

**CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENTS RELATING  
TO VIETNAM: JULY-SEPTEMBER 1969**

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### Summary

The three month period from July through September produced no major movement toward a negotiated settlement in Vietnam. There was no progress in Paris as each side waited for the other to compromise. The United States continued its two-track policy toward a settlement of the war with increasing stress on Vietnamization and on reduction of U.S. troop strength in Vietnam as the immediate prospects for a negotiated settlement dimmed. President Nixon made a trip through Southeast and South Asia in late July, explaining to Asian leaders the changes in the U.S. approach to Vietnam, Southeast Asia and the rest of Asia. The death of Ho Chi Minh on September 3 produced no apparent change in North Vietnam's policies and the major figures in the North Vietnamese ruling hierarchy maintained their positions.

The most significant statement of position on a settlement was made by President Thieu of the Republic of Vietnam on July 11, when he challenged the Communists to compete in an internationally supervised election. The North Vietnamese and the NLF/PRG, however, still refused to deal directly with the Saigon government and quickly rejected Thieu's proposal. In political developments in South Vietnam, General Tran Thien Khiem replaced Tran Van Huong as premier and a new cabinet was named on September 1. Combat action and casualties continued at a lower level, with occasional flareups such as heavy rocket attacks around mid-August and other attacks

about the middle of September. There was considerable debate, both inside and outside the executive branch, as to the meaning of the battlefield lull and to the decrease in infiltration.

The Vietnamization policy began to show movement with the reduction of U.S. troop strength by 25,000 in July and August and with the announcement on September 16 that 35,000 more would be withdrawn by December 15. The authorized troop ceiling will be reduced to 484,000 by December 15. The second announcement of troop withdrawals was expected in August, but a White House spokesman said that a decision was postponed because of an increase in enemy-initiated fighting. Others reported that the training of the ARVN was not moving as fast as had been hoped. Critics of U.S. policy charged that the decision was delayed because of domestic political considerations.

A change in U.S. strategy and tactics in the war was reported in July, with a number of references to a "protective reaction" policy which aimed at holding down U.S. casualties by limited response to enemy actions. This policy apparently is tied in with the Vietnamization policy. Secretary of Defense Laird has spoken of new orders to commanders in the field which aims at placing the "higher priority" on shifting the burden of the fighting to the South Vietnamese. There are conflicting reports as to the tactics being followed under the "protective reaction" policy. Some reports indicate that only small units are continuing to operate without restriction, while large units are dispatched only when an appropriate target is found. Another interpretation is that this policy means U.S. troops will fire only if there is a threat that they will be fired upon, while remaining prepared to take action if intelligence indicated an

enemy attack was likely.

The three day cease-fire beginning September 8, called by the Vietcong to mark Ho Chi Minh's death, was used as the basis for proposals by some for an extended or unlimited cease-fire. But statements coming from both sides during this period, before and after the short cease-fire, seemed to indicate a cease-fire would have to be negotiated in a wider context. President Nixon in his announcement on September 16, said that "we have offered to negotiate supervised cease-fires under international supervision to facilitate the process of mutual withdrawal." President Nixon has several times spoken of the difficulty of achieving a cease-fire in a guerrilla-type war. Secretary of State Rogers on July 2 said that a cease-fire without some sort of an overall agreement was "impractical and a gimmick." President Thieu on September 19 said "we will not agree to a cease-fire without first arranging that which will follow it." Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh of the PRG said in July that if the U.S. comes to an agreement "on the basis of the principle and main content of our overall solution... Among the concrete questions to be discussed and agreed upon by the parties will be the question of a cease-fire." Former Ambassador Averell Harriman in an article in the New York Times (August 24) said that a cease-fire should be the U.S. objective, suggesting that this could be achieved by mutual example as well as by agreement. Former U.S. negotiator Cyrus Vance called for a "standstill cease-fire" leading to "a leopard-spot federal or confederal solution." (New York Times, September 21).

President Nixon made a number of statements relating to present and future U.S.-Asia policy during the Asia trip which followed the Apollo 11

splashdown. He was on Guam July 25, reached Manila on July 26, Djakarta on July 27, Bangkok on July 28, Saigon on July 30, New Delhi on July 31, Lahore on August 1 and Bucharest on August 2. Speaking to newsmen on Guam, he stressed that while the U.S. should keep its commitments in Asia, the countries of Asia should work out their own collective security arrangements, with less dependence on outside powers, such as the United States. He said the U.S. would avoid the kind of policy that would make Asian countries so dependent that the U.S. would be dragged into a war like that in Vietnam. He said he was convinced that the best way to keep the United States out of another war in Asia was for the United States to continue to play a role there.

North Vietnam apparently did not modify its hard line calling for complete U.S. withdrawal. A statement on September 2 by North Vietnam's chief negotiator in Paris stirred some speculation about a shift in Hanoi's negotiating position, but there has been no follow-through. Xuan Thuy indicated in the September 2 statement that some progress could be made in Paris if the U.S. accelerated withdrawal of troops. But he still called for unconditional withdrawal; North Vietnamese representatives repeated the call for unconditional withdrawal in subsequent meetings in Paris.

President Thieu on July 11 called for internationally supervised elections in South Vietnam, with the NLF to participate if it renounced violence and pledged to accept the results of the election. An electoral commission -- in which all political parties and groups, including the NLF -- would be established to see that the election was fairly conducted.

Thieu said the South Vietnamese government was willing to discuss "with the other side" the scheduled procedures for holding elections, pledged to abide by the results of the election and said there would be no reprisals after the election. President Nixon hailed the offer as a fair proposal. The PRG criticized the proposal as a "swindle and a farce." The North Vietnamese charged that the offer was a reperformance of "the general elections farce staged time and time again by the U.S. and its puppets," and claimed there would be no free elections until U.S. troops were withdrawn. Despite some statements by South Vietnamese officials that seemed to hedge on the July 11 proposal, Thieu's six points of that date apparently remain the official government position.

There were strong indications in July and August that the opponents of Premier Tran Van Huong would succeed in getting him replaced. A petition in early August by President Thieu's political alliance calling for Huong's replacement apparently had Thieu's advance approval. General Tran Thien Khiem was named as Premier on August 23. The United States had been pushing Thieu to broaden his government to make it more representative. The new cabinet (named in September) remained far from representative of all groups and reports from Saigon indicated that U.S. officials were disturbed by the lack of new faces. Reports from Saigon indicated that the more prominent South Vietnamese political leaders turned down posts offered because they wanted more prestigious positions. The new cabinet consists primarily of trusted civil servants and military men.

Questions were raised during the period as to the extent of U.S. involvement in Laos and Thailand. Senator Fulbright said, for example,

on July 7 that the United States had a "secret agreement" with Thailand he had been told was much broader than any public commitment to Thailand. Administration officials stated that the agreement in question was a "contingency plan" drawn up in 1965 in accordance with previous commitments to Thailand. A New York Times report on August 15 stated that the contingency plan contained provisions for using U.S. troops in Laos if Communist forces threatened Thailand. Secretary Laird said on August 21 that the plan did not have his approval or the approval of the Administration. State Department spokesmen said that the plan could not be implemented without the specific agreement of the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate. President Nixon, in his meeting with newsmen on Guam on July 25, reportedly said that the United States had no secret defense agreement with Thailand, but did have commitments under the SEATO Treaty and the Rusk-Thanat agreement (1962). Ambassador Graham Martin, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand from 1963 to 1967, stated in September that the contingency plan did not extend U.S. commitments and that there had been no extension of U.S. commitments to Thailand during the four years he was ambassador. Discussions between the United States and Thailand on reducing the number of U.S. troops was begun. On September 30 plans were announced to withdraw 6,000 troops over the following ten months.

There were calls in the Senate for an investigation into the extent of U.S. involvement in Laos. Senator Stuart Symington on September 19 said that his subcommittee (of the Foreign Relations Committee) on Security Arrangements and Commitments Abroad "will seek to put on the record as much detail as possible on our involvement" in Laos. Hearings on U.S.



involvement in Laos began in October. There were reports that the United States, in addition to bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail, assisted Royal Laotian troops in campaigns against the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese troops. Premier Souvanna Phouma of Laos on September 27 denied reports that U.S. and Thai troops were fighting in Laos. President Nixon on September 26 said "there are no American combat forces in Laos" but did say that "we do have aerial reconnaissance, we do have, perhaps some other activities. I won't discuss those other activities at this time."

The Senate on September 17 voted unanimously in favor of an amendment to the military procurement bill which its sponsor, Senator John Sherman Cooper, said would bar U.S. troops from engaging in "combat, hostility or war in support of local forces in Laos or Thailand." Senator John Stennis said, however, that the amendment only prevented any money in the category of military assistance -- which the bill limited to \$2.5 billion -- from being used to finance combat operations (of U.S. troops) in Laos or Thailand. Several Senators who voted for the Cooper amendment said later they did so on the basis of Stennis' interpretation.

