

General VAN TIEN DUNG

Chief of V.P.A. General Staff

113

After political failure
**THE U.S. IMPERIALISTS
ARE FACING MILITARY DEFEAT
in South Vietnam**



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
HANOI-1966

*AFTER POLITICAL FAILURE
THE U.S. IMPERIALISTS
ARE FACING MILITARY
DEFEAT IN SOUTH VIETNAM*

General VAN TIEN DUNG
Chief of V.P.A. General Staff

After political failure
THE U.S. IMPERIALISTS
ARE FACING MILITARY DEFEAT
in South Vietnam

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
HANOI — 1966

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Publisher's note</i>	7
<i>After political failure the U.S. imperialists are facing military defeat in South Vietnam (by General Van Tien Dung)</i>	9
Annexes :	41
<i>I — An account of some fresh victories (Vantuong, Pleime, Baubang, Bongson)</i>	
<i>II — American military build-up in South Vietnam</i>	
<i>III — Casualty list</i>	
<i>IV — Map I: Battles in which American and puppet battalions were destroyed wholesale</i>	
<i>V — Map 2: Attacks on U.S. airfields</i>	
<i>VI — Photos</i>	

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

In their "special warfare" using puppet troops as a main tool for their aggression of South Vietnam the U.S. imperialists have suffered bitter setbacks, both in the political and military fields. Since March 1965, to retrieve the puppet army and administration on the verge of collapse they have massively introduced their own troops for a direct participation in the war. By the end of March this year, the number of G.I.'s already amounted to 230,000. In face of their heavy and repeated setbacks the Americans are preparing to increase their troops to 300,000 or 400,000. Will these reinforcements help them turn the tide of the war? Can the South Vietnam army and people defeat the U.S. imperialists militarily as they have done politically?

The article After political failure the U.S. imperialists are facing military defeat in South Vietnam by General Van Tien Dung, Chief of General Staff of the Vietnam People's Army, will give a clear-cut answer to these questions while an account of some fresh victories published in the annex will substantiate the authors' viewpoint.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
HANOI

AFTER POLITICAL FAILURE THE U. S. IMPERIALISTS ARE FACING MILITARY DEFEAT IN SOUTH VIETNAM

by General VAN TIEN DUNG
Chief of V.P.A. General Staff

IN their "special war" strategy using the puppet army as the main force to invade the South of our country, the American imperialists have pitifully failed in the political as well as in the military field. That is why they hurriedly and massively sent their troops to take a direct part in the war in an attempt to save the puppet army and administration on the verge of disintegration.

But after over half a year of direct confrontation with the American expeditionary force, the heroic army and people of South Vietnam have kept firm and developed their initiative: they have been inflicting defeats upon more than 200,000 U.S. troops and 500,000 of the puppet army. The American imperialists have failed to carry through the strategic tasks they have set for themselves, namely, to consolidate their bases, pacify the areas under their control, attack the liberated zones, annihilate the Liberation main force, wrest back

the initiative and turn the tide of the war. Worse still, they further lost initiative. All their most seasoned infantry and marine units have gone into action and suffered heavy setbacks. The puppet army continued disintegrating by chunks. In 1965 an important part of G.I.'s and puppet troops — over 200,000 — were wiped out or disbanded. All the American tactics and technique have gone bankrupt one after the other, and will inevitably end in complete failure as was the case with the puppet army formerly.

The great victories won by the South Vietnam army and people since the second half of 1965 testify that in theory as well as in practice *the South Vietnam army and people are fully capable of knocking down the best units of the U.S. expeditionary force, and stepping up their annihilation attacks against the American and puppet troops on all battlefields to win ever-greater victories even with the presence of some hundred thousand G.I.'s.*

In face of these serious military setbacks, the Americans are preparing to increase their effectives in South Vietnam up to 300,000 or 400,000 or more.

Even with such an increased contingent, will the Americans be able to change the war situation and wrest back the initiative? Can the army and people of South Vietnam continue confronting and defeating in any circumstances U.S. imperialism, the topmost imperialist power having the biggest economic and military potential in the capitalist world, as they have been defeating them on the political front?

To solve this problem, it is necessary for us to have a correct and comprehensive assessment of the relation of forces, and of the objective and subjective conditions which have brought about, and led to, the military superiority of the South Vietnam army and people over the American aggressors on the battlefield.

*

The all-governing law of war is that those who are in a stronger position will triumph over those who are in a weaker position. As the South Vietnam army and people have to oppose a weaker force (weaker in terms of war means and technique but stronger politically and morally) to a stronger force, they must pass from their initially weaker position to a superior military position on the battlefield, and turn the tables on the American imperialists.

Victory or defeat, initiative or loss of initiative on the battlefield, is always associated with a definite military superiority of a belligerent over the other. This is the yardstick to measure military superiority. Consequently, the military failure of the American imperialists in their "special war" strategy clearly proves that the South Vietnam army and people have won a definite military superiority over the puppet army organized, equipped, trained and commanded by the American aggressors. The 200,000 American troops brought into South Vietnam are not able to wrest back the initiative and change the war situation but suffer fresh defeats. This also demonstrates that the South Vietnam army and people keep on maintaining and developing their military superiority.

The continued introduction of American troops in an attempt to regain military superiority is precisely a proof of the failure of 200,000 G.I.'s and 500,000 puppet troops in face of the repeated offensives of the South Vietnam army and people.

In any war, to hold military superiority does not necessarily mean to have a stronger military force though the former is always associated with the latter. There is no material basis for military superiority without a military force developed to a certain degree. Force is the basis of *position* and any *position* derives from a given force. However, in the military field, position is the decisive factor. It reflects in a definite situation the possibilities and trend of the force in action. It also reflects the outcome of the competition of the subjective efforts of each belligerent in the utilization and deployment of his forces to create a position advantageous for himself and disadvantageous for his opponent. With an advantageous position a small force can change into a powerful force, inferiority into superiority, and weakness into strength. Therefore, when establishing the relation of forces between the South Vietnam army and people on the one hand and the U.S. imperialists on the other, one must take into account not only their respective forces but also their respective positions.

Because of the unjust nature of their war and their reactionary and backward military conception, the American imperialists cannot but rely on a professional army and modern weapons to secure military superiority in order to crush the resistance of the South Vietnam army and people. But the factors that create

military superiority reside not only in the number of troops and the quantity of weapons each side has at its disposal but also in its rear, in the political situation within and without the country, the fighting spirit of its army and people, its own ability to conduct the war, etc. This superiority springs from the interaction of all the political and purely military factors, of the subjective and objective factors of the two belligerent forces taken separately and in their relation. Therefore, in examining the factors of military superiority it would be erroneous to take into account only the purely military factors while glossing over the direct and indirect action of the political factors, and to look only into the number of soldiers and rifles, aircraft and cannons, while neglecting the role of the political and moral factors. This runs counter to the conception of historical materialism and to the proletarian military science.

When considering the problem of military superiority on the South Vietnam battlefield at present, we must do so in the concrete historical conditions of the war between the South Vietnam people and the U. S. imperialists. We must have a comprehensive survey of the political and military situation, and of the conditions of the battlefield on each side such as: character of the war (just or unjust), ability to conduct the war, armed forces taking part in military operations and their military art, the present aspects of the battlefield, offensive or defensive position of one or the other belligerent. Without considering these historical conditions, it would be impossible to expound why the South Vietnam army and people can secure military

superiority and win victories over the U. S. imperialists.

Proceeding from the above-mentioned conceptions and methods of investigation, and basing ourselves on the concrete conditions of the battlefield in the recent period, especially since the massive landing of U.S. troops in South Vietnam, we will analyse the over-all situation on both sides.

Firstly, the just character of the war and the absolute political superiority of our people are the fundamental objective factors that create and develop their military superiority.

As the topmost imperialist power the United States has the greatest economic and national defence potential in the capitalist world. The American forces are equipped with up-to-date arms and even chemical weapons; they have high mobility and great fire-power, especially insofar as their air force, navy and artillery are concerned. With the introduction of new U.S. contingents into South Vietnam the American and puppet troops have been reinforced in effectiveness, fire-power and mobile strategic and tactical reserves. As a result, for the time being and to some extent, the puppet troops still find in the U.S. forces a prop to ward off swift destruction and total collapse. All this constitutes the strong points of the enemy and also new difficulties and trials for the South Vietnam army and people who have to solve new military problems.

Nevertheless, in the political field, the U. S. imperialists have fundamental weak points which profoundly

influence and weaken their military position and strength.

Generally speaking, in the whole process of the war, the U.S. imperialists cannot throw all the economic and military potential of the United States for the sole purpose of invading the South of our country. This is because their unjust war of conquest is opposed by the American people and the world people, because they have to cope with the situation in many places and in various fields, including the military field, in order to rule over and repress other people, in the role of an international gendarme, and guard against other imperialist powers. Furthermore, they have to wage a war thousands of miles far from the U.S.A., which places them in a disadvantageous position as regards climate, terrain and support of the population. That is why they can only deploy a limited military strength in South Vietnam; they cannot put in as many troops as they like, and pour in as much money as they please; they cannot prolong the war indefinitely. We thus have not to cope with all their military might.

When the American imperialists completely threw off their masks and openly introduced their troops into South Vietnam, their basic weakness in their unjust war made itself felt more acutely than ever. The contradictions between them and our people became sharper. Nothing can screen any longer the subservient role of the puppet administration. The protest movement of the American people and world people has reached a new height. The American imperialists and their lackeys are more isolated politically. The

contradiction among the American ruling circles, the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and its puppets, and the contradiction between the puppets themselves have further aggravated, thereby causing confusion, hesitation and inconsistency in the U.S. conduct of the war, and weakening and scattering its war efforts. In particular, the "half-mouse half-flittermouse" strategy * which has been imposed on the U.S. imperialists as the result of the failure of their "special war" strategy reflecting the sharp contradiction between the political goal, i.e. the safeguarding of the neo-colonialist regime, and the military measure, i.e. the commitment of an expeditionary force for aggression, has landed and will land U.S. imperialism in more serious difficulties and deadlock in the political and military fields.

Should the U.S. imperialists increase their expeditionary force, and protract and extend the war, they would face greater political upheavals in their country and abroad. The more the G.I.'s are wiped out, the greater and more prolonged the burden imposed on the American people will become, and the stronger the latter's anti-war movement, the sharper the contradiction among the U.S. ruling circles, and the more weakened the U.S. rear. The puppet administration and army will be torn by inner antagonisms and disintegrated beyond remedy. The U.S. imperialists will further lose their initiative in all respects, unable to find a way out. Their will of aggression will meet with powerful counter-blows.

