

CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENTS RELATING
TO VIETNAM: June 1969

LARRY A. NIKSCH
Analyst in Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs Division

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Summary

Major developments in June were the announcement by President Nixon of the first U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam at the conclusion of his meeting with President Thieu at Midway Island and the creation by the Communists of a Provisional Revolutionary Government in a dramatic move to improve their bargaining position. At Paris, both sides appeared to harden their positions, particularly on the political question, and no progress in the negotiations was discernible. Opposition to the war within the United States grew more vocal in June as certain high officials of the Johnson Administration joined with Congressional critics in urging a step-up in the pace of U.S. extrication. Developments also took place with regard to Cambodia and Laos' role in the war.

At the Midway meeting between Presidents Nixon and Thieu on June 8, President Nixon announced that the United States would withdraw 25,000 troops from Vietnam by the end of August. The President's statement and later pronouncements by Administration officials emphasized that the 25,000 would consist primarily of combat forces. The U.S. Command in Saigon subsequently named two brigades of the Ninth Infantry Division and part of the Third Marine Division as units to be withdrawn.

The timetable for U.S. troop withdrawals became a center of some controversy between the Administration and its critics. Nixon asserted at Midway that "further replacements of American troops will be considered at regular intervals", and Secretary Laird set August as the next target

date for a new assessment of the possibilities for additional force reductions. The July issue of Foreign Affairs contained an article by former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford in which he proposed the withdrawal of all American ground combat forces by the end of 1970. When asked about this at a news conference on June 19, President Nixon remarked that: "I would hope that we could beat Mr. Clifford's timetable." Administration spokesmen later emphasized that the President had not given a commitment to pull out all American combat forces by this date but had only expressed his hope that it could be done. However, Congressional critics including Senators Kennedy, Fulbright, and Mansfield said that they considered the statement to be a commitment.

The Communist announcement of the formation of a Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam composed of the National Liberation Front (NLF), the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, and other "patriotic organizations", came on June 10, two days after the Midway Conference. The new PRG stated that it would assume the place of the NLF in the Paris talks. It also published a program calling for the overthrow of the Saigon Government, the formation of a provisional coalition government, and other standard Communist demands. Within a week of its establishment, all Communist governments had extended diplomatic recognition to the NLF regime. By the end of June, eight non-communist countries had recognized the PRG, including Syria, the United Arab Republic, Sudan, Mauretania, Mali, People's Republic of South Yemen, Congo (Brazzaville), and Cambodia.

Subsequent Communist statements on the political question appeared to bear out the general assessment that the formation of the revolutionary government represented a hardening of the Communist position. Le Duc Tho declared on June 19 that there could be no settlement so long as President Thieu, Vice President Ky, and Premier Huong remained in office. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, new Foreign Minister of the PRG and the new chief NLF/PRG negotiator at Paris, said on June 20 that the United States must unconditionally withdraw all troops "and war material" from South Vietnam. In an interview with the Washington Post published June 23, Le Duc Tho rejected elections in South Vietnam supervised by either a mixed commission of Communists and non-Communists or an international commission. He reiterated that only a provisional coalition government could perform this function. Le Duc Tho harshly attacked President Nixon in the interview, accusing him of creating a false picture of progress in the talks in order to mislead U.S. public opinion.

The Allied position in June coalesced around the proposition that a political settlement in South Vietnam should be determined by a free expression of the will of the South Vietnamese people, preferably through elections. Presidents Nixon and Thieu emphasized this at Midway and rejected an imposed coalition government. Both the United States and South Vietnam downgraded the PRG, pointing out that it contained no new political elements and was just a new name for the NLF. President Nixon rejected the Communist demand for the ouster of Thieu, Ky, and Hyong; and a U.S. spokesman in Paris predicted "a rather rough summer" if Hanoi and the NLF persisted along this line.

Allied flexibility appeared on two points. The Midway communique and President Thieu's statement of June 9 indicated that the South Vietnamese leader was more open-minded on the matter of elections than previously and was prepared to discuss the matter with the Communists. Secondly, Secretary Rogers' June 5 news conference remarks plus subsequent press reports pointed to a shift in U.S. thinking on the method of supervising elections. The Administration now appears to have a plan for a mixed South Vietnamese supervisory commission composed of the Saigon Government and the NLF. Such a plan, the United States reportedly believes, offers the Communists a role in administering elections without acceding to their demand for a provisional coalition government.

Domestic criticism of the Nixon Administration's handling of Vietnam increased in June. Secretary Clifford's article plus the "commitment" interpretation given by Senators Kennedy, Fulbright, and Mansfield to the President's June 19 news conference reply to Clifford signified the growing cleavage. Clifford and former chief Paris negotiator Averell Harriman both proposed a sharp cut-back or suspension of U.S. ground operations designed to keep pressure on the enemy, and former deputy chief negotiator Cyrus Vance advocated a stand-still cease-fire. Senators Fulbright and Gore expressed apprehension that the United States was giving too much political support to the Thieu Government and that this constituted a major roadblock to the achievement of a political settlement.

Developments occurred in both Laos and Cambodia in June with perhaps important implications for Vietnam. In Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk publicly

attacked North Vietnamese-Vietcong use of his territory as a sanctuary and ordered the Cambodian armed forces to oust them. While continuing to criticize alleged U.S. violations of Cambodian soil, Sihanouk announced on June 11 the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States at the level of charges d'affaires. At the end of the month, American military sources in Saigon reported heavy fighting between Cambodian and North Vietnamese troops.

Premier Souvanna Phouma disclosed that Hanoi had unsuccessfully attempted to persuade him to ask the United States to stop the bombing of North Vietnamese units in Laos. Souvanna Phouma demanded that North Vietnam withdraw its forces from Laos in return for a bombing halt. At the end of June, the North Vietnamese attacked and captured Muong Soui, giving them control over the strategic Plain of Jars in northern Laos. Observers speculated that the Communists sought to improve their military position in order to strengthen their bargaining power in any future negotiations aimed at the re-establishment of the tri-partite coalition which the 1962 Geneva Accords had originally created.

Militarily, in South Vietnam, the Communists besieged and heavily shelled the Special Forces camp of Benhet throughout the latter half of June but broke off the assaults at the end of the month. They also attacked Tay Ninh City, near the Cambodian border, on June 19 but were driven back. U.S. intelligence and State Department officials disclosed that North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam had dropped off significantly in 1969 as compared to 1968, but they were uncertain as to whether this had political implications.

