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Negotiate 1 (normass/deepe)

Saigon, May 8—The Vietnamese Communists are preparing to launch their own peace counter-offensive diplomatically and internally within South Vietnam in the coming months, reliable sources report.

The political campaign, expected to begin no earlier than July, would probably not repeat ~~not~~ ^{discussions or} lead to immediate negotiations with the Allied bloc, although it might pave the way for ^{them} those in the long-range future.

Reliable sources said they do not expect any new political proposals in the peace counter-offensive which would indicate substantial concessions or a softening of their previous positions. The sources predict the Communists would simply re-state and elaborate on their previous positions, hoping that the political tide would turn in their favor internationally—especially in America—while the political and military situation ~~becomes~~ becomes more favorable to them within South Vietnam.

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Negotiate 2 (~~normass/deepe~~) Saigon (normass/deepe)

Captured Viet Cong documents and official Hanoi statements indicate that the political-diplomatic moves are part of a "three-sided campaign" being coordinated with ^{their} a military escalation of the ground war within South Vietnam, which is also expected to accelerate in July or ~~later~~ with the monsoon rains.

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Negotiate 3 saigon (normass/deepe)

One key point in the peace counter-offensive would be the Communists' official elaboration on ~~the willingness~~ the willingness of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam--the political backbone of the Viet Cong--to form a national coalition government for a neutral South Vietnam, officially independent from the Communist North. Another ~~key point~~ key point would be an attempt to raise the prestige of the National Liberation Front, to make it appear as a separate entity from Hanoi--and thus worthy of an independent role ~~in~~ in discussions with the Allied side. Thus far, the Johnson Administration and the Vietnamese government ~~had~~ ^{would} have said they ^{could} talk with the ~~North Vietnamese regime~~ ^{would have to be} ~~with the~~ National Liberation Front represented on the Hanoi delegation.

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Negotiate 4 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Political sources here believe that if the Communists are really effective in their diplomatic ~~sales~~ presentations--which will mark a prelude to the American elections in 1968--they may be able to cause a great deal of divisiveness within the United States, splitting both the Democratic and Republic Parties into even more fragments, with some sides wanting to press on to win the war, others wanting to negotiate even at the price of recognizing the National Liberation Front and admitting it into a coalition governments, and others wanting to negotiate but ~~not~~ ^{different} on ~~more strict~~ ^{different} stringent terms.

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Negotiate 5 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Other factors determining whether the Communist terms would be acceptable to the ~~33y~~ Johnson Administration or the Vietnamese government would appear to rest ~~on~~ on the outcome of the following: first, the Communists military push and how badly they can maul Vietnamese government forces and tire out other Allied troops; second, the results of the Vietnamese government election for President and the Senate to be held in September; third, how much popular resentment anti-war demonstrators can arouse in Europe, America and Asia during ~~the summer~~ the scheduled hot summer of dissent; fourth, how much American popular resentment develops as budget discussions ~~begin~~ begin for the fiscal year starting July 1 and as American casualty lists grow longer.

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Negotiate # 6 Saigon (normass/deepto)

The diplomatic counter-offensive already appears to be underway in a behind-the-scenes fashion, as ranking North Vietnamese leaders attempt and apparently have succeeded to some degree in cementing the Communist bloc behind their upcoming military campaign and healing over Sino-Soviet differences on the conduct of the war. North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong has been in ~~Peking~~ Peking and a ~~delegation~~ North Vietnamese delegation has visited Eastern Europe.

In the coming months, the diplomatic counter-offensive would become more visible and more dramatic with ~~immense~~ overseas officials of the ~~Nato~~ National Liberation Front and North Vietnam holding ^{NUMEROUS} articulate press conferences with Western journalists, moving into the non-Communist countries and onlisting support from Communist Parties and other leftists, such as in France and Italy, and in general, attempting to lure neutralist countries to pressure ^{the} America and South Vietnamese governments for discussions on terms acceptable ^N to the Communists.

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Negotiate 7 Saigon (normass/deepe)

Political observers here believe that the ~~H~~ representatives
of the National Liberation Front—rather than the Hanoi ~~representatives~~ ^{OFFICIALS}
will gain the spotlight abroad and will offer just enough varied
conflicting viewpoints from Hanoi to confuse the issues, as a means to
add to the NLF prestige and its ~~purported~~ purported independence.

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Negotiate 8 saigon (normass/deepe)

On the political front in South Vietnam, Viet Cong political agents have been busily contacting non-government leaders in the religious, social and political fields, ~~urging~~² the urging themselves to boycott the upcoming September elections for Vietnamese President and ~~Senate~~³ Senate, ~~to~~^{to} either openly or discreetly criticize the elections as American engineered and rigged--and encouraging them to "save their names" until ~~the~~ different elections are held for a national coalition assembly. These Viet Cong political agents have said that the future national coalition assembly--representing both pro-Communists from the National Liberation Front as well as non-Communists--would then form a national coalition government, which need not be unified with Communist North Vietnam in the immediate future.

Persons who have been contacted by the Viet Cong representatives said that ~~most~~^{MANY} of the discussions took place during the Tet lunar holidays in February when large numbers of the population move f relatively freely around the countryside and into Saigon.

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Negotiate 9 saigon (normass/deepe)

Non-Communist individuals who are known to have been ~~contacted~~² contacted by the Viet Cong representatives include the leftist or anti-government elements in the major religious blocs, such as the Catholics, Buddhists, Cao Dai and Hoa ~~Hao~~ Hao ⁵ sections as well as prestigious ~~students~~ political figures and leaders of Vietnam's fragmented ~~political parties~~ political parties.

Just how much success the Viet Cong political cadre have had in enlisting the support--or the immediate neutrality--of the non-Communists living in the government-controlled zones remains to be seen until all ~~candidato~~ candidacies are announced and the election campaign begins this summer.

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One recent and effective example of ~~the~~ political maneuvering was the upcoming truce during Buddha's Birthday on May 23. South Vietnamese ~~Pre~~ Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky first proposed the truce to the Hanoi government for a ~~24~~ 24 hour period. Hanoi snubbed the offer. So did the National Liberation Front—but in ~~turn~~ ^{Not only} turn announced their own 48 hour truce, saying it was done ~~not only~~ at the request of the leading Buddhist member of the NLF Presidium but also of the head of the United Buddhist Church in Saigon, Thich ~~Thi~~ Tien Kiet-Khiet. Thus, the prestige of the NLF was enhanced in the eyes of the Buddhist leadership, which is already ~~predominantly~~ ^{predominantly} anti-government and leaning towards the Viet Cong.

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Negotiate 11 Saigon (normass/deepe)

The last official statement of the National Liberation Front ~~was~~ ^{March 22, 1965,} regarding the conditions for negotiations ~~and~~ ^{was} issued on ~~March 22~~ at the very beginning of the American build-up of combat troops in the South.

At a press conference, ^{CHAIRMAN} NLF ~~Chairman~~ Nguyen Huu Tho issued a long, but vaguely worded statement ^{WHEN THE NLF POS. 4 on} ~~which~~ was "resolutely to kick out the United States imperialists in order to liberate the South, build an independent, democratic, ^Dle peaceful, and neutral South Vietnam, and achieve national unification."

The expected launching of the diplomatic-political counter-offense, offensive, spelling out these vague generalizations, may still be unacceptable to the Johnson Administration and the Saigon-based Vietnamese government. But, if they are ~~acceptable~~ ^{are not rep} unacceptable, the Communists could well succeed to put both capitals on the political defensive, observers here said.

~~Edn~~ End Reuter