

A
 FILE SUBJ.
 DATE SUB-CAT.
 7/69

VIET CONG CLAIMS HEAVY U.S. LOSSES IN JAN-JUN 1969

[Commentary: "The South Vietnamese Army and People Achieves High Combat Efficiency During Six-Month Period"; Hanoi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 19 July 1969, p 2]

During the first 6 months of this year, the brave South Vietnamese army and people won very great and all-around victories. One of the most striking characteristics of the past 6 months is the high combat efficiency achieved by the PLAF.

1. In 6 months, the PLAF wiped out more Americans and destroyed more armored vehicles, combat launches, cannon, and enemy warehouses than in any other period

During the first 6 months of this year, the South Vietnamese army and people wiped out a very large part of the enemy's military force. Considering only U.S. and satellite manpower, our fighters and compatriots put out of action 140,000 men (including many officers, pilots, and technicians), many more than the 12,000 during the first 6 months of 1968 and many more than the 60,000 during the 7 months of the 1966-1967 winter-spring season.

As for enemy war materiel, the South Vietnamese army and people destroyed 3,950 U.S. planes (more than twice the number during the 7 months of the 1966-1967 winter-spring season), destroyed 6,000 tanks and armored vehicles (many more than the 1,460 destroyed during the first 6 months of 1968 and three times the number destroyed during the 7 months of the 1966-1967 winter-spring season), sank or set fire to 1,150 military ships and launches (nearly twice the number during the first 6 months of 1968 and 11 times the number during the 7 months of the 1966-1967 winter-spring season), destroyed 600 ammunition and petroleum dumps (more than 1.3 times the number during the first 6 months of 1968), and destroyed 1,690 cannon and heavy mortars (2.4 times the number during the first 6 months of 1968 and nearly five times the number during 6 months of the 1966-1967 winter-spring season).

Fighting the enemy after it has withdrawn completely in a defensive strategy is different from fighting the enemy when it is following a counteroffensive strategy. In counteroffensives, the enemy force is strong but usually reveals many more vulnerabilities than when it is pulled back on the defensive. During the past 6 months, the South Vietnamese army and people made outstanding combat achievements and set many new records in wiping out enemy manpower and war materiel while the Americans boasted that they had perfected their defense system. This point proves that the South Vietnamese army and people, who had previously fought the enemy very expertly during enemy counteroffensives, now are fighting a defensive enemy very expertly and achieving increasingly higher combat efficiency.

2. The highest number of battles fought during 6 months

The first 6 months of this year were also a period when the South Vietnamese army and people conducted the most sustained and continuous attacks. Three successive waves of simultaneous attacks took place in the space of 6 months with dozens of major attacks, hundreds of medium-size attacks, and thousands of small attacks in all theaters. The U.S. aggressors had to admit that they were attacked an average of 30 to 50 times each day. According to this same enemy admission (which is still far from the truth), during the first 6 months of this year, the Americans and the lackeys were attacked 5,000 to 9,000 times. Many of their hideouts were attacked repeatedly. Just during the first 20 days of spring, Kontum, Dakto, A-re-a, Cu Hanh, and Hoa Binh airfields were attacked 20 times. The command posts of the puppet 2nd Corps, the 23rd Division, the 24th Special Zone, the 42nd Regiment, and the 43rd Regiment were attacked and fired upon 11 times. During the 6 months, the Hung Vuong Military Training Center in My Tho Province was attacked five times. U.S. and puppet positions in Ben Tre City were attacked eight times. The command post of the U.S. 9th Division in Binh Duc was attacked and brought under fire 42 times in the space of 4 months (between 22 February and 22 June).

Fighting many battles during a given period of time and with a given force and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy while sustaining few losses ourselves is a very important indication of the high combat efficiency of the Liberation Army. It represents new progress in the South Vietnamese PLAF's ability to fight continuously. Even the leaders of the U.S. aggressors' war apparatus had to bitterly admit that "the present offensive of the Viet Cong has taught the United States a lesson about their ability to protect their forces and their attack ability (that is to say, the PLAF)" (Newsweek, 31 March 1969).

3. Many highly effective methods of attack were used during the 6 months

During the past 6 months, the South Vietnamese army and people employed many effective methods of attack, achieving high combat efficiency.

