

zczc sag

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steel 1 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON, MAY 11--In early May, Communist big-unit forces had formed "an arc of steel" around the northern tier of Saigon and Tan Son Nhut airbase. This movement of Communist steel-power thus began the dramatic enactment of the first <sup>Prediction</sup> ~~phase~~ of their foreboding slogan-jingle which had swept ~~sweeping~~ suburban Saigon a month before: "~~Peace~~ "Blood will flow in May. Peace will come in June."

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steel 2 (normass/deepe)

LATER,

military But, ten days after ~~their arming and deployment of troops~~ <sup>troops</sup> Allied operations had turned this deployment of troops in "an arc of aluminum," as one senior Allied officer explained. While the arc of Communist strength is still present, <sup>its</sup> big-unit combat effectiveness has been substantially tempered, Allied military sources believe, as has its capability of <sup>it</sup> roaring into Saigon proper and the airbase.

--more reuter



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steel 3 (normass/deepe)

A goodly chunk of the ~~success~~ success to date of the Allied military operations is openly credited to an ~~obscure~~ obscure Viet Cong political commissar who defected to the Vietnamese government on April 19 and outlined a ~~blue~~ blueprint of the Communists second attempted ~~drive~~ ~~these~~ big-unit thrust into ~~sg~~ Saigon. Thus far, Allied military sources say, the blueprint outlined by defector Tran Van Dac has proved generally accurate as the ~~drama of the Communists' May offensive unravelled~~. full *equivalent* drama of the Communists' May offensive of more than three ~~infantry~~ *plus* division—~~more than 50,000 men~~ *plus* ~~unravelling~~ *unravelling* in all around ~~sg~~ Saigon, and its suburban districts. *AND RURAL PROVINCES.*

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steel 4 (normass/deepe)

BENEFICIAL The Communists' attempted May offensive is considered here to have two strategic political purposes—one ~~internal~~ international and one internal. The international one—to use their military power to grab a psychological victory <sup>it</sup> as a means of enhancing their bargaining position in Paris as Washington-Hanoi peace talks begin--has been widely discussed and officially confirmed here by Communist prisoners and documents. Some diplomatic sources here believe that with or without negotiations, the Communists still would have tried to penetrate the urban centers--though they may have changed the timing of the offensive.

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steel 5 (normass/deepo)

The second political objective--the internal one--is to ~~control~~ <sup>- backed</sup> regarded here as to ~~be~~ designed to isolate ~~perhaps~~ the American position and the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu more and more from the Vietnamese people. Then, ultimately, <sup>if</sup> perhaps in a slow-motion, multi-phased attrition process, to ~~collapse~~ the Communists would destroy the Thieu government, seizing power in the name of the ~~Communist~~ <sup>alleged</sup> allegedly Communist-inspired Alliance for ~~National~~ <sup>North</sup> National, Democratic Peace Forces. The Communists would then negotiate a settlement with the Alliance which they <sup>themselves</sup> Communists themselves had created, and evict the Americans from Vietnam in the most ungracious manner.

The Communist small-unit actions which <sup>preceded</sup> ~~preluded~~ the May offensive seem to be clearly designed to effect this internal ~~havoc~~ <sup>have</sup> havoc for the Thieu government government--but, the Communists failed in their attempts. The most significant was the terrorist attempt ~~to~~ on the ~~Saigon~~ <sup>DRONE</sup> national radio and television studios, ~~when~~ <sup>SAIGON</sup> ~~duri~~ in which a blue-and-cream colored taxi loaded with plastique ~~perched~~ <sup>drove</sup> near the studios, but not near enough to blow the stations off the air. If the Communists had succeeded, they communication means of the government to talk to its own people during the critical days ahead would have been temporarily scissored. During the Tet offensive, also, the Communists made concerted efforts to capture the government radio stations in the provinces and in Saigon--and they met with only varying degrees of ~~sucess~~ <sup>success</sup> success.

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steel 6 (normass/deepe)

Likewise, Communist attempts, which failed, to blow up two main ~~bridge~~ bridges near the Saigon would have served to isolate Saigon geographically from the suburban sections of the province of Gia Dinh, made it more difficult for the government to ~~govern~~ govern outside the city and more difficult to sustain city life without ~~communications~~, <sup>Economic</sup> ~~transport~~ and produce from the countryside.

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steel 7 (normass/deepe)

Thus far, the Communist May offensive around ~~the~~ Saigon has surfaced three ~~significant~~ significant military tactical and strategic factors:

1. The Communists demonstrated they did not need the element of surprise to launch their ~~urba~~ offensive against the ~~ci~~ capital. Because of the blueprint revealed by the Communist defector, the Communists knew the Allies were already informed about their attack and alerted for their advance. They chose to attack anyway; thus negating the arguments of the American military command that they ~~would not succeed at~~ <sup>HAVE</sup> ~~attacked or succeeded~~ succeeded in attacking at Tet without the advantage element of surprise given them during the announced truce period.

2. The Communist timetable appears to have shifted from a long-term war of attrition to an all-out, urgent military showdown in which they are prepared to risk heavy manpower losses militarily in exchange for ~~political~~ political-psychological gains during pivotal ~~periods~~ <sup>time periods</sup> either internationally or internally.

