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alliance 1 (normass/deepe)

(This is the first of a two-part series on ~~the~~ <sup>INTERNAL FWD</sup> international and ~~internal~~ implications of the alleged pro-Communist peace group called the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces).

SAIGON, MAY ~~2~~ <sup>ten</sup> - The announcement of the ~~nine~~ <sup>ten</sup> nation-level committee members for an alleged pro-Communist peace group is considered here to mark a significant political step towards an all-out coordinated Communist drive to topple the elected government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Reliable ~~sources~~ Vietnamese sources here believe the announcement of the peace group's leadership, made over the week-end, marks a crucial turning point for the American-backed, anti-Communist government here. It is not considered a clear-cut political defeat for the Thieu government, but ~~if~~ it does represent an acceleration in the erosion of political strength in the government-controlled areas. Hence, the formation of the ~~nine~~ <sup>ten</sup>-member Alliance is considered as surfacing significantly and openly revealing the continued state of crisis and the unsolved problems of Thieu's elected government which was ~~inaugurated~~ inaugurated into office ~~last~~ last October.

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alliance 2 (normass/deepe)

The announcement of the leadership for the Alliance is also considered likely here to offer the pretext for the Communists to use the name of the movement in the future to perpetuate their so-called "general uprisings" in the cities and towns while simultaneously launching a concerted diplomatic offensive to win over ~~left~~ leftists in America and internationally <sup>with</sup> ~~the~~ ~~Washington-Hanoi~~ peace talks are temporarily ~~deadlocked~~ deadlocked on finding a conference site.

"The Communists are interested in the substance rather than in the semantics of words like 'front' and 'alliance'," one Vietnamese political source explained. "During the French Indo-China war, the Viet Minh was technically known as an alliance, while today the Viet Cong are called a front. During the ~~Indo-Indo~~ Indo-China War, Ho Chi Minh organized a front within a front; now the Viet Cong have organized the ~~alliance~~ new Alliance as an appendage of the National Liberation Front, or a satellite to it. In general, the Communists want bigger and bigger concepts to attract an ever-widening base of mass support. <sup>GOVERNMENT</sup> If the American's want to negotiate with the ~~new~~ new Alliance to dump the Thieu government, fine-- but Washington rejected that ~~idea~~ idea, so now they'll try to destroy the Thieu government by themselves."

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alliance 3 (normass/deepe)

Just what form the Communists will use to topple ~~the~~ in their attempts to overthrow the Thieu government is still unknown here. Some believe their ~~m~~ political offensive would be ~~made~~ made in ~~conjunction~~ conjunction with either ground assaults and/or rocket attacks on the cities and towns. Saigon is currently in a high state of tension and uneasiness as developments of this kind have been predicted ~~for~~ for more than a week by the Vietnamese and American military commands here. Other sources believe the Communists will turn more and more towards political agitation, subversion, attracting urban ~~disse~~ dissidents, propaganda and terroristic activities as the ~~spearhead~~ spearhead to destroy the Thieu government, with military forces playing a distinctly supporting role.

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alliance 4 (normass/deepe)

The short-range, immediate significance of announcing the national-level committee members of the Alliance last week-end is considered by Vietnamese political sources to be:

1. This is the first known migration of as many as ~~nine~~ <sup>ten</sup>

personalities of what ~~amounts~~ amounts to the upper-crust, snob-set Vietnamese moving to the pro-Communist side since 1960 when the National Liberation Front ~~itself~~ itself was established. This is not considered an outright defection of pro-American, anti-Communists to the pro-Communist camp. The important members of the announced Alliance are not ~~known~~ known here as anti-Communists; several have histories of pro-French leanings or pro-socialist and pro-leftist peace leanings or activities in the past. Yet, these committee members are not specifically known to Saigonese as Communists either, nor is there immediate, specific evidence of Communist backgrounds, informed sources report. While numerically insignificant in political terms, the ~~nine~~ <sup>ten</sup> personalities--intellectuals rather than politicians--are nevertheless considered as psychologically important in softening the attitudes of other urbanites towards the Communists. Communist radio broadcasts indicate more than the ~~nine~~ <sup>ten</sup> have been officially named to the committee, but ~~their~~ their names were not released.~~in~~

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alliance 5 (normass/deepe)

since 1964, Allied counterinsurgency experts here predicted--and feared--this specific moment when, as one said at the time, "the Communists will eventually ~~eventually~~ attract very respectable non-Communists to front for them--but behind the scenes the Communists will hold power. This will be a very clever ~~play~~ ploy by the Communists--and a very difficult one for the Allies to counter."

