

2020 sag

yy ~~two~~ <sup>NNM</sup>

offensive 1 (~~frier/deepe~~) (NORMASS/DEEPE)

SAIGON, DECEMBER 20—In assessing prospects for another Communist offensive, these three related questions must be weighed simultaneously:

1. Are the Communists militarily <sup>CAPABLE OF</sup> ~~prepared to~~ <sup>ING</sup> launch another offensive?

2. What is meant by another offensive?

3. What is the best political moment <sup>for</sup> ~~which~~ the Communist Politburo <sup>will</sup> ~~decide to actually order~~ <sup>of Dec 1961</sup> an offensive to be unrolled?

Since Communist political decisions consistently dictate Communist military strategy and tactics, this last question—the most significant one—is also the most difficult to assess because it involves second-guessing or interpreting Communist political intentions rather than <sup>ASSESSING</sup> ~~the~~ more specific <sup>data</sup> ~~on~~ their military capabilities.

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offensive 2 ~~(first/deeper)~~ (NORMASS / DEEPER)

On the first question, both the American and South Vietnamese military commands believe that the Communists have the capability of launching (ital) another Tet-styled, cross-country blitz war. But, ~~these~~ <sup>these Allied</sup> commands are confident that the Communist units will suffer a devastating military defeat. Unlike the January Tet offensive in which the Communists were handed political and psychological laurels simply for ~~attack~~ <sup>AND Spectacular</sup> in their surprise attacks on the cities—even though they failed in ~~accomplishing~~ <sup>their</sup> attaining the military objectives—the Communists now are in a position whereby they must <sup>Also</sup> ~~not only~~ also succeed in their attacks.   
Succeed if they Attempt their offensive.

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offensive 3 (frier/deepe)

(Normass/Hege)

Especially

Currently, the Communists are building up pressure in the outer Saigon area. At least one regiment of the North Vietnamese 1st repeat 1st Division, which was soundly battered in the battle of Due Lap in September, has been confirmed in Tay Ninh province, northwest of Saigon along the Cambodian border. In short, while Washington policymakers talk optimistically about North Vietnamese units which have moved back into North Vietnam, the Allied commands here are worried

about the North Vietnamese units that have moved further south to the outer Saigon perimeter. while Washington policymakers talk optimistically of units that have withdrawn from South Vietnam

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offensive 4 ~~(in (trial/deep)~~ (Norm ASS Leape)

To counter this buildup, the American command moved the elite U. S. Army 1st Air Cavalry Division--a heliborne division--straight into the Communist stronghold areas of War ~~to~~ Zone C and the the jungled areas further north--~~not~~ not far from the ~~the~~ Viet Cong high command. By doing so, the ~~Communist~~ Americans have brought in not only additional ground troops, but also long-range artillery, which consistently pounds ~~z~~ Communist-held areas heretofore out of the range of Allied weapons. While the Americans have seized the tactical initiative in this border area--~~interrupting~~ the Communists are regularly counter-attacking and sharp clashes have occurred continuously in the past weeks. Further south in the marshlands ~~around the~~ along the Cambodian border, the American-South Vietnamese "little boat navy" has also <sup>been</sup> moved in for intensive patrolling along border waterways through which Communist supplies had previously moved from Cambodia into the ~~Cholon~~ Cholon area of the capital.

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JY ~~AN~~ NM

offensive 5-~~(frim/isspe)~~ (NORMASS / *Lepe*)

GROUND - NAVAL

Behind this border screen designed to interdict Communist movement of men and supplies across from Cambodia, the Allied commands have been able to compress their other regular units into a small ~~sq~~<sup>er</sup> space for more intensive patrolling and for ~~weedin~~<sup>weeding</sup> weeding out the Viet Cong infrastructure in the villages. With the Communist main-force units still ~~a~~ fairly well contained ~~the~~ to the border areas, <sup>Other</sup> Allied <sup>NOW BE</sup> ~~ed~~ <sup>from</sup> regulars can fragment ~~their~~ conventional formations into a string of small patrols.

One battalion commander outside of Saigon told this ~~correspondent~~ <sup>He</sup> that ~~his unit could be broken down~~ <sup>HIS UNIT Nightly</sup> into 18 to 24 ~~night-time~~ patrols and ambushes <sup>Square</sup> ~~nightly~~, with each patrol covering as much as a "grid square" (one ~~square~~ kilometer <sup>on maps</sup>) in flat terrain.