* *Inconsistent-Transl.*

It is obvious that the most decisive factor to bring about military superiority is the political factor which is determined in its turn by the character of the war. In any war, the military aspect more than any other depends directly and profoundly on politics. The basic political weaknesses of the U.S. imperialists manifest themselves not only in the moral but also in the material field, they are not abstract but very concrete facts. They directly influence the enemy's position and force on the battlefield, make their impact felt on the conduct of his military strategy, and affect each American and puppet soldier in each engagement.

The South Vietnam army and people are weak materially and technically, but politically they have fundamentally strong points and this is the essential basis of their military superiority.

The war waged by the South Vietnam army and people in particular, and the Vietnamese people as a whole, is a just one. That is why we have absolute political superiority which unceasingly develops in the course of the war. Like the struggle of a house-owner against a pirate coming from afar, our self-defence war offers us an advantageous position in that it is conducted on our soil, and thus we can make use of all our human and material resources in our country to fight and to win. Spike-pits, mines and booby traps used by our compatriots to defend their fighting villages and hamlets against the foreign invaders have a tremendous effect and can paralyse, decimate and wipe out scores of thousands of aggressors. In such conditions, we are in a position to fight year after year, generation after generation. The manpower reserve with which to

replenish our effectives is inexhaustible. In fact, in our country there now exist many families whose grandfather, father and son are fighting in the same frontline against the Americans. Even vegetation and animals are used to fight the enemy. The climate and weather are also our friends and the enemy's foes. Don't we see that the G.I.'s are much afraid of hornets, reptiles and mosquitoes? In this modern war, we enjoy all the advantages in climate, terrain and support of the population, which give us a favourable military position and make our military potential inexhaustible and ever-expanding.

Of course, a people fighting a just war and thus hold absolute political superiority, cannot automatically gain military superiority. We must still rely on our political superiority to turn our political force into military force and gradually shift our political superiority into military superiority. When they began the war, with bare hands and, later on, a small armed force for self-defence, the South Vietnam army and people were placed in a weak military position. But guided by the correct political and military line of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, and relying on their absolute political superiority, they gradually transformed their weak points into strong points until they got military superiority. As for the enemy, owing to his fundamental political weakness leading to repeated political and military setbacks, he has little by little lost his initial military superiority. Thanks to their absolute political superiority and the military superiority they have gradually acquired—superiority constituted by both the political factor and the purely military and logistics factor,

thanks to their political and armed struggle — the South Vietnam army and people have step by step gained the initiative on the battlefield in the closing months of 1964 and the beginning of 1965, won repeated victories over 500,000 puppet troops organized, equipped and trained by the Americans, and in the main foiled the U.S. imperialists' "special war" strategy.

In their long, hard and most heroic struggle, the South Vietnam army and people have created for themselves solid bases to secure military and political victories in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists in the military field under any circumstance. The liberated zone covering four-fifths of the territory and inhabited by three-fourths of the population, constitutes the immediate and stable rear of the resistance war. The enemy has been carrying out air and ground raids, wresting manpower and wealth, thus creating difficulties for our rear, but he cannot turn it into his own. Neither can he seriously disturb it for, unlike the highly industrialized countries, it is based on a scattered agricultural economy. The South Vietnam army and people have a rear on the spot and can transform that of the enemy into theirs. In the liberated zone, nearly two million hectares of land have been distributed to the peasants. Other democratic reforms and the improvement of the people's livelihood in all respects have made of the liberated zone the supplier of manpower and material and moral resources to the front, and the bright image of South Vietnam after liberation. The South Vietnam army and people also rely on their bigger rear — socialist North Vietnam — actively supported and assisted by the socialist countries and the

world people. This great material and moral assistance is creating further conditions to substantially strengthen our people's force in all fields. In face of the American imperialists directly committing more troops to invade South Vietnam, and stepping up their war of destruction against North Vietnam, our army and people throughout the country will enhance their determination to defeat them. The heroic fighting spirit of our army and people is a decisive factor of victory. It is the continuation and full development of the age-old patriotic tradition of our heroic and indomitable people's resistance against foreign aggression. It is being translated into concrete deeds by each of us in fighting and in production, and turned into material strength in the frontline as well as in the rear in order to increase our military superiority. Senator Mansfield has rightly admitted that our people are resolved and fully capable to cope with any American force landed in South Vietnam *.

From the above-mentioned analysis, we can infer that the South Vietnam army and people are perfectly in a position to administer a military defeat to the American imperialists under any circumstances even in face of the biggest American armed force available for invasion of South Vietnam. This is due to the aggressors' unfavourable military and political position, and to the just character of our people's war which is to defend themselves and deliver South Vietnam from American domination, and not to wipe out the American armed force as a whole. In this analysis we have not compared the military

* *Washington Post*, January 9, 1966.

capabilities of our people and those of the American imperialists as a whole. We have examined the U.S. military force in its unfavourable and passive position in this war of aggression against our country. We have seen how the fundamental political weaknesses of the U.S. imperialists affect their military position and military force.

Secondly, the correct political and military line, and the correct conduct of the war are the decisive subjective factors to turn the political superiority of a just war into military superiority, and to further develop military superiority.

On the basis of definite objective conditions, the conduct of a just war brings decisive influence to bear on the use and development of the factors of victory, and on the transformation of political superiority into military superiority. It has a decisive influence on this transformation the concrete manifestations of which are the initiative of action and the victories won on the battlefield. As war is a competition of subjective efforts of men, an erroneous conduct of it may turn away an advantageous position and initiative of action. Reverse-ly, a correct conduct, and a full development of men's dynamism may transform inferiority into superiority, passivity into initiative, minor superiority into all-round superiority, and partial initiative into global initiative.

Due to their idealist world outlook and their reactionary and outmoded military conception, the U.S. imperialists always commit subjective mistakes in their conduct of the war. This is inevitable for them and has rendered their position still more difficult. Their "half-mouse half flitter-mouse" strategy resulting from

the failure of the "special war" strategy, is in itself an irremediable mistake. It is indeed the worse thing for war leaders to be compelled to do what they do not want to, and what they are not sure to give them victory. With the introduction of their ground force into South Vietnam the U.S. imperialists have done what they were reluctant to do, a step whose success is doubted by many of them, and whose failure is taken for granted by realistic-minded people.

In whole military campaigns and in isolated battles, the Americans usually ignorant of their opponent's capacities and their own, overestimate themselves and underestimate the South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces and people. No wonder then they have met with setbacks. When they began to commit their troops in South Vietnam they hastily announced that the L.A.F. were trying to avoid them. Not at all: Vantuong, Baubang, Pleime, Nhado (Phuocthanh)... were for them so many thundering blows. Banking heavily on their effectives and modern weapons they do not see all the political and moral strength of the South Vietnam army and people, and the tactics and technique of people's war.

In strategy, the Americans are facing at present a lot of problems. How to use the U.S. force and puppet troops? How many more troops to bring in? To take the offensive or to stand on the defensive? To fight lightning war or protracted war? To narrow down the controlled regions so as to increase their mobile forces or to further encroach upon the liberated areas? Where war actions are mainly to be carried out: in coastal

regions or in the hinterland, in the lowland or upland, in South Vietnam or in Central Vietnam? None of these courses is good and easily workable. This embarrassment of the Americans deprives them of a definite orientation, drives them into hesitation and greater passivity, and compels them to face the situation by makeshift.

The South Vietnam army and people have a correct political and military line; they have made full use of, and developed, the strong points of a just war, and overcome their weak points in material and technical means in order gradually to turn political strength into military strength, and political superiority into military superiority. As they can also objectively and scientifically appraise themselves and their enemy, and know how to bring into full play their own efforts, they are in a position to create for themselves favourable conditions and land the enemy in a more disadvantageous position. Under a talented, clear-sighted and consistent leadership the South Vietnam army and people have never been landed in passivity in any situation. Instead, they know how to win the initiative of action, maintain and further it, thereby putting the enemy into increasing deadlock. In the leadership and command of military campaigns and operations, the South Vietnam army and people possess a contingent of experienced cadres sprung from the mass movement, and grasping the military ability of people's war. They know how to neutralize the strong points of the enemy to strike at his weak points and to secure victory once the battle is fought. The realities of the direct confrontation with 200,000 odd American troops

over the past six months have given valuable experiences to the leaders and commanders of the army and people of South Vietnam.

The correctness of the line along which the war is conducted, and which finds its expression in the correctness of the strategic leadership, is of decisive significance inasmuch as it rapidly removes the South Vietnam army's and people's temporary and local difficulties, if any, in military campaigns or isolated operations.

For the above reasons, when the American imperialists were cocksure that by sending en masse their troops to South Vietnam, they would gain initiative and win big victories on the battlefield, the army and people there have rapidly surmounted fresh difficulties and trials, continued holding firm and promoting their initiative and dealt telling blows to the enemy. Such is the inevitable trend of the situation no matter how many troops the U.S. imperialists may bring in and whatever military manoeuvres they may resort to.

Thirdly, the entire people wage war with the Liberation Armed Forces—composed of three categories—as the direct factor of the military superiority of the South Vietnam army and people on the battlefield.

As has been said above, military superiority is always closely associated with a given military force. The armed forces which take a direct part in military operations are the condensed expression of this military force. A comparison between the armed forces of both sides will show the following:

As far as effectives are concerned, the American and puppet troops number over 700,000. Should some hundred thousand American troops be added, this total would reach nearly a million. This is a big force for the South Vietnam theatre of war. Nevertheless, though numerous there are among the American forces few combat and mobile troops, and many ordnance and occupation troops. With the increase in American effectives, the contradictions between the G.I.'s and puppet troops deepen. As the valiant struggle of the South Vietnam army and people goes on the puppet army will be disintegrated rapidly, thus weakening the military and political prop of the Americans; the more G.I.'s are wiped out, the more shaky the military mainstay of puppet troops will grow. Can reinforcements make up for the number of troops wiped out or disintegrated? The year 1965 witnessed the introduction of 200,000 additional American officers and men but also the knocking down of 227,500 American and puppet troops. Furthermore, if the American imperialists want to commit 400,000 troops in South Vietnam, they will have to mobilize a much greater number of soldiers for replenishment and relief, and to this end, proceed to war mobilization which is a major political problem for the U.S.A.