2. In terms of guerrilla geopolitics, the Communists have made political inroads into the cities at a time when militarily they are attempting to encircle some urban centers from the outskirts and when economically they are trying to strangle these populated centers from ~~produce~~ <sup>the countryside</sup> the countryside. In captured documents, the Communists have revealed that simply dominating the countryside to encircle the cities is indecisive for them; they must make gains in the cities and towns as well; that while the peasants are the foundation of the ~~revolution~~ their so-called revolution, the revolution will fail without either the passive or active cooperation of some middle and upper-class elements. The Alliance for ~~of~~ National, Democratic and Peace Forces, ~~acknowledged~~ <sup>though the individuals are neutralist and</sup> accepted widely in Saigon as Communist inspired and organized, is hence the first surfacing of these upper-crust elements actively joining the Communists in the ~~hideouts~~ <sup>hideouts</sup> their hideouts in the jungle of <sup>S</sup>R their Cambodian sanctuaries. These upper-crust elements are in addition to secret Communist agents and fifth-columnists ~~columnists~~ which have penetrated social and religious organizations in the cities as well as many ~~the~~ echelons of the anti-Communist government, <sup>police,</sup> and army.

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alliance 6 (normass/deepe)

"There's no indication this Alliance has a broad base," one informed source explained, "Nor does it claim to have. It is obviously a creation of ~~the National Liberation~~ and extension of the National Liberation Front and Hanoi, although this does not mean everyone in it is Communist. These individuals are not known for their political ~~skill~~ ability, but for their intellectual standing...."

"But unquestionably, there is alot of ~~con~~ political confusion in the cities," he continued. "There's alot of <sup>political</sup> ferment bubbling up and around. Slowly, Thieu and the government, in sort of a <sup>Slow</sup> glacier movement, ~~is~~ <sup>ARE</sup> trying to form a strong political structure which doesn't exist here, in order to get a broader national government. ~~But,~~ it is still in the formative stage, ~~and to be realistic,~~ and many ~~rel~~ realistic Vietnamese politicians believe that we are getting to the end of the shooting here--maybe in one month or one year. ~~But,~~ if the non-Communists are going to stand up against Communist pressure, the Thieu government ~~on~~ <sup>especially with t roots in the provinces,</sup> needs a political base, but these politicians find it hard to put aside their personal differences to build it. But, ~~evenx~~ I don't want to over-state the progress that has been made w towards that goal. Even if everything went according to schedule, ~~they cou the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~g~~ non-Communist non-Communists could not do it in a year. The essential problem is there is no political ideology on the non-Communist side. The nationalist political parties were important thirty years ago, but they're nothing now and ~~to~~ they have nothing new to offer the population."



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alliance 8 (normass/decpo)

*S.A.D.*  
Also during the Tet offensive, Communist radio broadcasts mentioned a Saigon capture chapter had been established, but no names were listed. Last week-end, both Liberation Radio and Hanoi Radio mentioned that the Saigon committee ~~extended~~ <sup>ED</sup> to expanded to mean the national-level committee) had met on April 20-21, <sup>outside Saigon:</sup> along with numbers of unnamed other persons, <sup>REPORTEDLY DREW UP THE ALLIANCE</sup> are listed their listed their program and leaders. Their program is described here as a carbon copy of the 14-point National Liberation Front program, issued last September, <sup>in</sup> the in terms of their main objectives of fighting the common enemies of the Thieu-Ky government and the Americans. However, the tone is less strident and the words are less biased: "the Americans" replaces the Communist language of "the American imperialists," for example.