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offensive # 6 (~~xxxx~~ (normass/deepe)

On the second question--what is meant by an offensive--there is little evidence that the Communists have forsaken their overall policy of "fighting while negotiating", ~~nor~~ or that they have given up their designs and desires of overthrowing the elected, American-supported Saigon government--which would ~~xxxx~~ be ~~eat~~ politically catastrophic for the Allied position both in Paris and in Saigon. Nor ~~it~~ do they seem to have veered from their strategy of attacking ~~Six~~ South Vietnamese cities--a tacit admission that Mao's ~~dictum~~ *Strategy* of using the countryside to ~~encircle~~ *work in Vietnam* encircle the cities ~~it still did not repeat not bring them victory.~~ *D.D. continue to*

Daily, Communist radio broadcasts talk of the "general ~~uprising~~ offensive and general uprising," ~~and~~ since their so-called third offensive seemed to fizzle for them in August, they have refrained from numbering ~~this~~ *their* predicted next wave.

*Speculation*  
But, there is considerable ~~debate~~ here that the Communists ~~have~~ *can* may be changing the form of next offensive and hence changing their tactical deployment of military big-unit formations.

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offensive *of* (normass/deepe)

Instead of pushing their big-unit regiments and battalions into a rather conventional-styled attack against the cities, as they attempted unsuccessfully in doing ~~in~~ during Tet and May, the Communists may be shifting into fragmenting their military power—or using only the lower *end* of their military organization, such as their guerrilla formations. *Spectrum* *retrograde*

While this ~~tactical~~ shift—rolling back from their Phase 3 peak—would be essentially a sign of inherent military weakness on the part of the Communists, this would not repeat necessarily bring much consolation to the Allies. *Roll-back* *Conventional* *could* Any military let-down in pure military power ~~would~~ be made up by political and ~~psycho~~ psychological gains—during an exceedingly sensitive political and psychological time period. The

*Defeating* Allied troops, instead of combatting Communist regiments and battalions, find it more difficult to counter might be ~~faced with~~ coping with waves of terrorism, sniper squads from Saigon ~~for~~ rooftops, high-intensity propaganda, political agitation, labor strikes and student ~~at~~ or Buddhist demonstrations.

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offensive/8 (normass/deepe)

There is also some indication that the Communists may be putting intense political pressure on Saigon's whole body politic--and that the nationalists or the Americans may serve Communist ends by <sup>Attempting to</sup> overthrowing <sup>or</sup> the Saigon government. Certainly, the strains and ~~tens~~ diplomatic strains and tensions between ~~the~~ the American and South Vietnamese officials are now becoming a serious ~~consd~~ consideration internally, <sup>Creating</sup> bringing a <sup>ED</sup> mark drop of ~~conf~~ confidence both in ~~the~~ the American commitment here and <sup>IN</sup> the Saigon government. There is an erosion of <sup>V. ET America</sup> anti-Communist strength here in recent days; there is a noticeable rise in anti-governmentism, which may reflect ~~Comm~~ Communist or French-inspired propaganda, but which is not nonetheless draining morale. Whether or not this is convertible into a <sup>BEING</sup> something close to the Communist "general uprising" or not is also debated here. Certainly, a <sup>Significant Overt</sup> ~~vietnam~~ really really ~~disasterous~~ <sup>Great</sup> political ~~crisis~~ between the Saigon government and the American officials or between the Saigon government and the Vietnamese population would be disasterous for the Allies; <sup>FW</sup> would be more beneficial for the Communists than a general offensive (which serves to momentarily unity <sup>E</sup> the nationalists). <sup>Fireworks</sup> and the Communists would undoubtedly abort their offensive just to watch the intra-mural ~~fight~~ on the Allied side.

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yy offensive 6 (frier/de)

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offensive 6 (frier/deeps)

Others predict the Communists will attempt to overrun a number of provincial and district capitals before making any spectacular moves ~~against~~ <sup>AGAINST</sup> Saigon.

Hence, the form of the next offensive remains very much in a topic of debate and speculation here, but there is a consensus that the Communists will attempt something within the broad lines of their "general offensive and general uprising" strategy.

As to the third question ~~on~~ what is the best political moment for the ~~the~~ Communist Politburo to ~~decide~~ to launch another offensive is the most difficult to answer. The dilemma for the Politburo, as seen from here, is that if the Communist launch a ~~major~~ spectacular big-unit offensive and lose, then they have very little to negotiate in Paris.

<sup>Get</sup> The prevailing view here is that the Communists will attempt some sort of extravaganza <sup>- Perhaps NOT OF A Big-Unit Character -</sup> to welcome in the new American administration in mid-January, <sup>this might</sup> which may also coincide with the ~~begin~~ formal beginnings of the

expanded Paris peace talks. Others, however, believe that the Communists may delay any <sup>DECISIVE Big-UNIT Showdown</sup> spectacular military moves until after (ital) American the <sup>Some</sup> first American troops <sup>Have been</sup> ~~begin~~ withdrawing <sup>from VIETNAM</sup> here and the over-all American combat level is substantially reduced--which may be <sup>Months Away.</sup> years. Then, the Communist forces would <sup>stand off</sup> ~~escalate~~, attempting to produce a Dien Bien Phu-type battle with <sup>perhaps in the</sup> Vietnamese government units. <sup>Streets of SAIGON.</sup>

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