June 2: A New York Times article on the preparedness of the South Vietnamese armed forces concluded that performance was still spotty, ranging from good to abysmal. The article noted, however, that the South Vietnamese armed forces were equal to the Vietcong, but not to the "external" threat except when backed strongly by American firepower and logistics. The South Vietnamese forces have "grievous" shortages of top-quality officers and non-coms, "crippling deficiencies" in helicopters, fighter-bombers, trucks and artillery, inadequate medical facilities and crude logistical systems. Desertion rates remain high, but many deserters join other military units closer to home. For the most part, the South Vietnamese forces are fighting where the enemy is less concentrated and less heavily armed. The present force includes an army of 500,000 regular troops, 420,000 militiamen and 630,000 armed pacification workers, policemen and part-time home guards. The air force and navy each have 25,000 men.

Senator Everett Dirksen said in a Senate speech that Senator Edward Kennedy's criticism of the attack on Hamburger Hill "did jolt my estimate of his wisdom and judgment." Dirksen stated that such criticism would lower troop morale since it was a direct reflection on the judgment and competence of U.S. field commanders.

June 3: UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, announced that North Vietnam had invited a UNICEF representative to Hanoi to discuss a possible UNICEF aid program. This represented Hanoi's first official overture to the United Nations. It resulted from months of private negotiations between the organization and North Vietnamese officials in Paris. The thirty-nation executive board of UNICEF also approved an additional \$300,000 authorization of aid for South Vietnam. The visit by the UNICEF representative was expected to lay the groundwork for arrangements with Hanoi to aid North Vietnamese children "as soon as possible."

President Thieu said South Vietnam would fight without U.S. assistance before accepting a coalition government with the Vietcong. He stated that he had "already the answer" if President Nixon raised the subject of special elections in South Vietnam in which the Vietcong could participate. Thieu said that the replacement of U.S. troops by South Vietnamese soldiers would top his own list of subjects.

- June 3: (cont.) A Washington Post article reported that the South Vietnamese armed forces now have 1,045,500 men. This figure will be increased by nearly 100,000 men by the end of 1969. The regular forces total 430,000 men, or double the 1965 figure; the territorial or militia troops total 391,000, also twice the 1965 figure; paramilitary forces total 182,000. The air force has 18,000 men and the navy 21,000. The size of the air force is to be doubled, with 1,500 pilots to be trained. The navy will induct 8,000 more men this year and will assume responsibility for patrolling some rivers and canals. A new fleet of 300 helicopter gunships will augment the 100 helicopters the Vietnamese already have. Two 20-plane squadrons of A-37 jet attack bombers will be added to the one A-37 squadron and the one F-5 squadron already in the air force.
- June 4: Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman J. William Fulbright accused the Nixon Administration of following President Johnson's policies in Southeast Asia. Fulbright said he still hopes for a change but "another month is about as long as we can hope." He added that: "Then our responsibility as legislators is to bring about changes." With regard to prospects for a unilateral U.S. withdrawal of 50,000 to 100,000 troops from Vietnam, he stated that: "The action would indicate to me that we plan to continue controlling Vietnam by proxy....This way you'll get no settlement."
- June 5: Secretary Rogers stated at a news conference that the United States is "not wedded to any government in Saigon" but is committed to the principle that "the South Vietnamese people should have the right to decide their own future." He stated that "any government that represents the will of the people of South Vietnam is acceptable to the United States." He disclosed that the "constructive proposal of President Thieu that he negotiate directly with the NLF has so far received no response." He added that "we suspect that what they [the Communists] are interested in is to attack the present government, cause confusion and chaos and thereby impose a governmental structure on South Vietnam that will not represent the will of the people." Rogers said that such a solution "would not be acceptable" but that if some Communists were elected to the government in a free contest, "obviously that would be acceptable to us and obviously it would be acceptable to the South Vietnamese." With regard to elections in relation to the provisions of the South Vietnamese constitution, Rogers said "the particular kind of elections, their timing and what they would consist of" and "whether the constitution would permit certain candidates and certain labels on the ballot I think are subjects for negotiation by the South Vietnamese and the NLF." When asked whether the NLF could be part of a

June 5: mixed supervisory commission to supervise elections, Rogers (cont.) asserted: "What that body will consist of should be decided in the negotiations. We have to recognize that the other side would have to have some guarantee...that their votes could be cast without coercion and counted properly. And whether that would be supervised by an international group made up of outside nations or whether it would include the NLF or not, I don't know. I certainly would not be opposed to that. But I want to make it clear that that is not a coalition government."

Rogers also said the training of the South Vietnamese armed forces was moving at a "rapid pace" and emphasized that the U.S. commitment was "not open-ended." He refused to rule out the possibility that Presidents Nixon and Thieu would announce a withdrawal of some U.S. troops at their meeting on Midway Island June 8. He called on the Communists to release the names of American prisoners of war and permit visits to American prisoners by neutral observers. He added that this would be an encouraging factor in the Paris talks.

NLF spokesman Tran Hoai Nam said after the 20th plenary session of the new Paris meetings that the NLF had established "contacts" with Vietnamese political groups and individuals in both South Vietnam and in Paris to form a provisional coalition government. He mentioned the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces and "other peace forces." The session itself produced no visible progress. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge asked five questions about the NLF's ten point program: (1) Is "your side" prepared to carry out the principles of the 1954 Geneva Accords: regroupment and withdrawal of forces, non-intervention by either zone of Vietnam in the affairs of the other while the country was temporarily divided, and reunification through free choice. (2) Are North Vietnamese forces prepared to withdraw from South Vietnam? (3) Does your ten-point program mean that North Vietnam is prepared to withdraw its forces from Cambodia and Laos? (4) What are your views on international supervision of other aspects of a settlement beyond that mentioned in your tenth point? (5) Why does your side hesitate to enter into productive negotiations of a political settlement with the Government of the Republic of Vietnam?

President Thieu, according to an article in the New York Times, was "reliably reported" to be prepared to accept special elections in South Vietnam as part of a negotiated settlement of the war. According to the article, Thieu informed Western diplomats and certain South Vietnamese political figures that he can agree to the holding of special elections before the next nationwide balloting (scheduled for 1971) if such elections become a prerequisite to peace.

June 5: Former Vice President Humphrey proposed "an immediate stand-still cease-fire" in Vietnam followed by "free elections open to all political groups." He also proposed that an international peace-keeping corps "oversee the cease-fire, the withdrawal of all outside military forces and the elections."

Senator Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) called on President Nixon to persuade President Thieu to accept a political settlement of the war. The alternative, Gore said, is "the Thieu plan of permitting a piecemeal withdrawal of U.S. troops along with a commitment to keep many, many U.S. soldiers in Vietnam indefinitely to keep President Thieu in office."