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- July 1: South Vietnamese forces reached the Special Forces camp of Benhet, lifting the siege of eight weeks.
- July 1: Vice-President Agnew told the governors of ten Middle Western states that they could not expect increases in Federal aid while the Vietnam war continued. He blamed critics of the President's war policies for prolonging the conflict.
- July 2: U.S. military officials in Saigon disclosed that three North Vietnamese regiments -- about 7,500 men -- had pulled back across the Demilitarized Zone into North Vietnam during the last three weeks. They added, however, that over-all North Vietnamese infiltration into South Vietnam from Cambodia and Laos was continuing at the level of about 10,000 men per month, the average for the last eight months. They asserted that more time was needed to assess the meaning of the withdrawal of the three regiments. (New York Times, July 2)
- July 2: Senator George McGovern disclosed that he had held talks with North Vietnamese and Vietcong representatives in Paris on May 23 and that the discussions had reinforced his own belief that: "So long as we cling to our military policy of maximum pressure and our political embrace of General Thieu, the negotiations in Paris are a sham and a delusion. There is no peace ahead on the course we are now following." McGovern said that the Communists insisted on two basic points: the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces and an end to the United States' "unqualified embrace of the Thieu-Ky regime." He voiced his opinion that the Communists placed "even more importance" on the U.S.-Saigon relationship than on the actual timing of a U.S. troop withdrawal. He stated that he had gained the impression that the Communists would understand a staged withdrawal but wanted public assurance that the withdrawal would be total and that the United States would not leave a contingent behind as it did in South Korea. McGovern asserted that he "shared" the Communists' belief "that the Saigon generals do not really want an end to the war; nor do they want an authentic process of self-determination."

- July 2: Secretary Rogers announced at his news conference that the United States and Cambodia had officially resumed diplomatic relations. Relations had been broken since 1965.
- July 2: Secretary Rogers said at a news conference "that during the last week we have had the lowest level of combat activity in Vietnam for a long time, possibly during the whole war." He attributed this to a change in enemy tactics but expressed uncertainty as to the Communists' purpose. He added that "in the last two or three months" the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam "has been at a fairly low level." On possible U.S. reactions to these developments, Rogers asserted that "if the level of hostilities decreases and it's significant, other than just as part of their short-term strategy, that would affect our decisions on the question of troop replacements." He specifically referred to "the number of troops that we withdraw and the timing of that withdrawal." When asked if the United States might respond by lowering the level of its own combat activity, Rogers said that "if the rate of combat falls off to a very small level, then obviously our plans will change. How they will change will depend on what the enemy's activity is." He later stated that "if we find that the other side is not fighting as they have been, then we will have to review our military planning but it depends on what happens." The Secretary had previously emphasized, however, that "the best way to de-escalate the war is to withdraw" as the United States had begun to do. He suggested that "if the enemy wants to de-escalate the war, have him withdraw his troops to North Vietnam, then the war is de-escalated." Rogers ruled out a cease-fire without some sort of an overall agreement, saying that a cease-fire alone was "impractical" and a "gimmick." On the political question, Rogers said that President Thieu supported the idea of a mixed commission to supervise elections and would include this in new political proposals.
- July 3: The 24th session of the Paris peace talks was reported to have made no visible movement. The Communist side attacked the United States and South Vietnam, while the South Vietnamese delegate stated that infiltration was continuing unabated, in contrast to Secretary of State William Rogers' statement on July 2. Henry Cabot Lodge thanked North Vietnam for the release of three American prisoners.
- July 5: Averell Harriman, former chief U.S. negotiator at Paris, said that the Nixon Administration should "seize this opportunity" of a lull in the fighting in South Vietnam "to come to an agreement with the other side on a mutual reduction of fighting and violence." He said he did not think much progress

- July 5:  
(cont.) could be made in the negotiations "until we find a way to reduce the fighting and violence." He added that: "A cease-fire is difficult but we've got to work toward it."
- July 5: North Vietnam's chief negotiator, Xuan Thuy, arrived back in Paris from Hanoi. Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, chief negotiator for the NLF, said that: "The Americans are intensifying their aggression in South Vietnam. Therefore, our military pressure against them has not ceased and will not cease." Xuan Thuy described the planned withdrawal of 25,000 American troops as President Nixon's plan for "fooling the American public." He stated that: "By comparison with the total number of 540,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam, the withdrawal of 25,000 is meaningless."
- July 5: U.S. killed and wounded for the week ending July 5 totaled 153 and 1,584 respectively. South Vietnam listed 247 killed and 586 wounded. Communist killed was placed at 2,846. U.S. troop strength stood at 538,500. The U.S. killed figure was the lowest since the week of January 11 and reflected the lull in the fighting.
- July 6: Senator John Stennis said on ABC's "Issues and Answers" that the United States may have to "draw a line" in Vietnam and pull back behind it and offer sanctuary to South Vietnamese who seek it. He acknowledged that his suggestion was "akin" to the enclave theory proposed by General James Gavin and others.
- July 6: George Sherman reported in the Washington Star that the Nixon Administration believed that the next two weeks would tell whether the Communists had changed tactics in response to the President's announced withdrawal of 25,000 American troops from Vietnam. Sherman stated that U.S. officials in Washington stressed that Secretary Rogers July 2 news conference remark that North Vietnamese infiltration had dropped referred to North Vietnamese troops in the upper end of the pipeline in North Vietnam and Laos rather than those arriving in South Vietnam. They said that it takes an estimated three to six months for men in the upper end of the pipeline to reach their southern destinations. According to these officials, the number of men leaving North Vietnam through the pipeline had dropped to lower than 8,000 per month.

- July 6: Australian Prime Minister John Gorton said that Australia would have to consider pulling out its 8,000 troops in South Vietnam if there was a "great and continuing" withdrawal of U.S. forces. Gorton stated that he did not expect that a decision would have to be reached before Christmas.
- July 7: Senator J.W. Fulbright said that the United States had a "secret agreement" with Thailand that he had been told was much broader than any publicly known commitment to support Thailand. Senator Fulbright said the secret agreement was an addition to and expansion of the Southeast Asia Treaty.
- July 7: Chalmers Roberts reported in the Washington Post that "Administration officials hinted yesterday that the timetable for American troop withdrawals from Vietnam may be speeded up if the current battlefield lull continues." Roberts added that the officials indicated that they did not consider the Saturday-Sunday mortar and rocket attacks on American military installations signified an end to the lull since they involved no ground attacks and inflicted only light casualties.
- July 8: Le Cuang Chanh, deputy foreign minister of the NLF's revolutionary government, said in an interview with the Egyptian newspaper Al Gumhuriya that the current lull in Communist military activity in South Vietnam was "only a stage-setter for an offensive more violent and inclusive than any undertaken by the revolutionaries so far."
- July 8: A battalion of 814 American infantrymen left Vietnam in the first troop withdrawal of the scheduled withdrawal of 25,000 American troops.
- July 9: Le Duc Tho, North Vietnamese Politburo member and overseer of Hanoi's Paris delegation left for Hanoi. (His last trip to Hanoi from February to May 1969 was followed by the presentation of the Communist ten-point peace proposal on May 8).
- July 10: India's Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh said upon arriving in Washington that India was considering recognizing the NLF's Provisional Revolutionary Government. He stated that the decision would rest on whether or not recognition would enhance India's role as chairman of the International Control Commission. Singh asserted that India was willing to play a role in an international supervisory body after the war, including the sending of troops.

- July 10: The 26th session of the Paris conference saw no visible progress. The NLF's Mrs. Binh said that: "We are ready to discuss the question of the withdrawal of all the troops of the United States and the other foreign countries in the American camp without asking any condition whatsoever." Ambassador Lodge replied that this was "to demand capitulation by our side." He told the Communists that: "We shall not capitulate. No negotiated settlement of the war in Vietnam is possible until you modify that demand." Neither Mrs. Binh nor Xuan Thuy acknowledged any reduction of the scale of fighting in South Vietnam.
- July 10: The State Department acknowledged that the United States signed a secret "military contingency plan" with Thailand in 1965 but interpreted the agreement as falling within the framework of previous commitments to Thailand. President Nixon said on July 25 in Guam that there was no secret defense agreement with Thailand.
- July 11: President Thieu challenged Communists to compete in an internationally supervised election under which South Vietnam's people would choose their future government. Thieu suggested six principles to govern the recommended elections:
1. All political parties and groups including the NLF could participate in the election if they renounced violence and pledged themselves to accept the results of elections.
  2. To make sure that the election would be conducted fairly, an electoral commission could be set up in which all political parties and groups including the NLF could be represented.
  3. An international body would be established to supervise the elections and to make sure that the elections would be held under conditions fair to all.
  4. The South Vietnamese government was prepared to discuss "with the other side" the schedule and procedures for holding elections.
  5. There would be no reprisals or discrimination after the elections.
  6. The government of Vietnam pledged to abide by the results of the election, whatever the result. "We challenge the other side to declare the same."

