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BANGKOK PAPERS SPECULATE ON INDOCHINA CEASE-FIRE

26 Oct POST

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Bangkok POST in English 26 Oct 72 p 4 D

[Article: "What a 'Leopard Spot Ceasefire' Entails"]

[Text] Saigon--Who would control how much of South Vietnam if a ceasefire is declared? Estimates of how much of South Vietnam's 65,950 square miles and how many of its 19 million people are in the hands of government troops or those of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, vary hugely between Hanoi, Saigon and Washington.

Geographically, the areas held by the communists could add up to about a third of the countryside, according to some unofficial surveys. Government sources, however, would probably set the proportion less than one-fifth.

What the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong hold in territory, however, they lack in population.

The problem is that nearly two decades of guerrilla war, and even the onslaught of more conventional warfare with North Vietnam's offensive starting last March 30, have left very undefined areas of control.

The near omnipresence of the communist forces has led to coining of the phrase "leopard spot ceasefire" to describe how the military positioning of both sides would look should the whistle finally be blown on the war.

Some statistics: U.S. officials in Saigon estimate that up to 1,000 out of over 10,000 hamlets in South Vietnam are now under North Vietnamese or Viet Cong control or have been evacuated in the face of communist attack.

Only five of the 241 district towns are held by the communist forces.

According to the same sources, about 510,000 people are still living in communist-controlled areas. The number of refugees from these areas is set at near the million mark.

The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong have a different version. A North Vietnamese news agency dispatch to mark six months of this year's offensive reported: "In the period, nearly 2,500,000 people seized their right to control in vast areas."

One generalisation often heard is that government troops control the cities and towns and the main highways, while the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese dominate big areas of the countryside in between. Thousands of square miles belong to no one.

28 Oct SIAM RATH

Bangkok SIAM RATH in Thai 28 Oct 72 p 3 D

[Editorial by Sumeru: "One Can Only Depend On Oneself"]

[Text] Rumors about the cease-fire in Indochina have been widely circulated in Washington, Paris, Moscow, Hanoi, Saigon, Vientiane and Bangkok. This speculation might come true in the near future, even at this moment while this editorial is being written.

Reports have poured in that the cease-fire might be declared tomorrow. The sooner the cease-fire is announced the better, since it means that the killings of fellow humans will stop in Indochina after 14 years of bloodshed. The cease-fire also means the beginning of peace, at least for a time being, so that the peoples involved will have an opportunity to seek ways to live in peace together.

However, if one carefully explores the current reality of the war in Indochina, one feels that such a cease-fire will be very shaky--since all parties concerned have not yet attained their goals. For example, North Vietnam has been unable to completely dominate South Vietnam. The establishment of a coalition government with the participation of the communist side in South Vietnam might not be realized and South Vietnam has failed to drive out all the North Vietnamese forces from its territory. There are at least 700,000 South Vietnamese people under the control of the North Vietnamese communists. In addition, when the North Vietnamese come to realize that they will not be able to conquer the South Vietnamese by using regular forces, they will certainly return to guerrilla tactics. Such developments will pose a serious problem for the international commission that will supervise a cease-fire.

The situation in Laos will not be much different either. Cambodia might be in an even more critical situation, because the communists have blandly refused to have any dialog with the Lon Nol Government and Sihanouk still regards himself as the legitimate chief of state of Cambodia and wants to topple the Lon Nol Government. His success is an arm's length away.

As for the United States, a cease-fire before 7 November means a landslide victory for President Nixon and his hope of withdrawing all U.S. forces from South Vietnam might come true. The future of Indochina will be decided by future developments. The one who reaps the most benefit from the cease-fire will be the United States. The Indochinese peoples will learn a very dear lesson: they can only depend on themselves. When one helps himself he has chosen the correct path.

THANOM HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE ON SOUTHERN SEPARATISTS

Bangkok Domestic Service in Thai 1300 GMT 26 Oct 72 D

[Text] Field Marshal Thanom Kittikhachon, chairman of the National Executive Council, told a press conference this morning, after the opening of the seminar at the National Institute for Development Administration, that all kinds of forces have been ordered to suppress the separatists, and reinforcements might be sent to the three border provinces in the south. The NEC chairman said that, at present, there is a small force of police in the three provinces, and a combined battalion with tanks and other heavy weapons in Pattani Province. He said the situation in Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani provinces is the work of separatists who want to set up a new state.

Asked about the reinforcement of Malaysian forces along the Thai border, the NEC chairman said that the forces were for the suppression of communist terrorists in Malaysia and have nothing to do with the separatist movement in Thailand. As for the report that some schools in Kelantan State of Malaysia told their students that Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat provinces belonged to Malaysia, the NEC chief said that the Thai authorities have known about this work by a certain group of persons in Kelantan for a long time. The Thai Government has asked for cooperation from the Malaysian Government regarding this. The NEC chairman said he hoped the situation will turn to the better since the opposition party in Kelantan has become cooperative with the Malaysian Government.