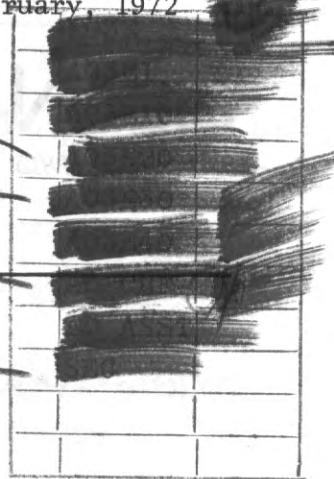


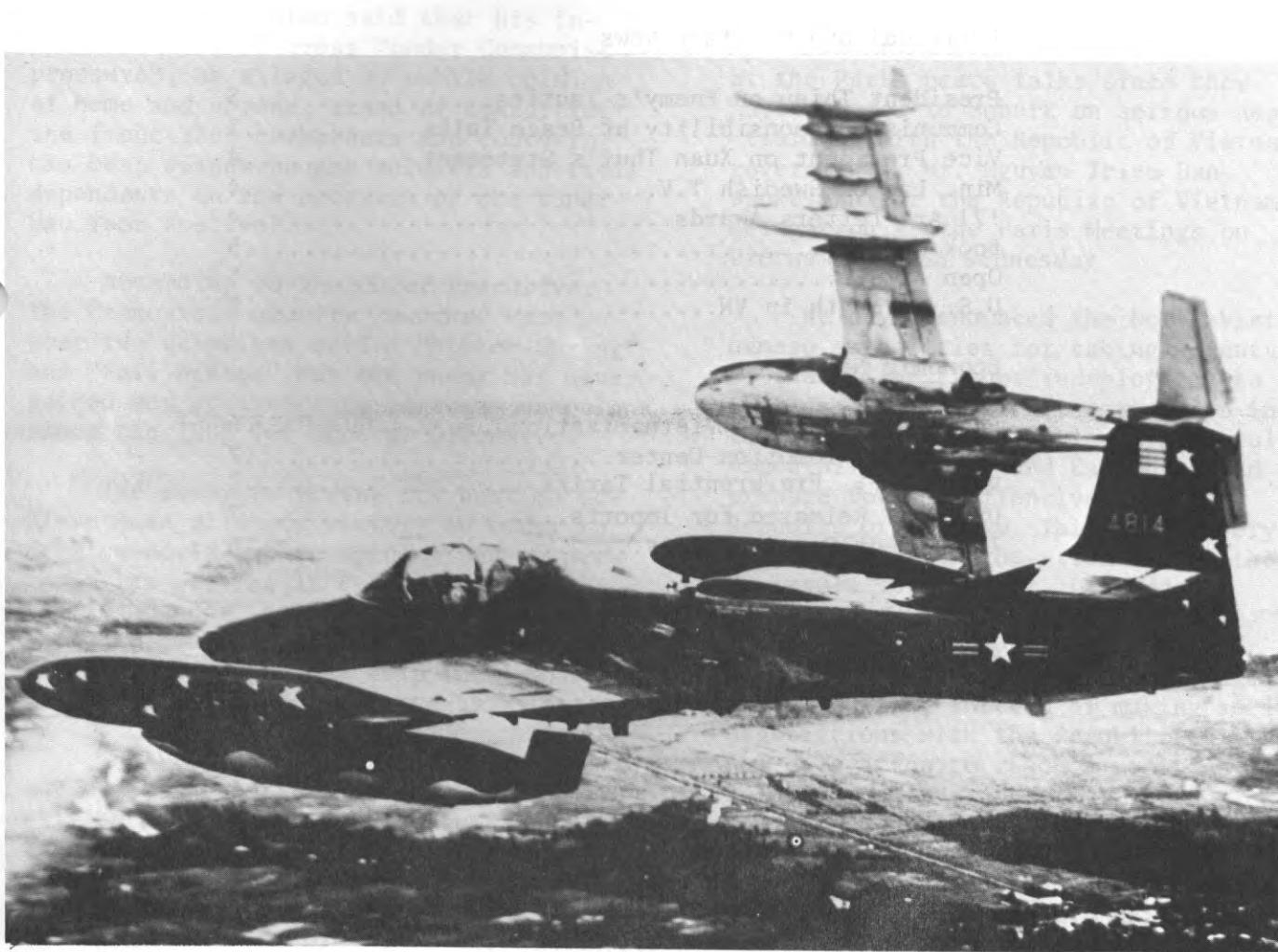
Vietnam **BULLETIN**

A SEMI MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

Volume VII, No. 3 & 4
February, 1972



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RVN Air Force

VIETNAM Bulletin

A SEMI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

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political & military news

President Thieu on Enemy's Tactics

SAIGON, February 11 (VP)-- President Nguyen Van Thieu Wednesday left Saigon for a two-day tour of combat units stationed in Military Regions I and II.

