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talks 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, April 26--Hanoi's acceptance to start talking produced a second political bombshell in South Vietna Vietnam, its second in four days.

Saigon is electric with emotional, frenzied talk of peace, coalition government, an American withdrawal, wild speculation of what will happen next--and the reaction ~~and~~ to all of this ~~var~~ is varied and ~~var~~ mixed ~~depending on~~ among the different elements of the Vietnamese population.

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talks 2 (normass/deepe)

But, Hanoi's acceptance was only a baby bombshell compared to President Johnson's speech four days ago outlining his d- de-escalation policy on bombing North Vietnam and his refusal to accept ~~any~~ a second term as president.

Still, the Saigon government, behind closed doors, and Vietnamese political sophisticates were clearly surprised by Hanoi's early acceptance.

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talks 3 (normans/deepe)

Only four hours before the Hanoi Radio broadcast its government's answer to President Johnson, the Saigon government was known to be continuing mapping out its plans for a general mobilization, calling up all men into military service between the ages of 18 and 33.

The Hanoi announcement did little to alleviate the "state of depressions" G President Ngy Nguyen Van Thieu was known to have fallen into since the Amb American Embassy notified two days before President Johnson's speech of the American initiate ~~initiat~~ initiative towards peace talks. No<sup>2</sup>, did the Hanoi acceptance solace Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky who reacted to President Johnson's peace move by "scaling the ai walls in a rage and cursing the Americans for deserting the Vietnamese," informed sources report.

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talks 4 (normass/deepe)

*Hawkish*      *Here*  
*How* The American community did not seem to have any set expectations of Hanoi would reply to the Johnson peace offer, and ~~they~~ many Americans were still stepping out of their daze from President Johnson's speech ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Monday morning here, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

"Everything has either swung a full circle, or else is swinging around in circles," one source explained.

Clearly though, the Hanoi acceptance intensified the long-held fears of American hawks that ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ talks with North Vietnam ==more reuter would take on a prolonged, agonizing form of Panmunjon during the Korea War—and that the bitterest, bloodiest fighting lay ahead.

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talks 4 (normass/deepe)

The ~~max~~ politically-informed Vietnamese sophisticates, however, <sup>HAD</sup> expected Hanoi to flat-out reject the President's offer; "Hanoi wants 100 per cent bombing cessation, and won't talk until they get it," one source explained.

Saigonese throughout last night ~~listened~~ switched their radio dials between VOA, BBC, Radio Hanoi, Radio Peking, Moscow and Liberation Radio.

~~He~~ <sup>the</sup> ye h dissected every word of the Hanoi Radio communique as answering President Johnson, and two divergent ~~reactions~~ interpretations results: Hanoi did not say anything about South Vietnam—~~and so the war will continue here, and its opposite argument,~~ Hanoi's acceptance to talk about anything is an ~~prelude~~ prelude to settling the war in the South.

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talks 6 (normass/deepe)

Since President Johnson's Monday speech, Saigon has been buzzing  
Saigonese, including ministers within the government, has been buzzing  
with the possibility of a coalition government, but the scales were  
tipped when Hanoi accepted to begin talking.

President Johnson's omitting President Thieu from the roll of  
American digna digna dignitaries during his official visit to Honolulu  
was considered a "crude" diplomatic move, and one which indicated to  
the Vietnamese that the American support of the Thieu government was  
weakening and that the Amrr American government might be willing to  
meet Hanoi's previous condition of accepting the National Liberation  
Front into a new Saigon government.

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talks 7 (normass/deepe)

As the news of Hanoi's decision came over radios in Saigon, one maid working for an American official exclaimed: "Fini ~~boom boom~~ boom, boom, very, very good. I have three brothers in Vietnamese army.

At the working level, another Vietnamese laborer explained: through an interpreter, "If peace comes, it would be a wonderful thing. I have an nephew who is about to be tra drafted, and I'm trying to buy him into a safe position, in a non-combat unit, or a safe unit. We tried to get him into the Vietnamese Navy, but they already have too many volunteers. I've arranged to buy him a job at the ordnance depot in Vung Tau. It will cost me 40,000 piastres (\$400)

to give to the major—and unfortunately, my nephew must hide from the draft evade the police for another month before he can go there.

Frankly, it's much better to raise chickens than to ras ras raise children. We can sell chickens for 100 piea piastres, but children only cost us money—and if we're lucky we only get back the dead body from the battlefield. It would be good to have peace.