- July 11: President Nixon hailed South Vietnam's election offer as an eminently fair proposal that could lead to peace if the Communists would negotiate seriously. He appealed to Hanoi "to respond in a spirit of peace" and to "let the political issues be resolved by the political process."
- July 11: The Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam dismissed President Thieu's new peace proposal as a "swindle and a farce." The PRG further criticized the proposal as being aimed solely at maintaining a "puppet administration" which "is a valet of the United States."
- July 12: South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Chanh Thanh announced that "Communists as Communists cannot stand for election" in the elections proposed by President Thieu. Thanh said the National Liberation Front could participate as the NLF, not "as Communists." The news conference was called to clarify Thieu's offer, the New York Times reported.
- July 12: American battle deaths fell to the second lowest figure of the year for the week ending July 12, while those of the South Vietnamese rose sharply. 148 Americans and 352 South Vietnamese were killed, with wounded put at 1,612 and 1,088 respectively. Communist deaths were reported at 2,369. U.S. troop strength stood at 537,000 as of July 10.
- July 13: North Vietnam charged that President Thieu's offer of free elections in South Vietnam was aimed at "re-performing with a new decor the general elections farce staged time and time again by the U.S. and its puppets."
- July 14: Secretary of State William Rogers told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "we'll have to have some control" over the disposition of surplus arms in Vietnam when the fighting ends. Asked by Senator J. William Fulbright about secret commitments supposedly made to Thailand in return for military bases in that country, Rogers said that was not the case.
- July 15: Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "I think we've certainly turned the corner" in the Vietnamese War. He said, "There is a change that has come about by assigning more combat responsibility to Vietnamese forces." He said that the Administration would decide by mid-August whether to withdraw more American troops, and that General Wheeler,

- July 15:  
(cont.) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had flown to Vietnam to consult with the American field commander, General Creighton Abrams. He stated that the Nixon Administration had put a "new emphasis on reducing casualties" but that the order of "maximum pressure" still stood. However, a modification of battlefield strategy was under consideration, he said.
- July 15: Rennard C. Davis flew to Paris with a delegation of peace activists en route to Hanoi to secure the release of three American prisoners held by North Vietnam.
- July 16: North Vietnam "vigorously rejected" President Thieu's six-point plan to allow the Vietcong to participate in elections. North Vietnam, in a statement issued by its delegation to the Paris peace talks, said that there could be no free elections until American troops were withdrawn.
- July 17: The Communist delegations formally rejected the South Vietnamese government's new peace proposals at the 26th session of the Paris peace talks. After the session, Ambassador Lodge told reporters, "I am an optimist -- Unless I am told 'no' twenty-five times I am willing to hope for a 'yes'."
- July 17: General Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began a four-day conference with American commanders in Vietnam in an effort to assess the meaning of the battlefield lull and to discuss the modernization and equipping of the South Vietnamese army. Orders to American field commanders were still reported to be to inflict as many casualties as possible on the enemy while keeping American casualties to a minimum.
- July 17: Secretary of State Rogers, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, accused North Vietnam of an "inhumane and inexcusable" attitude toward American prisoners of war.
- July 18: A South Vietnamese government spokesman said that changes in the South Vietnamese cabinet would be announced in the next few days. He said that "the official reason is to make the government more effective to cope with the present situation." A spokesman for Premier Tran Van Huong said the Premier had no intention of resigning.
- July 19: North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh charged that "Nixon's plan to withdraw 25,000 U.S. troops in an attempt to appease American and world opinion is a trick." He repeated the demand for "total, complete, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and satellite troops from South Vietnam."



- July 19: President Thieu said that it would not be possible for South Vietnamese forces to replace all American combat troops by the end of 1970. President Thieu said his government would "do our best to replace the maximum possible number of U.S. troops as fast as possible. If the U.S. government helps us with enough equipment and enough funds," Thieu said, "we can say we can replace a very important amount of combat troops by 1970."
- July 19: According to informed military sources, Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia had reached a new agreement with the Communists to permit Communist troops to cross Cambodian territory, store equipment in Cambodia, and obtain food. A State Department spokesman declined to comment on the report of the agreement.
- In return for helping the Communists, Sihanouk was reported to have received assurance under the latest agreement that his version of Cambodia's borders would be honored.
- July 19: The New York Times reported that the Provisional Revolutionary Government delegate to the Paris peace talks, Mme. Nguyen Thi Binh, said in an interview that if the U.S. "sincerely" wanted to settle the Vietnamese problem it "must enter into direct talks" with the PRG. The PRG is the "genuine representative of the South Vietnamese people," she said. Mrs. Binh said that if the U.S. comes to an agreement "on the basis of the principles and main content of our overall solution...Among the concrete questions to be discussed and agreed upon by the parties will be the question of a cease-fire."
- July 19: American and South Vietnamese battle deaths were 182 and 295 respectively for the week ending July 19. 1,405 Americans and 923 South Vietnamese were reported wounded. Communist deaths were put at 2,203. American troop strength stood at 535,500 as of July 17.
- July 20: General Earle G. Wheeler, at a press conference following a trip to Vietnam, said that the lull in fighting did not appear to be a politically significant de-escalation by the enemy. Wheeler disputed reports that three North Vietnamese regiments had withdrawn across the DMZ. He said he was not yet able to assess enemy intentions and that the South Vietnamese would not be able to assume the full war effort by the end of 1970.

- July 22: A group of critics of U.S. war policy in the Senate stated that a majority of the American people did support the President's refusal to unilaterally withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam. Senator Charles Percy (R.-Ill.) said Hanoi was misreading American public sentiment by delaying negotiations in Paris in the hopes of a pull out, and stated that "there is nothing to be gained by prolonging the conflict."
- July 24: President Nixon observed the splashdown of the Apollo 11 spacecraft in the Pacific. President Nixon was on Guam July 25, reached Manila on July 26, Djakarta on July 27, Bangkok on July 28, Saigon on July 30, New Delhi on July 31, Lahore on August 1, Bucharest on August 2, England on August 3, and Washington on August 3.
- July 24: The New York Times reported that the Pentagon was drawing up new guidelines for American commanders in Vietnam that were designed to cut down on search-and-destroy missions and to reduce American casualties. This was considered a change of emphasis to reflect battlefield and political realities rather than a dramatic shift in policy.
- July 25: Speaking at an informal news conference in Guam, President Nixon said that the United States should formulate a long-range post-war Asian policy and that the United States was a Pacific power due to geography and past history. He said that while there was great promise there, potentially the greatest threat to world peace was in Asia and that he was convinced that the way to avoid becoming involved in another war in Asia was for the United States to continue to play a role there. The role should consist of assisting, not dictating, however. He said that while we would keep the treaty commitments we have and assist development plans, we must avoid the kind of policy that will make Asian countries so dependent on us that we are dragged into conflicts like Vietnam. He said that the United States should emphasize that military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, would be expected to be increasingly handled by Asian nations themselves. He said that for the future, the United States should support collective security for free Asian nations to deal with internal security or threats other than those involving nuclear powers. He cited problems in Thailand and Vietnam as examples of this type of threat. He said that in each of the countries he would be visiting, he was going to discuss participation in an international body to supervise elections and troop withdrawals in South Vietnam, for he believed that such supervision should come from Asian nations primarily and thought President Thieu

July 25:  
(cont.)

agreed. He said that General Wheeler had reported that the South Vietnamese were accepting American troop withdrawals with good grace, but that one of the purposes of his trip was to assure Asian leaders that the United States would continue to play a role in Asia to the extent desired by Asian countries. He said that in the next five to ten years, as Asian collective security arrangements are made, the United States would try to avoid creeping involvement and would handle each country on a case-by-case basis. He said a good general principle would be to help countries fight against internal subversion, but not to fight the battle for them. He said that future U.S. military assistance would recede, but that economic assistance would increase, particularly programs with a multilateral character. A major objective of future policy, he said, should be to avoid wars like Vietnam. President Nixon said that he might order a reduction of military operations in South Vietnam if that would help the negotiations. He acknowledged that he was reviewing battlefield tactics in the wider, diplomatic context.

July 25:

In Paris, Prince Souvanna Phouma, the Prime Minister of Laos, charged that 60,000 North Vietnamese troops were waging war in his country. He rejected as "completely false" a charge by Xuan Thuy at the 27th session of the Paris peace talks that Laos had been invaded by the U.S.

Souvanna said he had authorized the American bombing raids, which have been aimed at North Vietnamese base camps and supply raids along the South Vietnamese border, as a measure of legitimate self-defense.

July 25:

The American military command reported that the U.S. had lost 5,696 aircraft in Vietnam worth at least \$3 billion since 1961.

July 26:

President Thieu reassured top officials of his government that South Vietnam could prevail over its enemies even without American troops. Thieu defended his recent offer to the NLF to participate in internationally supervised elections, promising that anti-Communists would win such an election with ninety-nine percent of the vote. He also promised to maintain three objectives: "no territorial concessions, no coalition government, and no letting the country fall into Communist hands." Thieu said, "We will never accept a coalition government even for one day to organize the elections."

July 26: Military sources reported that top officers of the United States military command in Saigon remained opposed to a reduction of the American effort on the battlefield, despite the continuing lull in the fighting. The officers believed that the five-week-old reduction in enemy initiated activity was merely a tactical device and devoid of any political significance.

July 26: 110 Americans and 290 South Vietnamese were killed in battle in the week ending July 26. 1,056 Americans and 831 South Vietnamese were wounded. Communist deaths were reported at 2,079. U.S. troop strength stood at 536,000 as of July 24.

July 28: In Thailand, President Nixon said that the "United States will stand proudly with Thailand against those who might threaten it from abroad or from within." His statement was interpreted as a diplomatic move to diminish Thai fears of American withdrawal from Asia.

July 29: American commanders in Vietnam reportedly had modified their battlefield strategy of "maximum pressure" in recent weeks to a strategy of limited response to enemy tactics.

Termed "protective reaction," the reported new strategy was designed to hold U.S. casualties down and dates from the time the current battlefield lull began nearly six weeks ago.

One important aspect of the shift in strategy was that while reconnaissance and ambush patrols and other smaller units are continuing to circulate freely in the field, large forces are dispatched only in response to intelligence data that indicates a good chance of meeting the enemy. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird had indicated that the "maximum pressure" strategy was under review, but had not announced any change. (New York Times, July 30, 1969).