President Thieu said that his inspection tour of areas "under Communist pressure", as alleged by public opinion at home and abroad, aimed at comforting the front-line combatants and conveying his best wishes to the soldiers and their dependents on the occasion of the Lunar New Year Festival.

According to the Chief Executive, the Communists usually launched each year two campaigns called "Winter-Spring" and "Fall-Winter" but the enemy has never gained any achievements in these campaigns since the 1968 Tet General Offensive.

The enemy is trying its best to achieve some military victory in order to deceive world public opinion and to persuade its allies in Peking and Moscow not to abandon it, President Thieu added that the Communists also hoped that a military victory could help them gain advantage at the Paris Peace Talks.

The President emphasized that, in any case, a solution for the Vietnam war will be decided by the Vietnamese people themselves.

He added that Vietnam will have peace sooner or later according to the Communists' goodwill at the negotiation table, since the Republic of Vietnam government has already showed its goodwill to end the war through the January 25, 1971 peace package.

The President then expressed the belief that the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces will have enough capability to smash all Communist aggression plots and urged all the combatants to be determined for self-defense fighting.

Communist Responsibility at Peace Talks

PARIS, January 21 (VP)-- "The Communists themselves must bear full responsibility for the present deadlock at the Paris peace talks since they have refused to embark on serious negotiations with the Republic of Vietnam government", Mr. Nguyen Trieu Dan, spokesman for the Republic of Vietnam's delegation at the Paris Meetings on Vietnam said on Wednesday.

We have denounced the North Vietnamese authorities for taking advantage of the Allied troops' redeployment to increase their military activities in the whole of the Indochinese peninsula, especially in Laos and Cambodia, and to prepare for new offensives in the Republic of Vietnam. This is the very cause that makes the situation on the peninsula serious, Mr. Dan added.

This is an indication that the Communists are still looking for a military solution, instead of making serious negotiations with the Republic of Vietnam delegation to reach a political solution for the conflict, the spokesman added.

Dealing with the normalization of relations between the two halves of Vietnam, Mr. Dan said, "what we hope for and have proposed many times is peaceful coexistence between North and South Vietnam regardless of their different political regimes.

Vice President on Xuan Thuy's Statement

SAIGON, February 10 (VP)-- Vice President Tran Van Huong, in a special interview granted to Vietnam Press on Thursday remarked that Xuan Thuy's recent statement was just a "political trick" aimed at sowing confusion among the South Vietnamese people, creating division among the nationalist leaders.

Saigon newspapers recently printed a statement by Xuan Thuy, the North Vietnamese Chief negotiator at the Paris peace talks, saying that the Ha-Noi rulers may hold talks with Vice President Huong provided that he accept to abolish the present Constitutional regime and to change the anti-Communist policy.

Vice President Huong said, "since the Republic of Vietnam Constitution is in effect, the National Assembly is in effect, and President Thieu is in effect, I am in no position to talk to the other side."

The Vice President also denied allegations of a "Tran Van Huong" solution for the settlement of the war.

"There is a unique solution to the troubles of South Vietnam which have been set forth by President Nguyen Van Thieu in an effort to restore peace for the Nation," Vice President Huong said.

Min. Lam on Swedish TV

PARIS, January 31 (VP)-- Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam last January 27 was a guest speaker on a half-hour Swedish television program on Vietnam.

Also featured was a documentary film by Mr. Christenson and Linde, filmed during their visit to the Republic of Vietnam early in January.

The film depicted the RVN progress in the military, political and economic fields and the growing strength in her fight for self-defense.

Besides Minister Lam, other guest speakers of the program included Kien Hoa Province Chief, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Linh, Secretary General of the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations (VCFR) and many other political, military, and religious personalities.