American planes bombed North Vietnamese anti-aircraft batteries in North Vietnam which had shot down an unarmed U.S. reconnaissance plane. This was the first reported bombing in North Vietnam since November.

A group of 23 prominent South Vietnamese issued a peace plan calling for an immediate cease-fire, an interim "reconciliation" government, and withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese forces from the country. The group, calling itself the Committee for the Establishment of Progressive Nationalist Forces, is chaired by prominent lawyer and former minister Tran Ngoc Lieng and is composed of well-known businessmen, labor unionists, and Roman Catholics. They are reportedly linked with Saigon's militant Anquang Buddhists, who have often opposed government policies. (Washington Post, June 6).

June 6: The Cambodia journal Realities Cambodgiennes carried an editorial stating that: "The Vietnamese communist threat is both immediate and continued. We feel its effects within our very frontiers, since these invaders are already on our soil. They occupy certain portions of our territory in peripheral regions where they try to maintain themselves at all cost." The editorial referred to "the example of Laos before our eyes where the influence of Vietnamese communism is becoming stronger, even to the extent that this neighboring country is now threatened with being completely absorbed by North Vietnam within a short period of time." The editorial said that Vietnamese Communist activities in Laos and Cambodia represented "the enactment of a plan for the conquest of all of Indochina, whose objective is to transform Cambodia and Laos into mere provinces of a communist 'Greater Vietnam'...."

During testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chairman J.W. Fulbright said he feared that the Midway Island meeting would result in President Nixon "adopting" President Thieu "as our boy."

June 7: David Hoffman reported in the Washington Post that "reliable South Vietnamese sources" had said that President Thieu would seek the following commitments from President Nixon at their meeting on Midway Island: (1) That presidential elections be held in 1971 with the present South Vietnamese Government intact and in power. These elections, however, might be supervised by a quasi-independent international control commission, probably with Communist representation. (2) That the elections be within the framework of the South Vietnamese constitution. (3) That as part of any peace settlement, North Vietnam publish and agree to a timetable under which Hanoi army units would be withdrawn from the South. U.S. forces would withdraw within the same period and in comparable numbers.

U.S. casualties for the week ending June 7 totaled 252 killed and 2,125 wounded. South Vietnam listed 457 killed and 1,391 wounded. Communist killed was placed at 4,035. U.S. troop strength stood at 537,500.

June 8: President Nixon met with President Thieu at Midway Island and announced that the United States would withdraw 25,000 troops from Vietnam in July and August. Nixon described those to be withdrawn as "combat forces" and said they would be replaced by South Vietnamese forces. The President asserted that "further replacements of American troops will be considered at regular intervals" in the light of three criteria: progress in the training of South Vietnamese forces, progress in the Paris peace talks, and the level of enemy activity.

In their joint communique, Nixon and Thieu "agreed that application of the principle of self-determination required that the people be able to choose without interference or terror. They rejected Communist attempts to pre-determine the outcome of future elections before they are held." The communique went on: "The two Presidents confirmed their conviction that the form of government under which the people of South Vietnam will live should be decided by the people themselves. They reiterated their common resolve to reject any attempt to impose upon the Republic of Vietnam any system or program or any particular form of government, such as coalition, without regard to the will of the people of South Vietnam. They declared for their part they will respect any decision by the people of South Vietnam that is arrived at through free elections." With regard to international supervision, they said "it would be appropriate to offer guarantees and safeguards for free elections" and "provisions for international supervision could be written into the political settlement." They added that "the essential element of any

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June 8: arrangement on withdrawal of non-South Vietnamese forces is that there be adequate assurances and guarantees of compliance with the terms of the arrangement." They also declared "that withdrawals could commence simultaneously and proceed expeditiously on the basis of a mutually acceptable timetable, that all externally introduced forces would have to be withdrawn not only from South Vietnam but also from Laos and Cambodia, and that the further introduction of forces into these countries must be prohibited." Thieu described to Nixon his government's plan for village and hamlet elections and "laid particular stress on his pursuit of a vigorous land redistribution program that would give the land to those who work it."

U.S. officials with President Nixon at Midway included Secretary of State William Rogers, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, Henry Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, General Creighton Abrams, the U.S. commander in Vietnam, and Adm. John McCain, commander of American forces in the Pacific. President Thieu had with him Foreign Minister Tran Chanh Thanh, Defense Minister Nguyen Van Vy, General Cao Van Vien, chairman of the Joint General Staff, Nguyen Phy Duc, of President Thieu's staff, and Bui Diem, South Vietnam's ambassador to the United States.

June 9: President Thieu said upon his arrival in Saigon from Midway Island that "there will be no coalition government, no peace cabinet, no transitional government, not even reconciliatory government." On the subject of possible elections, he stated: "When the other side shows good will and sits down at the negotiating table, then we will discuss that election question." He said that "everything can be discussed at the negotiating table."

Secretary Laird said that the 25,000 U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Vietnam would be "heavily weighted" with Army and Marine combat forces. He described this as "the first increment" and asserted that August was the next "target date" for considering further withdrawals. He also disclosed that the U.S. troop level had been allowed to drop by about 5,000 since February 1969--from a high of 543,054 on February 20 to 538,500.

The NLF delegation in Paris declared that the American decision to withdraw 25,000 troops from Vietnam represented "only a grain of sand thrown in an ocean and in no way affects the continuation and intensification of the war." The North Vietnamese delegation stated that "Mr. Nixon follows in the footsteps of Mr. Johnson" by trying to keep the Saigon Government in power.

June 10: The NLF announced the formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces; and other "patriotic organizations." NLF sources in Paris said that Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, number two member of the NLF delegation in Paris, had been named foreign minister of the PRG and would become head of the delegation. Tram Buu Kiem, present head of the NLF delegation, would return to South Vietnam. Radio Hanoi, which broadcast the Front's announcement, stated that the "duty" of the new regime was to "overthrow the present government and take control of all South Vietnam's internal and external affairs."

President Nixon said upon his arrival in Washington that the United States had "opened wide the door to peace" and that North Vietnam could respond to the withdrawal of 25,000 American troops by withdrawing its forces "or by negotiating in Paris, or through both avenues." The President stated that the Midway conference had made three points: that South Vietnam could take over "a substantial part of the combat activities presently being borne by Americans", that President Thieu "completely approves and supports" the U.S. eight point peace plan, and that the war had now reached the point where "we can begin to bring Americans home."