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alliance 9 (normass/deepe)

al-LEVEL

The ten members listed as heading the nation-wide Alliance seemed to be well balanced between the three contained a mixture of the three regional divisions of Vietnam, North, Central and Southern; of various religious religious group groupings and of various professions, although heavily weighed towards lawyers, doctors and professors, which are consisted the well-educated educated layer of Vietnamese society.

The chairman was listed as Trinh Dinh Thao, a semi-retired Saigon lawyer, about sixty years of age. He was born in North Vietnam, but moved to the South at middle age "and spoke with a Southern dialect," one Southern mentioned. His law degree was earned from his studies in France; his son, also a lawyer, is married to the daughter of one of the richest jewelers in Saigon. Thao was considered by informed Saigonese to be "buddy-buddy" with Nguyen Huu Tho, head of the National Liberation Front; the two lawyers reported worked together in peace movements at the end of the French Indo-China War, when in 1954, he was reportedly arrested by the Saigon government and sent to Haiphong, still an open port for the exchange of persons refugees and soldiers before coming under Communist control. Thao was reportedly told if he wanted to side with the Communists he could stay up north and live with them. However, he reportedly left Haiphong and returned to South, some sources say via Paris. In 1965, he was again arrested for signing a pro-Communist peace petition and was one of three persons the Saigon government pushed across the was tried by a special tribunal and then released.

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alliance 10 (normass/deepe)

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"Thao is just another kind of hippie, but an old hippie,"  
<sup>one</sup> one Saigon who knew him explained. "He spends all day with his dogs. He has twenty dogs and he spends \$ 20,000 piastres (\$200) a month just for dog food. The rest of the time he just takes care of his mango grooves. <sup>(A SWEET FRUIT)</sup> They ~~the~~ Although the mangoes bring him in several hundred thousand piastres a year, he grows them just for their beauty."

Vice ~~Chair~~ Chairman Lam Van Tet is a Southern-born Cao Daist, a ~~religious~~ religious sect worshipping Buddha, Confucius, Victor Hugo and Jesus Christ. Tet was rather prominent in Saigon as the chairman of the All-Religions Citizens Front established in 1964 with the Rev. Hoang Quynh representing the Catholics, and others representing the Hoa Hao and Buddhists and Cao Daists. <sup>LAURETTE AD</sup> "Tet is kind of a professional chairman," one Saigonese ~~joked~~ explained. "He'd be chairman of any kind of group that asked him. And many groups asked him, ~~some~~ so he <sup>6</sup> would contribute to the group, ~~and~~ some because he <sup>is</sup> was such a nice man. He never got mad, no matter how much anyone criticized him, and if the group wouldn't let him talk, he'd just sit there and keep his mouth shut." He is reportedly rather elderly, ~~now~~, ~~he's~~ roughly seventy years old, and walks with a cane. While listed as an engineer, a more accurate translation would be a land surveyor; he is also a large landowner, which Viet Cong and Hanoi radio broadcasts conveniently <sup>1</sup> failed to mention. He ran for but lost his election to <sup>ENTER</sup> join the current ~~So~~ upper house of the legislature that is now in session.

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alliance ll (normass/deepe)

A second vice chairman <sup>is</sup> of the Buddhist monk Thich ~~Don~~ Don Hau, who is also de vice chairman of the Hue ~~chapter~~ <sup>chapter</sup> in Hue. He, like the chairman of the Hue grouping, are thought to be in hiding outside of Hue, where heavy fighting has taken place in the past few days between U. S. Army 1st Air Cavalry, <sup>101st</sup> 101st Airborne and North Vietnamese Army units.

Secretary General Duong Ky <sup>PEACE-LOVER</sup> was arrested for his anti-government actions in 1965, was one of three sent over the Ben Hai bridge to North Vietnam in 1966 that year, <sup>then</sup> he went to Paris and returned to Saigon in 1967, informed sources report. Active in the past <sup>BU</sup> Buddhist-inspired demonstrations and crisis against a succession of governments following the fall of <sup>Saig</sup> Ngo Dinh Diem, he was a<sup>2</sup> for a time a professor at the University of Hue and Hue universities.