In answering a question, Minister Lam said the Republic of Vietnam always advocates peace, however, all her proposals for a cease-fire and free election under international supervision have been rejected by the other side.

We expect, said Minister Lam, that North Vietnam will soon realize that there is no more hope in her scheme to take over South Vietnam by force of arms.

Meanwhile, it was reported that Swedish Senator Anders Bjorck, a member of the opposition party, submitted to the Swedish National Assembly a motion asking suspension of aid to North Vietnam and the establishment of a Swedish Embassy in Saigon, if a similar diplomatic mission is set up in Hanoi.

In the Republic of Vietnam, Sweden has a consulate in Saigon while a Vietnamese information office is set up by the VCFR in Stockholm in 1970 and operating on a private capacity.

1971 Art- Letters Awards

SAIGON, February 5 (VP)-- President Nguyen Van Thieu Friday afternoon presented the 1971 Presidential Art and Letters Awards to winners at a ceremony held at Independence Palace.

On this occasion, President Thieu stressed the role of culture in the preservation of the national spirit. According to the President, the government should not only promote freedom for cultural activities, but also help uphold the national culture.

The 1971 Presidential Art and Letters Awards includes 23 prizes worth VN \$100,000 to VN \$600,000 each for 23 types of nine literary and fine arts sections. There were also two consolation prizes of VN \$25,000 to VN \$150,000 each, for each type of section involved.

Book Subsidy

Sometime after President Nguyen Van Thieu announced an estimated two-billion subsidy for the pharmaceutics industry, the association of importers of books and magazines held a general meeting at the Saigon Chamber of Commerce to ask for a similar subsidy.

Textbooks and magazines have been imported at the rate of VN \$118 to the U.S. dollar previously. Since the realignment of the exchange system brought this rate to VN \$400 per dollar, an estimated VN \$30 millions' worth of books and other publications have been left to pile up in the storerooms of the Central Post Office Building.

After an inconclusive lobbying campaign, in the course of which importers reportedly approached every member of Congress as well as every high government official, they warned that the price of textbooks may increase by 250%.

Anguished PTA representatives from the Saigon area thereupon deluged Congressmen with petitions, arguing that it was unfair for the government to subsidize some 6,000 students seeking an education abroad (these are allowed to buy limited foreign exchange at VN \$118 per U.S. dollar) at the expense of millions of primary and secondary school and university students at home.

The PTA's plea was apparently heeded, for the Ministry of Economy has agreed to put up a VN \$100 per dollar subsidy for all publications imported before November 15 last year and to extend this subsidy to all textbooks--but not magazines--imported thereafter.

Still, with these new regulations, textbooks are expected to cost twice as much as before the New Economic policy.

Open Arms

199 REDS RALLY IN WEEK

SAIGON, February 11 (VP)-- Open-Arms Services throughout the country last week welcomed 199 Communist cadres rallying to the national cause. The returnees included 81 military, 71 political agents, and 47 other elements.

The Military Region IV topped the list with 128 returnees.

Thus, the returnees rallying to the government side during the first forty days of 1972 totalled 922.

Since the promulgation of the Open Arms policy in February 1963 a total of 193,786 returnees have been received throughout the country.

US Strength in VN

SAIGON, January 31 (VP)-- The U.S. military strength in Vietnam this week totals 136,500 men in comparison with 143,700 troops of the previous week, U.S. military sources said.

The figure includes 102,300 Army men, 6,900 Navy men, and 26,700 Airmen and 100 Coast Guard personnel and 500 Marines.

In addition, approximately 13,000 Navy personnel with the 7th Fleet Forces are aboard ships operating off the coast of Vietnam but are not included in the U.S.-strength-in-country figures.

Meanwhile, Free World Forces taking part in the Vietnam war this week total 48,300 persons as compared to 50,900 of the previous week, the same sources said.

* * * *

economic news

Economic Impact of Vietnamization

Within the next three months or so, after the bulk of the U.S. Armed Forces has been withdrawn from the war zone, the effects of Vietnamization upon the nation's economy will become more apparent.

But even now, many current socio-economic problems are traceable to the U.S. redeployment process.

Indeed, at the peak of the American involvement here, some 20,000 Vietnamese were provided with employment and income by the U.S. defense apparatus and contracting firms. Countless others derived a living directly or indirectly by supplying labor, goods, and services to the U.S. sector.