Secretary Laird stated that the Defense Department would spend about \$36 million in the remainder of fiscal 1969 and about \$120 million in fiscal year 1970 to improve the fighting effectiveness of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. Laird said that American forces "should not remain in substantial numbers indefinitely to contain the North Vietnamese threat, if a negotiated settlement proves unobtainable." The bulk of the funds will reportedly be used to procure equipment for the South Vietnamese Army. Laird also asserted that he had added \$25 million to the fiscal 1969 budget to maintain the level of B-52 sorties in South Vietnam at 1,800 per month. He said that because of "budget stringencies" the 1,800 sortie level could not be continued in fiscal 1970.

Secretary Rogers said that the planned withdrawal of 25,000 U.S. troops "provides an opportunity for the North Vietnamese, if they are interested in de-escalating this war, to respond by withdrawing their forces to North Vietnam." He described the Communist reaction to the announcement as "a pretty good sign that they are not happy with the action President Nixon has taken and that they are upset." He termed it "a discouraging thing" from the enemy's standpoint, because it showed that South Vietnamese forces were becoming stronger.

June 10:
(cont.) George Sherman reported in the Washington Star that White House sources had revealed that the Nixon Administration decided in February 1969 to begin the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. After three months of study, the Administration decided to withdraw 25,000 initially. The sources, according to Sherman, asserted that no decision on future withdrawals would be made until President Nixon reviewed the impact of the first withdrawal.

U.S. military analysts in Saigon reported that all known Communist infantry regiments had left their Cambodian sanctuaries north and west of Saigon and were now operating inside South Vietnam. (Washington Post, June 11).

The world Communist summit conference in Moscow urged Communists, workers, and other "progressive forces" to obstruct American shipment of troops and supplies to Vietnam. It also proclaimed June 20 as "international day of solidarity with Vietnam."

An eight-member American study team in South Vietnam from May 29 to June 5 said the Saigon government uses torture and brutality to suppress opposition. The team's report said the South Vietnamese government relied "more upon police state tactics and American support to stay in power than upon true representation and popular support." The group said present conditions would prevent South Vietnam from developing the kind of strong, democratically elected government that could resolve differences with the Vietcong. The group said that it had asked President Thieu, while it was in South Vietnam, to release Truong Dinh Dzu and Thich Thien Minh.

June 10-
11:

Chalmers Roberts of the Washington Post and a Washington Star staff writer (unnamed in the article) reported that White House sources had asserted that President Thieu had accepted at the Midway conference the concept of genuine self-determination for South Vietnam and was willing to risk the political life of his regime in elections in which the Vietcong could participate. The core of the Nixon-Thieu agreement called for a free election with guarantees of fairness to all parties. The Star staff writer declared that the Allied objective, as stated by the White House sources, "is to work out a formula which will reflect the real political balance of the country in the future government." Both Nixon and Thieu, according to the sources, agreed that genuine self-determination could not be achieved through the creation of a coalition government; the United States, however, would accept a coalition if brought about through elections. The Star staff writer

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June 10-
11 (cont.) stated that the sources had revealed that the section of the Nixon-Thieu communique stating that an international body "could" be included in the final political settlement reflected the desire to be flexible on this issue--possibly opening the way for negotiations with the Communists about other types of election commissions, including an all-Vietnamese commission with NLF members. Both Roberts and the Star staff writer said the sources maintained that U.S. officials did not know whether or not the Communists would accept a settlement based on free elections.

June 11: The Provisional Revolutionary Government announced that it would replace the NLF at the Paris talks. The NLF's Tran Buu Kiem said in Paris that the PRG could be enlarged to include "other patriotic groups." (He apparently made this statement in response to Allied officials who had pointed out that none of the announced officials of the revolutionary government came from outside the NLF or the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces). Kiem described the government as an intermediary leading to formation of a provisional coalition government. He rejected, however, secret talks with the Saigon Government, saying that "private meetings with this handful of traitors would not contribute anything towards a solution of the Vietnamese problem."

The NLF's Liberation Radio broadcast the text of the "program of action" of the PRG. The program declared that the PRG was "prepared" to enter into consultations with "political forces representing the various social strata and political tendencies" in South Vietnam that stand for peace, independence and neutrality "with a view to setting up a provisional coalition government." The coalition government would "organize general elections in order to elect a constituent assembly, work out a democratic constitution... and set up a coalition government." The program called for re-establishment of "normal relations" between North and South Vietnam, with the two zones reaching agreement "on the status of the demilitarized zone." Reunification of Vietnam would be achieved "step by step, by peaceful means, through discussions and agreement between the two zones, without constraint from either side." This and other references to foreign policy are similar to those in the NLF program. The PRG program was more explicit, in its references to Cambodia and Laos; to carry out a "good-neighbor policy" toward Cambodia and pledged "respect for the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia in her present frontiers." The program also pledged to maintain a "good neighbor policy" toward the Kingdom of Laos on the basis of the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos.

June 11: President Thieu termed the NLF's revolutionary government a "new propaganda maneuver" conceived by Hanoi. He vowed never to recognize the PRG "as an independent entity." Thieu said the Communists miscalculated in timing their announcement: "They thought the United States would pressure us to accept a coalition government. Now everyone knows that the outcome of Midway is that we will never accept a coalition government." Thieu also noted that members of the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces were given only minor positions in the revolutionary government.

The South Vietnamese delegation at Paris issued a statement that the formation of a revolutionary government by the NLF came as "no surprise" and "added no more authority or additional significance to the NLF." It added that the new regime did create "additional obstacles to the negotiations." The statement noted the NLF's failure "to include in this new creation of their other people than their own."

Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk announced that diplomatic relations between his country and the United States would be established at the level of charges d'affaires. The State Department stated that the two countries had agreed to talks to work out the details of resuming diplomatic relations.

Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk charged at a press conference that "our Vietnamese socialist friends [the Vietcong] are communizing our people and overtly Vietnamizing our territory..." He also stated: "Since Vietnam intends to seize Cambodia, Cambodia is obliged to defend itself against the Vietnamese communists, though overt official relations are very cordial." Sihanouk asserted that there was "a large number of Vietcong in Svay Rieng" province (the closest Cambodian territory to Saigon) and detailed their activities. He accused the Vietcong of trying to detach Rattanakiri province (adjacent to South Vietnam's Central Highlands) from Cambodia and asserted that Cambodia would "fight with our own means to maintain our territorial integrity." He said that "at present there is war in Rattanakiri between Cambodia and Vietnam."

Thailand's Communications Minister, Dawee Chullasapya, said that Thailand would withdraw its troops from South Vietnam as soon as South Vietnamese forces could replace them. He stated that Thailand had asked the United States to make preparations for South Vietnamese forces to take over the fighting in areas where Thai troops now operated.