On our side, the South Vietnam army and people not only dispose of the regular troops, but also regional troops, militia and guerilla forces, and a huge reserve in the rear. Fighting on their own territory, and waging people's war developed to the highest degree, in which each inhabitant is a soldier, and combining political struggle with armed struggle, they

are definitely superior to the U.S.-puppet forces in terms of combat troops and activities in the theatre of war.

Nevertheless, the strength of an armed force does not only lie in its effectiveness but also in its quality. The historical viewpoint from which we proceed to the analysis of this quality requires that it should be considered in given concrete conditions together with the military ability of this armed force. In our country's battlefield, in face of the South Vietnam heroic army and people having decade-long experiences and traditions of armed struggle, and waging a highly developed people's war, the American forces have shown many weaknesses while their strong points are limited. The Liberation Armed Forces constantly increase in number, are endowed with a high fighting spirit, well trained and better and better equipped. They are officered by a large contingent of tempered cadres who have rapidly grown up and possess an excellent people's war military technique. All this has enabled them to limit the impact of the strong points of the aggressors and to aggravate their weaknesses in order to defeat their big and well-equipped forces.

Be they infantrymen, marines, paratroopers or "air cavalrymen", the American troops have all a low morale. Furthermore, the U.S. Army is organized, equipped and trained to fight a conventional war with rear and frontline clearly delineated -- against a similar belligerent on a battlefield which can be used for large deployment of motorized forces. That is why, involved in entangled warfare, and confronted with an omnipresent adversary with high combativeness and flexible and

skilful people's war methods, the American troops are morally on the downgrade while their motorized force and fire-power are handicapped and their tactics "caught on the wrong foot". This has manifested itself clearly in all the past engagements. There has not been any radical change to this state of things although the Americans have been trying to hookwink their troops in South Vietnam, to boost their morale, improve their organization and equipment, and hurriedly train them in counter-guerilla warfare.

The U.S. Navy and Air Force are fairly strong. The great part of the Seventh Fleet is operating in Vietnam with about one-fourth of the number of aircraft-carriers and nearly 3,000 aircraft of various types (fighter planes account for one-fifth of the total number of this kind in the U.S. Army). But, the outcome of any war has never been decided either in the sky or at sea, but on the ground. The Liberation Armed Forces have neither aircraft nor warships but they know how to sink the enemy's warships, destroy hundreds of American planes, and put out of action scores of American pilots at a time.

In covering the U.S. ground force, the fairly strong fire-power of the U.S. Navy, Air Force and artillery, does cause difficulties to the Liberation Armed Forces when they are preparing to go into action or drawing near the enemy's line or clearing the battlefield. But the use of strategic bombers for tactical missions in close support of the ground troops yields little result. This the enemy has admitted after over one hundred and fifty sorties of B.52's. Especially in hand-to-hand engagements American planes and artillery lose their

efficiency. The Americans have also acknowledged that in ground operations the fire of the Liberation Armed Forces is very powerful and very accurate, not to speak of their fighting spirit. And there have been many cases of the U.S. Air Force and artillery bombing and strafing even American and puppet troops. On February 3, 1966, U.P.I. quoted the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives as saying that the U.S. Air Force "is responsible for unbelievably tragic shortcomings in techniques of close air support for ground troops in South Vietnam". As the Liberation Armed Forces muster and disperse with flexibility, mobility, rapidity and secrecy, make full use of close fighting tactics, and swiftly clear the battlefield, not only can they avoid the brunt of the fire of the American and puppet troops but also wipe out wholesale a battalion or several battalions of American troops at a time.

With flexible tactics the Liberation Armed Forces have frequently taken the American troops unawares. The latter cannot find a propitious ground for the application of the form of regular warfare in which they are expert. Regarding the inadequacy of the U.S. fighting methods, it has led American officers to conclude that in the Vietnam war "the problem of tactics can be settled on the battlefield only". They have admitted that they were forced to fight the way "chosen by the opponent". They have paid great attention to studying the fighting methods of the Liberation Armed Forces but were at their wits' ends to cope with them. All of the U.S. arms have received staggering blows. All of the U.S. tactics have failed. An A.P. correspondent has compared the G.I.

in Vietnam to "a superbly conditioned but half-blinded heavyweight boxer pushed into a strange ring full of trap doors and stumbling-blocks" while his opponent "may seem like a cunning veteran lightweight with eyes in the back of his head". As the situation stands, any number of U.S. troops dispatched to South Vietnam cannot make up for the irrationality in their organization and equipment and for the deadlock in their tactics. Given precisely the qualitative disparity between the armed forces on both sides, the Americans want to achieve a far more advantageous ratio for them to cope with the Liberation Armed Forces *.

The American servicemen are not acquainted with the South Vietnam terrain and climate. The number of troops relieved or put on the sick list usually runs as high as tens of thousands, i.e., as many as the casualties. On this score, the Liberation Armed Forces are in quite different a situation.

The Americans have often boasted of their powerful economic and defence potential but the supply problem for the U.S. expeditionary force in Vietnam is regarded as "the most critical" one. Indeed, the American army is meeting great difficulties in logistics. Military text-books often advise army commanders to guard against sending troops to far-away places. In the present aggression against Vietnam the U.S. imperialists have a rear thirteen thousand kilometres

** For the Americans the ideal ratio should be 20 to 1, at least 10 to 1. In fact they have been trying hard to achieve a 5-1 ratio. But in view of their actual possibilities, they reckon they could only oppose 3 G.I.'s to 1 Liberation fighter.*

from the battlefield. This is a rare case in history, because compared with the rear and battlefield of the German and Japanese fascists in World war II, the rear of the American imperialists is now much farther. The Americans have admitted that they are faced with difficulties throughout the three links of their logistics system: shortage of transport from the U.S.A. to Vietnam due to the lack of ships and the refusal of the crews of many countries to carry U.S. goods to South Vietnam; insufficient unloading facilities in South Vietnam seaports and airfields (these are small in size and in number); insecurity of the transportation to the battlefield (roads have been constantly attacked); and three-fourths of strategic transport planes have been mustered to ensure airlift but this is still below requirement, not to mention the fact that aeroplanes themselves are ambushed. The material needs of American troops are great and complicated. For example, a fighting officer needs each day ten litres of water carried from the rear. "Play boy" as the G.I. is, the failure to meet the least of his need can demoralize him. One of the main reasons for the delay in the execution of the plan to dispatch troops to South Vietnam is that the U.S. logistics are not up to requirement. The more troops the Americans send to South Vietnam, the more difficulties they encounter in logistics.

In the meanwhile logistics of the Liberation Armed Forces can be ensured on the spot thanks to the people's help. Their material and technical needs are not the same as those of the U.S. Army. Therefore, their logistics can satisfactorily meet their demands

and enjoy more and more favourable conditions as the liberated areas expand and the support given by the rear is continually growing.

All the above-cited reasons explain why the American servicemen, when deprived of the fire support provided by aircraft, armoured cars and artillery, are not better, even worse, than the puppet soldiers in many respects. They want to be light and swift but they are in fact heavily equipped and slow. They think they are strong but they are actually weak. American papers are right in saying that the G.I.'s are "play boy" soldiers while the Liberation Armed Forces are regarded as "valiant troops having a real strength and the discipline of a hard-trained army".

A military victory or defeat is decided by the belligerents' armed forces on the battlefield. The U.S. and puppet armies are strong only in fire-power but weak in fighting spirit and military ability: they are not acquainted with the terrain while their rear is far from the front, not to mention other logistics difficulties. The superiority of the American troops in fire-power too cannot be brought into play extensively as the Liberation Armed Forces know how to strike at it, avoid and limit its effects. The latter's advantage lies in that they consist of three categories of troops and are helped by the population in their struggle; though inferior in fire-power, they are superior in number, in fighting spirit and military ability; they are inured to the battleground and their supplies can be found on the spot. The fire-power of the South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces is at present not absolutely weaker in all cases. The factor

deciding the victory of one army over another is not weapons but man with his fighting spirit and military ability. That is why the Liberation forces which rely in their struggle on the strength of the entire people, on the vast rear of people's war, are precisely the forces that directly account for the development of military superiority of the South Vietnam army and people, and help them defeat the U.S. and puppet troops on the battlefield.

Fourthly, the initiative of the Liberation Armed Forces in their repeated and successful attacks, as well as the development to a high degree of people's war, are tangible manifestations of their military superiority which they help to maintain and further increase.

We still remember that in the 1964 winter — 1965 spring operations people's war in South Vietnam overcame a number of weak points and took a big step forward both in the countryside and in the towns, from the upland to the lowland, in South Vietnam as well as in Central Vietnam, in guerilla actions just as in large-unit attacks, in armed struggle and political struggle. The Americans and their henchmen were thus landed in a losing position and in strategic passivity. The puppet administration and army were facing the danger of total collapse. The Western press has already hinted at the gloomy situation faced by the French colonialists on the eve of the Dienbienphu campaign.

In a conventional war with clear-cut frontlines and stable rears, with no developed people's war in which the opponents' positions are interlocked, the American forces doubtlessly would have been able to give their

enemy more or less decisive blows. But confronted with people's war in South Vietnam, in which half a million puppet troops could not score the smallest success; 200,000 G.I.'s would not be able to turn the tide. Furthermore the losses sustained by the American and puppet forces were manyfold heavier: whereas in 1964 8 puppet battalions were wiped out, in 1965 the figure rose to 52 battalions, including 9 American battalions.

What a military commander must absolutely guard against is to be swayed by his adversary and unable to muster sufficient mobile reserves to operate at will. But no sooner had the American troops come in than they were thrown into the sea of people's war, beaten by the South Vietnam army and people everywhere and from all sides, and thus compelled to disperse to cope with the situation with embarrassment. They were landed in a dreadful position which is to lose their initiative of action and to scatter. As a result, they become weaker, have no more powerful reserves and will still further lose their initiative.

