

# The New Options at Paris

By JIM BLUM

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. — Mrs. Binh's seven points of July 1 offer more than just an opportunity to settle the prisoner issue. The plan she submitted at Paris on behalf of the Provisional Revolutionary Government could lead to an end of the Vietnamese war and a lessening of hostilities in Southeast Asia.

On the basis of long study of the Paris talks, I would like to present an explanation of the July 1 plan.

●As North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho clarified in a Times interview on July 6 a solution to the questions of a specific timetable for release of civilian and military prisoners and the withdrawal of U.S. troops could occur separately from a political solution in the South. In addition, the status of U.S. prisoners held in North Vietnam has changed from "war criminals" to "civilians captured in the war."

●A provisional coalition of the

various social, political and religious forces in South Vietnam who aspire to "peace and national concord"—regardless of their pasts and possibly including the present leaders in Saigon—would displace the Thieu regime.

An absence of U.S. partiality toward Thieu at the time of the October, 1971, elections might speed the replacement process—and thereby prove U.S. goodwill, according to Le Duc Tho.

The tasks of the provisional coalition would be to stabilize and gradually improve living conditions, to maintain order and prevent reprisals, and to enter into discussions with the provisional government on the organization of elections to form a permanent government. Although the July 1 plan specifies that the provisional coalition must stand for "peace, independence, neutrality and democracy," it fails to specify the nature of a post-electoral, postprovisional coalition government.

●The new proposal by Mrs. Binh is the first to directly interrelate the

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questions of reunification and removal of certain Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam. If both processes are to occur on the basis of mutual respect and "normal" interzonal relations, as the plan specifies, then neither zone could maintain troops in the other.

Perhaps to insure that neither zone takes advantage of the interim prior to reunification, the plan does not rule out acceptance of foreign military supplies by either zone. However, neither zone may harbor foreign troops or advisers.

●South Vietnam will accept foreign assistance to develop its mineral resources, and it will cooperate with its pro-Western neighbors to promote regional development. Significantly,

the July 1 plan never mentions the Laotian and Cambodian problems which, as Le Duc Tho says, would only complicate a Vietnamese solution.

●The United States must in some manner pay for damages to both zones of Vietnam. It is worth recalling that in 1965 President Johnson offered post-economic assistance to both zones. The new plan of the provisional government insists that the parties agree to adequate international guarantees to safeguard a negotiated solution.

The July 1 plan should help clarify past Nixon Administration misapprehensions—especially on the questions of prisoner release and the nature of a provisional coalition as well as the process by which certain Vietnamese troops will withdraw from the South. With this (new) knowledge, is there anyone who still feels that the kill must continue?

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