- June 11- The following countries extended diplomatic recognition to
 12: the NLF's revolutionary government: Algeria, Syria, North Korea, East Germany, Poland, Rumania, Cuba, Yugoslavia, North Vietnam, and Congo (Brazzaville).
- June 12: At the 21st session of the expanded Paris talks, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh appeared for the first time in her new role as "foreign minister" of the "Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam", which she described as "the genuine and legal representative" of the South Vietnamese people. She called on Communist and neutralist nations to grant diplomatic recognition and "stronger support" to the PRG. Mrs. Binh described the Midway conference as "a political farce" and said the announced withdrawal of 25,000 American troops from South Vietnam was "mere tokenism." She called "on the American people" to "continuously and resolutely demand that the Nixon Administration put an end to the costly war in Vietnam and withdraw all U.S. troops." South Vietnam's Pham Dang Lam described the NLF and its government as "a tool and creation" of North Vietnam. He called on the Communists to work out "a just and genuine peace in which there is no winner and no loser...." He added that "many" and other "important" U.S. troop withdrawals could take place if the Communists demonstrated goodwill "at this meeting and on the battlefield." Lam said that Saigon was "ready to discuss with all concerned parties military as well as political proposals, the withdrawal of external forces as well as the political future of South Vietnam." He stated that "the basis for discussion can be the points of similarity between the positions of both sides", asserting that some of the Communist ten points were "not too far" from the Allied position. After the meeting, South Vietnamese spokesman Nguyen Trieu Dan stated that the formation of the NLF revolutionary government "constitutes a hardening of the communist attitudes and shows their negative and more warlike attitude." U.S. spokesman Harold Kaplan asserted that the new government presented "some complications" but noted that during the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-1940, the Soviets set up similar organizations in "liberated areas" in Finland that were forgotten when Moscow signed a peace treaty with the Finnish government.

The Saigon government announced new taxes on imported goods. The taxes are expected to bring in five or six billion piasters in additional revenue in 1969. They are in accord with the stabilization agreement reached in May between Saigon and Washington. This called for new revenue measures to counter inflation and reduce the 1969 budget deficit. The United States had asked for this agreement before releasing the last \$40 million of this year's economic assistance to South Vietnam.

June 12: Hanoi described the PRG as "the legal government and the authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people" and said that it had agreed "to raise the representation of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation in the North to the special status of special representative of the Republic of South Vietnam."

A Senate Appropriations subcommittee released testimony given before it in April by Major General Henry A. Miley, Jr., and Brigadier General Donnley P. Bolton. Miley estimated that it would cost \$6.2 billion to modernize the South Vietnamese army and that the modernization process "has a long way to go."

June 13: The U.S. Command in Saigon said that two brigades of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division and a regimental landing team of the 3rd Marine Division would be withdrawn from South Vietnam by the end of August and replaced by South Vietnamese troops. The Pentagon said that 16,000 of the initial 25,000 man pull-out would be redeployed in Okinawa, Japan and Hawaii.

The Soviet Union, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Mongolia recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government. Other countries recognizing the PRG by the end of June included Cambodia, Communist China, Peoples Republic of South Yemen, United Arab Republic, Albania, Mauritania, Sudan and Mali. This brought the number of countries recognizing the PRG to twenty-three.

June 14: The Saigon government suspended publication of the English-language Saigon Daily News after it printed a column mildly critical of Premier Tran Van Huong. This was the 32nd daily newspaper to be suspended since press censorship was formally abolished a year ago. The editor and publisher of the Daily News was arrested two months ago on charges of having engaged in "activities profitable to the Communists and harmful to the public security."

The U.S. Command in Saigon issued figures showing that for the month of May the number of South Vietnamese living in "relatively secure" areas had risen to 84.2 percent, a rise of 0.9 percent since April.

U.S. casualties for the week ending June 14 totaled 335 killed and 1,695 wounded. South Vietnam listed 516 killed and 1,424 wounded. Communist killed was placed at 4,504. U.S. troop strength stood at 536,500.

June 15: The official press of Laos published the text of an interview of Premier Souvanna Phouma by the Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun. The Premier stated: "The bombings carried out by American aviation in the frontier regions of Laos are a dead weight which stems from the Geneva Accords of 1962. At Geneva the signatories of the Geneva accords guaranteed the independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of Laos. The moment a signatory does not respect these accords, it is the duty of all the other signatories to intervene to make him respect them. If North Vietnam wants the bombing to stop it must withdraw its troops from Laos." The Premier said that the North Vietnamese Ambassador had in May "demanded that we stop the bombing, which would be tantamount to giving the Neo Lao Hak Sat (Pathet Lao) and the North Vietnamese aggressors a great military advantage."

Cyrus Vance, former deputy chief negotiator at Paris, proposed a "standstill" cease-fire by all sides in Vietnam.

Communist China recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government and urged it to fight until "complete victory." The Peking statement said that the Nixon-Thieu talks at Midway Island proved that the United States "will never carry out unconditionally the withdrawal of all" its forces from South Vietnam "nor will they ever agree to the establishment of a revolutionary coalition government...." Premier Chou En-Lai said that the NLF mission in Peking was now recognized as the Embassy of the PRG.

June 18: In an article in the July issue of Foreign Affairs, former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford proposed the withdrawal of all American ground combat forces from Vietnam by the end of 1970. He also suggested that American military commanders be instructed to discontinue the policy of applying maximum military pressure on the enemy and instead to seek to reduce the level of combat. Clifford stated that while American ground forces were being withdrawn, the United States should continue to provide South Vietnam with logistic support and air support; withdrawal of this support would be determined on the basis of political and military developments. Clifford said his policy would confront North Vietnam with the dilemma of continuing the war in the face of a prolonged American presence or of "tacitly or explicitly" agreeing to a mutual withdrawal of U.S. and Hanoi forces. It would also force the Saigon Government to "recognize...that American objectives do not demand the perpetuation in power of any one group of South Vietnamese." It would place pressure on President Thieu to make room in his government "for individuals representative of other nationalist elements in South Vietnamese society."