At present 700,000 U.S. and Saigon troops have to spread over 9 American bases and 3,000 posts and garrisons held by the puppets. The American bases have never enjoyed any safety; a great number of troops have had to be put for occupation, guard and defence duties. For this reason, though American reinforcements have been massively introduced there is no substantial rise in their mobile forces. Both strategic and tactical mobile forces account for a more 20-25 per cent of the total effectives. (In their

war of aggression against our country, the French had but half as many troops as the Americans and their puppets at present, but twice as many mobile forces. The enemy himself deplors that his mobile forces have often to carry out occupation and pacification duties while "Vietcong regiments are entirely mobile units". He has been vainly trying to muster a bigger mobile force but his troops remain scattered around his bases and posts. If he withdraws from his posts and watch towers to have more mobile forces he will not be able to control the population and the areas under his control will shrink. If he tries to expand these areas, he will thin out his force and reduce his mobile effectives. To establish a position or occupy a new one raises many complex problems such as occupation or combat troops or raiding troops for pacification purposes, artillery support, transport, supply, etc. The clearing and protection of communication lines alone requires a tremendous force. Meanwhile, a shot fired by some guerillas is enough to keep an enemy platoon on the alert; a hundred Liberation fighters investing a post is enough to compel the enemy to use one thousand or more troops for its defence. Normally when a mobile force has occupied an area after destroying or driving away the opponent's main force, it is regarded as gaining control over this area. But it is not so in South Vietnam. Here when the enemy mobile force withdraws, the situation remains what it was. It is just like "thumping water". If it stays on for occupation and pacification purposes, it will lose its mobile character. That is why willy-nilly, the American and

the puppet troops cannot avoid the contradiction inherent in all wars of aggression in face of a developed people's war, that is, contradiction between dispersion and concentration, between occupation and mobility.

Under these circumstances, even though the American imperialists are so obstinate as to introduce more troops into South Vietnam, and raise the effectives of their expeditionary force to 400,000 or 500,000 they would not be able to solve the problem and transform quantity into quality in order to wrest back the initiative and turn the tide of the war.

First, about quantity. Should the Americans increase their effectives, the South Vietnam army and people, relying on the active assistance and support of the rear, would do their best constantly to boost their own force. Should they and their puppets succeed in raising their mobile forces and be in a position to carry out many offensives at a time, the Liberation forces would also mount ever-larger scale attacks from many directions, at the same time standing ready to counter them on the very site of their offensives. Should they have additional mobile forces for pacification, guerilla warfare would also be stronger politically and militarily so as to foil their pacification plans. This is not to mention the greater difficulties faced by the enemy in the political and military fields resulting from the arrival of more American troops: defection of large numbers of puppet troops, further losses and sinking morale of the G.I.'s. So much so it will be difficult for the fresh contingents to replenish the American and puppet forces wiped out or disintegrated.

Moreover, the battlefield from Quangtri to Camau has been already prepared by the South Vietnam army and people; the Liberation Armed Forces have been already distributed to definite areas and given definite assignments; they are ready for attack. Military history has shown that when one opponent has prepared the battlefield, he is half way to victory. Paramount importance should be attached to the fact that, on the basis of the development of guerilla warfare, the South Vietnam main forces have been deployed, are holding strategic positions, ready to strike hard blows.

In a chess game it often happens that a simple pawn can stalemate an opponent. A few platoons of the Liberation Armed Forces having a foothold in key areas and capable of operating there can increase their value manyfold and tie down important enemy forces and even stand up to a whole division. In the whole South Vietnam theatre of operations the enemy has to cope with every group or every platoon of the Liberation Armed Forces, with all people, including old women and children. The Americans cannot change the aspect of the war of entanglement, which is so unfavourable, and so advantageous for the people's forces. With some hundred thousand additional troops they could not disengage from this situation and would certainly be encircled, decimated and gradually defeated.

The ever-developing Liberation Armed Forces, with their experience in defeating the most seasoned U.S. units of all arms, have all the necessary conditions to enhance their capacity in undertaking large-unit operations and to bring guerilla warfare to a new height.

There will be more and more battles resulting in the annihilation of whole units of the U.S. and puppet main forces. It will be necessary for the Americans and the puppets to increase their occupation troops to save their positions from destruction and to deal with our attacks from many directions and on many battlefields at a time. As a consequence, they will not be able to muster a big mobile force for decisive offensives in order to regain the initiative. Whatever their number, the enemy forces will be drowned in the sea of people's war which involves all the political, military and economic potentialities of the people for the creation and development of the military superiority of the army and people of South Vietnam.

The military superiority held by the latter forms the basis of their offensive whereas their initiative in carrying out this strategy constitutes a lever which allows them to maintain and develop this military superiority without necessarily having a military force bigger than the enemy's.

*

The setbacks of the American imperialists and the victories of the South Vietnam army and people in the recent past are the natural outcome of the development and growth of the latter in their just war conducted along a correct political and military line. They are the outcome of the weakening of the American and puppet troops in their unjust war waged along a reactionary political line and from an idealist and adventurist military viewpoint, smacking strongly of the reliance

on weapons. This has led to the appearance and gradual development of the South Vietnam army's and people's military superiority on the battlefield. Therefore, however hard they may try to strengthen their armed forces, whatever cruel means they may use and whatever experience they may draw in their strategy and tactics, the U.S. imperialists will not be able to wrest back the initiative and avoid a severe military defeat after their bitter political failure. Indeed, it was precisely when their troops were introduced en masse that the South Vietnam army and people were offered more favourable conditions to wipe them out in increasing numbers. Our famous strategist Tran Quoc Tuan pointed out, "Defence is easier if the enemy rushes in like a hurricane".

World military history has shown that when, on the basis of their absolute political superiority, a people have gained military superiority in their just war, this military superiority can but develop without let-up once it has appeared on the battlefield, and the prospects of their final victory are already in sight.

Of course, the war waged by our people will be fierce and arduous, because the United States, the topmost imperialist power, commands a vast potential, and is obdurate and cruel. So long as their will of aggression is not smashed the American imperialists will perpetrate more ignominious crimes, sending in more troops and using all means to massacre our people and devastate our country. For the Vietnamese people, fighting the U.S. aggressors and defending their fatherland is a sacred task to safeguard their sovereignty and national

independence, a lofty duty in the world people's struggle against imperialism, because U.S. imperialism is the international gendarme and the worst enemy of socialism and mankind. Our people will never allow themselves to be enslaved again, they will fight until final victory. They will not shrink from any sacrifice. With a grim determination our army and people will do their utmost to promote their military superiority, keep up and develop their initiative in order to win greater and greater successes until final victory is achieved. To avoid a still more bitter defeat, the only way left to the U.S. imperialists is to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam and let our people settle their own affairs by themselves.

It is not true that in this war there will be, as some people in the U.S. ruling circles claim, neither winner nor loser. The Vietnamese people will win, the U.S. imperialists will be defeated, just as nearly two centuries ago the American people won and the British colonialists were defeated. The confidence of our people in the possibility of defeating the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys in the political as well as in the military field in this fierce struggle against foreign aggression for national salvation at present as in the future, is based on solid scientific foundations, and has been substantiated by actual facts. Our people throughout the country will resolutely make all-out efforts to push ahead the struggle against the U.S. aggressors until final victory.

ANNEXES

I

AN ACCOUNT OF SOME FRESH VICTORIES

VANTUONG

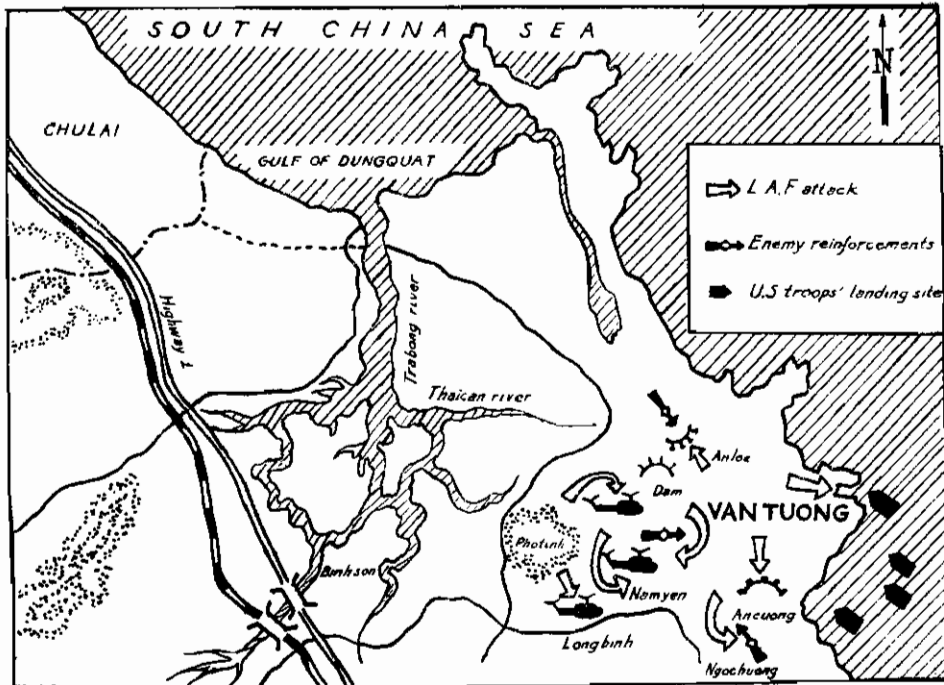
THE FIRST MAJOR CONFRONTATION AND THE FIRST DEFEAT OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

(August 18-19, 1965)

VANTUONG, a small coastal village in Quangngai province, seventeen kilometres from the gigantic U.S. Chulai base, was the scene of the first important engagement between the American forces and those of the National Front since the first massive landing of American marines in South Vietnam in March 1965.

On August 18, 1965, 8,000 American marines, with fire support from the Seventh Fleet units, deployed in three columns against Vantuong where a unit of the National Front regular forces was believed encamping. They attempted to overrun the village from three sides, leaving free only the coastal strip to the East. The American staff reckoned on swallowing up the Liberation forces in one mouthful if the latter tried to break the encirclement on that side.

At dawn, tens of helicopters brought marines into the village while landing crafts poured in others on the adjoining beach. Coming from the North, the third column covered by tanks and armoured cars, crossed the Trabong river and headed for Anloc. Thus at 6 a.m. 2,000 marines were on the



spot ready for action. Those coming by sea fell into a mine-field, suffered some casualties and withdrew. They wasted an hour marking time and then decided to go southward in the direction of a nearby hill where nothing suspicious had been spotted by reconnaissance helicopters. Two platoons were parachuted at the foot of the hill. No sooner had they landed than they came under violent fire. One helicopter crashed, three others were set afire. The others sought in vain for a safer landing place: three more were shot down. Under intense fire they tried to take away the dead. From the very beginning, the attempt to encircle the L.A.F. by surprise with helilifted units in co-ordination with the navy proved a failure. The U.S. command had thought that by a previous pounding of the village, warships from the Seventh Fleet would wipe out the people's armed forces. In fact, well dug in in trenches and strong fortifications, the L.A.F. dodged the bombings and waited until U.S. troops landed to fire at them.

