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SUMMER 1969: A VIET CONG STUDY OF THE SITUATION
AND PROSPECTS.

Background

"The General Offensive and General Uprising is a process aimed at repelling the enemy step by step and gaining partial victories one at a time."

"Through the four phases [of General Offensive and Uprising] the policy lines adopted by TW [Central, possibly Hanoi Politburo] were entirely correct and the situation has developed as expected by us."

The two quotations above are from a document issued by an unspecified command agency, probably Headquarters of the South Viet-Nam Liberation Army, captured on June 1, 1969, in III Corps Tactical Zone by a unit of the Ninth U.S. Infantry Division. They repeat the assertions -- that "complete" victory will be achieved in a series of steps, and that developments have shown that the Party has been correct in its plans and estimates -- which appear in an increasing number of Viet Cong documents captured during spring and summer of 1969. 1/

The document presented here is in two parts: an assessment of the situation in South Viet-Nam, and notes on "Principles and Characteristics of the General Offensive and General Uprising."

The first part contains characteristic claims of military and political successes scored by the Viet Cong during the spring offensive, and of deterioration in the capability of the Government of Viet-Nam and the United States to continue the war.

It calls for "more and bigger victories", and says, "We are racing against time. . .so we must step up our offensive. . .during the coming summer."

The document cautions at the same time that "...we should not consider summer as a decisive phase, but a phase with special significance in which the Americans will be obliged to adopt a policy which is consistent with our line."

In its discussion of the General Offensive and General Uprising, the document concedes that "the enemy still has more than one million troops" and that this number cannot be annihilated or wiped out.

Nevertheless, "Victory will come to us, not suddenly, but in a complicated and tortuous way." The document notes: "...we have made an important step forward -- the enemy was defeated in the North [suspension of bombing]; he has to talk with the Front (NLFSVN) in Paris and discuss the problems of troop reduction, withdrawal of troops and coalition government." It sees these as steps toward

certain American defeat.

"...whether the phase of General Offensive/Uprising will be prolonged or shortened, the victories gained will be great or small, the difficulties met will be many or few, will depend on the intensity of our efforts", the document says; "Therefore we must dismiss the thought of relying on others' assistance, or the wait-and-see attitude."

"For this reason," the document concludes, "the concept of securing the decisive victory in either the Winter-Spring or Summer Campaign is not relevant."

Note:

1. See Viet-Nam Documents and Research Notes No. 61-62, "Decisive Victory: Step by Step; Bit by Bit", and U.S. Mission Press Center Release No. 40-69 (May 9, 1969), "Captured Document Reveals Political Guidance for VC Summer '69 Campaign." Similarities in the subject, format, and language of the two previously published documents, the one presented here, and other unpublished documents, indicate that each of them is a response to a very high level (probably COSVN) directive requiring lower echelons to conduct training courses on these subjects.

July 1969.

[STUDY] OF MAJOR THEMES.I. VICTORIES SCORED DURING THE SPRING PHASE:

- The Spring phase was a great and overall victory having strategic significance.
- This is clearly pointed out by Circular #13.

Here we state only the general aspects of the military, political, and economic fields which we think are connected with strategic problems, the aggressive intention and war policy of the Americans.

Military field: The U.S. forces this time sustained heavier casualties than in the first phase of Mậu Thân (year of the Monkey) New Year. The elite units (the 1st and 25th U.S. Infantry Divisions, the 1st U.S. Air Cavalry Division and the Americal Division) suffered very heavy losses.

This is a very important point because the U.S. planned to prolong the war, but they must protect their forces (U.S. forces) and maintain and develop the puppet forces in order to force us to negotiate in a weak position.

The losses sustained by U.S. forces have exerted an impact on the afore-mentioned political scheme and pushed the American people to ask for an end to the war, the restoration of peace, and the withdrawal of troops (from Vietnam) (as shown by the demonstrations staged on 5-6 April 1969 by the people in the United States).

Dissension within the U.S. Government is growing more and more acute:

- The puppet forces also sustained heavy losses:

This is also a very important factor, because if the puppet troops and puppet government are shaken and demoralized by these losses, the U.S. cannot rely on them to realize their neo-colonialism, prolong the war, and their aggressive will is increasingly shaken.

- Strategic backward step: From the offensive position they stepped backward, applying a ((new)) strategy which includes both the offensive and defensive (search and destroy and pacification).

But, with their "Clear and Hold" strategy, despite their preparedness, they were fiercely attacked and sustained heavy losses. Their forces which were deployed in the field and in blocking positions were subjected to our "thunder-like [sic] blows." Strongholds and military bases such as Đông Dũ [Airborne training area], Trảng Lớn and Long Bình were continually attacked by our forces.

To protect Saigon, they built a system of bases around the Capital (Đông Dũ, Long Bình). The fact that these bases were continuously attacked drove the Americans into a very critical position. To cope with the situation, they set up small bases to protect their larger bases. But the more they deploy troops to protect these bases, the more they are driven into a defensive position.

Being in a defensive position, their already depleted forces are more scattered, and they cannot organize strategic reserve forces. They counter our attack with a piecemeal commitment of force, using small forces of company and battalion size only; these can be very easily destroyed.