July 30: President Nixon conferred with Vietnamese President Thieu in Saigon and visited American troops in Vietnam.

At the Presidential Palace, President Nixon called U.S. and South Vietnamese peace proposals "as generous as any ever made in the history of warfare. We have gone as far as we can or should go in opening the door to negotiations which will bring peace. It is now time for the other side to sit down with us and talk seriously about ways to stop (the) killing...."

July 30:  
(cont.)

Unless Hanoi responded affirmatively to allied peace bids, White House officials said after the Nixon-Thieu meeting, the United States intended to slow the rate of troop withdrawals after an initial series is completed.

President Nixon sought to convince North Vietnam and the Vietcong that the United States would press Saigon no further to make unilateral, public concessions in the Paris peace talks. Talking to American troops, President Nixon said "What happens in Vietnam, how this war is ended, may well determine what happens to peace and freedom in all of Asia."

President Nixon held lengthy conversations with General Creighton Abrams -- on the flight from Bangkok to Saigon, and on the return flight -- on proposed changes in military tactics in the war zone.

July 31:

President Nixon said in India that he had flown to Saigon to demonstrate solidarity with the government of Nguyen Van Thieu and that he saw no basis for speculation that he was ducking out of commitments there. He said that South Vietnamese governmental institutions are strong and called President Thieu probably one of the four or five best politicians in the world.

LRS-13

- August 1: The State Department denied a published report that the Nixon Administration was secretly proposing a "partitioning" of South Vietnam.
- August 1: Administration officials revealed that the United States had asked the Soviet Union to restrain North Vietnamese assaults in Laos in an effort to preserve the coalition established by the 1962 Geneva Conference. The Soviet Union was co-chairman of the Conference.
- August 2: 139 Americans and 276 South Vietnamese were killed in Vietnam in the week ending August 2. Wounded figures were 1,110 and 545 respectively. Communist deaths were reported to be 2,168. U.S. troop strength stood at 537,000 as of July 31.
- August 2: Huynh Van Trong, a special assistant to South Vietnamese President Thieu, and several ranking civil servants and military figures were arrested during the past ten days in a government crackdown on a Communist intelligence network. A government spokesman said that nearly fifty persons had been arrested.
- August 3: American government agencies in Vietnam quietly proceeded with reduction in staff. The civilian reductions were part of President Nixon's recent order to reduce the American presence overseas.
- August 4: President Nixon briefed Congressional leaders on his trip to the Pacific and told them that the United States intended to keep but not expand its commitments in Asia. He stressed the need for Asian countries to bear an increasing responsibility for their own defense. White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said the President discussed the policy with the leaders he visited in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, South Vietnam, India and Pakistan and it was "accepted" by all of them. All Asian leaders asked President Nixon about Soviet Party Chief Brezhnev's statement that a collective security system be established in Asia and Ziegler said the President replied that the United States would not join in such an arrangement with another major power in Asia.
- August 4: Three United States servicemen held captive by North Vietnam were released in Hanoi in the custody of an American pacifist group headed by Rennard C. Davis.
- August 5: Murrey Marder reported in the Washington Post that the United States and South Vietnam reportedly agreed in principle that up to 50,000 more American troops could be

- August 5:  
(cont.)            withdrawn by the end of the year, with more to be withdrawn in 1970, but no pull-out time table exists. South Vietnam reportedly is now less apprehensive that it once was about the removal of the initial 100,000 U.S. troops.
- August 6:            The Army announced that eight Green Berets, including six officers and two non-commissioned officers, had been charged with the murder of a suspected Vietnamese double agent. One of those arrested was Colonel Robert Rheault, the Special Forces Commander in Vietnam. Rheault was relieved of his command on July 21. The Army charged that the Vietnamese intelligence agent had been shot on June 20.
- August 6:            President Thieu replaced four of his generals in a move long urged by U.S. military commanders to make South Vietnam's army more effective. Thieu reportedly had balked earlier at the U.S. pressure for changes and made the move only after the U.S. mission had eased its pressure.
- August 8:            It was reported that the pro-government political alliance organized by President Thieu had petitioned for the replacement of Premier Tran Van Huong. Saigon sources were certain the petition would not have been drafted without Thieu's advance approval. Observers believed the petition made certain that South Vietnam would get a new premier in a matter of weeks.
- August 9:            In a news conference held during his visit to New Zealand, Secretary of State William Rogers said that it was difficult to understand the actions of North Vietnam but that "if we feel that their actions are a signal, this will be considered very seriously."
- August 9:            96 Americans were killed in Vietnam in the week ending August 9, the lowest weekly total in two years. 225 South Vietnamese were killed and 687 wounded. U.S. wounded number 990. Communist deaths were put at 2,360. U.S. troop strength stood at 537,200 as of August 7.
- August 12:            The Communists attacked more than 100 cities, towns and bases across South Vietnam with rockets, mortars and infantry charges. The fighting and shelling broke an eight-week lull in the war. The action was the heaviest since May 11.
- Military spokesmen in Saigon, commenting on stepped-up enemy military activity warned: "The intelligence we have...indicates the enemy is preparing for a fall campaign to be conducted during August and September."

LRS-15

- August 13: A wide counter-offensive was mounted against enemy units that attacked allied positions earlier in the week. There were heavy B-52 bombing raids on enemy positions.
- August 14: Senator Frank Church said the Senate and the public had a "right to know" if the provisions of a secret agreement between the U.S. and Thailand would involve U.S. troops there in the event of a domestic rebellion. He said "it would be demeaning to the Senate" for Senators to go to the Pentagon to see a copy of the agreement.
- August 14: At the 30th weekly meeting of the Vietnam peace talks, Ambassador Lodge condemned North Vietnam and the Vietcong for launching new attacks and expressed concern about indications of a planned general offensive. The Communist side dismissed his remarks as propaganda and called American troop withdrawal "a sham."
- August 15: According to official American figures, 87.6 percent of South Vietnam's population was considered to be under "relatively secure" government control as of the end of July.
- August 15: Six North Vietnamese, held for six days by Laos as spies, were expelled to North Vietnam by the Laotian government.
- August 15: The New York Times reported that sources in the Nixon Administration revealed that the secret contingency plan drawn up with Thailand in 1965 contained provisions for using American troops in Laos against the Communists before they cross Thai borders. If the plan were put in effect, some American troops would be at least nominally under Thai control. State Department spokesmen, however, emphasized that the plan could not be implemented without the specific agreement of the American President with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- August 15: The new U.S. charge d'affaires, Lloyd Rives, arrived in Phnom Penh.
- August 16: Henry Cabot Lodge returned to the United States to confer with President Nixon and Secretary of State Rogers.
- August 16: U.S. battle deaths rose to 244 for the week ending August 16, the highest toll since mid-June. 1,409 Americans and 1,269 South Vietnamese were wounded. 477



- August 16:  
(cont.) South Vietnamese soldiers were killed. Communist deaths were reported at 3,898. The number of Americans killed in 1969, through August 17, was 7,395; in 1968, 10,796 Americans were killed during the same period, reflecting the lower overall level of the war in 1969. U.S. troop strength stood at 534,200 as of August 14.
- August 16: It was reported that eighty to ninety percent of the equipment needs of South Vietnamese troops had been filled, and that the key factor now in turning major fighting responsibility over to the Vietnamese was the required length of training time. Equipment of U.S. units in Vietnam will be distributed to other U.S. installations in the Pacific and Southeast Asia when the troops withdraw.
- August 16: Vietcong gunners shelled thirty-nine camps and towns throughout South Vietnam. Twenty-three of the attacks were directed against American targets.
- Heavy fighting was reported in War Zone C in Tayninh Province, an area of increased ground activity during the past week.
- August 19: Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman said that the Thai government had pledged to President Nixon that it would never ask for U.S. combat troops to fight insurgents.
- August 20: Secretary of State William Rogers described the Nixon plan for troop withdrawal from Vietnam as a policy of taking "sensible risks for peace." Secretary Rogers said that the policy of disengagement from the war by turning more and more of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese would not be affected by the level of enemy attack unless there was a new and massive assault. He added, however, that a "high level" of enemy attacks made American withdrawals difficult. He said American forces had eased their pressure on the enemy during the summer combat lull.
- Concerning the contingency plan with Thailand, Rogers said that the Administration would "consult" with Congress before using it. He said, "we fully understand the necessity for support of any military venture, both by Congress and the public."
- August 21: At the 31st regular session of the Vietnam peace talks, U.S. representative Philip Habib told the other side, "There can be no negotiated settlement to the war in Vietnam unless you are prepared to withdraw all North Vietnamese troops and elements from South Vietnam, Laos