At 8 a.m. U.S. reinforcements came in. But the Americans dared not move forward and huddled together, providing a fat target for the L.A.F. At 9.30 a.m., new helilifted reinforcement units were landed to the Southwest of the village, within range of L.A.F. mortars and machine-guns. By that time, the plain had been strewn with hundreds of dead since the L.A.F. emerging from behind the enemy lines had fallen upon the panic-stricken newcomers who had expected Liberation forces to come from the village. In other places of the battlefield, hidden by well camouflaged fortifications, the people's forces lay in until the enemy drew very near to mow them down with machine-guns or engage them in close-hand fighting. The U.S. Air Force and Navy units had no other alternative than pounding behind the lines. The armoured vehicles proved of no use in attempting to drive out the Liberation forces who knocked out several of them. The L.A.F. often came as near as twenty metres from the enemy and destroyed tank caterpillars with grenades. The M.118 armoured cars were so high that they had to give leg-up to

one another to jump on the vehicles and drop grenades into the turrets.

By 1.30 p.m., the enemy had landed 6,000 G.I.'s who failed to deploy in battle array. Many helicopters were busy evacuating the dead. During the fight, the villagers kept moving in the trenches and supplying food and tea to the fighters. They said to a group who wanted to rush out to save a hamlet set afire by enemy bombs, "Don't mind our homes! 'Take care' of the Yankees first!" The uninterrupted presence of the population at their sides decupled the people's fighters' courage and initiative.

In the afternoon, new reinforcement units brought to 8,000 the total number of U.S. troops engaged in the battle. U.S. planes and helicopters had made 1,000 sorties. The U.S. Air Force and Navy had fired 6,000 shells, six tons of rockets and dropped four tons of incendiary bombs. However, the three columns could not join up. The Americans spent the night of August 18 dug in in makeshift trenches.

On August 19, they dared not leave their ditches. Those who climbed out for a breath of fresh air were immediately shot. U.S. planes made 500 rescue sorties to assist the infantry. The armoured cars being paralysed, the G.I.'s did not feel like taking any action, several of them had fallen victim to mine or spike traps.

On August 20 morning two puppet battalions were sent in as reinforcements. They cautiously moved along a highway. U.S. aircraft and warships bombed and strafed the village again. Towards midday, the Americans effected their junction on a deserted village: the population and the N.F.L. fighters had withdrawn under cover of night. The only thing to do for the U.S. command was to withdraw from the place and do the battle count: 919 men put out of action (four companies of marines virtually knocked out), 22 armoured cars destroyed, 13 planes and helicopters shot down.

The battle had proceeded exactly as at Apbac in January 1963 *.

* A victory of the Liberation troops over an enemy ten times stronger. In this battle the U.S. puppet helicopter tactics and armoured car tactics were foiled for the first time.

attack by surprise a small N.F.L. unit and wipe it out by using helicopters and warships. At Vantuong, the U.S. command wanted to win an easy victory which would raise the prestige of the G.I.'s who had just landed in Vietnam and to boost the morale of the puppet troops. But from their well-dug positions in a fortified village, the people's fighters supported by the population, defied up-to-date arms with their extraordinary heroism and unusual mobility. They inflicted heavy losses on the aggressors then disappeared the same way as fish slip through the gaps of a fisherman's loose net.

Vantuong was the first test in a war which will become increasingly disappointing for the Yankees.

*

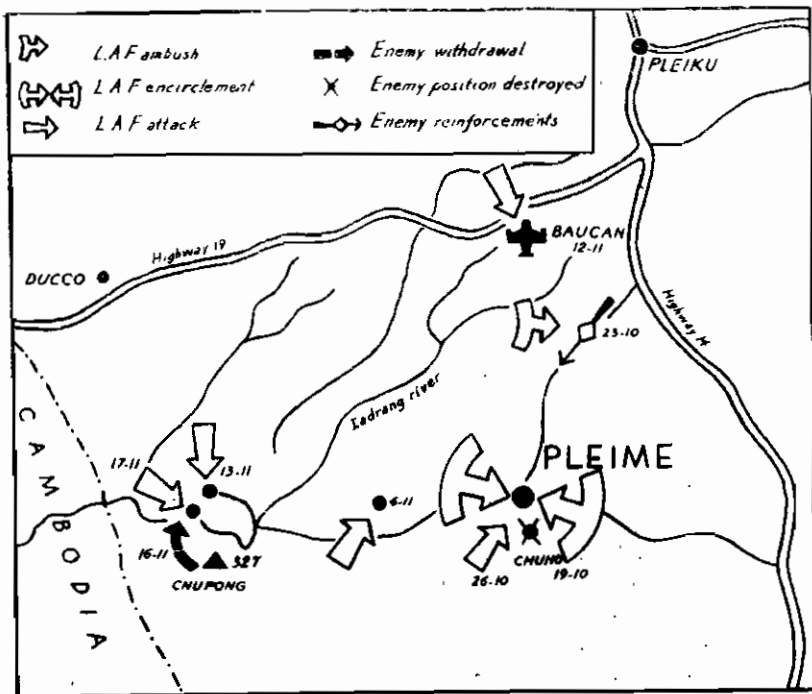
PLEIME

(October 19 — November 17, 1965)

THE enemy post here, guarded by 400 men of the "Special Forces" and commanded by twelve American "advisers", was situated some forty kilometres from Pleiku, near the Cambodian border. It was supported by many smaller posts on the road to Pleiku, where important puppet forces were stationed. On October 19, having encircled Pleime the L.A.F. stormed the outpost of Chuho, two kilometres from the centre. The enemy air force flew 600 sorties in an attempt to relieve the post whose surroundings were submitted to heavy bombing and napalming. The grip did not loosen. On the 21st, the enemy command had to send reinforcements by helicopters, which were attacked even before their landing. The air force was unable to support a few timid sorties of the garrison. The following day, five

planes were shot down, one blockhouse completely destroyed and all the other installations of the post damaged. The desperate situation of the puppet troops forced the U.S. command to call out the famous First Airmobile Cavalry Division garrisoned at Ankhé. The latter, however, dared not come forthwith to the succour of the post at Pleime. On the 23rd, a brigade was landed first at Pleiku while a puppet column of 100 vehicles including many armoured cars and a 105-mm artillery unit, was dispatched to Pleime. The column advanced very slowly, covered by heavy artillery and air force poundings. At 4.00 p.m., it had covered just thirty kilometres and reached a point ten kilometres from the post. Here it fell into an ambush and lost two battalions along with 81 vehicles. The remnants fled in confusion. For several days running, the enemy confined himself to engaging his air force which, though very active, did not succeed in breaking the encirclement of the post which had to be supplied by parachute. On October 26, another column of puppet troops was sent to Pleime: it was ambushed and had 150 men killed and three armoured vehicles destroyed. The column fled back and the position continued to be pounded by the assailants.

On the 29th, the L.A.F. fire lost much of its intensity. Thinking that the L.A.F. had run out of munitions, the U.S. command threw the First Airmobile Cavalry Division into the battle. It believed that such an action taking place at a moment when the Liberation forces were tired out and short of ammunition, would secure an easy victory for the G.I.'s who could thus claim for themselves the credit of saving the post and routing their adversary. From October 30 to November 6, U.S. helicopters brought in several thousand men of the First Airmobile Cavalry Division around Pleime in a twenty-kilometre frontline. In the first two days the reinforcements did not meet with any resistance. This seemed to confirm the American command's opinion that the worn-out people's forces had given up the



fight. But on November 1, they resumed their attacks in many points. In a hurry Yankee troops dug themselves in after having suffered bitter losses in unexpected ambushes. On the 7th nearly 400 Americans were killed. On the 12th the L.A.F. attacked the First Airmobile Cavalry Division headquarters itself at Anke and the Baucan airfield, thirty kilometres from Pleime where they annihilated the U.S. Third Brigade H.Q. and several barrack-buildings, killing and wounding 200 Americans, including many pilots. On the 14th, the L.A.F. resumed their offensive, thereby compelling the U.S. command to send several thousand men to the Iadrang valley, twenty-five kilometres from Pleime. From the neighbouring hills and mountain slopes their fire hit the American reinforcements and then a fierce hand-to-hand fight occurred. The U.S. Air Force dropped napalm on the Yankee-held lines. In a single day—the 14th—120 planes continually bombed the battlefield while U.S. artillery fired 4,000 shells, but the opponent troops were so close to each other that the pounding proved inoperative. At the end of its tether the enemy command called out B.52's from Guam to try to bomb L.A.F.'s lines. However, as is widely known, B.52's are meant for strategic missions, in particular against big urban centres, and unable to produce the expected effect against forces dispersed in dense forests and positions that cannot be accurately spotted. Indeed, the L.A.F. carried on their attack, and on the 16th the first U.S. battalion considerably thinned out had to withdraw. U.P.I. correspondent cabled the same day that he had seen the colonel commanding the Seventh Regiment crying his eyes out, and that the battle had been the most costly so far for the American forces. The helicopters could no longer ensure supplies for U.S. troops nor take the corpses away. And on the 17th a disorderly retreat followed.

Part of the G.I.'s were evacuated by helicopters under our fire, the remainder had to withdraw by road for lack of

means of transport. The U.S. Fifth Battalion was annihilated by the pursuing people's forces. The American commander, to cover up his defeat, briefly stated that the Iadrang valley offered no strategic interest whatsoever. Thus, in a month, from October 19 to November 17, the L.A.F. put out of action 2,500 enemy troops including 1,000 Americans, downed 19 planes and helicopters, destroyed 56 tanks, 42 vehicles, two 105-mm guns and inflicted on the First Airmobile Cavalry Division its first defeat.

The battle at Pleime has proved that helicopters are no magic weapons and that the L.A.F. are perfectly capable of conducting operations of long duration despite enemy air action, and dealing a terrible blow at the morale and reputation of the First Airmobile Cavalry Division.