- June 18: President Thieu declared he would never allow South Vietnam (cont.) to fall to Communism: "I would like to reaffirm that I will not let South Vietnam fall into the hands of the Communists, directly or indirectly, immediately or eventually."
- June 19: President Nixon stated at a news conference that "there is no substantial evidence, publicly, to report" with regard to substantive negotiations at Paris but that "we hope within the next two or three months to see some progress in substantive discussions." When asked about former Secretary of Defense Clifford's proposal that 100,000 U.S. troops be withdrawn from Vietnam by the end of 1969 and that the remaining ground combat troops be pulled out by the end of 1970, President Nixon replied that another decision on troop withdrawals would be made in August and would "depend upon the extent of training of the South Vietnamese, as well as developments in Paris, and the other factors that I have mentioned previously." He added that: "I would hope that we could beat Mr. Clifford's timetable." The President said that he had checked into the relationship between U.S. and enemy operations and the level of American casualties and had found "that our casualties are in direct ratio to the level of enemy attacks." He proposed "that if the enemy now will withdraw forces, one-tenth of its forces, as we have withdrawn one-tenth of our combat forces, that would tend to reduce the level of fighting." President Nixon described the NLF provisional revolutionary government as "simply a new name for the same activity that was there previously, the NLF or National Liberation Front, as it was called." He called on the provisional government to "agree to internationally supervised elections" and stated the U.S. position toward a political settlement: "As far as the United States is concerned, we will accept any decision that is made by the people of South Vietnam, but we think that the provisional government should join with the Government of South Vietnam, and any other political parties in South Vietnam, in participating in supervised elections." He added that President Thieu "has supported our position that we have made, and I know will be making an offer of his own with regard to a political settlement." He asserted that "we are not going to accede to the demands of the enemy that we have to dispose of President Thieu before they will talk." The President also endorsed the concept of cease-fire as long as it was guaranteed and supervised by "an international force or some outside force."

June 19: The 22nd session of the expanded Paris peace talks produced no visible progress. North Vietnamese Politburo member and supervisor of the Hanoi delegation at the conference, Le Duc Tho, referred later to President Thieu, Vice President Ky, and Premier Huong and said "those three must go." He added that as long as they remained in office, "there is no hope for any settlement...." He denied that North Vietnam believed the conference to be futile as long as the Saigon Government participated, claiming instead that the Thieu regime "is opposed to peaceful settlement." He stated that: "You know, each party expresses its views...the views are too far apart... but views should be expressed until our views will be accepted." He added that if the United States did not concede to Communist demands, "even the chairs will be worn out, but the conference will go on." Ambassador Lawrence Walsh said that the United States still awaited "your response to our questions" asked on June 5 about the NLF's ten point program.

June 19-20: Communist forces launched six separate attacks on the city of Tay Ninh, fifty miles northwest of Saigon. Some 300 Communists broke into an outlying district of the city.

June 20: A spokesman for the U.S. delegation at Paris said that: "The declaration of Le Duc Tho to the effect that those three [President Thieu, Vice President Ky, and Premier Huong] must be thrown out before they will even have a negotiation augurs a rather rough summer because this is out of the question. There cannot be a political negotiation if the other side is to determine who the interlocuters are."

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, the PRG's new chief negotiator at Paris, stated: "It is necessary that the Americans withdraw not only all their troops, but all their material, and that without condition." She rejected the proposal of mutual troop withdrawal, saying: "The Americans are the aggressors and must withdraw. But the Vietnamese evidently cannot withdraw from their own country." Mrs. Binh said that to pull out all U.S. ground troops while leaving "logistic support" behind "means leaving the U.S. Air Force and artillery behind which can only be a prolongation of the war under a different form. How can we possibly accept such a thing? Impossible." She repeated: "Mr. Nixon must know one thing: we demand the total and unconditional withdrawal of all troops...and war material."

June 20: The Information Ministry announced in Saigon that publishers of daily newspapers must submit three copies of each issue (cont.) to the government two hours before they go on sale. Previously, proofs of articles were required before printing. A Ministry spokesman said that if an issue contained articles "harmful to the national policy or helpful to the Communist cause" it could be confiscated and the publisher charged with violation of the government press code.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry reacted strongly to a reference by Clark Clifford in Foreign Affairs that Thailand "was in no hurry to allocate" additional troops to South Vietnam. The Foreign Ministry statement said that Thailand had only one battalion of troops in South Vietnam at the time of Clifford's visit (in 1967) but that after President Johnson met with Thailand's King and Prime Minister in 1968 "we soon increased our contribution and now we have one division of Thai troops in Vietnam."

Pentagon sources indicated that U.S. ground combat elements in South Vietnam constituted about 263,000 men, or about sixty percent of the total army and Marine strength of slightly under 440,000. When President Nixon referred to withdrawal of one tenth of all ground combat forces, he was referring to one tenth of the 263,000 figure. In using the term "combat forces", President Nixon was including both combat troops such as infantry and direct combat support troops such as artillery. The Pentagon described the entire U.S. ground combat strength in Vietnam as slightly more than ten division equivalents: seven army and two Marine divisions and five regiments not attached to divisions (Washington Post and Washington Star, June 21, 1969).

June 21: Herb Klein, the Nixon Administration's communication director, stated that the "President made no commitments; the President made no promise, but he expressed a hope that this could be done." Klein was referring to President Nixon's May 19 news conference statement that he hoped that "we could beat Mr. Clifford's timetable" calling for the withdrawal of all U.S. ground combat forces from Vietnam by the end of 1970.

Senate Democratic Leader Mike Mansfield and assistant party leader Senator Edward Kennedy told reporters that they regarded President Nixon's May 19 remarks about the withdrawal of all U.S. ground combat troops from South Vietnam by the end of 1970 as a firm schedule for a substantial American withdrawal from Vietnam. They said they would support such a move.

June 21: The Associated Press reported that Allied commanders were increasingly concerned over the upsurge in the level of fighting near the DMZ in view of the scheduled withdrawal of the 9th Marine Regimental Landing Team and support units from that zone of operations. The AP said that intelligence reports indicated that two fresh North Vietnamese regiments with some 2,500 men each had moved into South Vietnam just south of the DMZ. One enemy regiment, the 57th, came in from Laos while the second, the 36th, infiltrated through the DMZ itself. U.S. Marine sources said the 36th appeared to be replacing either the 27th or the 244th North Vietnamese regiments. (Washington Star and Washington Post, June 22).

Radio Phnom Penh quoted Prince Sihanouk as saying that the Vietcong had signed a paper admitting that its troops had violated Cambodia's territory. In signing the paper, according to Sihanouk, the Vietcong pledged "strict respect for Khmer territory...and promising once peace has been restored over there that they will no longer dare to stay on Khmer territory but will leave it immediately." The radio also quoted Sihanouk as stating: "The Viet Cong and Viet Minh (North Vietnamese) are present everywhere in Svayrieng Province."