Skillful raids: The Liberation Army has always been skilled at conducting raids but it has acquired new experience and, consequently, has recently conducted very skillful raids. Many U.S. positions with a strength of approximately one battalion, carefully deployed with abundant firepower and reinforcements, have been rapidly and efficiently wiped out by small-strength units of the Liberation Army as in the Thi Tinh, Ben Tranh, Tra Cao, Loc Ninh, Dong Pan, Ca Tong, Ba Chiem, Soc Ta Te, and Nui Dot plantation area in Eastern Nam Bo, Dong Tranh and Highpoint 1078 and Dong Tien in Tri-Thien-Hue [Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces and Hue City], Highpoint 97 and Kiem Lam in Central Trung Bo, E-xe-pich Camp in Southern Trung Bo, and Nhon Xuyen in Central Nam Bo and so forth.

U.S. commanders conducted research to find countermeasures but were unable to withstand the skillful raid tactics of the Liberation Army. Between 23 February and 16 March, U.S. positions at Ben Tranh in Thu Dau Mot Province and at Tra Cao in Tay Ninh Province were raided three times in a row and there were many battles in the space of one hour.

Very widespread artillery attacks: Artillery attacks have become a very dangerous method of attack, causing permanent fear in the Americans and puppets.

Besides supporting the combat infantry troops, the artillery men skillfully fought alone and in some battles destroyed large warehouses with a few shells, inflicting heavy losses:

--hitting many nests of the puppet regime and more than 100 U.S., puppet, and satellite command posts from regimental echelon on up.

--destroying hundreds of enemy rear services depots and many strategic reserve depots such as An Don in Danang and Deo, Mieu Lo, and Phu Hoa in Binh Dinh Province and so forth.

--destroying nearly 50 important airfields and thousands of planes of various types.

--firing on boat convoys and enemy ports, making an outstanding contribution to the military feat of sinking or setting ablaze 1,150 combat launches and ships.

--regularly firing on enemy bases and besieging and threatening the enemy for many days as happened at Ben Het-Pleiken in Kontum Province and Binh Duc in My Tho Province.

The high efficiency of artillery attacks during the past 6 months proved that the level of artillery equipment among all three types of troops has been improved. The art of reconnoitering the enemy and the firing techniques of the artillery units are very good. The very broad and deep development of people's war created favorable conditions for the

artillery men to get close to the enemy bases and hideouts to fire on the enemy. With good battle positions, forces deployed everywhere, and regular ammunition supplies, the artillery units were able to fight the enemy continuously, at all times and in all places. High-level American military intelligence elements in Saigon had to admit: "There is no longer a single Allied base in South Vietnam which can be considered invulnerable." (AFP, 10 March).

Skillful ambushes: Along with the scores of medium-sized and small ambushes in all theaters, the Liberation Army also created opportunities for dozens of large and brilliantly victorious ambushes. There were three continuous ambushes on 18, 19, and 20 June on Route 13, destroying and damaging 206 military vehicles (including 161 tanks and armored vehicles), wiping out nearly 1,000 of the enemy and shooting down 26 planes. There were two ambushes on 11 and 13 June, wiping out two military convoys on Routes 14 and 19, destroying 150 military vehicles and 200 tons of war materiel, and wiping out more than 300 of the enemy. The ambushes against the enemy during the recent period took place in different circumstances than before because all of the Liberation Army's ambushes were within an area where the enemy had deployed a fairly thick defense system. However, because the Liberation Army had a good picture of the enemy, correctly selected the ambush site, and had many ways of attacking enemy tanks and armored vehicles and many ways of shooting down enemy planes, it was able to win great victories in its ambushes.

Fighting with well-trained forces: There were scores of attacks from Quang Tri Province to Ca Mau Province where the enemy was unable to predict the direction of attack or the PLAF troop strength. They only felt the very painful surprise blows struck at the middle of their hideouts, bases, and warehouses. The fighting methods of the well-trained forces have become universal. The very successful deep penetration attacks of the Liberation Army such as those against the bases at Dong Du and Tech Nich and against the Lam Son Training Center and the demolition attacks against the general ammunition and petroleum depots alongside Danang Airfield and in Quy Nhon City of Region 6 have given the Abrams headquarters quite a headache. They exclaimed: "At Dong Du, the Viet Cong moved right into the middle of the base and selected the best targets." They admitted: "Huge fires erupted in the colossal ammunition dumps next to the Danang Air Force Base, setting off scores of explosions shaking windows and doors throughout the city." The Americans conducted research and studies but were unable to cope with this dangerous fighting method of the Liberation Army.