The U.S. is more and more bogged down in a contradiction-filled position:

- There is indecision between concentration and dispersion; between offensive and defensive; between self-protection and destruction of the enemy.

We have a creative method of conducting our attacks, successfully using small forces against larger ones. We always develop the traditions of such particularly Vietnamese [fighting outfits] such as the special action units, the commandos and direct fire ((flat trajectory)) artillery units.

- We are able to conduct sustained and prolonged attacks. Besides, we have not committed all our forces.

- The fighting spirit of the U.S. and puppet troops continues to decline.

- The war in VN has shaken the U.S. world strategy. The U.S. military forces in SVN are the best trained units which account for two-thirds of the entire U.S. Infantry forces.

Besides VN, there are many other critical areas such as Middle East, Korea, Germany and Western Europe.

The U.S. does not have its own world strategic reserve force.

Political: Enemy military failures caused the failure of his political scheme to continue the war while at the same time preserving U.S. and puppet forces and maintaining the puppet government, and forcing us to negotiate in a weak position.

His aggressive will was again shattered. Recently, the American people's movement to oppose the war, and demand the restoration of peace and the withdrawal of U.S. troops, has boiled up again with greater intensity.

U.S. internal confusion:

- On our side: Paralleling our military attacks, the people in the 3 areas [mountain, lowland and city] simultaneously rose up to attack the enemy politically. Particularly, they conducted attacks against the civilian self-defense forces, punished and educated "Phuông Hoảng" [members of the Phoenix project]. They also initiated struggles against enemy sweep operations, looting, air, artillery shelling and pacification activities They opposed the war, demanded peace and exposed the true face of the U.S. warmongers and the "Country-selling" Thieu-Ky-Huong clique.

Disregarding the enemy barrages of bullets and bombs, the people participated in combat activities; served as civilian laborers; and sabotaged communication lines. Expressing their determination to fight and defeat the enemy to seize power, they joined our revolutionary organizations, thus strengthening our forces.

The desertion rate among the enemy ranks has increased and the movement to oppose the war and sweep operations has been developed.

Good political developments were noted in the weakest areas that is the lowland areas of the Cuulong River and Region 5, and especially in the area of "Hoà Hảo" religious sect.

For the first time the revolutionary and armed forces had come the sacred land of the "Hoà Hảo" village to visit and talk with the Hoa Hao compatriots. Many Hoa Hao units in charge of mobile counter actions remained inactive and did not open fire on us.

Economy: Difficulties in the field of economy encountered by the U.S. have increased. Therefore, the U.S. had to take the following actions:

- Cut the budget for outer space study (which actually is a program designed to pre-

pare war against the socialist bloc).

- Cut down the number of military bases in foreign countries which are used to coerce these countries to side with the U.S.

- Cut down the budget for social welfare programs.

- Increase taxes.

These actions have intensified the American people's movement to oppose poverty, starvation, illiteracy and diseases.

- The gold flow.

These factors caused an adverse effect on the dominating role of the U.S. over the world's economy and finance.

It is evident that the U.S. had suffered heavy failures in the Spring [campaign], failures of strategic significance. This effected its aggressive will and political plots and presses it to quickly adopt a clear-cut policy on VN, i.e. whether to prolong or end the war.

Our deficiencies:

- Activities in cities and areas bordering cities were weak.
- The guerrilla warfare movement was developed slowly.
- Political and military proselyting activities left much to be desired.
- Force building was slowly.

Significance of the year 1969 especially the 1969 Summer.

+ Opportunities in 1969.

For the enemy:

1968 is the year when the enemy was constantly attacked and suffered heavy losses in lives and materials.

- The aggressive will is shaky, a military success is impossible.
- A political decision has to be made.
- Expand the war?

+ The Nixon Administration

The period of "honeymoon" has passed, the Democratic Party cannot allow the Republican Party to take too much time before making decisions .

The authority belongs to the Republican Party. But the congress is largely controlled by the Democrats. Therefore, Nixon must make a decision that will enable his Party to gain more seats in the 1970 election year.

- For these reasons, Nixon had:

- Flown to Europe

- Met Lodge
- Sent Laird to Viet-Nam
- Recalled Bunker and Sullivan.
- The U.S. people want an end to the war, and a withdrawal of U.S. troops (demonstrations held on 5 and 6 April 1969 with the participation of servicemen).
- + The U.S. internal situation is tense.
- Our side:

The reasons which prompt the U.S. to quickly settle the war are also the ones that press us to develop our victories and to conduct successive attacks to force the enemy to adopt a clear-cut attitude.

After a year of General Offensive, we have obtained a considerable victory, but we need more and bigger victories in order to decisively change the situation.

Example: If the water is at 70-80 degree, we should heat it to 100 degrees until it boils.

We should take advantage of the time when the enemy is in hesitation to launch attacks to drive him into a deadlocked position where he is forced to accept a war settlement which is advantageous to us.

What has to be done:

Americans: Staying one more day, they will suffer more casualties, spend more money, and be opposed by the American people, without any hope of being able to strengthen the puppet troops and government.