A sharp decrease in American demand for these goods and services, especially during the past 12 months or so has resulted in depriving this category of wage-earners of both employment and income.

The resulting picture is not one of total darkness, however. Unemployment in the cities and around American military bases has contributed to maintaining price inflation at a tolerable level over the past year. In the reckoning of experts, it has also helped and will continue to help in the implementation of the program of relocation of war refugees.

Also as U.S. and third country nationals leave Vietnam, such problems as housing in urban centers are becoming less acute. In Saigon, for instance, many apartment buildings vacated by American tenants have remained unoccupied.

This, however, is not to say that all is well. Vietnamization has brought and will bring along with it serious changes both the Government and the People of South Vietnam must see and act accordingly.

The Government used to earn about

US \$300 million per year by supplying piasters to meet in-country expenditures by the U.S. government. It has been authoritatively estimated that for the fiscal year 1971-1972 ending in June, that figure will drop by 50 percent. For the remaining part of 1972, when only a remaining force of 69,000 or less GI's is to be found here, South Vietnam's foreign exchange earnings from this source--the only source at present--will drop to a very low level: probably under US \$20 million.

With the future of America's Foreign Aid Bill still in doubt in the U.S. Congress, the prospect for the South Vietnamese economy looks rather poor. Without foreign exchange, the Administration cannot finance imports at the rate of US \$700 million per year and without imports, it cannot raise enough piasters to meet public expenditures..

Moreover, as recently approved by the National Assembly, the 1972 Budget stands at 305 billion piasters. The U.S. disengagement meaning naturally more of the fighting burden being transferred on South Vietnamese shoulders, it will undoubtedly raise the level of defense spending and make further appropriations inevitable.

As mentioned earlier, Vietnamization has a salutary effect on the local economy since it reduces the cost push and helps to damp inflation. But the country must be prepared to face a new set of socio-economic conditions. Sociological consequences of unemployment and decreased purchasing power, for instance, must be dealt with in time before they may reach uncontrollable proportions.

In this connection, a great deal has been said about turning former U.S. base facilities to productive purposes. It has also been frequently pointed out the South Vietnam has inherited from America a first-rate infrastructural network. Thousands of miles of roads and bridges have been built or upgraded. Airport and harbor facilities are now available at most economically strategic points. . . .

Investment Opportunities in VN *

Investment opportunities are plentiful in Vietnam, and those which are included in the Priority List will receive assistance from the Government.

Below, readers will find a number of profitable industrial projects which are reproduced from "Industrial Development News", a monthly bulletin published by the Industrial Development Bank of Vietnam. For more details, please contact the Industrial Development Bank, Investment Promotion, 40 Nguyen Hue, Saigon.

PROFITABLE INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

The Industrial Development Bank in collaboration with the Directorate of Planning and the Export Promotion Center has prepared a list of profitable industrial projects to assist potential investors in the selection of a sound investment.

These industrial projects are selected on the basis of the following criteria listed in the order of decreasing priority :

1. Export-oriented industries using local raw materials
2. Import-substitution industries using local raw materials
3. Labor intensive industries with high value added

LIST OF PROFITABLE INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

A. MARINE PRODUCTS:

1. Deep-sea fishing
2. Cold storage and refrigerated trucks
3. Fresh, frozen or dried shrimp and fish
4. Marine product canning
5. Shark fin
6. Agar-agar

B. FOREST PRODUCTS

1. Sawn wood
2. Plywood, veneer
3. Particle board
4. Furniture
5. Pine resin

C. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS:

1. Dehydrated banana
2. Banana cold storage
3. Rubber and rubber products
4. Duck feather
5. Soy bean and fruit juice
6. Food and fruit canning
7. Yeast
8. Tea processing for export
9. Edible oils
10. Industrial oils (castor, tung)
11. Cane sugar

D. MINERALS:

1. Silica sand (after cleaning and grading)
2. Glassware
3. Marble
4. Salt used in industry
5. Cement
6. Fertilizer

E. MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES:

1. Electric motors
2. Light bulbs and fluorescent lamps
3. Tin cans
4. Large scale spare part manufacturing and assembling
5. Insecticide sprayers and agricultural equipment

F. CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES:

1. Rubber latex
2. Insecticides from chlorine
3. Paint
4. Soda ash
5. Raw materials for pharmaceutical industry
6. Printing ink
7. Plastic resine (MVC, PVC)
8. Pulp and paper
9. Electronic components
10. Synthetic fiber such as Nylon, rayon, synthetic wool

Special Feature

From Potential to Power

The South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) has come of age. In the 17 years since its inception in mid-1955, the fledgling force has established itself as the fastest-growing air arm in Southeast Asia. What is more, emerging as one of the world's leading air powers, it has recorded chapters along the way of phenomenal expansion.