- August 21:  
(cont.) and Cambodia back to North Vietnam." He said the United States would never agree to unilateral withdrawal. His statement was rejected as "absurd" by the other side.
- August 21: President Thieu announced that Premier Tran Van Huong had agreed to step aside so that a more broadly based government could be formed. Huong had succeeded Nguyen Van Loc fifteen months ago.
- August 21: Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird said that the 1965 military contingency plan with Thailand did not have his approval and "does not have the approval of this Administration." He said "I don't agree with using American troops without proper consultation and advice of the Congress." Laird said that "we have all sorts of contingency military plans."
- August 22: The State Department announced that the U.S. and Thailand had agreed to begin talks on reducing the American forces in Thailand. Officials, however, saw no rapid withdrawal.
- August 23: General Tran Thien Khiem was named Premier and Minister of the Interior. A four-star army general and close friend of President Thieu, Khiem had been Deputy Premier, Interior Minister and head of the Pacification Program.
- August 23: A White House spokesman announced that President Nixon would defer a decision on the withdrawal of more troops from Vietnam. The spokesman said that the deferral was based on the increase in enemy-initiated fighting in Vietnam and that it was time for the enemy to respond to the President's proposals for a negotiated solution. According to White House sources, there was no change in the policy of phased withdrawals. Critics of U.S. policy charged that the decision was delayed because of domestic political considerations.
- August 23: Battle casualties dropped as the pace of the enemy's fall offensive slackened, it was reported. U.S. and South Vietnamese deaths stood at 190 and 368 respectively for the week ending August 23. 1,367 Americans and 928 South Vietnamese were wounded. Communist deaths were 2,724. U.S. troop strength as of August 21 stood at 526,500.
- August 24: The New York Times Magazine published an interview with former U.S. Ambassador W. Averell Harriman in which the Ambassador said that the stalemate in Paris could only be broken when the United States is "ready to accept the status quo, militarily and politically. The other side made it quite plain to us that they're going to continue

- August 24:  
(cont.)
- fighting as long as we continued fighting." He said that the "principal object would be for our forces to go into more defensive positions, to be available if the other side attacks, but not to try, at the last minute, either to 'win the war' militarily or to pacify the people," concentrating instead on consolidating our existing positions. He said that a cease-fire should be the U.S. objective, suggesting that this can be achieved by mutual example as well as by agreement. He proposed using the B-52 raids as a bargaining card, the U.S. agreeing to stop them in return for Communist agreement to cease violence in the cities and ambushes on the highways. Aiming at military disengagement, he said "the way to freeze this is to take parallel action, announce that you're taking parallel action; we can afford to announce it." He expressed disappointment in President Thieu's government, saying that the U.S. should apply increased pressure on Thieu to broaden the base and that the election commission proposed by Thieu did not go far enough. He also stressed the importance of "real guarantees" to safeguard any agreement, adding that the United States would have to come to a separate agreement with Hanoi, hopefully including economic assistance. Harriman said that he was "very much opposed to a cut-and-run strategy" but if the President announced that he was taking steps toward a cease-fire, world and American public opinion, very important to the North Vietnamese, would be rallied behind Nixon.
- August 24:
- Retail prices in South Vietnam, especially those of rice and sugar, took their sharpest rise in sixteen months, as AID reported a cost-of-living increase of twenty-three percent in three and one-half months. As the government faced the prospect of a large budget deficit, some experts called for devaluation. Criticism of economic policies was cited as one reason for the replacement of Premier Huong with General Tran Thien Khiem.
- August 24:
- For a brief period, A Company of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade refused to obey orders to resume operations in enemy territory in the Song Chang Valley, where they were attempting to reach the wreckage of a helicopter shot down five days before.
- August 25:
- Fighting erupted again in Queson Valley, where heavy fighting occurred the previous week. Marines and infantry were engaged in two separate incidents. Fighting was also reported in Binhduong Province, near Saigon. American

- August 25:  
(cont.) commanders in the Saigon area reported that enemy troops had pulled back and that enemy operations now generally consisted of small units of fifty to two hundred men attacking for limited objectives. However, it was reported that the first full North Vietnamese regiment had moved into the Mekong Delta, apparently to reinforce the Vietcong.
- August 25: Patrick Moynihan, Executive Director of the Urban Affairs Council, reported that the end of the Vietnam War would not bring the expected fiscal dividend due to built in cost increases in all other federal programs as well as defense replacement costs. The following day, White House sources disagreed with Moynihan's assessment, saying that he had exaggerated the degree of budget stringency foreseen. (Washington Post, August 27),
- August 25: Thai Premier Thanom Kittikachorn said that Thailand did not want the withdrawal of American forces stationed there, but that if the United States intended to withdraw them, discussions should begin at once.
- August 26: Fighting flared near Hiepduc, thirty miles south of Danang, where fierce fighting had occurred during the past ten days. Official sources reported 733 North Vietnamese dead, and 72 Americans killed.
- August 26: An American plane was reported lost over North Vietnam, the first loss over North Vietnam. It was the sixth plane to be lost since the bombing halt on November 1.
- August 26: Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk said that U.S. intelligence indicated an "almost total lack" of North Vietnamese infiltration into the South recently. He speculated that this may be a reponse to American peace moves.
- August 26: President Thieu ordered the release of 54 political prisoners and 44 POWs and reduced the sentences of 470 others in honor of the Buddhist lunar fall festival.
- August 27: The enemy offensive which began August 12 was apparently ending.
- August 27: Senator Charles Percy met in Bangkok with Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and later reported that "about ten percent" of the 49,000 U.S. troops in Thailand would be withdrawn. Sources said it was unlikely that any of the 36,000 air force personnel would be withdrawn as long as the Vietnam War continued and the Communists gained ground in Laos.

- August 27: The State Department reported that infiltration of North Vietnamese forces in the south had dropped below Hanoi's combat losses. The State Department said this was "significant" as "what we see is mutual withdrawal." The Defense Department did not agree that the drop in infiltration was "significant," stating that "the enemy is substantially replacing his losses," and "strength remains sufficient for him to conduct operations under the present strategy" of small-scale operations. Both agencies agreed that there was a decline in enemy troop strength, however.
- August 28: Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge told the 32nd session of the Paris peace talks that the U.S. had reduced the rate of B-52 bombing raids in an effort to reduce the level of violence.
- August 28: Army Secretary Resor said in a Saigon news conference that "Vietnamization" of the war was ahead of schedule but "the ARVN is still short of leaders, particularly officers and non-commissioned officers. But it takes time to train them." He expected more troops to be withdrawn, however. 250 Marines of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 344 left for Japan, completing the 25,000-man withdrawal promised by President Nixon. Four grenades were tossed at a hamlet near Saigon causing severe casualties, and several minor military clashes were reported.
- August 28: Colonel Michael D. Healy was named as the new Special Forces commander in Vietnam, replacing Colonel Alexander Lemberes, who had replaced Colonel Robert Rheault. Colonel Healy is a twelve-year veteran of the Green Berets.
- August 30: U.S. forces reported 185 Americans killed and 1,057 wounded in action in the week ending August 30. 354 South Vietnamese were reported killed and 966 wounded. Communist dead were set at 2,477. This brings the total American dead since January 1, 1961 to 38,313, with 248,153 wounded. U.S. troop strength stood at 511,800 as of August 28.
- August 31: Newsweek Magazine reported that President Nixon's second troop withdrawal announcement was deferred partially due to advice he had received from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reportedly calling for a slower withdrawal than he had projected.

August 31:

The New York Times reported (October 16) that, according to official American figures, 89 percent of the Vietnamese people were living under "relatively secure" control of the Saigon government as of August 31 -- 15.3 million of a population of 17.3 million. The figure was 84 percent for those in the rural areas.

- September 1: Testimony by Major General K.B. McCutcheon before the House Appropriations Committee, made public on September 1, revealed that over \$65 million worth of Marine munitions was destroyed in fires in Vietnam on June 26 and April 27.
- September 1: Composition of the new Vietnamese cabinet was announced. The new cabinet included nine hold-overs from the previous cabinet. The new cabinet remained far from representative of all groups and reports from Saigon indicated that U.S. officials were disturbed by the lack of new faces.
- September 1: The U.S. Command turned over to the South Vietnamese an infantry division base camp in the Mekong Delta and announced that American operations at Nhatrang Air Base were being reduced. U.S. troop strength dropped to 511,800, the lowest in eighteen months, as "Vietnamization" continued.
- September 2: Xuan Thuy, Hanoi's chief negotiator, said in Paris: "If President Nixon withdraws troops rapidly and in considerable numbers we will examine this factor and take it into account." This was considered an indication of some flexibility but Xuan Thuy continued to speak of total and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops. He dismissed as "unrealistic" suggestions that the two sides accept a truce in present battlefield positions. Thuy said the withdrawal problem was linked with the formation of a future Saigon government; if there were a rapid withdrawal "we would take into account this factor."
- September 2: In a news conference at Bethesda Naval Hospital, two Navy men recently released from prison by the North Vietnamese told of brutal treatment and torture of American prisoners by the North Vietnamese. Lt. Robert Frishman said, "I think it is time to get out the facts." The two Navy men, along with a third American prisoner, had arrived in Vientiane from North Vietnam on August 5.
- September 2: Hanoi radio reported that North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh had become gravely ill over the past several weeks and that his condition was deteriorating.

