

SAIGON STUDENTS WANT U.S. TO GO

Say Vietnamese Could End
the War by Themselves

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By TAKASHI OKA

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, July 3 — "If only the Americans would go away, we Vietnamese could settle the war between ourselves."

Again and again in interviews here, student leaders have expressed this sentiment. Students here and in other cities have been demonstrating against the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu for months.

On the surface, they seem to echo what the representatives of Hanoi and the Vietcong have been saying at the long-deadlocked Paris peace talks.

The students, by and large, are not Communists. The reasons for their anti-Americanism are more complex than the simplistic declaration — often made by Communists — that the United States is an enemy invading and occupying Vietnamese territory.

"I was a senior in high school when I saw Americans for the first time in my life," said Ha Dinh Nguyen, chairman of the Student Struggle Committee at Saigon University.

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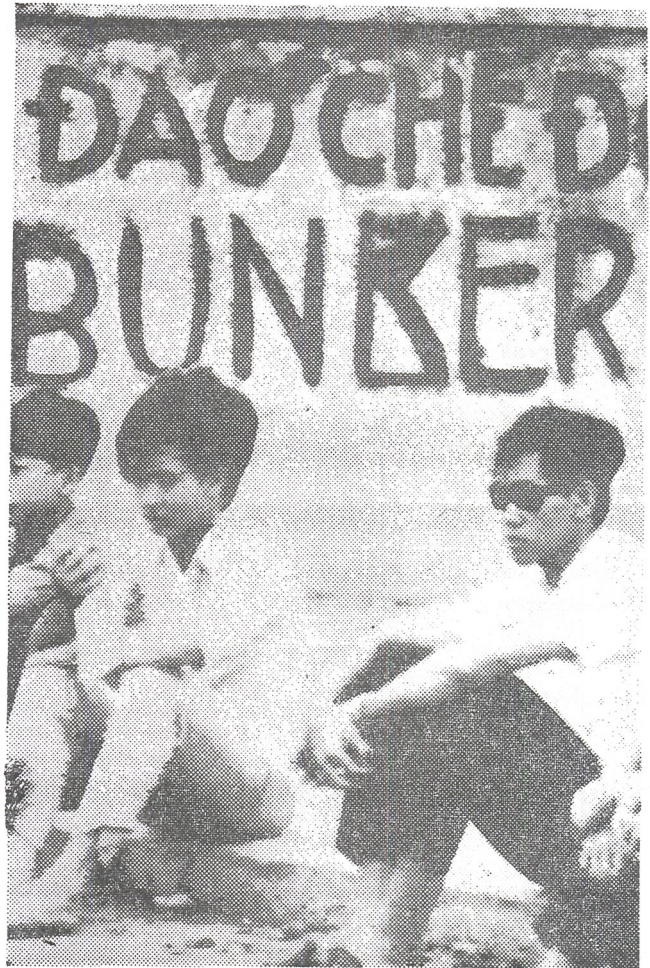
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He spoke through an interpreter.

"It was in Hoian, in central Vietnam," he said. "I admired those soldiers. They seemed so carefree, so strong. I was moved to think that they would have come from so far away to die for something other than their own country."

Saigon Changes His Mind

Mr. Nguyen, who is 23, said his feelings about the Americans began to change after he came to the capital.



SAIGON UNIVERSITY students at a demonstration before Van Thieu and Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. Ambassador.

"I saw how they interfered at all levels in Vietnamese society," he said. "I read about the massacre of Vietnamese civilians in Mylai. I saw myself how the lives of city people were disrupted by the American presence. I began to feel that the American presence itself is the reason the Communists continue the war."

Another student, Doan Van Toai, deputy chairman of the Saigon Student Union, said: "We students take note of the fact that on this side we have half a million foreign troops, while on the other side there are none."

The student activists are estimated to number not more than several hundred out of a total of about 42,000—32,000 in the University of Saigon and 10,000 at the Buddhist Van Hanh University. But the agitation, featuring marches, songs, sit-ins, and noisy motorcycle parades, has been

continuous, imaginative, and guerrilla-like. It shifts from demands for student autonomy to the release of arrested students, from complaints about high taxes and the cost of living, to protests against the regime's support for Premier Lon Nol in Cambodia.

Anti - Americanism has emerged from time to time, notably during a demonstration against the American Embassy on June 15, when the students burned an American jeep, clubbed its occupant and scrawled "Peace Now" and "Bunker Go Home" on the pavement.

Government Indecisive

Government reaction to the student agitation has been indecisive. Early in March, the police arrested several student leaders, including Huynh Tan Mam, president of the Saigon Student Union, on suspicion of being Communist agents. Most of the students have been released, but five remain in jail.

Premier Tran Thien Khiem and other officials have appealed to the students, saying that the Government has met all of their justified demands. Nevertheless, the agitation continues. Along with labor disputes, Buddhist protests, demonstrations and erection of squatter huts by wounded war veterans, the nearly universal complaints about inflation, unrest among the students worries the government.

It also disquiets American officials, who see no alternative to Mr. Thieu short of a coup or a military defeat.

One reason for the growing anti-Americanism of the students is the fact that the United States is supporting Mr. Thieu, whom the students accuse of being an arbitrary and indecisive ruler more interested in assuring his own re-election in 1971 than in restoring peace to South Vietnam.

Then too, many students are conscious that they hold a privileged position, exempt from the draft and living comfortably in Saigon, while some of their comrades who chose the Communist-led National Liberation Front scramble around in the jungle.

Some remain in Saigon from cowardice. Others have made overtures to the Liberation Front, only to be politely turned down. It is not easy for those brought up in a society where manual labor is still looked down on to adjust themselves to the kind of discipline the Communists demand.

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leges whereas on the other side they have ideals. We call the Communists materialists, but we are more materialist than they."

This feeling is aggravated by the knowledge that those on the Saigon side can keep up their privileges and their relatively comfortable lives only with the help of a foreign power. The most idealistic of the students opposing the Government say they remain in Saigon because they still feel it is possible to carry out a non-Communist revolution, to establish a regime of democracy and social justice.

Fight 'With Bare Hands'

"We are fighting with our bare hands," said Duong Van Day, a medical student at Saigon University, "to carry out a total revolution — to abolish

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