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alliance 12 (normass/deepe)

Lidsted as assistance <sup>t</sup> secretary general is a rather well-known, wealthy woman doctor in Saigon, ~~duong quynh~~ Duong Quynh Hoa. (Now) in her late thirties ~~or early forties~~, she maintained a good medical practice of her own and left behind a fashionable villa on Hong Thap Tu Street, in the elegant French quarter. She had received her doctor's degree in France, and reliable sources who knew her said she was once engaged to a French Frenchman who was a member of the Communist Party. He died before they were married and she never wed anyone else. She was bitter for sometime, these sources say, because her ~~brother~~ brother, a lawyer in the resort city of Dalat, was murdered and robbed, supposedly by hooligans, in the early 1960s, <sup>B</sup> but she suspected that government agents during the Diem regime committed the crime. Her father, from ~~the~~ a wealthy Southern family, is a retired teacher at a French boy's school in Saigon.

"She's just a hippie," one ~~Saigon~~ Saigonese said, referring to Miss Hoa. "She's charming and rich. But why didn't she get married and enjoy life and help her clients who need a good ~~doctory~~ doctor? Instead she is going into politics, sacrificing her future for the dumb people in the countryside, just to be ~~food~~ fooled by the MACHIAVELLIAN Communists."

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alliance 13 (normass/deepe)

she had been arrested by the government of Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky in 1965 and later was released by that same government.

A second assistant secretary general was ~~1966~~ listed as Le Hieu Dang, who was well known as deputy deputy chair chairman of the Saigon Study in Student Union, with headquarters on ~~to~~ the mainstreet of Saigon, in 1966 and 1967. He was known to have participated in the American-sponsored summer programs student programs which helped rebuilt and clean up some of Saigon's slum districts.

A third assistant secretary general, Thanh Nghi, is known as the author of a French-Vietnamese dictionary. He holds the equivalent of a master of arts degree from France. Nearly fifty, he is considered by anti-Communists as "sort of a beatnik," because of his short jagged haircuts. A frequent coffee-shop gossip, he was often accused of being on an announcer on Radio Catinat, Saigon's mythical rumor-mill, and was once put in jail for some of the distortions he mouthed. The government at the time ~~su~~ suspected him of working for the French intelligence agency in Vietnam.

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alliance 14 (normass/deepe)

Three others are listed as standing committee members. Educated in

RANCE

2 NV Nguyen Van Kiet ~~in 1964-1965~~ held a government position dealing with

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primary and middle-level education. ~~He holds a liberal arts degree~~ AS WELL AS A ~~WORK~~ TEACHING JOBS IN MERRIONG DELTA AND AT UNIVERSITY

the University of Saigon. Tran Trieu Luat graduated from the

Saigon ~~in 1967~~ was vice chairman of the Saigon Student

Union, lead anti-government demonstrations, and then became a

professor at the University of Saigon in the education department.

Little information is available, even from official sources,

about Nuyinh Van N Huynh Van Nghi, who ~~has~~ was not further identified

by the Communists.

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alliance 15 (normass/deepe)

SAIGON

The/reaction to the names of the committee members seemed to split into two broad categories. One, voiced by Southern businessmen and a few Northern refugees unable to flee the country, was: "These Alliance people are very rich. They have all kinds of (educational) degrees. They belong to upper-class families. If they can get along with the Communists, why can't we?"

Others, who have suffered bitter past experiences with the Communists, such as Northern politicians, explained in the words of one: "These Southerners haven't had any experience living under the Communists. The Communists are just using these Alliance people as figureheads, but they are not given any real power by the Communists. These Alliance people are dreamers; they are confused. The Communist appeal for cooperation in this case is as sweet as honey, but they will soon find out this honey is very sour."

(Hank: I'll send the second piece tomorrow. <sup>TOMMORROW</sup> I'm also flying to Cantho for one delta interview, returning to Saigon at nightfall. I'll try to file that story Saturday. Multithanks for your long letter and generous arithmetic. I'll get a ~~REPLY~~ <sup>REPLY</sup> off to you this week-end. Also, the embargo is breaking somewhat on the Ashau Valley operation, and we'll try to file something on that over the week-end or Monday. Regards. Bev).

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