- September 4: Hanoi Radio announced that President Ho Chi Minh died on September 3 of a "sudden, very serious heart attack." All citizens were urged to "translate sorrow into revolutionary acts" to realize Ho's ambitions. The Vietcong delegation in Paris released a statement saying that they were "more than ever resolved to wage the sacred struggle against American aggression for national deliverance to the final victory."
- September 4: The Vietcong announced that it would observe a three-day cease-fire to mark Ho Chi Minh's death, beginning on September 8. Hanoi began seven days of official mourning. South Vietnamese President Thieu predicted that "the morale of Communist troops and cadres both in the North and in the South, which has already deteriorated, will become worse." Vice President Ky commented, "Ho's death left North Vietnam like a snake without a head." The United States had no official comment. In Paris, North Vietnamese delegate Xuan Thuy said that Ho's death would bring "no change" in Hanoi's domestic or foreign policies.
- September 4: It was announced that three days earlier allied troops fought Communist soldiers in Cambodia after a U.S. helicopter that had strayed into Cambodia was downed.
- September 4: After a quick trip to Hanoi to extend condolences on the death of Ho Chi Minh, Chinese Premier Chou En-lai and his delegation left Hanoi for Peking. The Russian delegation led by Premier Kosygin arrived on September 6.
- September 5: Chief of Naval Operations Thomas H. Moorer said that the Navy would complete its share of Vietnamization of the war by June 1970. He said the U.S. had already given the Vietnamese about 170 ships and was helping to build a navy of 30,000 men.
- September 6: Senate Majority Leader Mansfield called on President Nixon to take the initiative for an "unlimited cease-fire" in South Vietnam, coupled with troop withdrawal, in an attempt to convert the three-day cease-fire announced by the other side into a step toward peace. Senators John Sherman Cooper and Gaylord Nelson also called for an extended cease-fire at U.S. initiative. Meanwhile, President Thieu's office announced that South Vietnam would not go along with the cease-fire, though government officials had stated that, while not acknowledging it publicly, they would unofficially observe the truce if not attacked.



- September 6: Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency described Ho Chi Minh's successors as "a collective ruling body" composed of Ho's "closest comrades-in-arms and most outstanding disciples." Mentioning no names, the editorial made clear that the ruling body would continue to be the Politburo of the Lao Dong (Workers) Party.
- September 6: 137 Americans and 502 South Vietnamese were reported killed in Vietnam in the week ending September 6. Communist dead were reported at 2370. The U.S. and South Vietnamese reported 1449 and 1210 wounded respectively. U.S. troop strength stood at 509,700 as of September 4.
- September 8: A joint statement issued by the American and South Vietnamese general staff said that during the three-day cease-fire "our military operations will be influenced by the nature of enemy operations." Reports from the battlefield confirmed that American commanders were ordered to fall back into defensive positions where feasible, not to provide ARVN support, and to avoid casualties. Americans acknowledged that there had been no B52 strikes since the cease-fire was due to begin. Meanwhile, American officials in Washington said that they did not feel that the cease-fire would become permanent or would mark a change in the war.
- September 9: A South Vietnamese army spokesman reported that the South Vietnamese army had stepped up offensive operations against the enemy, despite the joint U.S.-South Vietnam statement issued on September 8, indicating that the enemy cease-fire would be respected. It was impossible to confirm Saigon's reports of operations, but it was reported that U.S. forces were not providing support and were avoiding enemy contact, which would hold down the level of South Vietnamese contact. The U.S. Command reported seven "significant" enemy violations of the cease-fire, in which a total of two Americans were killed and twenty wounded.
- September 10: The White House announced plans for a top-level government conference on the Vietnam war to be held September 12. Sources said that the discussion was expected to cover the future conduct of the war and troop withdrawals. Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler said that the conference would cover "the entire Vietnam situation." Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker had conferred at the White House on September 9.

- September 10: Senator Barry Goldwater commended President Nixon for the troop withdrawals that had taken place, and said that he did not think future criticisms of the President should "be based... on political expediency." He said, "I hope we all would support the President's efforts to gain peace."
- September 10: Senator Jacob Javits stated on the Senate Floor that the President's decision to reconsider troop withdrawals "has created a sense of uneasiness...which could lead to a serious erosion of public confidence..." He called for the President to "recapture the momentum of his earlier announcements...by setting a timetable for withdrawal of 200,000 more U.S. troops by the end of 1970."
- September 10: NBC reporter Robert Goralski reported that he had learned from "authoritative sources" that the Green Berets had committed 300 political assassinations since 1965, some of them designed to appear to be the work of the Vietcong.
- September 10: A crowd of 200,000, including delegations from 34 countries, was reported to be present at Ho Chi Minh's funeral. The funeral oration was delivered by Le Duan, who also read Ho's will. The will called for internal and external unity: "We will do our best to preserve the unity of the party... to increase the combat capability of the party as the core of the national united bloc..."
- September 10: The next meeting of the Paris peace talks was set for September 13. The talks had been postponed at the request of Hanoi because of the death of Ho Chi Minh.
- September 11: The truce announced by the Communist side ended with heavy shelling of over 31 American installations and B52 attacks against the enemy by the American side. Meanwhile, the Saigon government maintained that it had never observed the truce.
- September 11: In the week ending September 11, 137 U.S. soldiers were killed and 1449 wounded. 502 South Vietnamese and 2291 Communists were killed and 1211 South Vietnamese soldiers were wounded.
- September 12: At a U.N. luncheon, Secretary General U Thant chided the U.S. and Vietnam for failing to reach a peace agreement, saying that "many opportunities towards a peaceful solution were missed." He appeared to be referring to the failure to extend the recent cease-fire.

- September 12: President Nixon met with principal advisers on Vietnam for a full review of future U.S. strategy. Those attending included Ambassador to South Vietnam Ellsworth Bunker, U.S. Commander General Creighton Abrams, and Pacific Commander Admiral J.S. McCain.
- September 12: Ronald Ziegler, White House News Secretary, gave this explanation of the 36-hour halt in the B52 bombing raids following the three-day cease-fire: "The President did order a suspension of B52 flights...We wanted to see what the other side intended to do in terms of the level of their military activity, following the 72-hour period which was suggested by the other side to be a cease-fire period. We wanted to determine whether this cease-fire period which was suggested had significance beyond the death of Ho. We did not want to resume B52 flights for a few days following the end of this period, but...we were under immediate attack...the suspension...was not an action which was intended to signal the other side or get a response from the other side directly to that action." When asked if the B52 suspension would have been continued, Ziegler said: "Our activities have always been influenced by the level of activity on the other side." It was reported that the halt was not intended as indefinite, but to indicate to Hanoi that the B52 raids may be considered a bargaining card.
- September 13: At the 33rd session of the Paris peace talks, negotiators argued inconclusively over U.S. prisoners of war in North Vietnam, ignoring other developments such as Ho Chi Minh's death and the possibility of future U.S. troop withdrawals. Lodge condemned the Communists for their inhumane treatment of prisoners, while the DRV/PRG refused to allow Red Cross supervision of camps until the United States agreed to accept the NLF's ten points.
- September 13: The U.S. reported 143 Americans killed and 1343 wounded in action in Vietnam for the week ending September 13. South Vietnam reported 529 killed and 976 wounded. Communist deaths were reported at 2403. U.S. troop strength stood at 510,000 as of September 11.
- September 14: Senator Mike Mansfield, interviewed on ABC's "Issues and Answers," said that the "opportunity has been passed by" and "at this time would be, I think, counter-productive" to couple any new announcement of troop withdrawals with offers of a cease-fire or B52 bombing halt. He said that President Nixon should explain his recent Vietnam policy to the American people, saying that he was reminded of stop-and-go mixups of the Johnson administration. Senator Hugh Scott,

- September 14: on "Meet the Press" said that he felt that President Nixon's recent actions have shown the North Vietnamese that he "has a number of options at hand."  
(cont.)
- September 15: Vietnamese Vice President Ky announced that the White House was planning to announce further U.S. troop withdrawals of 40,500 men by the end of November. The White House did not confirm the figures, and it appeared that Ky had jumped the gun on what was to be a joint Saigon-Washington announcement. Ky also said that he expected cuts to total 150,000 to 200,000 by the end of 1970. Ky said there would not be any new peace initiatives because "we have made enough concessions." He said, "We think it is time to take more responsibilities. We are now capable to replace the Americans." He also said that any attempt to form a coalition with the Communists in Saigon would be overthrown within ten days by a military coup.
- September 15: For the first time in the war, regular North Vietnamese army forces were reported to have gone into action as a unit in the Mekong Delta.
- September 16: The New York Times reported that high ranking U. S. officials said that Secretary of State William Rogers would ask Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to urge Ho Chi Minh's successors to negotiate an end to the Vietnam War. Rogers will meet with Gromyko in New York over the next two weeks.
- September 16: New South Vietnamese Premier Khiem said in a speech that "The main interest of the new cabinet is enhancing the quality of local-level administration." Meanwhile, President Thieu issued a statement saying that the newly announced U.S. troop withdrawal "is the measure of the progress in the strengthening of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam."
- September 16: President Nixon announced that 35,000 more American troops would be withdrawn from Vietnam by December 15, and appealed for the beginning of "meaningful negotiations." Reviewing the proposals he had made toward a settlement, the President said that "the time has come to end this war. Let history record that at this critical moment, both sides turned their faces toward peace rather than toward conflict and war." The White House announced that about half of the new withdrawals would be combat troops. A White House source said the new decision was based on three factors: (1) The stalemate since early May in Paris, despite signs of movement, (2) substantial decline in infiltration, and (3) a report by Gen. Abrams indicating improvement in the ARVN. Reviewing his efforts to end the war, the President said that "the only item which is not negotiable is the right of the people of

September 16: South Vietnam to determine their own future free of outside interference." After a meeting with the President, House GOP leader Ford said that "we can look for continued reductions" if improvement continues. Acting Minority Leader Hugh Scott said that American casualties and infiltration were much lower.

President Nixon's decision was described by Communists in Paris as "more or less dribbles." A Hanoi spokesman said: "We demand the total and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam...There is no other alternative."

September 16: Military sources in Saigon indicated that the defense of Saigon would be solely in government hands within thirty days.