Starting with 92 pilots flying battle-worn aircraft given it by the French, VNAF now numbers 2,100 flyers and more than 900 aircraft, including the supersonic F.5 Freedom Fighter jets. And it continues to grow.

Even more significantly, the entire development process has taken place in an environment of war. Few nations, if any, have undertaken such a massive buildup while having to face a formidable enemy bent on their destruction so singlemindedly as the Viet Cong have been trying to do the South Vietnamese nation.

Real Start

This remarkable development, however, really started in the early 1960's, nearly a decade after VNAF was formally created. Before the conflict expanded into an international struggle, there were still fewer than 200 pilots and only a few more than 100 aircraft flying South Vietnamese colors.

But, then, VNAF began to acquire additional aircraft to replace the ancient French planes. Also during this period an air logistics depot, training centers, a rudimentary tactical air control center, and several air bases were developed or improved.

With standardization of its operations and training conducted by an ever-enlarging U.S. advisory force, the Repu-

blic's air arm grew increasingly more capable. Between 1962 and 1965, it increased from 4,000 to 10,000 men. Its aircraft more than doubled, from 180 to 380.

Sensing a need for better distribution of its manpower, aircraft and logistical support, VNAF restructured into four tactical wings and one air transport wing. VNAF had had two wings, the 62nd at Pleiku and the 41st at Danang. The 33rd Wing was organized at Tan Son Nhut. The first helicopter squadron was activated. The 62nd Wing was moved from Pleiku to Nha Trang, placing it closer to Viet Cong concentrations in the northern sector.

The story of the eagle is not one of only expansion, though. There were also demonstrations of its growing ferocity.

Growing Ferocity

On Feb. 8, 1965, 24 A1 Skyraiders flew out of Danang near the 17th Parallel and destroyed 90 per cent of the Vinh Linh military establishment, the Communists' final collection and storage area before moving onto the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Although VNAF fighters received heavy antiaircraft fire and almost every plane was punctured with bullets, there were no casualties. All but one Skyraider returned safely to Danang. The pilot of the one aircraft that was lost bailed out and was rescued.

By mid-1966, the all-volunteer air force was a potent military organization boasting more than 16,000 personnel and more than 350 aircraft. It consisted of several fighter squadrons equipped with A1s, helicopter squadrons with H34 Seaboats, four liaison squadrons and two transport squadrons.

June 1, 1967 was a red-letter day VNAF. The 522nd Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa converted from the A1 to the supersonic F.5 Freedom Fighter to become the first Vietnamese all-jet fighter squadron. During the previous year, 33 Skyraider pilots had been carefully chosen to form the nucleus of the jet squadron. As one of the first air force units ever to transition from propeller aircraft directly to supersonic jets, VNAF again proved its caliber.

Blueprint for Expansion

In December 1968, the blueprint for further VNAF expansion was established when the U.S. Department of Defense approved the Improvement and Modernization Program. The multi-phased program of training and equipment acquisition was designed to make VNAF totally self-sufficient in the defense of the Republic, thus allowing disengagement of the U.S. Air Force from the conflict.

During this period, the U.S. shoudered a major portion of the air war over the south and began air strikes in the north. U.S. attack sorties rose from about 65,000 in 1965 to more than 200,000 in 1968, while VNAF attack sorties stayed between 20,000 and 30,000 per year in the same period. At one time during peak 1968 action, there was an average of one sortie per minute in the Republic of Vietnam.

The enemy attacks launched during Tet 1968 actually heralded the reverse pendulum swing. The outstanding response to the massive enemy offensive by the tiny VNAF strike force of 70 A.1 Skyraiders and 17 F.5 Freedom Fighters revealed a potential that had been almost forgotten."