Averell Harriman, former chief U.S. negotiator at Paris, said the United States "should take a more defensive military position in Vietnam", shifting its forces to the cities as American troops are withdrawn. "This course would cut the casualties", Harriman stated, "and there's a reasonable prospect the other side would respond and de-escalate." Harriman added that "we will not come to a political settlement until we abandon our attempt to improve our military position" and that "the first order of business" should be to seek a "mutual reduction in the fighting."

U.S. casualties for the week ending June 21 totaled 247 killed and 1,686 wounded. South Vietnam listed 474 killed and 1,496 wounded. Communist killed was placed at 3,988. U.S. troop strength stood at 537,500.

June 22: Lt. Colonel Tran Van Lam, press secretary for President Thieu, stated that a Reuters report that Thieu was planning to set up an advisory council to organize a joint election commission with the Vietcong was "a complete fabrication." Reuters earlier had reported that Thieu would soon announce such a plan. When asked if Thieu ruled out such a plan, Lam said: "He doesn't rule it out. He doesn't rule anything out. Everything can be negotiated."

June 22: President Thieu said in a speech that South Vietnam's armed forces were able to "shoulder major responsibility on the battlefields and reduce the allied contribution of manpower and lives." He added that "we have already started and will continue to reduce the allied contribution in manpower."
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Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, J. William Fulbright, said on ABC's "Issues and Answers" that the committee would hold new hearings on the Vietnam War. He stated that critics of Administration policy wanted President Nixon to "make a movement that would indicate a hope that he was moving toward a change in the war and a de-escalation or stopping it, but nothing happened." He said that President Nixon's speech at the Air Force Academy in which he attacked the views of "neo-isolationists" in the United States and his meeting with President Thieu at Midway confirmed Fulbright's "fears that he was not going to change the Johnson policy." Fulbright asserted that he regarded as a "commitment" President Nixon's remark at his June 19 news conference that: "I hope we could beat Mr. Clifford's timetable."

Garnett Horner reported in the Washington Star that "a close aide" of President Nixon had in an interview pictured the President as anxious to avoid getting trapped in the "talk-fight" strategy, which the Communists seemed to be pursuing in Vietnam. While the aide refused to discuss the specific steps the President may have in mind, he said that President Nixon's expression of hope that the United States could withdraw all ground combat forces from Vietnam by the end of 1970 represented "no comfort for the doves." The aide stressed that Nixon rejected a unilateral cease-fire, unilateral de-escalation, unilateral withdrawal, and a coalition government. The President, the aide said, "stood firmly" with the South Vietnamese government of President Thieu. The aide also said that future withdrawals of American troops would depend to a large extent on what the other side did.

Max Frankel reported in the New York Times that the Nixon Administration was formulating a peace plan which would offer the Vietcong a relatively secure minority position in South Vietnam, including local authority in districts they control and possibly the right to keep arms there. Frankel stated that elections still figured prominently in Administration thinking. He said that the Administration felt that elections could be arranged in such a way as to reflect the relative military and political strengths of the Saigon Government and the Vietcong and that they could assure the Vietcong a minority voice in the postwar Saigon Government. Elections could also give the

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June 22: Vietcong greater voice in provincial and district governments, (cont.) including control of regions in which they now wield effective power. Moreover, according to Frankel, the Administration was considering the possibility that a new or amended South Vietnamese constitution could create a kind of federal structure with specified administrative functions reserved to local authorities.

June 23: The South Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issued a statement that all elections in South Vietnam "must be held in strict observance of the current laws and regulations." The statement denied reports that President Thieu might seek a constitutional amendment to permit special elections as part of a peace settlement.

North Vietnamese forces attacked a besieged Special Forces camp at Benhet in the Central Highlands. The camp had been surrounded by approximately 2,000 Communist troops for several weeks. The camp was occupied by about one hundred American artillerymen and military advisers and by 500 South Vietnamese soldiers and several hundred of their dependents. A column of tanks and armored cars led a convoy carrying supplies into Benhet on June 24.

Chalmers Roberts reported in the Washington Post that while the Nixon Administration still spoke of international supervision of elections in South Vietnam, it was moving closer to the idea of a mixed commission as the instrument of supervision. Such a commission would be composed of representatives of the Thieu Government and the NLF's provisional revolutionary government. Roberts said that U.S. officials expected Thieu to agree to such an approach although he had as yet given no commitment even in private.

Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's supervisor of the North Vietnamese delegation at Paris, said in an interview with the Washington Post that the Communists would reject a political settlement in South Vietnam based on elections supervised either by a mixed commission of Communists and non-Communists or by an international supervisory body. He stated that the Communist ten point peace proposal called for elections to be supervised by a provisional coalition government; he asserted: "And only in that way can fair and democratic elections be held...There is no other organization which can organize fair and democratic elections." With regard to international supervision, he declared; "The general election is an internal affair of the South Vietnamese people. There can be no international supervision under whatever form to supervise

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- June 23: these elections because such supervision would constitute interference in the internal affairs of the South Vietnamese people...." Le Duc Tho downgraded the importance of private talks at Paris and accused President Nixon of spreading rumors concerning private talks and progress in the negotiations in order "to create hope among the American people." He denied that "many secret meetings" had taken place and said that "no progress at all has been made in the meetings." He added that "our positions are very far apart." He accused the United States of "continuing to exert maximum military pressure on the battlefield." He charged that: "The amount of bombs and ammunition it used during the last five months can be said to have exceeded the bombs and ammunition used in every other period since the beginning of the war...." He described the Communist February-March offensive as "counter-attacks" intended "to give an answer to the intensified attacks of the United States...." He criticized the recent proposal of former Secretary of Defense Clifford, because in his words, "Mr. Clifford still wants to maintain in South Vietnam the U.S. Air Force and logistic troops to help the puppet troops to de-Americanize the war. This is the wrong point in his position." He described as an equally "wrong point" Clifford's position that "only after the withdrawal of what he called the North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam will the U.S. withdraw all its forces...As for us, we demand the U.S. troops and the troops of its allies be rapidly withdrawn from South Vietnam without any conditions being imposed." Le Duc Tho did say that if Clifford desired to withdraw troops more rapidly than President Nixon, this was "to some extent a positive aspect in his statement." He warned that "if Mr. Nixon is determined to pursue the war, U.S. casualties will increase...."
- June 24: Premier Tran Van Huong's government ordered local officials to release persons being held as suspected Vietcong without concrete evidence against them. The order also called for the release of persons who had been forced to work for the Vietcong. The move apparently was made in response to criticism from South Vietnamese legislators that government troops and police were arresting people illegally and extorting bribes in return for their release.
- June 25: White House Press Secretary Ron Ziegler described as "well thought out in advance" President Nixon's news conference statement that he hoped to beat former Secretary of Defense Clifford's proposed timetable for a withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from Vietnam. Ziegler emphasized that it was up to the Communists to end the impasse at Paris.

