source 5).

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Within South Viet Nam, Communist ~~political~~ cadre, both armed and unarmed ones, are ~~es~~ escalating the political war by tightening their grip on more and more villages, district towns, provincial capitals and even within Saigob Saigon itself.

"The only thing the Communists do not control in the provincial capitals is the traffic," one Western diplomat explained.

One Vietnamese-speaking American explained, "I've visited alot ofx the villages that are supposedly government-controlled. I call them the near-empty hamlets. It makes my American bosses ~~ma~~ mad, but none of the government villages have the number of people in them they should." (Source 4.)

Even within Saigon, the simmering, underground political situation is expected to erupt within months, if not weeks, with student demonstrations and political unrest.

Within this context, President Johnson's reference to holding free elections in South Vietnam virtually terrified the Vietnamese anti-Communists.

"If a free election were held in South Vietnam now, the Communists would win hands down," one Vietnamese anti-Communist explained.

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When discussing the build-up of American combat forces, one Vietnamese intellectual explained, "The whole idea is incomplete. There's a division of unarmed Communist political cadres in Vietnam; can American troops find them? The Americans and the Vietnamese are operating in two different worlds.

"The Americans are planning in terms of Mars; the Vietnamese are still living in the 1700's."

Or, as one Western diplomat explained, "The Americans insist upon running a conventionalized war the American way. The fact it's in Vietnam is incidental." (Source 7.)