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steel 8 (normass/deepe)

3. The Communists have made a pivotal switch in their battlefield strategy. The cities are now the frontline--no longer the jungles and rice paddies. In effect, the Communists appear to be <sup>have</sup> ~~synthesizing~~ <sup>ed</sup> the Mao-ist strategy of using the countryside to encircle the cities, along with the Moscow-type strategy of <sup>violent</sup> ~~a~~ sparking revolution and uprisings within the cities. Hence, this May offensive is a continuum of their Tet offensive, but with less scope countrywide and far less psychological -political success

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steel 9 (normass/deepe)

Reliable sources here believe the Communists had three layers of achievement or limited objectives in attempting their military mission of pushing ~~t~~ into Saigon. The first mission--and by ~~far~~ ~~far~~ ~~far~~ for their most ~~ambiou~~ ambitious--was to attempt a Hue-styled ~~seize~~ seizure of portions of the city and hold it for as long as possible, as they did for 25 days in the old imperial capital during the Tet offensive. If their big-units had ~~so~~ succeeded in ~~penetr~~ penetrating substantial portions of the city and key installations, they would have been joined by terrorist suicide squads to destroy other installations such as American billets, the Saigon ~~port~~ port, the Vietnamese High Command, the American Embassy. American military field commanders believe they ~~have~~ the ~~Communist~~ Communists have thus far virtually failed in this prodigious plan--and that their main-force units have been ~~so~~ badly mangled on the outskirts of Saigon that there is little hope for them to try again for such spectacular ventures again. in the near near future.

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steel 10 (normass/deepe)

Failing this, the Communists second and more realistic military aim would be to pin down American units outside the city harass and attrite American units outside the city capital while also creating an increasing amount of turmoil and ~~h~~havoc within the city. Failing this objective, ~~these sources~~ the Communists would, <sup>third option,</sup> these sources believe, pull back slightly from the city limits and ~~and~~ concentrate on the rural districts immediately outside the capital, where they would attempt to uproot government outposts, assassinate government district and village councils, ~~as~~ revolutionary development teams--and in effect, to strangle the capital while preparing to assault it ~~at~~ again at a later date. Most of the Communist activity ~~and~~ activity--whichever of the three missions they decided to attempt--would concentrate in a twenty 15 to 20 mile ~~radius~~ radius from the Saigon city ~~limits,~~ limits, these sources said, ~~while~~ <sup>beyond</sup> ~~outside of~~ this distance they would attempt to set up their Communist-controlled revolutionary governments in villages abandoned by the government. ~~These~~ These sources also believe this ~~straw~~ stratagem to conquer ~~S~~ Saigon would ~~be~~ also be the pattern for slow-motion seizure of power in other urban centers.

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steel 11 (normass/deepe)

Just how much success the Communists have had to date on their latter two endeavors is difficult and probably ~~premar~~ premature to assess. Unable to push their main-force units into the city itself, the Communists are expected to continue their lower-level ~~harrasing~~ ~~activities~~ small-unit military activities and propaganda work.

The Communists seem determined to continue their efforts to spark a "general ~~uprsi~~ uprising" in the cities. In A radio broadcast on May 9 communicated the appeal of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front to the people of the Saigon capital region. It said: "The people have to <sup>2</sup>th join the Revolutionary Forces, not only to uprising where possible, but to help the Revolutionary Forces destroy all military installations and any other facilities which help the enemy, such as electrical plants. The people should help the Revolutionary Forces pull down the electricity poles, to destroy the warehouses of military materials, to arrest the reactionaries, to seize power anywhere it is liberated or occupied by Revolution Forces, such as offices and factories.

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steel 12 (normass/deepe)

The broadcast continued, "The people must destroy all documents used th by the government to pince the people; they should destroy the family identification lists at the prec sub-precinct politic po. police stations and any other files used police files about the people.

"This attack (into Saigon) is going to continue and the people are encouraged to move forward in order to overthrow the puppet government."

The term "Revolutionary For Forces" has spring sprung into use since the Tet offensive indicating pro-Communist troops--<sup>such</sup> as hooligans, government deserters and draft-dor dodgers--who have allied themselves with the Commun Viet Cong.

An earlier address, on May 6, from the central committee to the people and revolutionary soldiers explained: "During these minutes and hours of heroic fighting of all of our people today, we have to clear grasp clear clearly the purpose of the revolution. <sup>we must act</sup> With steel determination, and super effort, and the courage to overcome all difficulties and without hesitation to carry out the continuous offensive and all-out uprising--to fight the Americans, to overthrow the puppets, to seize power into the hands of the people, to re-take independence and national sovereign sovereignty, democracy and and happiness for the people."



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steel 13 (normass/deepe)

"So, all the cadre and soldiers should fiercely assault...every  
mini minute and every hour...in order to win complete victory...The  
people in the city and in the countryside who are still temporarily under the  
control of the enemy should uprising with arms. Those who have weapons  
use weapons. Those who have knife, ~~use knife~~ knives, use knives. Those  
who have hammer use hammer...in order to establish the revolutionary  
government. And the people who live in liberated areas (of the countryside)  
should carry out the slogan everything is for the frontline (the cities)."



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steel 14 (normass/deepe)

In Cholon, Viet Cong troops were reported to call at the homes of the population and seize their ~~for~~ ~~governing~~ government family lists, which records the each member of the family in government files. And Viet Cong teenagers have been reported calling at the homes of government officials, ~~uring~~ <sup>t</sup> urging them to join the pro-Communist Alliance. But, with the rapid influx of refugees into Saigon, the civilian casualties, the growing ~~red-tape~~—the difficulty of keeping tract<sup>K</sup> of who is friendly and who is enemy in the city—and the general feverish pitch of Communist propaganda, a key ~~question~~ internal question for South Vietnam <sup>9.1.6.19</sup> is whether ~~or not~~ the Communists succeed or ~~fail~~ fail in ~~promoting~~ their "general uprisings."

- send reuter