September 17: The Senate voted unanimously in favor of an amendment to the military procurement bill which, its sponsor, Senator John Sherman Cooper, said would bar U.S. troops from engaging in "combat, hostility or war in support of local forces in Laos or Thailand." Senator John Stennis interpreted the amendment as merely preventing military assistance money from being used to finance combat operations (of U.S. troops) in Laos or Thailand. Several senators who voted for the amendment were reported to have said that they did so on the basis of Stennis' interpretation. Stennis said that before he could accept Cooper's interpretation, extensive hearings would be necessary.

September 17: Secretary of Defense Laird told a news conference that the withdrawal of more American troops from Vietnam would have a significant effect on future draft calls. He said that fluctuations in actual troop strength in Vietnam "will continue to fall between one and two percent below the authorized ceiling." The Pentagon later said that Laird had told Rep. L. Mendel Rivers that there could be no complete U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam unless Hanoi released all American prisoners.

September 17: Four American women whose husbands were missing over North Vietnam met for nearly two hours with Xuan Oanh of the North Vietnamese peace delegation who said he would let them know individually by mail about the fate of their husbands after checking with Hanoi. They reported he said that anyone seeking information about prisoners would be welcome at the North Vietnamese delegation if he came without U.S. government sponsorship.

- September 17: The Vietcong radio denounced President Nixon's announcement of additional troop withdrawals as a plot to prolong the war, saying "As long as the U.S. is still stubborn, we will follow the path set by Chairman Ho Chi Minh...to defeat completely the U.S."
- September 18: The U.S. Army announced that six Special Forces officers including Colonel Robert Rheault would be brought before a court martial on charges of murder and conspiracy to murder a South Vietnamese suspected of being a double agent.
- September 18: An interdenominational group headed by a former South Vietnamese chief of state, a prominent Catholic priest and a Buddhist monk today appealed to the United Nations to help break the deadlock at the Paris peace talks by setting up a three-member international conciliation committee.
- September 18: In an address to the U.N. General Assembly, President Nixon said that the U.S. was prepared to withdraw all its forces from Vietnam and that the current withdrawal totalling 60,000 men is "a significant step." He said that it was time for the other side to respond and urged the members of the United Nations to "use your best diplomatic efforts to persuade Hanoi to move seriously into the negotiations..."
- September 18: Senator John Sherman Cooper called for an investigation by the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees to determine whether or not American forces were already committed to combat in Laos. The New York Times published a report describing American military air support to a government offensive in Laos.
- September 18: Senator Edward Kennedy criticized President Nixon's handling of the war as "virtually unchanged" despite campaign promises. He said that "we have made only token troop withdrawals on the battlefield" and that "we have not been willing to consider the continued control of the Thieu regime as a negotiable question...as long as we remain unmoved on this issue there can be no peaceful solution."
- September 19: In speaking of the Administration's proposed draft reform, Secretary Laird said that he hoped Hanoi would realize that it indicated the progress that was being made in Vietnamization of the war.
- September 19: President Thieu said "We will not agree to a cease-fire without first arranging that which will follow it." He ruled out as "unacceptable" three suggested cease-fire plans that would involve cession of South Vietnamese territory.

- September 19: Senator Stuart Symington said that his Subcommittee on Security Arrangements and Commitments Abroad "will seek to put in the record as much detail as possible on our involvement" in Laos. He said "We have been at war in Laos for years..." Meanwhile, the State Department said that the U.S. had "no military presence" in Laos aside from its nineteen man embassy military attache staff.
- September 20: North Vietnam said that President Nixon's U.N. speech was "full of perfidious arguments and deceitful tricks." It repeated its demand that the U.S. withdraw totally and unconditionally from Vietnam.
- September 20: U.S. intelligence officials estimated that 30,000 enemy troops were massed near the DMZ. While no attacks seemed imminent, General Creighton Abrams said that there was much evidence that the enemy was planning a winter-spring offensive. He described the scheduled additional troop reductions as "manageable."
- September 20: Foreign Ministers of the five allied governments fighting in South Vietnam met in New York with Secretary of State William Rogers and South Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Tran Van Lam. The ministers said that their combined troop strength of about 70,000 men in South Vietnam would be maintained despite President Nixon's decision to begin withdrawing American troops. He promised that they would be consulted in advance of any future U.S. troop withdrawals.
- September 20: U.S. deaths for the week ending September 20 were 135, the lowest in six weeks. 297 South Vietnamese and 2696 Communists were reported killed. The U.S. listed 1114 wounded, and the South Vietnamese 883. U.S. troop strength stood at 510,200 as of September 18.
- September 21: Senator Mike Mansfield's report to the President on his two-week trip to Southeast Asia recommended that President Nixon's "Guam Declaration" be implemented by putting an "immediate freeze" on all military and civilian personnel increases in Southeast Asia, and that some operations be cut back in the future. Questioning the U.S. role in Asia, Mansfield said that "our presumption of a primary danger to the Southeast

- September 21: Asian countries which they themselves do not perceive, (cont.) does not provide a sound basis for U.S. policy. Rather, it tends to create for this nation the role of self-appointed, great power protector in an area in which a militant young nationalism speaks the common language of resistance to foreign intrusion."
- September 21: The New York Times Magazine published an interview with former U.S. Ambassador Cyrus Vance calling for a "standstill cease fire" leading to "a leopard-spot federal or confederal solution" in Vietnam. Vance explained that "a standstill cease fire recognizes the status quo." All offensive activities would be stopped and civilians could move freely. A modified form of the International Control Commission would establish about 300 local posts to prevent violations of the agreement. The Saigon government would be required to recognize NLF authority in the area it now controls, with the disputed areas being negotiated for. Anybody who wanted to could move into an area under the control of the other side, and free elections would eventually be held throughout the country, the timing of the elections to be up to the parties. Elections would be conducted by a mixed broadly-based electoral commission, with the local results to "reflect the realities that exist on the ground," rather than a winner-take-all approach or a joint coalition government. Vance said, "The NLF would be accepting a trade-off, obtaining local control by giving up its demands for a strong position in the central government" with the central government playing a weak role in the areas controlled by the NLF. Sweeping land reform would be initiated and medical aid and relief would be given to North and South Vietnam, along with economic assistance.
- September 22: Senator Hugh Scott said that in order to insure Republican gains in the 1970 Congressional elections the President should cut the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam in half, trim Defense Department spending by more than the announced cut of three billion, and substantially reduce draft calls. He said that an indefinite American stay in Vietnam "was not impossible but was the least desirable" prospect. He said that he was satisfied that the President "wants to avoid creeping involvement" in Laos "but he might slip into it."



- September 23: Ambassador Graham Martin, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand from 1963 to 1967, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that when he left Thailand in 1967 "there was no commitment, implied or actual, that did not exist when I arrived." Martin said that the contingency plan, signed for the U.S. by Major General Richard Stillwell, the chief of the Military Assistance Command in Thailand, could not be implemented without approval by both governments. In the case of the United States, he said this would be done "in accordance with our constitutional processes." He said in regard to the contingency plan that "many others have been done in... precisely the same pattern." Martin said there was no relationship between the contingency plan and Thai permission for the United States to use current bases there.
- September 23: Administration officials acknowledged in reply to an inquiry from Senator J. William Fulbright that there did not exist a "specific document" nor a "formal diplomatic request" for U.S. troops from the Saigon government. State Department officials said, however, that the record showed "continuing consultation" about sending U.S. troops that "amounts to a request." Fulbright had said it was "shocking" that no formal request had been made and that Congress was not asked for specific authority.
- September 23: The State Department reported that there were approximately 500 U.S. government employees assigned to the Embassy in Laos, plus about "330 AID contract personnel" and 1300 American dependents. The AID contract personnel, according to State Department spokesman Carl Barch, included those working for Air America, Continental Air Service and the International Voluntary Service. He denied that there were any U.S. "combat troops" in Laos.
- September 24: South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam said at the United Nations that "we can revise our laws" if Hanoi would seriously discuss elections at the Paris peace talks.
- September 24: Hanoi's official news agency announced that Ton Duc Thang, the Vice President of North Vietnam, had been chosen to succeed Ho Chi Minh as president of North Vietnam. He was considered to be a figurehead. After his election he said that "our people are resolved to fight until complete victory..."