When the attack started, more than half of all VNAF personnel were off the bases enjoying the holiday with their families. The remaining crews flew around-the-clock. Within three days, however, 90 per cent of the force was back on duty and VNAF was flying 78 sorties per day. Though 17 planes were lost, ten on the ground and seven in the air, the total force flew 50 per cent more sorties than normal.

When the Chips Are Down

VNAF had clearly demonstrated what it could do when the chips were down. In fact, the entire Vietnamese military found a new confidence. They had met the enemy's maximum effort and, unlike the Communist offensive of 1968, they had held.

Four years after *Tet*, the South Vietnamese Air Force has even grown more of formidable instrument of war. Now organized into five air divisions, it is under the command of Major General Tran Van Minh.



*Vietnamese Air Force F.5
fighters on a mission.*



With nearly a thousand planes and 40,000 airmen, the Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) has become one of the most formidable such forces in the world. Recently, with the addition of scores of supersonic F.105 jet fighters (photo above) and the subsonic A.37 to its arsenal, VNAF has joined the jet era.

But these sophisticated aircraft have yet to prove their full value over the battlefields of South Vietnam, where helicopters (photo on opposite page) have been for many years the indispensable air arms of the foot soldiers. In the current military situation of the land, these troop carriers fly each day hundreds of sorties, transporting thousands of troops to the most sensitive points of the Republic.

Noticeably absent from these photos is the Skyraider, a fighter-bomber left over from the last war, which has proven incomparably efficient for close air support. Most VNAF fighters can drop their bombs wherever the ground troops want with a degree of accuracy that has often astonished many an observer.



The Climate of VN

Viet-Nam has a tropical monsoon climate not unlike that of peninsular India or Burma. The regular seasonal alternation of wind, with northerly winds in winter and southerly winds in summer, controls almost every aspect of weather conditions.

Pressure and Winds

In winter, winds (north-east monsoon) blow outwards from central Asia towards the low-pressure region in equatorial latitudes. By contrast, in summer, the low pressure of central Asia causes a reversal of wind direction from north-east to south-west. In general, seasonal variations of pressure are more extreme in the north than in the south of the country.

The winter monsoon does not appear in the northern part of South Viet-Nam until the first week of October and in lat. 10° N until the third week. Along the coasts of south Central Viet-Nam and South Viet-Nam it blows parallel to the shore. Where high land drops sharply to the sea offshore winds frequently occur ; this tendency sometimes brings about a local reversal in the direction of the monsoon.

The force of the north - east monsoon is not constant. It blows in successive pulsations of varying strength, sometimes exceeding force 7 on the Beaufort scale, while at other times falling below force 4. The frequency of strong winds decreases from north to south.

After two transitional months of April and May, when winds are variable, the summer regime be-

comes established in early June. The summer monsoon in Viet - Nam sets in with less suddenness and force than is characteristic of the commencement of the winter monsoon. Throughout June, July and August a low-pressure system is stabilized over South Viet-Nam and there is a regular in-blowing wind from the south-west or south. The summer monsoon in this region seldom exceeds force 5 on the Beaufort scale , except at times in the coastal lowlands of southern Viet-Nam.

The plateaus of Central Viet-Nam (Kontum, Darlac, Lang Bian) are marked in summer months by local winds which differ in their excessive aridity from the general character of the monsoon . These "winds of Laos"--as they are often called--constitute the dominant winds at Binh Dinh in July and August. They are hot and dry, sometimes blowing with extreme violence and provoking intense evaporation.

At all periods of the year, land and sea breezes are a common occurrence, especially along the coasts of what is now South Viet-Nam. They originate from the differential heating of land and sea. The sea breeze usually makes itself felt around 1:00A.M and reaches a maximum force in the early afternoon to die away at sunset; in the late evening, it is replaced by the land breeze which persists until about sunrise. Along the coasts, where the configuration of the land--e.g. mountains--protects the plains from the prevailing winds, the local breezes may become the predominant wind and have sufficient force to reverse the general monsoon current.