*

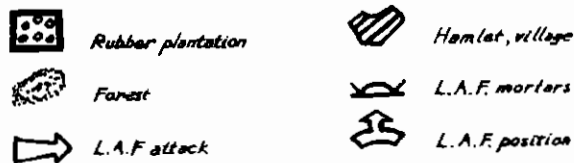
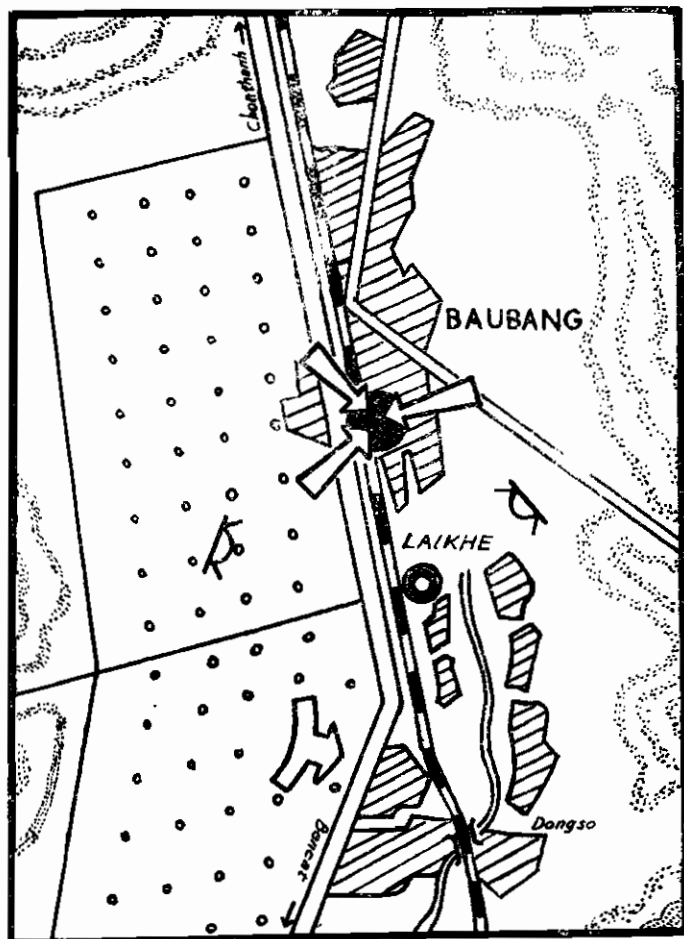
BAUBANG

(November 11 — 12, 1965)

ON November 11, 1965, two infantry battalions, two armoured squadrons and one artillery company making up a powerful column were detailed to clear Highway 13.

On November 12, it was the turn of the First Infantry Division, known as "Red One", to be put to the test. A strong column consisting of two infantry battalions, two armoured squadrons and one artillery company was sent out to clear Highway 13, Northwest of Saigon. Earlier, puppet troops had sustained bitter losses on this road while B.52's in vain bombed the whole region which, however, remained impregnable. Now the task was entrusted to the First Infantry Division.

Starting from Bencat about 40 km from Saigon, the column advanced very cautiously and had covered just



fifteen kilometres at nightfall when it reached Baubang situated on Highway 13, fifty-four kilometres Northwest of Saigon, where it pitched camp. The place appeared to be a safe one, for on the twenty-five kilometres from Bencat to Chon Thanh there existed outlying pickets whose artillery could give protection and whose garrisons could provide support if need be.

The column struck tents on a area two kilometres long by half a kilometre wide, protected by a double row of tanks and armoured M.113's all around, and a belt of barbed wire inside. All the tanks and M.113's had their pieces pointed outwards. In this laager the G.I.'s went to sleep very confidently. Rubber plantations stretched along the road, which were supposed to be clear of "Vietcons" after so many operations. But the L.A.F. were already there that night and their scouts, informed by the local population, infiltrated in next to no time into the enclosure to locate the targets and ways out. The people's forces noiselessly drew as near as three hundred metres from the encampment without in the least disturbing the Americans' heavy sleep. At 5 a.m. on the 12th, an extremely accurate fire struck at the enemy C.P. wireless, artillery and the G.I. tents. For ten minutes the panic-stricken Americans could not return a single shot. When the tanks began firing, the L.A.F. had already slipped into the encampment and, armed with sub-machineguns, hand-grenades, and anti-tank weapons, decimated the groups of G.I.'s just out of their sleep, and set ablaze many tanks and M.113's. They used the machineguns of the destroyed tanks against the enemy. Completely nonplussed, these put up no resistance. During that time, the Saigon troops garrisoned in the vicinity were playing possum. At 8 a.m. enemy planes came and flew over the place but the L.A.F. had taded into the jungle. The ground was strewn with the corpses of 2,000 enemy soldiers and wreckage of 39 tanks and armoured vehicles, and six 105-mm guns. It was the heaviest defeat so far of the U.S. expeditionary force in South Vietnam. The American press only made a guarded allusion to it.

BONGSON

(January 27 – March 7, 1966)

“TO search and destroy the Vietcong main forces... foil their offensive plans... reoccupy the Tamquan area... restore control over National Highway One cut off by the guerillas for over a year”: Such were the objectives of the big operation carefully prepared by the Westmoreland command since late 1965 “to crush the Vietcons” in next to no time, according to Western reports.

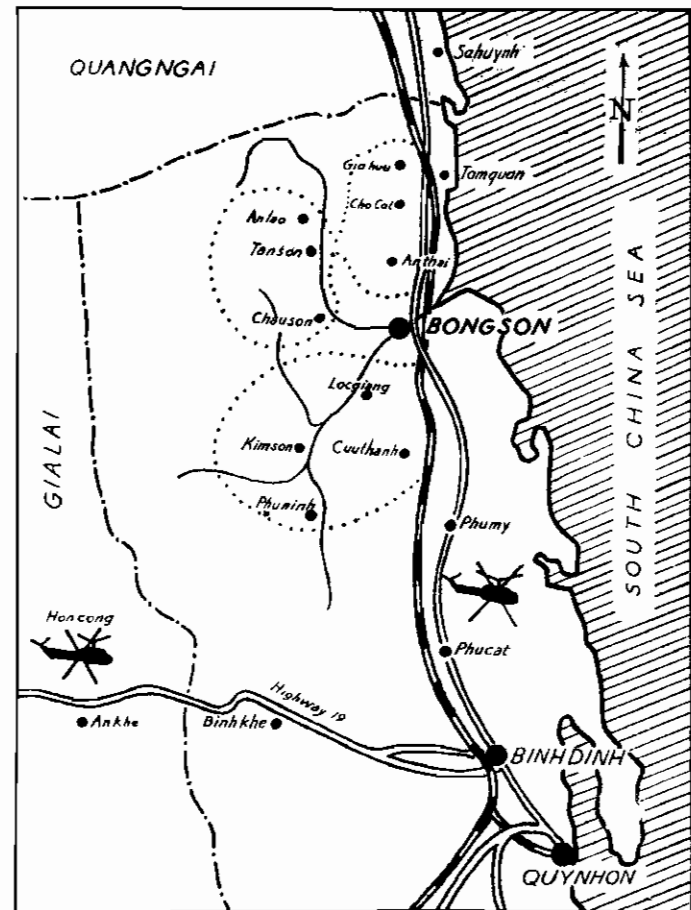
Six thousand American troops from the First Airmobile Cavalry Division, two regiments of puppet rangers from the Twenty-Second Division, a tactical group of puppet paratroopers and many battalions of South Korean mercenaries totalling twenty battalions, along with some hundred planes and M.113 armoured cars, were deployed.

The target was the Bongson-Anlao area, an important strategic position North of Binhdinh province. Since long Tamquan, Gياهو, Anlao to the North and Northwest of Bongson have been liberated. This is a rich and populated coastal area crossed by many vital communication lines such as the North-South Railway and Highway One. Guerilla warfare is developing there, threatening the last enemy posts in the region.

How did the plan of the “dry season offensive” and “pacification” unfold there?

FIRST STAGE: THE “MASHER” OPERATION

On January 28 a helilifted American force from the First Airmobile Cavalry Division undertook a multipronged movement in an attempt to occupy Chocat as a springboard against Tamquan town. Earlier, thousands of puppet paratroopers and Pak Jung Hi mercenaries had raided along Highway One to North of Bongson and around Phuly to open the way while jet planes including strategic B.52's fiercely bombed and strafed the target area of the U.S. units.



The Liberation Armed Forces stood ready. Right on the first day, virtually all the helicopters which landed troops at Chocat were downed. The American-South Korean column proceeding from Bongson was also attacked by the guerillas and sustained heavy losses. Three U.S. and puppet battalions then made three thrusts to relieve those at Chocat but were also repelled with 1,300 men wiped out (one American battalion was seriously battered), twenty-four planes and helicopters downed or damaged.

Along Highway One Pak Jung Hi troops and puppet paratroopers were intercepted by the local guerillas in three engagements and lost over one hundred men.

Then on January 31, two U.S. companies from the Second Battalion, First Airmobile Cavalry Division, raiding at five kilometres South of Tamquan came to grips in a grim battle with the Liberation troops and were practically put out of action (Reuter).

Commenting on the initial setbacks of this operation A.P. said that these were vicious and bloody engagements for the Americans.

Having pinned down a U.S. force around Bongson the Liberation fighters rapidly stormed the enemy's encampments.

On the night of February 2, they violently pounded Phucat airfield in the frontline of the operation, destroying 78 helicopters and annihilating 110 Americans. At Phumy town over one hundred South Korean mercenaries were wiped out by the guerillas in a surprise attack. These battles greatly hampered the enemy operation.

SECOND STAGE: THE "WHITE WING" OPERATION

The "Masher" operation then became the "White Wing" operation. The U.S. military command in Saigon intended to carry out a raid South of Bongson and muster the bulk of its artillery and ground force "to make a clean sweep of the Vietcong regulars" in the Anlao valley. Along with a

column proceeding from Bongson, 5,000 marines then engaged in the "Double Eagle" operation to the South of Quangngai, were also gathered for a co-ordinated action, thus bringing the strength of the aggressors to nearly 20,000. One half of this force belonged to the First Airmobile Cavalry Division and constituted the mainstay comprising six battalions of infantry and four of artillery. As A.F.P. termed it on February 7, it was "the biggest operation in the Vietnam war" carefully prepared and carried out by the Westmoreland command. After several air strikes at the Anlao valley, early in February three twelve-men groups of U.S. commandos were dropped there by helicopters. No sooner had they landed than they were surrounded and put out of action. Only two escaped, among them a major, their commander.

On February 7, the Americans and their satellites from many directions entered Anlao, thirty kilometres to the Northwest of Bongson, only to witness the miracles of people's war: a no man's land bristling with booby traps and spike pits and rendered mortally dangerous by snipers' fire. Those who arrived on foot were closely intercepted by the guerillas while those helilifted were fiercely attacked, and many aircraft were hit and downed. Thus a big army unit advanced with fear in their hearts! A battalion from the First Airmobile Cavalry Division dropped on a 300-metre-hill took eight hours to go down and landed on a valley full of guerillas.

Colonel Hall Moore, commander of the Third Brigade, complained: "I'm very disappointed".

