

2020 sag

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attacks 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, AUGUST 19—Widespread Communist ground and indirect firepower attacks has produced a fairly stiff ripple of military activity here—but not repeat not ^{the} expected third wave of an offensive.

American officials here are still reserving opinions of whether the week-end rippling of stiffer fighting, breaking the two-month-old ground lull, is even a prelude to the long-predicted tidal wave. ~~in~~ The ~~more~~ expectation here had been that the predicted offensive would ~~drive~~ ^{have} drive more vigorously into the major cities—rather hugging the ~~Vietnamese~~ Vietnam's fragile ~~to~~ frontiers.

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attacks 2 (normass/deepe)

In private, however, several opinions ~~normass/deepe~~ seem to prevail before any ~~concrete~~ concrete ~~a~~ pattern has yet been established. The first—and predominant view—is that attacks along the borders are a *diversion* ~~division~~ for the ~~first~~ bigger future battles around Saigon, Hue and other *main* cities. *These believe* The Communists would temporarily revert to their old border strategy of last fall, in an attempt to siphon off Allied troop concentrations from the more populated areas. ~~normass/deepe~~ Some intelligence sources *also* believe, ~~normass/deepe~~ that the Communists are attempting to open up their corridors of infiltration and to extend their authority over ~~an even~~ *countryside* a wider area of the ~~rural~~ areas. For example, on August 12, a decoded Communist message from units outside the greater Saigon perimeter complained that Communist troop movements were difficult and slow because Allied forces were too active around the larger cities. "So we must pin down by mortaring and rocketing the enemy along our ~~def~~ corridors of infiltration," the message stated.

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attacks 3 (normass/deepe)

A second private opinion, expressed by some officials, is that the Communists will simply continue to nibble at exposed areas of the countryside, such as along the borderlines, while maintaining a constant, but lower-level of activity countrywide.

Just what, if any, political connection the breaking of the ground-war lull has with either the Paris peace talks or the upcoming Democratic convention is hard to assess here. ^{However,} The independent English-language "Saigon Daily News" seemed to present a rather articulate assessment in its editorial commentary on the end of the lull. ^{"THE PAPER WROTE"}

"These attacks should end the controversy whether or not the communists have shown restraint, ^{AND} have withdrawn some of their troops back to their side of the seventeenth parallel. President Johnson has been correct to put the number of communist infiltrators at 30,000 for July. In ~~the~~ retrospective, the controversy was a loss of time. The communists are still very much on the war path; they still cling to the policy of fighting while talking....let us not forget that the terms of any settlement in ~~Paris~~ Paris not only reflect, but will also be agreed to on the basis of the realities on the battlefield....

"Bitter fighting is ahead and the communists have not ~~abandoned~~ abandoned their plan to attack Saigon because they believe if Saigon falls, the whole country will fall as a ripe plum."

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attacks 4 ~~in~~ (normass/deepe)

MORE NARROW,

Within a ~~very~~ ^{limited} ~~scope~~ political sense, Vietnamese sources noted two internal political interpretations of the ending of the lull. The first is that the Communists are ~~are~~ attempting to commemorate the August 19th revolution which took place in 1945, when the Communist-led elements seized power from the defeated Japanese at the end of ~~the~~ World War II. ~~Annun Communism~~ For internal psychological purposes, Vietnamese sources ^{said} the Communists may attempt to play up the importance of that anniversary ^{for several weeks until Septem BEAR 2} ~~until early September, when the Communist-controlled~~ ^{when} ~~23~~, twenty three years ago, President Ho Chi Minh was named President of the country. ~~on September 23~~

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attacks 5 (normass/deepe)

More significant, however, Vietnamese sources note the concentration of ground and fire attacks on in Tay Ninh province (12 attacks in a three hour period on Sunday evening) plus infiltration of bands of Communists into the provincial capital of Tay Ninh city, 60 miles northwest of Saigon.

Tay Ninh city contains the "Holy See" ~~autno~~ autonomous "Holy See"

of the powerful Cao Dai church, a Vietnamese-styled militant,

~~off-shoot of Buddhism~~ amalgamation of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism--

plus sanctification of Victor Hugo. More than half the population of the

province belongs to the Cao Dai church--188,000 church members out of a

total population of 295,000. The Great Temple of the Cao Dai religion--

a huge garrish edifice featuring dragons and other fairytale creations--

is also located in the province.

Throughout Vietnam, some two million Cao Daiists look to Tay Ninh province--and to the Great Temple in the Holy See--as their holyland.

And, for some time the politics of the Cao Dai church has been very, very shaky, Vietnamese sources say.

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attacks 6 (normass/deepe)

Throughout Vietnam, the leadership of the Cao Dai church is considered fragmented into thirteen separate, ~~the~~ sometimes feuding factions. ^{MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS RESIDE IN} ~~the~~ But, the ruling top ~~the~~ echelons have vied for control of Tay Ninh province itself. In general, Tay Ninh province has nominally been pro-government, especially since the fall of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. Diem ~~the~~ had crushed the religious army of the Cao Dai in the mid-1950s.

~~However,~~ under the surface, the ~~pro-neutralist, pro-Viet Cong,~~ anti-government wing of the Cao Dai church had been quietly vying for power. These elements include church leaders who are now residing in Cambodia; they also include pro-Communists, pro-neutralists and PRO-GOVERNMENT pro-French French elements. For some time, nationalist Cao Dai leaders feared that the Communists would attempt to attack Tay Ninh city—and if it could be held long enough—the pro-government church leaders would be driven from the province. About a month ago, when more Communist saboteurs and agents were noticed in the city, these pro-government ~~leaders~~ Cao Dai leaders pleaded that the defense in the province be strengthened. But, the Allied commands here ^{were unable to do so,} ~~have~~ ^{HAVING} been forced to concentrate their troops outwards from Saigon, leaving ^{a PARTIAL} ~~a~~ ^{LAST WHEN} ~~relative~~ military vacuum in the fringe areas like Tay Ninh. During ~~this~~ month in which Communist pressure was building up in the province, some of the pro-government church leaders did flee to Saigon, VIETNAMESE SOURCES REPORT.

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attacks 7 (normass/deepe)

Also, earlier this year, one of the pro-government Cao Daiist leaders, elderly Lam Van Tet, was announced as having joined the alleged pro-Communist Alliance for National, Democratic and Peace Forces of Vietnam.

It would be a crippling blow to the Vietnamese government at this time if ~~the~~ it lost even the nominal support of the Cao Dai church-- and the nominal, though unrealistic support it claims to give the government through its two million ~~in~~ followers. Also, in the light of peace ~~neg~~ negotiations, American intellectuals and political scientists have generally looked up the Cao Dai church as a bloc vote of anti-Communist support, which would ~~soften the line~~ allow an BETWEEN THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS AND accommodation with the Communists without the inevitability of a Communist take-over.

Now, however, a pivotal internal question for the future is TAY NINH whether the Communist attacks in the province--and the crossfire of fighting in the pockets of fighting in the city itself--will soften the ~~anti-Communist~~ nominal anti-Communist anti-Communism of the Cao Daiists.

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