Typhoons

Originating for the most part between the 5th and 20° N paral-

RVN CLIMATE

LEGEND GHI-CHÚ

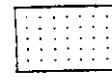
CÁC MIỀN KHÍ-HẬU VIỆT-NAM (RVN CLIMATE TYPES, BY AREA)



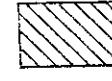
CENTRAL CLIMATE
(COASTAL AREAS)
Khí-hậu Trung-Phân
vùng duyên-hải



CENTRAL CLIMATE
(HIGHLANDS)
Khí-hậu Trung-Phân
vùng cao-dô

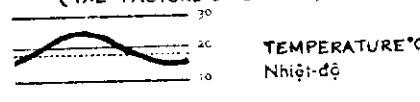


CENTRAL CLIMATE
(DROUGHT AREA)
Khí-hậu Trung-phan
vùng hán-hạn

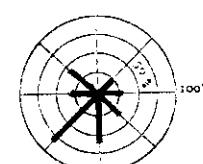


SOUTHERN CLIMATE
Khí-hậu Nam-Phân

CÁC YẾU-TỐ KHÍ-HẬU (THE FACTORS OF CLIMATE)



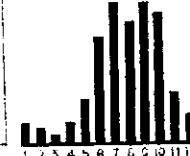
TEMPERATURE °C
Nhiệt độ



WINDS
Gió

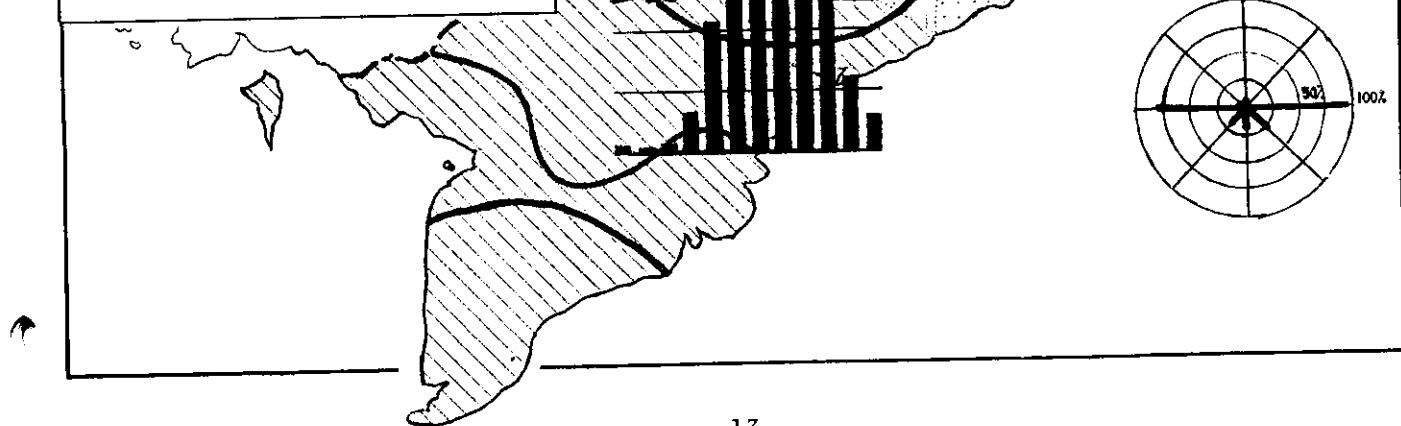
VŨ LƯỢNG (RAINFALL)

HUẾ : 3007 CM
B.M.THUỘT : 1816 CM
PHAN-THIẾT : 1187 CM
SAIGON : 1937 CM



RAIN-FALL
MUG

Vùng đồng-nhiệt
(Isothermal Regions)



lels and the meridians of 130 and 150°E, these tropical cyclones not only cause extensive material damage when they hit the coasts of Central Viet-Nam, they also bring with them heavy rainfall. The frequency of typhoons hitting the coasts of Viet-Nam peaks from about July to November, with the danger lying north of the 15th parallel in July, August and September but moving rapidly south in October and November.

Temperature

Viet-Nam lies entirely within the tropics and the whole country, except in some mountainous areas, experiences high temperatures throughout the year. The mean temperatures, reckoned annually, differ but little from Hue (77°F or 25°C) to Saigon (81.5°F or 27.6°C). Even this difference can be explained mostly by the difference in latitude.

