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huong 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, MAY 20—President Nguyen Van Thieu's appointment of schoolteacher Tran Van Huong as a new and prestigious Prime Minister here is regarded here as having the primary ^{intention} purpose of unifying Vietnam's atomized non-Communist political groupings—a necessary step whether the country's future brings peace, war, or a curious mixture of both.

Informed sources believe ~~that~~ a collateral purpose of ^{greater} unity among Vietnam's non-Communists may be to dampen any potential defections either to the Viet Cong or its newly-formed satellite grouping called the Alliance for National, Democratic and Peace Forces. The Communists have been making a bid for more support from urban intellectuals, educators and professional ~~person~~ personalities, while urging urban uprisings against the constitutional government of President Thieu.

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huong 2 (normass/deepe)

whether ~~J~~ Huong—his name means "perfume"—succeeds or fails in the future remains a pivotal question. Already he is facing difficulties in forming and officially naming his new Cabinet, reliable sources report. There is still wide disagreements ^{Huong} between some ~~politicians~~ politicians he has contacted, these sources report, and some powerful Vietnamese generals, including ~~Viet~~ Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, are known to be unhappy about Huong's ~~of~~ appointment. Some of ~~these~~ these discontented generals met at the Presidential Palace on Monday—thus fueling more rumors of possible military action ~~against~~ ^{or} pressure on Huong. But, no unauthorized movements of Vietnamese troops have been witnessed, informed sources report, and the capital population seemed more concerned with the Communists' frequent rocket attacks into the homes and ~~port~~ police stations, rather than the difficulties within the government.

~~Prime~~ Outgoing Prime Minister Nguyen Van Loc and his 18-member Cabinet, ~~more reuter~~ who resigned en masse Saturday to pave the way for Huong's cabinet, is currently acting as a caretaker government, official sources report.

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huong 2 (normass/deepe)

The appointment of Huong himself is not regarded here as a major ~~for~~ forward step towards ~~an~~ internal negotiations with the Viet Cong; ^{may} ~~the~~ at the most it be described as opening up the option of subtle, sidesteps or conversations towards some beginning of an arrangement with the Viet Cong, if either side so decides. The internal "peace" picture may be clarified later this week when the foreign minister is named. The current foreign ^{DR. TRAN VAN DO} minister, ~~who might remain in office~~ has publicly said that the reshuffle of the government would not affect its foreign policy.

While some of Huong's ^{no} entourage is considered here to be neutralist-inclined, the ~~policy~~ policy-making decisions of the executive branch reside here in the hands of the President; the prime minister is considered as "the chief minister responsible for execution of policy," as one Vietnamese political source observed. The Vietnamese constitution has formulated a government that ^{is} a half-Presidential and half-parliamentary system, much like ~~Gen~~ President Charles DeGaulle's government in France or the ~~go~~ current government of South Korea.

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huong 4 (normass/deepe)

Huong's primary mission of achieving some unity among the non-Communist political factions here is, in fact, regarded as an essential pre-condition before an internal political settlement agreeable to all sides can seriously be entered into ^{by} the Saigon regime. Vietnamese politicians ~~now~~ ^{the most} argue that if the Viet Cong are unified, disciplined and dynamic political force in the South--and if they are allowed into a coal coalition government, they would "swallow" up their non-Communist opposition at will. But, these politicians argue, if somehow the non-Communist groupings can be unified into a ~~also~~ cohesive force, then a coal coalition government need not be a political defeat for the ~~non-~~ Communists--and perhaps some persons might be ~~en~~ induced to desert the Viet Cong ranks.

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huong 5 (normass/deepe)

Officially, the American Mission here regarded the change of government as "an internal Vietnamese matter," and refused to comment on the move. An official spokesman said the American government backed no particular candidate for the new prime minister-ship. However, privately, informed sources indicate Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker had supported a change in the Cabinet and the Prime Minister after the Communist Tet offensive in late January and he supported the nomination of Huong. But, the post-Tet change of government, widely rumored at the time, became bogged down in Vietnamese bickering and was stifled. The ~~the~~ Communists' second ground offensive into the capital, largely unsuccessful in a military sense, nevertheless created more economic and political problems for the ~~the~~ government, while at the same time lowering its prestige. Hence, the current urgency of the government change--and before President Thieu visits the United States ^{in June} at a time when Vietnam is facing increased war pressure by the Communists around the cities, more political subversion within the cities, and ~~peace talks at~~ the uncertainty of peace talks in Paris.

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huong 6 (normass/deepe)

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Informed sources report that since ~~the~~ his arrival here last summer, American Ambassador Bunker has been working vigorously to promote unity among Vietnam's ~~scattered~~ scattered civilian political groups and personalities. Up to the appointment of Huong, these ~~other~~ observers believe ~~Bun~~ the Ambassador has largely failed in the positive sense of forcing or ~~perpet~~ persuading such ~~unit~~, unity, although in a negative sense, he has assured, with the political impact of half-million American troops, that the Vietnam's former ~~day~~ coup-happy days did not re-appear on the political front.

(Hank: Tomorrow I'm going on a one-day trip to Tayninh province outside of Saigon. I'll ~~ret~~ return Tues. night or Wednesday morning. The government announcement of the new government is not expected until after Tuesday and I want to check the Cambodian border situation. We will probably file another piece when the announcement is made, especially, more in terms of the balance of forces within the ~~gover~~ government and the effect on peace talks. ~~Sanatthidhommann~~ K K I'm attempting to get an interview with Huong, ~~And K R S H~~ like everyone else. Once this blows over, I plan to go to Danang, and ~~hope~~ hopefully, get in a one ~~with~~ half day trip to the Seventh Fleet in case the bombing raids are halted. Regards Bev).

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