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victory--1

april 22, 1965

SAIGON--American policymakers are expected to soon be faced with a major dilemma about Viet Nam--whether to drive for peace through negotiations this year or whether to strive for victory in the coming years.

Observers here who carefully watch the internal political situation believe the American policymakers can no longer hope to have both ~~victory~~ peace and victory.

The internal political situation is now drifting towards the point which should induce the Communist-led National Liberation Front and Hanoi to negotiate honorably and with success for a sizable chunk of the ~~par~~ Saigon government. However, paradoxically, this is being ~~accompany~~ accompanied by a growing stream of anti-Americanism, which observers here believe could easily be whipped up to defeat the whole American position and posture in the this southern republic.

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victory--2

~~the~~  
"Violent demonstrations against Taylor (American Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor) and the whole American position are inve inevitable, though not necessarily imminent," one Western diplomat predicted. "The American Marines, the American jets, the American advisors—everything but your at economic aid—is likely to be being ~~being~~ chucked out of here." in a blodd bloody, ungracious manner."

While the outside world watches to see when and if Soviet missiles, or Soviet and Chinese Communist volunteers are sent to North Viet Nam, ~~xxx~~ Western political experts here believe the best trump card in the Communist hands is to exploit and ferment the internal political situation within South Vietnam, which is already in a sizzling, simmering state of ferment—but still sub-surface. It can ~~is~~ be ~~ex~~ and is expected to explode at any moment. The Saigon political situation is now drifting, in the view of anti-Communists here, towards one of the lowest points in a decade—when in 1955 the gambling pirates called Binh Xuyen mortared the Presidential Palace of Ngo Dinh Diem.

"We are now in the most unspectacular state of instability I've yet seen," one Saigon businessman explained. "As the military war against Communists grows bigger, the Communists' political war grows hotter."



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One high-ranking American officer explained, "The ~~3~~ war can not be won in Saigon--but it can and is being lost in Saigon. The question is whether the political situation can or will be reversed."

These political observers believe that the internal political situation should be an inducement for the Communist-led National Liberation Front--and Hanoi--to negotiate for peace. They argue that the Communists have been offered the rice-rich Mekong Delta, they pro-neutralists now have a toe-hold in the present government, the most anti-Communist elements--the Catholics and the armed forces--are either leaderless or disunified. More significant, this pro-neutralist trend is expected to grow in the coming weeks as they prepare the means to snatch more control within the government and ~~more~~ <sup>future</sup> more ~~political~~ control of the legal mechanisms of the government. For example, the Prime Minister has recently signed a decree outlining elections for city and provincial councils on May 30th--in which, according to the ~~stat~~ 40-page statute, Viet Cong <sup>Secret</sup> agents and their <sup>COVERT</sup> sympathizers would be ~~given~~ <sup>NOT DENIED</sup> the right to ~~vote~~ vote. The acting Chief of State Pham Khac Son this week has appealed for the election of a National Congress, which political observers predict would easily be ~~pen~~ penetrated by pro-Communist and pro-neutralist elements. Similarly, the government is considering the removal of military province chiefs, turning them over to civilians--but there is no assurance ~~that~~ that these ~~government~~ officials would be anti-Communist.



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Political observers here have long considered the Vietnamese armed forces more unified, more disciplined and more anti-Communist than the civilian elements of the population--and the trend in the last six weeks has been for the armed forces to ~~ix~~ play a decreasing role in political affairs.

This growing pro-neutralist trend within the official government circles--and the future legal institutions--has been accompanied by a sub-surface state of bubbling discontentment with the American-backed government of Prime Minister Phan Huy Quat and with the Americans. The right-wing Catholics accuse the dapper Prime Minister of being too ~~soft~~ soft on the ~~Buddhist subversives~~ Buddhists, which they consider Communist subversives; the pro-neutralist Buddhist politico-priests, which ~~an~~ jubilantly supported Quat when he took office nine weeks ago, "are now stopping their support of him," as one pro-Buddhist layman explained, and they have initiated an avalanche of rumors that Quat is "the puppet of the Americans."

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Likewise, the Vietnamese--of all political colors--believe the American military leaders are moving closer and closer to the French colonial position militarily--thus incurring all the disadvantages psychologically of being tabbed as colonialists, but none of the ~~political~~ colonialists' advantages of political control. In one recent example, most of the Vietnamese language newspapers carried the small news item that American Military Commander General William C. Westmoreland ordered the bombing of Tay Ninh province, northwest of Saigon, in one of the ~~new~~ biggest raids in the war. Vietnamese ~~general~~ officers from the rank of general to that of captain were openly irked and accused the Americans "of trying to take over ~~in~~ our command function. You ~~know~~ longer give us the right--or even the privilege--of being Vietnamese," one Vietnamese major explained. (Actually, Westmoreland gave the order to all American aircraft commanders involved in the operation, according to one high-ranking source, but only at the request of the Vietnamese High Command.)

The American bombing of North Viet Nam, also, is now shoring up the anti-Communist government position; the Southern-born anti-Communists are more depressed at the Saigon political situation than they are encouraged at the bombing of North Vietnam; ~~the~~ Northern-born anti-Communists openly resent their homeland is being bombing bombed.



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(One Northern-born Vietnamese battalion commander reportedly checks the newspaper every day to see if the home village where his parents are living in the North has been bombed. He defiantly explained, "I want to win the war in the South--but without bombing my home village.")

In short, the invisible, unarmed subversive war is now considered far more significant than the violent, bloody guerrilla war in the countryside--which has been going spectacularly, but not consistently well for the government side. From the Washington point of view, the bombing raids against North Vietnam are designed to convince Hanoi to call off the infiltration of troops into South Vietnam and possibly to slow down the Communist-directed Viet Cong guerrilla fighting within this southern republic.

But anti-Communist Saigonese and Western diplomats here believe that even if Hanoi and the Viet Cong guerrillas totally stopped their military actions, the Communist and pro-neutralist political subversives would gain more and more control of the Saigon government.



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victory--7

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Many political observers here believe that May will be a pivotal month in the future political-military war. The month contains three important Communist holidays--May 1 Labor Day, May ~~19th~~ 7th the anniversary of Dien Bien Phu during the Indo-China War in 1954 and May 19th on Ho Chi Minh's birthday. These observers predict the Communists will make a sensational attack, either through use of sabotage as against the American Embassy, or a military push on the ~~in the~~ battlefield in the provinces. One likely example of what they may attempt is to mortar the American military command in Saigon city, "which would make a mockery of the American fetishness about weaponism," one Western diplomat groaned.

The month of May also contains the ~~Buddhi~~ Birthday of Buddha, which the pro-neutralist Buddhist leaders are expected to celebrate with spectacular ~~ex~~ parades, colorful floats, in an attempt to ~~port~~ portray themselves as the most respectable, most organized political force in the country. The Buddhist newspaper Chanh-Dao reported that Buddhist representatives decided to request the Supreme Priest to issue a ~~commi~~ communique appealing for a two-day cease-fire ~~a~~ between the Viet Cong Communists and the government forces on May 15-16 on the occasion of Buddha's Birthday.