Climatologists discern a "regime of Saigon" which extends along the coast of Central Viet-Nam all the way to Nha Trang or Qui Nhon and further west even. The annual range of temperature of Saigon is small (6.2°F or 3.7 degrees Centigrade); the hottest month is April (85°F or 29.7°C) and the coldest month, December (78.8°F or 26°C). The chief distinguishing characteristic, however, is the existence of two maxima (April and August for Saigon) and two minima (July and December), a typical feature of the equatorial climate. This regime extends as far north as Nha Trang, but farther north at Hue it is no longer in evidence.

On the mountains and plateaus of Central Viet-Nam temperatures are much lower. Dalat, at 1500m on the Plateau of Lang Bian, has a mean annual temperature of 14°F (7.8°C) less than Nha Trang

which lies at sea level in almost the same latitude.

Precipitation

Like all tropical monsoon areas, Viet-Nam for the most part receives a heavy annual rainfall. Relief has an important influence upon its distribution. Thus, annual rainfall is very great in the central and southern parts of the Vietnamese Cordillera (e.g. Hon Ba, 3,748 mm or 150 in.). The plain of the lower Mekong is a relatively dry area, but the driest region is the strip of lowland along the coast of Central Viet-Nam from Phan Thiet to Cap Padaran. The mean annual rainfall at Cap Padaran for the period 1907-29 was only 737 mm (30 in.), an incredibly low figure for a monsoon area--this may be ascribed to the parallel alignment of the coast and the direction of the monsoon.

The monsoonal regime is the most important factor determining the seasonal distribution of rainfall. As a general rule summer, or the period of the south-west monsoon, is the wettest season and winter, when the north-east monsoon blows, the driest. Saigon receives a mean annual rainfall of 2,022 mm (81 in.), of which 1,908 mm (76 in.) falls from April through December and only 114 mm (4 in.) between December and April. A double maximum in June and September is another significant feature in the rainfall regime of Saigon, as of other localities in southern Viet-Nam.

Central Viet-Nam has a different rainfall regime from the regime of Saigon. The wettest period here occurs from September to January rather than during the summer. At Hue, 2,260mm (91 in.) falls in these months and only 643 mm (26 in.) in the

rest of the year. The highest rainfalls are recorded in October and November, a fact attributable to the frequency of typhoons during this season.

Variability of rainfall from year to year is a common feature of the climate of Viet-Nam. Yet rainfall, which is crucial to the cultivation of rice--by far the most important crop of the country, is a very complex problem. The study of its variability and evaporation (especially due to the warm and dry "winds of Laos" in Central Viet-Nam) alone is not enough. The extreme sensitivity of rice crops to any imbalance in the weather can destroy or severely damage them. Droughts are common, especially in Central Viet-Nam, and excessive rainfall is no less prevalent and just as harmful, causing floods that destroy the harvest and widespread damage to household property, roads and railways (cf. the 1964, 1970 and 1971 floods).

Snow is practically unknown in South Viet-Nam while hail occurs but rarely in the mountain areas of Central Viet-Nam (e.g. Dalat), usually accompanied by thunderstorms.

Humidity

Relative humidity maintains a high level at all seasons in the greater part of Viet-Nam. In the south and along the east coast humidity is highest during the rainy season--June to October in the Mekong delta, October to January in Central Viet-Nam.

The mountain regions of Viet-Nam have a more variable relative humidity than the lowlands. Abundant rainfall from the winter monsoon, accompanied by very heavy clouds, frequently leads to 100% humidity. By contrast,

there is an extremely low humidity (as low as 10%) at the end of the winter season (March and April). On the high plateaus exposed to both the north-east and south-west monsoons relative humidity is generally speaking very much lower.

Visibility and Clouds

Central Viet-Nam has poor visibility in the first few weeks of the north-east monsoon season (October) and from January to April when the Asiatic winter high pressure is weakening. In southern Central Viet-Nam and the Mekong delta fog is uncommon throughout the year.

Over most of Viet-Nam cloudiness is heaviest during the period of maximum precipitation. At Saigon, May to October is the cloudiest period and the dry season, January to April, is the least cloudy. In Central Viet-Nam (Qui Nhon) the rainfall maxima in November, December, and January coincide with the greatest cloud-cover, densities as high as eight-tenths being frequently recorded, while March, April and May are the clearest months in the region.

The above is excerpted from Atlas of the Republic of Viet-Nam, a forthcoming publication of the Embassy of Viet-Nam.

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