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peace 1 (normass/deepe)

LEFT-WING

SAIGON, DECEMBER 17--A loosely-knit peace movement is carefully being woven here, which has the potential of violently ripping apart the political fabric enshrouding the 14-month-old elected government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

If the peace movement begins snowballing with mass popular support and violent political upheavals and turbulence in Saigon and other major South Vietnamese cities, it could give a whole new shape to the war and to the peace in South Vietnam--tilting both distinctly in favor of the Communists.

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peace 2 (normass/deepe)

And, depending on the rapidity of developments here, the peace movement could force an agonizing decision on either the outgoing Johnson Administration or the incoming Nixon Administration in Washington--the decision of whether to continue backing the Thieu government, even if it must repress pro-peace demonstrators. President Lyndon Johnson has encouraged the Thieu government to develop through so-called ~~one~~ constitutional processes and democratic elections--and has supported the growth of that government with American money and ~~blood~~ blood; the Communists have attempted through the use of military force to overthrow the government, and vow they will continue trying to do so; in between these two extremes a dynamic peace movement might tilt the internal balance of power.

The issues, however, ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> more complex than a clear-cut war versus ~~peace~~ <sup>will develop</sup> controversy; more precisely, the issues seem to be what kind of peace <sup>S/</sup> one favoring the pro-Communist side or one favoring the anti-~~Comm~~ Communist side in the future in South Vietnam.

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peace 3 (normass/deepe)

The short-range objective of the peace movement is to ~~pe~~ appeal for-- and to wage street ~~dim~~ demonstrations for, if necessary--an immediate ceasefire to the war in South Vietnam; a ceasefire is often ~~cons~~ confused with peace. In this immediate objective, the peace movement would rather closely parallel current American policy aims in Paris. But, if the South Vietnamese government represses the peace movement in an attempt to maintain law and order, then the more strategic, ~~longer-range~~ *AND EXTREME* objective of the movement ~~might~~ might swerve towards ~~to~~ the overthrow of the Thieu government. In this case, the movement would serve Communist ends and would be similar in form to what the Communists call "the general uprising." *The Communists have been calling* ~~the~~ *American backed. than the* for the overthrow of the Thieu government and the formation of a "peace government" in Saigon. This short-lived transitional "peace government" would then form a "coalition government" with the Communist-~~led~~ led National Liberation Front, according to the Communist plan.

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peace 4 (normass/deepe)

Thus far, the leadership of the peace movement contains a hodge-podge of various dovish elements. ~~St~~ South Vietnam's second largest labor union has already passed a resolution appealing for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the war. One labor leader is among the peace organizers, STRIKES AND OTHER TROUBLES reliable sources report, and a series of labor ~~headlines~~ headlines might become "be a form of struggling" for peace. Some Several prominent nationalist leaders, ~~some~~ including ~~some~~ known as pro-French neutralists, are also known to be lending their political support and brains to the movement. One prominent Roman Catholic priest, from the ~~segment~~ minority segment known as "progressive Catholics", is also known to be Truong Dinh involved, as well as friends and close associates of ~~Tran~~ Tran Dzu, the runner-up to Thieu during the Presidential election last year. Dzu was later sentenced to prison for publicly advocating contacts ~~talks~~ between the Saigon government and the Viet Cong.

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peace 5 (normass/deepe)

But, ~~certainly~~ <sup>political</sup> certainly the most significant ~~power element~~ <sup>BLOC</sup> involved includes the left-wing Buddhist monks and laity, which have successfully sparked the overthrow of several Saigon regimes in the past five years. <sup>these</sup> ~~The~~ Buddhists have already been organizing "movements to struggle for ~~for~~ peace" <sup>D</sup> one of these is for the general South Vietnamese population, including persons of all religious groups and social classes. The second is ~~the movement for youth~~ called "movement for youth to struggle for peace," generally appealing to persons less than thirty years old and the third is specifically organized for university students and high school pupils.

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peace 6 (normass/deepe)

Since the South Vietnamese people have endured tremendous sufferings from the eight-year-old war here, peace has a dream-like attraction to the population in general and ~~especially~~ <sup>to</sup> especially for the Vietnamese youth who are the ones most often drafted to do the bitter fighting. Some ~~of~~ <sup>other</sup> students and ~~draft-age~~ <sup>males</sup> youth have for some time expressed opposition to the war in Vietnam. Some are ~~also~~ bitterly anti-American; many are <sup>Vocally</sup> anti-government; some are known to be Viet Cong sympathizers or ~~activities~~ activists.