Skillfully fighting on the rivers and in the ports: The attacks of the South Vietnamese army and people on the rivers of Eastern and Central Nam Bo and the attacks against the military ports at Danang were of a striking nature. Just during the 10 days between 22 February and 3 March, the ship-hunting units of Bien Hoa conducted many skillful attacks, sinking or setting ablaze 26 ships on the Long Tau and Dong Nai rivers (eight of the vessels had a cargo capacity of 5,000 to 12,000 metric tons). During one attack on the night of 26 February against the

Danang Military Port, 11 bomb-laden transport ships, one warehouse area, and more than 200 enemy troops were destroyed. The record of the South Vietnamese army and people in sinking and setting ablaze enemy ships on the river and in military ports during the first 6 months of this year far outdistanced the record for all of 1968.

Skillfully encircling the enemy: The PLAF not only encircled enemy troops at Ben Het and Pleikan in the mountain and jungle region of Tay Nguyen but also conducted encircling attacks at the large An Hoa Base and in the Tien Phuoc District Capital in the coastal delta, very close to Danang City and Tam Ky City in Quang Nam Province. Each siege lasted for more than a month. The special features of these sieges were the simultaneous encirclement and continuous attacks against the enemy in its posts and the destruction of enemy rescue elements coming to life the siege. During the three sieges mentioned above, the PLAF wiped out more than 8,000 Americans and puppets, shot down or destroyed on the ground nearly 250 planes, and destroyed nearly 300 military vehicles and more than 60 pieces of artillery and heavy mortars.

Along with the highly effective methods of attack mentioned above, there were also innumerable methods of guerrilla attacks on all battlefields which the Americans and puppets were unable to contend with.

4. During the 6 months, the South Vietnamese army and people both inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy and destroyed many enemy schemes

--The South Vietnamese army and people exercised the initiative, attacking the enemy as they wished, defeating the enemy's "blocking" operations (such as the operations at Co Ca Va, A Bia, and Dau Tieng) causing the enemy to plunge deeper into a passive position and, at the same time, bankrupted the Nixon program to "apply the maximum pressure."

--The South Vietnamese army and people conducted mighty attacks against vital positions of the Americans and puppets and also conducted powerful attacks against areas where the U.S. aggressors were testing the so-called "de-Americanization" of the war. In Kontum Province, the South Vietnamese army and people inflicted very heavy defeats on the puppet 42nd Regiment, 47th Regiment, and 2nd Ranger Inter-Group. In Long Khanh, the South Vietnamese army and people paralyzed the puppet 18th Division. The puppet army was dealt painful losses and the U.S. scheme to "puppetize" the war was dealt very heavy defeats.

The South Vietnamese army and people also coordinated military attacks with mass uprisings, smashing many "strategic hamlets," bankrupting the U.S. and puppet "accelerated pacification" plan, particularly in the coastal area of Central Trung Bo.

It is clear that the South Vietnamese army and people achieved high combat efficiency during the past 6 months because they conducted many attacks, wiping out many of the enemy while suffering very few casualties themselves, both realizing their objectives and smashing many of the enemy's schemes.

Combat efficiency is the most accurate measurement of the quality of combat and the effectiveness of the fighting methods of an army. With high combat efficiency, the South Vietnamese PLAF were able to conduct powerful and sustained attacks, to become increasingly victorious with each attack, and to become increasingly stronger with each attack.

The PLAF achieved high combat efficiency primarily because they promptly applied good experiences and increased their combat quality by cleverly combining combat and development. The fighting will of the Liberation Army cadres and fighters is very high, the table of organization and equipment of the units has been improved, and distinct progress has been made in the level of organization and command and in the technical and tactical level.

The PLAF also created and adapted many good fighting methods, rationally employed their forces, developed the consolidated power of revolutionary warfare, and correctly selected the direction of attack. In war, the selection of the direction of attack for each major offensive must be based on the strategic task and on the enemy situation and our situation on the battlefield. The selection of the correct direction of attack is based on considerations about wiping out many of the enemy, destroying many of the enemy's schemes, and developing our own powerful offensive position. If these three requirements are met, the selection is good. Recently, the South Vietnamese army and people correctly selected the direction of attack and, consequently, created favorable conditions for winning major victories, raising combat efficiency. The South Vietnamese army and people also learned how to cause the enemy to make one mistake after another. Although the enemy desperately took precautions, he was continuously surprised and continuously exposed his vulnerabilities.

The high combat efficiency is the most concentrated manifestation of the steady and all-around progress of the South Vietnamese PLAF. With such vigorous progress, the PLAF definitely will become increasingly resilient and powerful with each attack and win greater victories.

6477

CSO: 3520-D