- September 25: Premier Thanom Kittikachorn said that the first withdrawals of American troops from Thailand would begin "before December."
- September 25: Senator Charles Goodell introduced a bill that would require the withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970 by withholding appropriations. In a speech, Goodell said that his bill was offered "to help the President and Congress develop a workable plan for ending American participation in the war..." He said that current operational assumptions "will probably keep us fighting for years." Goodell said that the war "brutalizes our collective conscience, distorts our priorities, and frustrates our good intentions." He said that the South Vietnamese should assume full responsibility for the fighting by the end of 1970.
- September 25: Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, speaking after the 35th session of the Paris Peace Talks said that the Communist delegations "seemed more rigid than they have been for several months. They rejected our proposals for peace in what I thought were rather harsh terms and they repeated their demands for our immediate withdrawal and turning over the country to them without any indication that they are ready to negotiate." It was reported that all four delegations had nothing new to offer. The U.S. spokesman said that "negotiations have reached a stage where no useful purpose is served by further flexibility and reasonableness."
- September 26: Answering questions on the Vietnam War at a Press Conference, President Nixon said, "I think we are on the right course in Vietnam. We are on a course that is going to end this war. It will end much sooner if we can have to an extent, to the extent possible in this free country, a united front behind very reasonable proposals. If we have that united front, the enemy then will begin to talk, because the only missing ingredient" in speeding up conclusion of the war "is the refusal of the enemy in Paris to even discuss our proposals...any incentive for the enemy to negotiate is destroyed if he is told in advance that if he just waits for 18 months we will be out anyway. Therefore, I oppose that kind of arbitrary action." He said that recent proposals to establish a cut-off time on U.S. military presence in

September 26: Vietnam are "defeatist" and not in the country's interest, though "made with the best of intentions." He said that the objective he was trying to reach was to end the war before the end of 1970 or the middle of 1971. The President said that he expected activity opposed to war on college campuses, but "under no circumstances will I be affected by it." The President suggested that new leadership in North Vietnam might lead to some policy re-evaluation by the Communist side. He cited progress in the reduction of U.S. casualties and troop strength, as well as favorable world opinion toward the U.S. stand. Summarizing his position, he said, "Once the enemy recognizes that it is not going to win its objective by waiting us out, then the enemy will negotiate and we will end this war before the end of 1970. That is the objective we have." He said that the U.S. would support President Thieu because he had been elected by the Vietnamese people. He said that political and economic stability in the South, as well as the Vietnamization program, were moving forward.

Asked about Laos, he said "there are no American combat forces in Laos... We have been providing logistical support and some training for the neutralist government in order to avoid Laos falling under Communist domination." He said that U.S. participation was at the request of the Laotian government and that aerial reconnaissance and "some other activities" were carried out since "Laos relates very much to Vietnam, because the Ho Chi Minh trail runs through Laos."

September 26: Democratic National Chairman Senator Fred Harris reacted to President Nixon's news conference by saying that "it's time to take the gloves off on the Vietnam war issue. It's nine months since the President took office. I'm afraid President Nixon is rapidly losing the advantage he had...I'm really alarmed that (there) really isn't a plan..." A number of Democratic Members of Congress met with Harris and agreed to draft a resolution calling for Senate debate October 8 demanding a specific timetable for American withdrawal from Vietnam. Senator Muskie, commenting on the Administration's Vietnam policy, said it is "not so much a well-thought-out policy, but a flying-by-the-seat-of-his-pants policy."

- September 26: Republican leader Hugh Scott, however, said in a radio (cont.) interview that "an automatic, precipitous, deadline-type withdrawal would simply encourage the North Vietnamese to say: All we have to do is dig in and wait, the Americans will go home, and then we'll massacre the civilian populace."
- September 26: Authoritative sources in Saigon reported that South Vietnam would like the process of "Vietnamization" of the war to continue until the end of 1972, with a residual force of U.S. troops remaining after that. Other South Vietnamese sources were reported as saying that 200,000 American troops, including air, artillery, infantry and logistic units should remain. None of the Vietnamese sources said that they had received any commitment from the United States in agreement with such a plan.
- September 26: A South Vietnamese government spokesman confirmed today that Saigon was selling surplus weapons, but denied that any were U.S.-made. He said they were primarily French-made and were acquired before the U.S. entry into the war. It was reported that some were captured from the enemy.
- September 27: President Thieu said today in a television interview that he would never "leave" the United States, "but if someday, the United States says, 'You must accept a coalition government with the Communists, or we will abandon you,' then I will say thank you, we'll continue the fight" without U.S. aid. He said that he thought the process of withdrawing U.S. troops would take "years and years" and that Saigon had "no ambition or pretense" to take over on the fighting from U.S. troops by the end of 1970. He suggested, however, that South Vietnam could replace "the bulk of your infantry" by then, though South Vietnam would then require more aid in terms of guns, aircraft and money. Thieu said that he did not think the war would end until the Allies showed their determination not to make further concessions, but that Saigon's delegation would not walk out on the talks, despite an extended stalemate. He said he did not see an end to the war this year or next. "The Communists will begin serious negotiations only when they sense they will not profit by pressure from the American people on the American President to accelerate the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam," he said.

- September 27: The Laotian Premier, Prince Souvanna Phouman, said it was "perfectly false" that U.S. and Thai troops are fighting with the Laotians against the Pathet Lao, but that he might seek help in halting a planned enemy offensive. He said, "We only defend our liberty for our survival because we are invaded" by 50,000 North Vietnamese troops.
- September 27: Fewer Americans were killed in the week ending September 27 than at any time in more than two years. 95 were killed and 1315 wounded. 308 South Vietnamese were killed and 896 wounded. Communist dead totalled 2382. U.S. troop strength stood at 511,500 as of September 25.
- September 28: On a television interview, Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson said that he had been "misled by optimistic views from the Pentagon" in 1965 in assessing Vietnam policy. He said that the "people who were lower down the line..who had more immediate contact with both the military and the civil front in Vietnam" presented a different view than the reports from the top.
- September 28: President Thieu on "Issues and Answers" said that President Nixon had not given him any plan for future U.S. troop withdrawals, but that he felt if the U.S. gave "substantial aid, on equipment, on funds...we can replace a hundred, hundred fifty thousand" in 1970. He said he would prefer a long-range plan. He also said that the U.S. should "help us economically and in more sophisticated weapons."
- September 28: Senator George McGovern proposed that President Nixon offer asylum to any South Vietnamese who felt endangered by the withdrawal of U.S. troops.
- September 29: Senate Minority Leader High Scott and Minority Whip Robert Griffin called for a 60-day moratorium on criticism of the President's war policies, explaining that the President needed time, "elbow room," and a "common front" to negotiate a peace settlement. Senator Scott said that criticism might give Hanoi the impression "that the people of the United States are greatly divided" and that after 60 days, "You will have a new situation." House Minority Leader Gerald

- September 29: Ford said that "politics should stop at the water's edge" and that proposals for the withdrawal of American troops were "tantamount to surrender." Senator Edward Kennedy rejected Scott's plea, saying that senators should speak out if their statements were "constructive, searching, and positive."
- September 29: Laotian government troops with the backing of U.S. planes from Thailand were reported to have recaptured the strategic outpost of Muong Soui, which had fallen to the Communists in June.
- September 29: Army Secretary Stanley Resor said he had dismissed charges against eight Green Berets charged with murdering a suspected double agent after learning that the Central Intelligence Agency, "though not directly involved," would not let its personnel testify at the trial, and "under these circumstances the defendants cannot receive a fair trial." The White House acknowledged on October 1 that President Nixon had "approved" the refusal by the CIA to allow its personnel to testify.
- September 30: After a meeting with President Nixon, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott said, "The American people and the Congress clearly, in our judgment, oppose these cut-and-run and bug-out resolutions..." I would suggest that those people who want to demonstrate ought to demonstrate against Hanoi." He said that he though the President's policies were just and reasonable and that objectors fail to consider that "it is Hanoi which is inflexible and not the U.S." Congressman Gerald Ford said that the President and the American leadership believed that "there must not be capitulation or bug-out in our conflict in Vietnam." The Administration" believes that the quickest way to end the fighting, to end the casualties, is to have flexibility and to convince the enemy that the American people are unified for action at the peace table and for action in ending the war," Ford said.
- September 30: It was reported by sources in both the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao that the increase in U.S. bombing in Laos had altered the situation there, according to the New York Times. Daily sorties by U.S. planes reportedly were in the hundreds. Previously, U.S. bombing aimed at North Vietnamese

- September 30: (cont.) supply routes, whereas the object now was "to hit the enemy wherever he is," according to Laotian sources.
- September 30: In a ceremony at the White House Rose Garden, President Nixon responded to criticism of his war policy by saying, "We think we can bring peace. We will bring peace. The peace that we will be able to achieve will be due to the fact that Americans, when it really counted, did not buckle and run away, but stood fast, so that the enemy knew that it had no choice except to negotiate..." He said his objectives were to "negotiate a fair peace" which would consist of allowing the "people of South Vietnam" to choose their government.
- September 30: The U.S. and Thailand announced plans to withdraw 6000 U.S. Air Force and Army men from Thailand in the next ten months. Withdrawal was possible due to changing "operational requirements related to the Vietnam conflict." Reacting to the announcement, Senator Fulbright said it was "good but not very significant. I'd like to see them all come home." Senator Church said he hoped it was the "first step" leading to total withdrawal. Regarding future plans the announcement said, "The two governments will continue to evaluate the level of United States armed forces in Thailand in light of their assessment of developments in the Vietnam conflict."
- September 30: The New York Times reported that South Vietnamese sources said that Saigon had been negotiating with Washington "for some time" for an increase in economic and military assistance as American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam.
- September 30: The New York Times quoted "informed sources" in Paris as saying that North Vietnam was willing to supply the names of at least some of the American prisoners it holds, as a result of the visit to Paris of the wives of missing pilots. This was considered to be a gesture of "self-interest" by Hanoi, and not considered to reflect any softening. In interviews, Communist delegations recently returned from Hanoi seemed to take an even harder overall line on a settlement. Nguyen Thanh Le, the chief North Vietnamese spokesman, was quoted as

- September 30: saying "President Nixon has miscalculated" if he believes new leadership in Hanoi will produce any change and that "President Nixon will meet defeat as President Johnson has." Le said the delegation was not interested in discussing other problems relating to prisoners, as they were covered in the ten point program of May 8.
- September 30: The Foreign Minister of Sweden announced that Sweden would give North Vietnam \$40 million in economic aid over a three-year period. He said the government also hoped to aid South Vietnam when the war is over.