Currently, Buddhist monks and professors who teach in Buddhist-operated high schools are organizing their students for peace demonstrations, <sup>Reliable Sources Report</sup> ~~if necessary~~, in the streets, if necessary. Other Buddhist monks and prominent lay followers or sympathetic politicians have already held a series of seminars to discuss the prospects of peace and have elected ~~chairmen~~ chairmen of peace committees to plan out their campaign.

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peace 7 (normass/deepe)

Reliable sources report that in ~~Mekong~~ <sup>the</sup> Delta heavily populated Mekong Delta, Buddhist monks and laymen have organized a series of religious celebrations to distribute sacred relics—which is also a first step for pulling together the ~~dormant~~ dormant and ~~une~~ incohesive Buddhist hierarchy there. ~~Tham Buddhistism~~

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peace 8 (normass/deepe)

While the issue of peace is a highly explosive political commodity here, the organizers of the movement are careful to avoid advocating any political platforms which would label them as pro-Communist, pro-government or anti-government. However, it is considered extremely significant here that the Buddhist leadership has rejected an offer by the Thieu government to name <sup>of its</sup> the any prominent supporters to be appointed as <sup>CABINET</sup> ministers in the oft-rumored upcoming government re-shuffle. Reliable sources report that the Thieu government made the offer as a means to allay ~~Buddhist~~ dovish discontent, to dampen any ~~Buddhist~~ indirect Buddhist allegations about Thieu being a Catholic, and to take the ~~sta~~ steam out of a peace push, which government officials have been publicly predicting. But, the Buddhist leadership "squarely and flatly answered it would not ~~cooperate with the Thieu government~~ cooperate with the Thieu government." <sup>Because it is a WAR GOVERNMENT</sup> one reliable source reported.

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peace 9 (normass/deepe)

~~Rather than the peace movement~~

<sup>2</sup> And while the peace movement organizers are careful to avoid backing any particular nationalist personalities, informed sources report <sup>these</sup> ~~they~~ dovish elements are secretly maneuvering their support <sup>to</sup> ~~to~~ General Duong Van Minh as an alternative to the Thieu government. General Minh, a popular Southerner, lead ~~the first coup~~ Vietnam's first coup d'etat, in which the ~~Buddhist~~ militant left-wing Buddhists, the Vietnamese armed forces, the Americans—and some ~~sup~~ suspect the Communists—~~are~~ coalesced to overthrow Roman Catholic President Ngo Dinh Diem. Minh—often called "Big Minh" because of his ~~stat~~ physical stature—<sup>2</sup> was later overthrown by another military ~~group~~ <sup>He</sup> ~~group on the other~~ and was charged with being "pro-neutralist and pro-French." Minh has been exiled in Bangkok for the past four years, <sup>2</sup> but returned to Vietnam in early October this year after American officials here heavily pressured the Thieu government <sup>Permit it.</sup> ~~to allow his return.~~

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peace 10 (normass/deepe)

Rather than a direct frontal attack against the x Thieu government, however, the peace movement could easily develop into an indirect flanking assault against the elected government. Since peace demonstrations if they develop<sup>^</sup>~~ment~~, would be held in government-held areas, ~~not~~ rather than in the ~~Comm~~ insecure Communist-held areas zones, any urban turbulence would ~~not~~ divert the government's attention away from the war in the countryside, ~~which has currently turned dramatically in favor of the~~ away from ~~the~~ favoring the Communis Communist where the Communists are currently doing badly.

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peace 11 (normass/deepe)

For the past several months, the Thieu government has been issuing sharp warnings to the Vietnamese political leaders and population to avoid ~~uprooting the~~ rocking the ~~boat~~ internal boat on the issue of peace; and during the ~~in the~~ last few weeks the two-house legislature has ~~granted the government the authority to~~ passed a "state of war" resolution which grants the govern executive branch of the government the ~~authorit~~ AUTHORITARIAN HAND. authority to rule with an even more iron ~~gloves~~.

In case the left-wing peace organizers do initiate urban disturbances, the government can be expected to take sharp REPRESSIVE counter-action. In the event of this crucial political confrontation, the fight for peace may be as turbulent--and perhaps as ~~bloody~~ bloody--as the war itself.

(IThanks for zeepager idea. Yes, I think eye'd like to do it--  
= but I'll think about the format and give you my ideas on it later.  
The wedding bells are not until February in Nebraska, so I certainly hope to have it finished by ~~then~~ then--hopefully, before I leave Vietnam. This peace piece is rather ~~is~~ important and we'll have to watch the political situation here carefully. Regards Bev).

--end reuter