June 25: The United States Navy turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy (cont.) sixty-four river patrol gunboats valued at \$18.2 million in what was described as the largest single transfer of military equipment to the South Vietnamese armed forces thus far.

Military intelligence sources in Saigon reported, according to a New York Times article, continuing signs that enemy strategy is aimed at exerting as much control as possible over rural areas and their populations. At the same time, these sources believe that concerted attacks on small allied outposts are aimed at intensifying opposition in the United States to the war.

June 26: At the 23rd session of the expanded Paris talks, the Communists spurned Allied peace offers unless they involved unconditional withdrawal of American troops and the establishment of a provisional coalition government. After the meeting, NLF spokesman Duong Dinh Thao called for a "peace cabinet" in Saigon and rejected elections supervised by the "Thieu-Ky-Huong administration." At the session, itself, the NLF's Nguyen Thi Binh described the American proposal of a mutual troop withdrawal as "absurd." Col. Ha Van Lau, speaking for North Vietnam, said "the whole problem depends on the United States." Ha Van Lau accused President Nixon of issuing statements which were "merely a scene of the play staged by Mr. Nixon to appease and deceive public opinion in the United States and the world...." On the Allied side, Ambassador Lodge told the Communists that "we categorically reject your demand that we replace the legitimate government of the Republic of Vietnam." Lodge described the planned withdrawal of 25,000 American troops from Vietnam as "a significant step" and said that "further reductions" would take place. South Vietnam's Ambassador Pham Dang Lam accused the Communists of continuing to seek "total victory" rather than an end to the fighting. After the session, both U.S. and South Vietnamese spokesmen stated that North Vietnam could begin a process of mutual de-escalation by withdrawing troops from South Vietnam as the United States began its own withdrawal.

June 27: Chalmers Roberts reported in the Washington Post that American intelligence reports indicated a drop in troop infiltration from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. Roberts pictured U.S. analysts as uncertain as to whether this had any political significance or whether the infiltration had fallen off because North Vietnam already had enough men in the South for its expected summer offensive. Roberts also reported that the North Vietnamese 273rd Regiment with some 1,200 to 2,000 men had moved into Chaudoc province (bordering Cambodia) in the Mekong Delta about two months ago. This was, according to Roberts, the first infusion of a regular North Vietnamese line unit into the Delta.

June 27: The United States allocated \$10 million to support a radical new South Vietnamese land reform program which will give land to more than 800,000 rice farmers. The Thieu government is pushing for legislative approval of the program, which will involve expropriation of 3.2 million acres of rice land; the present owners would receive twenty percent cash payment and the remainder in eight-year bonds. The three-year program would cost an estimated \$400 million, ten percent of which the Saigon government hopes to get from the United States.

June 28: U.S. sources in Saigon stated that preliminary figures showed that North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam during the first five months of 1969 had been forty percent lower than in the same period in 1968. The figures showed about 10,000 Communists a month entering South Vietnam in 1969 as against just under 17,000 a month in 1968. (Washington Post, June 29).

U.S. casualties for the week ending June 28 totaled 241 killed and 1,674 wounded. South Vietnam listed 446 killed and 804 wounded. Communist killed was placed at 3,485. U.S. troop strength stood at 539,500. Total U.S. killed in combat since January 1, 1961 was 36,866, while the total of noncombatant deaths reached 6,142. Total U.S. wounded was 236,563. Total South Vietnamese killed was 81,661, while enemy killed reached 523,704.

U.S. military sources in Saigon stated that heavy fighting had taken place between North Vietnamese troops and Cambodian army units. The Cambodians were trying to drive the North Vietnamese from sanctuaries in Cambodia from which the Communists had launched attacks into South Vietnam. The informants stated that the heaviest Cambodian attack was launched against North Vietnam's Bo Ba Tay base camp located ten miles from South Vietnam's Tay Ninh city. The Manila Herald published an interview with Prince Sihanouk in which he allegedly asserted that his armed forces were making "good progress" in the campaign. It quoted Sihanouk that: "Recent success achieved (included) destroying Khmer Viet Minh Communist cells (and) reoccupation of villages and strategic centers...temporarily under Vietnamese Communist and Khmer rebel control."

Military sources in Vientiane, Laos, reported that North Vietnamese forces had captured Muong Soui, giving the Communists complete control of the strategic Plain of Jars in northern Laos. In London, Laotian Premier Souvanna Phouma said the attack on Muong Soui amounted to an "invasion" from North Vietnam. Tammy Arbuckle, reporting in the Washington Star from Vientiane on June 27 and 28, stated that the ultimate Communist objective appeared to be

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- June 28: to win control of all the territory that had been allotted to the Laotian neutralists under the 1962 Geneva Accords. At that time, Souvanna Phouma, leader of the neutralist faction, became Premier in the new Tripartite Coalition Government, which also included Communists and rightists. Arbuckle said the Communists would probably place their own pro-Communist "neutralists" in theoretical control of the newly won territory. This would, according to Arbuckle, give the Pathet Lao and North Vietnam an opportunity to increase Communist influence in any re-constituted coalition government that might be set up in the future. Arbuckle also reported that "informed sources" had said that U.S. rocket-firing helicopters had participated in the battle for Muong Soui along with Thai artillerymen.
- June 29: After several days of heavy shelling, enemy attacks on the Special Forces Camp of Benhet dropped off sharply. Officers at the camp speculated that the North Vietnamese either had pulled back to regroup or were lying low while receiving supplies and replacements from Cambodia and Laos.
- June 30: Members of South Vietnam's House of Representatives disclosed that ninety members of the 135 House members had signed a petition asking President Thieu to dismiss Premier Tran Van Huong. The House - with a bare quorum of sixty-eight members present for the vote - had on June 16 called for a special joint session of Parliament to consider a motion of non-confidence in Premier Huong. A major reason for Premier Huong's unpopularity was the recent imposition of tax increases on about 180 imported items. Many of those who voted for the joint session were members of The People's Progressive Bloc, a forty-six member group that has consistently supported President Thieu.

The NLF threatened "certain and inescapable revenge" on U.S. and South Vietnamese prisoners in its hands in retaliation for-- according to the Front--the murder of Communist prisoners in Allied hands. U.S. officials said on July 1 that enemy rockets had caused the casualties referred to on June 30 by the NLF.