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65 Professors In Saigon Urge Peace Moves

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From News Dispatches

SAIGON, Jan. 23—Sixty-five South Vietnamese professors called on "all the belligerent parties" today to extend the coming lunar new year cease-fire and start peace negotiations.

"The present conflict is seriously endangering the very existence of the Vietnamese people from both material and moral standpoints," the professors said in a statement. "Therefore every Vietnamese has the duty to contribute to the finding of a suitable way out for his fatherland . . .

"The complex differences between the official positions require subtle solutions that can only be reached after long deliberations and drawnout negotiations.

"In order to create a suitable atmosphere for such an open-hearted discussion between the belligerent parties, and above all to save thousands of people from death and suffering while a peaceful settlement is being sought, we appeal to all the belligerent parties to extend indefinitely the Tet cease-fire and to negotiate immediately a peaceful settlement."

The Tet standdown is scheduled to begin this weekend. The Vietcong say they will observe a seven-day cease-fire beginning Friday.

The Allies have announced they would observe a 36-hour cease-fire. This was originally scheduled to be 48 hours, but a government spokesman said last weekend this had been reduced because Saigon had learned the enemy would take advantage of the period to carry out supply missions.

The professors, most of whom are from the government-run University of Saigon, made no direct mention of the National Liberation Front in their statement. The NLF is the political arm of the Vietcong and the South Vietnamese government has stated repeatedly that it will not recognize it.

But the professors' appeal was directed to "all Vietnamese who have the responsibility in this land not to forfeit this precious opportunity

. . . to sit together, to recognize one another as Vietnamese in order to find a formula for peace based on the supreme interest of the nation."

On Jan. 10, a group of about a dozen South Vietnamese intellectuals released a six-page proposal calling for "the unification of the National Liberation front and the Republic of Vietnam." Apparently fearful of government reprisals, the drafters issued their statement anonymously.

South Vietnam's 17 Roman Catholic bishops have also issued a call for a start in negotiating an end to the war. The bishops said the Americans should stop bombing North Vietnam and that the North Vietnamese should stop infiltrating South Vietnam.

On the other side of the issue, a group of 300 Roman Catholic refugees who fled from North Vietnam more than a decade ago urged the Saigon government to reject any peace solutions initiated by the United States. They vowed to fight against any government coalition that included Communists.