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talks 8 (normass/deepe)

At the other end of the economic spectrum, the upper-crust intelleg intellectuals began with the Communist Tet offensive making up their minds about how to get out of the country and how they would do it. They thought they had time; the Hanoi acceptance today told them didn't. Some are trying to buy Chinese Nationalist passports, selling under the table for 300,000 piastres—\$3000, a sizeable sum of money in Vietnam. Others are attempting to buy Laotian passports, less expensive, ranging from \$100 t \$1000 to \$2000, ~~depnding on connections.~~

While the black market rate on the American dollar has remained stable, the rate of French franc, a very alin <sup>1/2</sup> ~~market~~, has jumped from 36 to 45 piastres per fra nouv new france on the black market. These would be the rich, French-educated Vietnamese who sought to leave for France, which is the most likely escape hatch for Vietnamese with French leanings and connections. Ironically, a number of French women and children have during past weeks also been leaving Vietnam, leaving behind their husbands to maintain their plantations and economic interests.

Other Vietnamese are arranging to be smuggled to Cambodia, <sup>there</sup> and try to buy up Cambodian passports, reliable sources report.



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talks 9 (normass/deepe)

A Vietnamese bar-girl, who had made a fortune off the American military buildup, began buying diamonds which she could sell once she got to France. "A friend invited with a French husband asked me a week ago to go to France with him. She said there's going to be a coalition government and you and I can't live under them. When I heard Radio Hanoi last night, I decided to go with her and will take my three children."

It was not uncommon to find mixed, contradictory emotions within one Vietnamese individual.

A 44-year-old Vietnamese businessman, who had <sup>PREVIOUSLY</sup> served the Vietnamese army 15 years and now faced being recalled under Thieu's upcoming general mobilization scheme pondered: "~~I hope Hanoi~~ I'm glad Hanoi is going to talk, so I don't get called up. But, then the Americans <sup>ng</sup> might agree to a settlement and in the long range, South Vietnam will have a coalition government, which the Communists will dominate."

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talks 10 (normass/deepe)

In a business office in Saigon, a small small no knot of importers, ~~who~~ had profited from the war, discussed the Hanoi ann90 annou communique.

A 40 year old explained: "In general, we should be proud of the Communist Vietnamese. Not only has the United States suffered a defeat--because the Americans were supposed to win this war militarily at any cost and they have failed. Unfortunately, ~~there~~ regret these Vietnamese countrymen are Communist and we can not live with them. I fled No the Communists once--in 1954 from North Vietnam and I don't know what I'll do this time.

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talks 11 (normass/deepe)

A businesswoman joined the conversation: "Look it. If the Americans agree to negotiate, we are finished—~~comp~~ completely lost. I'm afraid my children will be dumped into a Communist dye-bath and come out rosy or red. Children are just like new white cloth and their (political) co. colors can be died. But, I'm sure it won't do the Communists any good to try to dye us older persons—~~were're~~ already colored colored.

Anchor Another businessman explained: " anyway since Tet, we haven't been doing a good business. Purchasing power has dropped by 97 per cent and the inflation is getting worse. Maybe with peace we will have some kind of order instead of this chaos.

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talks 12 (normass/deepe)

A Vietnamese army officer: "I'm afraid Hanoi's acceptance will make my job much harder. It's will be more difficult to control the troops--and there is going to be more fighting ahead of us. But why should be Vietnamese troopers want to fight hard--and risk being killed the last minute before peace."

A Vietnamese member of the National Assembly: "I don't have to worry too much. The Communists are ~~smark~~ smart enough not to be too tough on the hot-tempered South Vietnamese. They need our cooperation. And we still have more military strength than they do. If they make concessions, they'll have the cooperation of the ~~Vietnabese~~ soldiers and politicians, who will accommodate with them. But, if they're too tough, the anti-Communists will fight back."

Another assemblyman added: "The Americans are generous people and they won't abandon us without making a deal with the Communists not to assassinate the anti-Communists. But, in general it is very sad to end the war by negotiations--the Vietnamese government <sup>is</sup> is just now ready to fight--but it is not ready to negotiate at all."

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talks 13 (normass/deepe)

One Vietnamese woman, with two sons in the Vietnamese army and a third to be called up, cancelled her decision to cut her hair and become a Buddhist nun when she heard of Hanoi's acceptance. "Peace is always good she said and war is always destructive."

One rich Chinese businessman bought a pet shepherd puppy as an additional pet. He warned a fellow Saigon playboy: "If a coalition government is formed, you won't have a chance to fool around any more. You'll have to get to work to help the society heal the wounds of war. So you should live it up now that the war is going on, and before it is too late."

The playboy responded: "Yes, it's too bad Vietnam doesn't have a big island like Formosa. But, we have only Phu Quoc island, which is too little for the million Vietnamese who want to flee here. Besides, the Cambodians are already claiming they own Phu Quoc."

An elderly woman: "If peace comes back to Vietnam, there won't be so many ~~mei~~ Americans or so many cars. I can go back to the countryside and be buried properly when I die. Not like the war victims who are buried without coffins."

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