

Breakthrough in Vietnam Talks?

To the Editor:

We agree with your editorial of July 2 that the Communist offer to release all prisoners of war if the United States agrees to withdraw its forces from Vietnam by the end of the year opens the way to a breakthrough.

The Vietcong's seven-point peace proposal makes crystal clear that a simultaneous troop withdrawal and liberation of prisoners will not depend upon a resolution of the political problem in Saigon. These proposals underscore explicitly that the phased withdrawal and prisoner release "will begin at the same date and will end on the same date."

Significantly, too, the proposals de-

clare that a cease-fire will ensue with the withdrawal of the American troops and agreements will be provided on the modalities for assuring security of the withdrawing forces. If the Nixon Administration fails to accept the new proposals, it will be responsible for extending the war and postponing the release of prisoners indefinitely.

The Times is not accurate in stating that the National Liberation Front plan contains potentially obstructive conditions such as the demand for a prior political settlement in Saigon. The second point merely calls on the United States to respect the right of self-determination in South Vietnam

and to stop backing the Thieu regime.

The N.F.L. proposal indicates that the South Vietnamese themselves "will use various means" to form in Saigon a new administration. There can be no objection to that proposal.

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New York, July 2, 1971

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