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concern 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, DECEMBER 19--A deep sense of concern and uncertainty, mixed with anguish and some ~~anger~~ ^{B. Herneal} is ~~developing~~ increasing within Vietnamese political and governmental circles about future American policy.

The visible drop in confidence in a American stick-to-itiveness at the conference table in Paris--especially after Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford's latest public rebuke at the Saigon government--is also creating a rather significant erosion of Vietnamese anti-Communist morale and confidence in their own government.

The uncertainties arising from the ~~imax~~ crescendo of criticism from Washington officials about the Saigon government is giving rise to fresh batch of coup d'etat rumors, and some prominent Vietnamese nationalist politicians are known to be gambling that the American policymakers are ~~aga~~ about to dump the g elected government of President Nguyen Van Thieu. Some have been saying this for months--and may be over-interpreting Mr. Clifford's criticisms of the Saigon government--but it is producing a politically disquieting effect.

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concern 2 (normass/deepe)

These un-settling, if not nerve-wracking, public remarks from Washington--which are also raising the disgust of members of the American community here, including some doves rather cool to the Saigon government--also are being made during a most jittery period when many Vietnamese and American officials think "almost anything can happen." The American military command has been calling on and off alerts throughout the country, expecting a major Communist big-unit offensive--or to be prepared for it in case the Communists attempt it. However, others are more frightened at the prospect of a major terrorism and sniper ^{WAR GAMES} campaign in the cities, and while this would not repeat not necessarily involve a large number of Communist ^{BIG} military units, it could have a still have a devastating effect psychologically, ^{perhaps} ~~perhaps~~ ^{her hope} raising major damages creating ^{more} ~~major damages~~ to other urban sectors. ~~stimulating~~ ^{promoting} a rising tide of criticism against the Thieu government, believe that the left-leftish-orit oriented nationalist political and religious leaders may begin a

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concern 3 (normass/deepe)

The week before ~~Christa Christman~~ Christmas is chock-ful of Vietnamese Communist holidays ~~abd abd~~ and anniversaries, and many nationalists ~~traditionally~~ feel that Communists will attempt to celebrate these occasions with ~~spectau spectu~~ spectacular displays of violence in government-held areas. The most important ~~anniverss~~ of these ~~anniversaries~~ is ~~dates~~ is the ~~eighth~~ eighth anniversary of the founding of the Communist-led National Liberation Front ~~of~~ on December ~~20ty~~ 20th and the Communists have been calling for a their biggest ~~celece~~ celebration to date.

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concern 4 (normass/deepe)

Vietnamese
The concern about the lame-duck foreign policy of the outgoing Johnson Administration is that Washington in the remaining month before the Presidential Inauguration will make some major, irreversible last-minute concessions to the Communists at the conference table in Paris, which would erase significant battlefield gains made in the last few months. Vietnamese politicians are deeply suspicious of the Johnson Administration pushing events too rapidly in Paris--especially in pressuring the Saigon government to be outmaneuvered by the insurgent National Liberation Front. Vietnamese government circles discreetly accused President Johnson of playing politics with the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam before the American election--and these officials are now alleging that he is interested mainly in engraving himself ~~favorably~~ a favorable place in the history books.

~~Vietnamese sources were also especially ear-irked that Mr. Clifford --more reuter played down the Communist violations of the supposed "understanding" about refraining from shelling Vietnamese cities and abusing the demilitarized zone--although these are reported almost daily by the American military command here. Rather than pressuring Hanoi to abide by their agreements, the Saigon officials resented Clifford's remarks that the South Vietnamese delegation was holding up progress at the Paris peace talks and his statement that even if the Communists began a fourth offensive the Americans would still continue with the peace talks. While there may have been some merits in these his remarks, sources here criticize the "big stick" approach of Clifford and his tactical wisdom of his laying all his cards~~

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concern ⁵ (normass/deepe)

Vietnamese sources were also especially irked that Mr. Clifford played down the Communist violations of the supposed "understanding" about refraining from shelling Vietnamese cities and abusing the demilitarized zone. The American military command here regularly reports ~~xx~~ Communist violations of one sort ~~or~~ or another. Rather than pressuring Hanoi to abide by their agreements, Washington is instead ~~now~~ ~~proceeding~~ criticizing Saigon--and even worse publicly-- ~~allegat~~ alleging the ~~of~~ South Vietnamese government is holding up progress at the Paris peace talks. ~~and~~ Even worse, the South Vietnamese were horrified by Clifford's remark that even if the Communists launched another military offensive, the American officials would still continue to talk in Paris. While this statement was probably ~~true~~ true, sources here criticize Clifford's ~~tax~~ wisdom in laying all his negotiating cards on the bargaining table and his "big stick" approach in publicly criticizing the Vietnamese, ^{when}

Disunity - at least in appearance - is desperately needed internationally AND internally.

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concern 5 (normass/deepe)

Other Vietnamese anti-government--or "out "Out "out" politicians--
especially anti-government ones outside of the ruling circles--are also
increasing their criticisms of the American policy here--because it is
supportintg the Thieu government. They are reportedly selling all
all sorts of ideas political "armchair ideas", plans for moving
Thieu out of the Presidency and proposals for new governments, hoping
to gain American support for future political action.

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concern 6 (normass/deepe)

"Even officials at the (Presidential) Palace, feel that they are caught," one informed source explained. "They don't k/want to see the Americans (~~troops~~ (combat troops) go, and yet they k don't want to see more and more of their country ripped apart. Morale in the city is not repeat not as good as it should be and the government is not repeat not as strong as outsiders think. The population is both jittery and increasingly jeopardized by the high cost of living--ordinary people simply can't make ends meet--and this in turn may start demoralizing the Vietnamese armed forces. If the words starts going around fast that the Americans are going to bug out fast, alot of people could start changing sides. There is alot of anti-Americanism now--not between the G. I's and the population, but by the ~~s~~ those who have been fighting this war ~~for a long time~~ long before the Americans heard of Vietnam. ~~administering the war has been a long time~~ ~~maintaining the war has been a long time~~

"The reason the Vietnamese politicians began rallying around Thieu in his showdown with Johnson last month was that it captured the latent anti-Americanism of many Vietnamese. ~~of them~~ Now that is vanishing quickly, as it becomes clear the Americans are putting more and more pressure on the Saigon government. All in all, there's enough indices around pointing towards a catastrophe of some sort."

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