On February 11 alone, nearly one hundred American and puppet troops were killed and injured, four helicopters downed and four others damaged.

Then, ten days later, on February 17, Colonel Moore changed his tune, saying, "The Anlao valley isn't an important tactical area", and ordered his men to pack up and return after sustaining heavy losses. It was to be recalled that a few days earlier the U.S. Psychological Warfare Department while trumpeting about this big operation had said that the same valley was strategically most important.

THIRD STAGE: "BLACK HORSE"

While 15,000 Americans and mercenaries were labouring their way in the Anlao valley, those at Bongson also got bogged down in a morass. They were heeled by the Liberation troops who attacked them with all the weapons available. The cavalymen were also intercepted.

On February 15, the U.S. encampments at Antuong were stormed and forty-five of the enemy troops wiped out.

At 3.00 a.m. on February 17, two companies were completely destroyed at Locgiang. The same day at noon an American company helilifted to Phuninh hamlet came under a violent fire from the Liberation fighters. Two other U.S. rescue battalions were also intercepted. 380 Americans were put out of action in these engagements. On February 18 night and in the morning of the following day, a U.S. company was encircled and destroyed nearly wholesale Southwest of Bongson. In this battle, a box barrage by the American artillery and a force 70 metres from the beleaguered troops could not help relieve them. Reporting on this battle U.P.I. said that the "Vietcong" counter-attack on February 19 was one of the toughest battle in the war. U.S. Adjutant Curtis Arms who narrowly escaped death admitted, "The fighting has been even tougher than that in the Iadrang valley (Western Pleime) last November". According to him, in Iadrang the Americans could locate the Liberation troops but in this engagement "the Vietcong keep turning up in different places" and the Americans did not know where they were and how to fight (U.P.I., February 21).

In fact, the Liberation fighters chose the right moment when the enemy was at a loss to sally out and fall on him. With the violence of a hurricane in the February 20 battle, they assaulted the helicopters upon their landing to destroy them with the cavalymen aboard. Surviving Adjutant Hendersen related that the Liberation fighters "shouted while rushing forward, it's frightful (U.P.I., February 21). With their close-range fighting, the Liberation troops overwhelmed the enemy, depriving his air force and artillery of their effectiveness.

On February 18, when intercepting the American column raiding Datuong, they managed to wipe out 220 enemy troops under a rain of 2,365 cannon shells. In the February 17 engagement at Anghia U.S. planes and guns failed to cover the ground forces because "the Vietcongs were so near that American planes and artillery could not hit them without endangering the Americans as well". (U.P.I., February 21).

While breaking the enemy's thrusts, the Liberation troops also penetrated into his den. Their mortaring of the front-line command of the Airmobile Cavalry Division at Bongson struck at the headquarters of the operation, throwing the enemy into confusion. Earlier, on February 19, in close coordination with the Liberation troops at Bongson, the Gialai regional forces launched a strong mortar and surprise attack on the base of the mobile division at Ankhe, destroying ninety-seven helicopters and razing to the ground the signal centre of the base. Nearly five hundred Americans were put out of action.

At the end of February 1966, the "White Wing" operation was renamed "Black Horse". But whatever the name adopted the Airmobile Division after being defeated at Iadrang now fell into a "dreadful" trap at Bongson, so much so that on March 6 an end had to be ordered to the operation. Thus after sustaining a sound beating and heavy losses for 39 days, the enemy failed to achieve his three objectives, as revealed by U.P.I.

The guerillas and Liberation fighters in the Northern part of Binhdinh and at Bongson firmly kept their initiative of the operations on their native land. After thirty-nine days and nights of valiant counter-raids and continuous counter-offensives, the Liberation Armed Forces have wiped out large contingents of enemy troops. According to a communiqué of the L.A.F. Command, from January 27 to March 7, 7,540 enemy troops were knocked down, including 4,763 Americans, most of them cavalymen, 301 planes and helicopters were destroyed, shot down or heavily damaged, 30 M.113's and five cannons destroyed.

II

AMERICAN MILITARY BUILD-UP IN SOUTH VIETNAM

Dates	Number of troops	Landing places
March 8, 1965	Ninth Marine Brigade	Danang
March 21, 1965	400 military policemen	Saigon
April 10, 1965	One marine battalion	Danang
April 10, 1965	One marine battalion	Phubai (Hue)
April 14, 1965	One marine battalion	Danang
May 3, 1965	173rd Parachute Brigade	Bienhoa and Vungtau
May 12, 1965	One marine battalion	Chulai
June 9, 1965	2,500 engineering servicemen	Camranh
July 1, 1965	400 marines	Quinhon
July 2, 1965	500 marines	Quinhon
July 7, 1965	8,000 marines	Danang
July 7, 1965	1,400 marines	Quinhon
July 12, 1965	First units of the First Infantry Division	Camranh
July 15, 1965	1,800 logistics servicemen	Danang and Camranh

Dates	Number of troops	Landing places
July 29, 1965	101st Parachute Brigade	Camranh
August 14, 1965	One marine battalion	Chulai
August 24, 1965	600 engineering servicemen	Danang
August 27, 1965	2,000 logistics servicemen	Quinhon Camranh Vungtau
September 3, 1965	1,400 marines	Chulai
September 4, 1965	700 troops, First Airmobile Cavalry Division	Quinhon
September 12, 1965	The bulk of the First Airmobile Cavalry Division	Quinhon
September 16, 1965	2,500 logistics servicemen	Camranh Nhatrang Danang Vungtau
October 7, 1965	Two brigades, First Infantry Division	
October 23, 1965	Four battalions of artillery	In various places
December 30, 1965	Third Brigade, 25th Infantry Division	Pleiku
January 18, 1966	Second Brigade, 25th Infantry Division	Vungtau
January 1, 1966	First Marine Regiment	Chulai
Late in March 1966	15,000 troops	In various places

The total number of American troops introduced into South Vietnam from early March 1965 to late March 1966 was 230,000.

It is to recall that towards the end of 1961, 1962, 1963 and 1964 the American force amounted respectively to 2,000, 11,000, 15,000 and 25,000 officers and men.

III CASUALTY LIST

(Upward of 100 in each engagement)

Date	Localities	Casualties
February 7, 1965	Pleiku Airbase	357 pilots and technicians
February 10, 1965	Quinhon headquarters (Binh Dinh province)	107 officers and personnel
March 30, 1965	American Embassy, Saigon	217 officers and personnel
May 16, 1965	Bienhoa Airbase	350 pilots and technicians
May 27, 1965	Nuithanh (Quangnam province)	139 U.S. marine and satellite troops
June 28, 1965	Nhatrang (Khanhhoa province)	130 (mostly Americans)
July 1, 1965	Danang (Quangnam province)	193 marines
August 5, 1965	Lienchieu gasoline dumps (Quangnam province)	150 marines

Date	Localities	Casualties
August 9, 1965	Phongbac (Quangnam province)	171 marines
August 18-19, 1965	Vantuong (Quangngai province)	919 marines
August 24, 1965	Bienhoa Airbase	300 pilots and technicians
September 19, 1965	Thuanninh (Binh-dinh province)	200 paratroops
October 3, 1965	Dientien (Quangnam province)	One company completely wiped out
October 8-13, 1965	South of Bencat (Thudaumot province)	459 paratroops
October 10-14, 1965	Phucac (Binh-dinh province)	363 troops (First Airmobile Cavalry Division)
October 27, 1965	Nuocman airbase (Quangnam province)	283 pilots and technicians
October 27, 1965	Chulai Airbase	300 pilots and technicians
October 30, 1965	Lachau (Quangnam province)	One marine company completely wiped out
November 8, 1965	Datcuoc (Bienhoa province)	One paratroops battalion completely wiped out
November 12, 1965	Baubang (Thudaumot province)	Two battalions, Second Brigade, First Infantry Division, two armoured car squadrons and one artillery company completely wiped out (2,040 men in all)

Date	Localities	Casualties
October 19- November 17, 1965	Pleime (Gialai province)	One battalion and four companies, First Airmobile Cavalry Division, completely wiped out (1,700 men in all)
November 20, 1965	Camxe (Thudaumot province)	500 U.S. troops, First Infantry Division
November 22, 1965	Soctrang Airbase	100 pilots and technicians
December 4, 1965	Metropole Hotel (Saigon)	200 pilots and officers
December 5, 1965	Longxuyen (Thudaumot province)	800 troops, First Infantry Division
January 1-7, 1966	Duchoa—Duchue (Cholon province)	729 U.S. and satellite troops
January 8-19, 1966	North of Cuchi (Giadinh province)	1,438 killed and wounded (First Infantry Division)
January 23-27, 1966	South of Cuchi (Giadinh province)	933 troops, First Infantry Division
January 30, 1966	Phuloi Airbase	300 pilots and technicians
January 28- February 12, 1966	Nhontrach (Bienhoa province)	400 troops, First Infantry Division
February 7, 1966	Tamting (Bienhoa province)	127 troops, First Infantry Division
January 28- February 15, 1966	Moduc (Quangngai province)	816 troops, Third Marine Division
January 19- February 19, 1966	Tuyhoa (Phuyen province)	1,078 Americans and 1,288 South Koreans

Date	Localities	Casualties
January 27- March 3, 1966	North of Binhdin h province	Two battalions and six companies, First Airmobile Cavalry Division, completely wiped out (5,160 men in all)
February 20, 1966	Ankhe (Gialai province)	500 troops, First Airmobile Caval- ry Division
February 18-20, 1966	Binhthuan province	400 troops, First Airmobile Caval- ry Division
February 24, 1966	Phuloi Airbase (Thudaumot province)	100 troops, First In- fantry Division
February 7-12, 1966	Cuchi (Giadin h province)	183 troops
February 24, 1966	Bongtrang — Nha- do (Thudaumot province)	Two battalions and their operational C.P., First Infan- try Division, com- pletely wiped out and one battalion of Australian troops dealt heavy blows
February 21-24, 1966	Cuchi (Giadin h province)	130 troops, 25th In- fantry Division
February 21-27, 1966	Trangbang (Thu- daumot province)	243 American (25th Infantry Division) and satellite troops
February 19-22, 1966	Tienphuoc (Quang- nam province)	357 troops

Date	Localities	Casualties
February 28, 1966	Tamky Airbase (Quangngai province)	100 pilots and tech- nicians
March 3-6, 1966	Tuyhoa (Phuyen province)	405 troops, including one company of the 101st Para- chute Brigade
March 5, 1966	Baubang (Thuda- mot province)	One battalion of the First Infantry Division comple- tely wiped out
March 4-5, 1966	Donggiap (Quang- ngai province)	Two battalions and four marine com- panies complete- ly wiped out
March 8-23, 1966	Zone D (Bienhoa province)	1700 troops, 173rd Parachute Briga- de and First In- fantry Division
March 12, 1966	Vungtau (Baria province)	200 troops, including a colonel
March 14-16, 1966	Duchoa (Cholon province)	350 troops, 25th In- fantry Division
March 23, 1966	Chulai Airbase (Quangnam province)	200 pilots and tech- nicians
March 21-22, 1966	Sontinh (Quang- ngai province)	837 marines
March 17-23, 1966	Cuchi (Giadin h province)	145 troops
March 27, 1966	Xuanloc Airbase (Bienhoa province)	106 pilots and tech- nicians

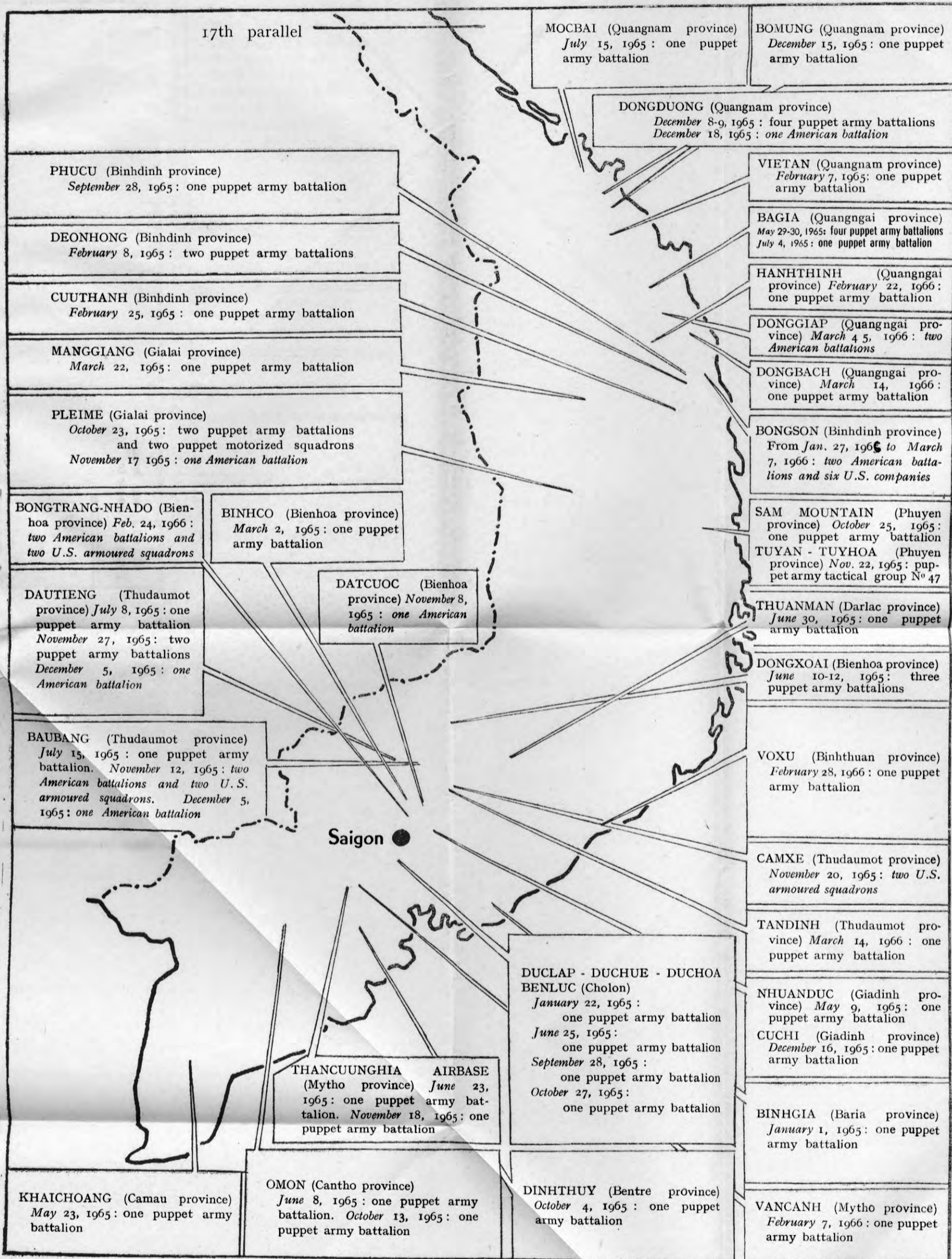
Date	Localities	Casualties
March 29, 1966	Sontinh (Quang-ngai province)	442 marines
March 30, 1966	Pleime (Gialai province)	Two companies, First Airmobile Cavalry Division completely wiped out

While this book is in the press, the American expeditionary force has sustained further losses in many areas, among which worth mentioning are the casualties in two attacks in the Saigon region :

— 215 officers put out of action at Victoria Hotel, April 1.

— 300 pilots and technicians knocked out at the Tanson-nhat Airbase, April 13.

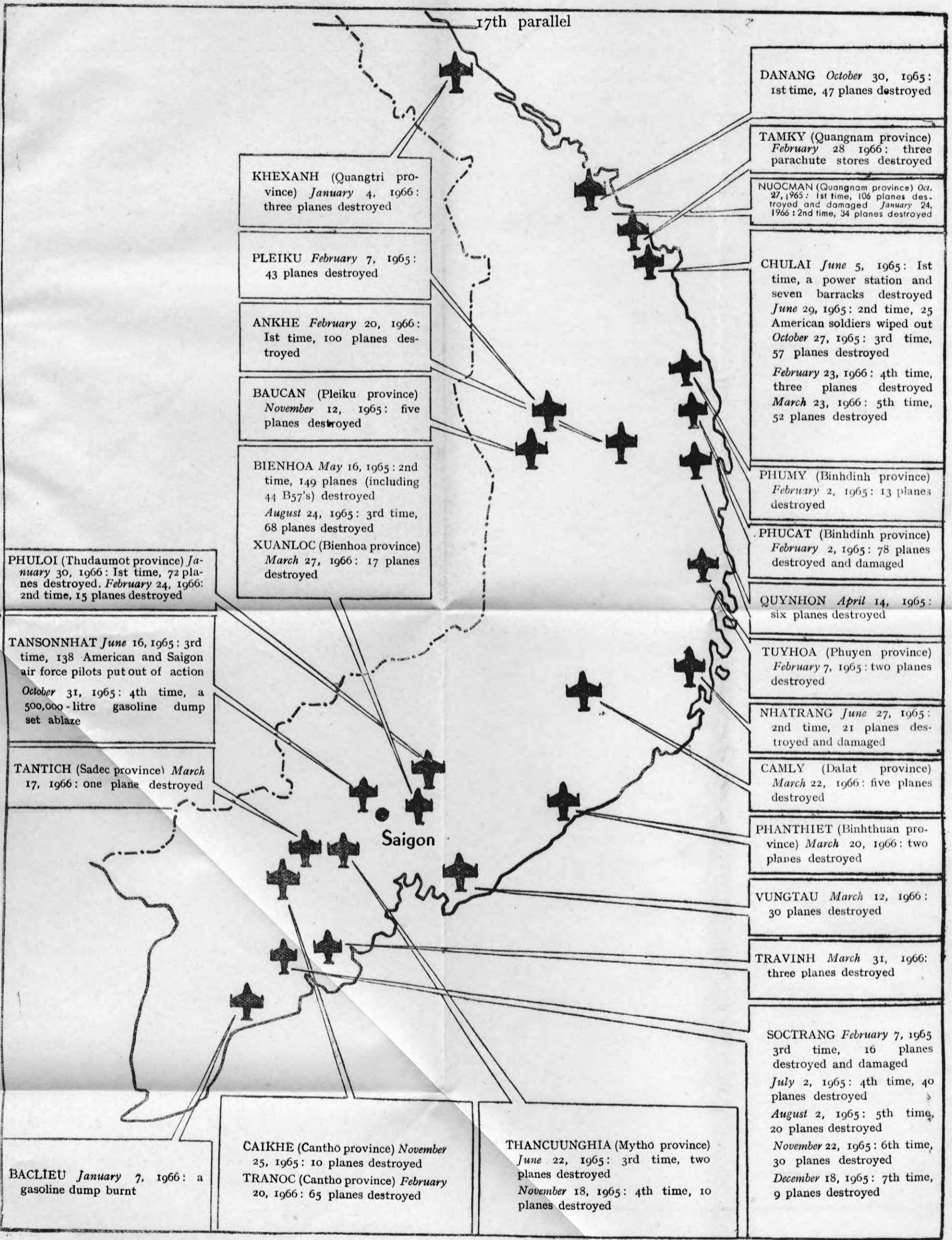
BATTLES IN WHICH ENEMY BATTALIONS WERE DESTROYED WHOLESALE FROM JANUARY 1, 1965 TO MARCH 31, 1966



NUMBER OF BATTALIONS ANNIHILATED:

- Puppet army: 47 battalions, one tactical group and two motorized squadrons
- American expeditionary force: 13 battalions, six companies and six armoured squadrons

ATTACKS ON ENEMY AIRBASES FROM JANUARY 1, 1965 TO MARCH 31, 1966



When this book is in the press news comes of another victory recorded by the Saigon-Giadinh Liberation Armed Forces on April 13, 1966, attacking Tansonnhat airbase for the fifth time, and destroying 67 planes

TOTAL: 41 ATTACKS, DESTROYING AND DAMAGING 1,209 PLANES OF VARIOUS TYPES

THE U.S. WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM

CRIMES...

The Americans have recourse to most barbarous means including combat gases to massacre the South Vietnamese people



... AND PUNISHMENTS



PLEIME (October 19 — November 18, 1965): 1,700 G.I.'s of the First Airmobile Cavalry Division killed



BONGSON (January 27 — March 7, 1966): 5,160 American troops put out of action

DANANG (October 30, 1965): 47 aircraft destroyed
↓



↑
BAUBANG (November 12, 1965): 2 American battalions, 2 armoured squadrons and 1 artillery company completely annihilated

YET IN HONOLULU (February 7, 1966)



Mc Namara and Co tried to puff up Nguyen Cao Ky by reaffirming their determination to carry on the war of aggression

THE
LIBERATION
ARMED
FORCES



Mrs. Nguyen Thi Dinh, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the
L.A.F. with a group of young fighters

Attacking U.S. troops



HANOI
VIETNAM