Puppet troops: They are severely battered.

Puppet Government: All governmental structures are paralyzed and the government cannot control the people. ((We)) are racing against time, so ((we)) must step up ((our)) offensive during the first six months, i.e. during the coming summer.

It is also necessary to emphasize the importance of summer, a very vital period in which the enemy is forced to adopt a policy, to accept serious negotiations with us, withdraw troops and recognize the Front ((NLFSVN)) and a coalition government.

Therefore, we should not consider summer as a decisive phase, but a phase with special significance in which the Americans will be obliged to adopt a policy which is consistent with our line.

Role of Summer phase: Recently, the Spring phase has given a painful blow to Nixon, embarrassing him in his attempt at prolonging the war to secure a position of strength. For that reason, we should make great effort so as to exploit the victory of the Spring phase, and be determined to aim repeated military and political blows at Nixon in the Summer phase to force him to renounce his policy of prolonging the war for securing a position of strength, and cause him difficulties, when he is about to make a final policy decision on Viet-Nam in June of this year.

We must make everybody clearly see this opportunity and the strategic importance of the [1969] Summer Campaign. It must be conducted simultaneously, continuously, and widespreadly. Everybody must accomplish all missions prescribed, deal a heavy blow at the enemy's plot to gain a position of strength, to change the balance of power to our advan-

tage, to rush forward to win a decisive victory.

Specific missions for the Summer Campaign:

+ We must inflict casualties on the enemy in men and war facilities 50% higher than during the ((1969)) Spring Campaign. Specifically, continual attacks must be directed at cities, towns, enemy base areas and storage facilities. Work out a plan for a proper use of forces to attack specific objectives and defeat a number of U.S. and puppet trump card units. In addition, concerted efforts must be made to wear down and disintegrate a large number of [RVN] Regional and Popular forces, security and police agencies, and especially the forces which occupy and control the districts and villages.

+ In rural areas, initiate 3 phases of attack in order to destroy and basically disintegrate the enemy's governmental infrastructure. Particular efforts must be made to kill enemy tyrants, spies, break enemy oppressive control, and in coordination with the people, force the enemy to surrender and confess himself guilty in the face of the people.

+ Disintegrate the enemy's Civil Self Defense organizations and other reactionary ones, to basically defeat his pacification plan, organize the people into a strong guerrilla movement, and through the revolutionary organizations and administrations, to ensure the people's mastership.

In addition, consolidate the Party Chapters, Youth League Chapters, improve the people's living conditions, and mobilize manpower and material resources to support the frontline.

+ Organize widespread guerrilla warfare in cities and towns. Promote political movements and try to take over the power at the infrastructure level. Coordinate with the united front ((sic)) to operate on a large scale at the upper level and coordinate with the diplomatic offensive to wage the struggle against the stubborn Americans and their henchmen, the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique. Establish a Peace Cabinet to conduct serious negotiations with the Front, to break the enemy's control in many city areas and confuse it in its rear areas.

- Conduct strong and continuous attacks on land and water communication axes.
- Motivate a people's troop proselyting movement.
- Positively develop our revolutionary capabilities.

* * *

12 April 1969

A Number of Principles and Characteristics of the General Offensive and General Uprising.

The General Offensive and General Uprising is a phase of activities, a process of continuous offensive conducted by our combined military, political and troop proselyting forces using the three types of troops [main, local and guerrillas]. It is a process of regular attacks combined with phases of attacks having climaxing points, each phase being more violent than the preceding one.

- The General Offensive and General Uprising is a process aimed at repelling the enemy step by step and gaining partial victories one at a time.

- Why?
- The enemy still has more than one million troops.
- We cannot annihilate or wipe out one million troops.

- The enemy still has the capability of resisting us and getting replenishment troops. Although the village oppressive control machinery of the enemy is damaged, it is not yet paralyzed. His psywar machinery is still powerful and he still has the capability of implementing his pacification plan and General Mobilization program.

- For this reason, the General Offensive and General Uprising is a hard process, full of sacrifices and hardships.

- We secure victory not through a one-blow offensive, not through a phase of attack, not even through a series of attacks culminating in a final kill.

- Victory will come to us, not suddenly, but in a complicated and tortuous way.

- This victory is a limited victory, not a complete and clear cut victory.

- In the process of the General Offensive and Uprising, subjective efforts have a decisive effect.

Therefore, whether the phase of General Offensive/Uprising will be prolonged or shortened, the victories gained will be great or small, the difficulties met will be many or few, will depend on the intensity of our efforts.

- Our subjective efforts are the efforts made by the entire Revolutionary forces.

- They must include the efforts of individuals, units and local areas.

Therefore we must dismiss the thought of relying on others' assistance, or the wait-and-see attitude.

- Subjective efforts must be continuous, more and more intensive and must not be lax at any time. We must overcome impatience, imperseverance, demoralization and the desire to relax.

- Through the four phases ((of General Offensive/Uprising)) the policy lines adopted by TW ((Central = possibly Hanoi Politburo)) were entirely correct and the situation has developed as expected by us.

- TW estimated the time for us to gain the decisive victory is during the Winter-Spring Campaign of 1969. If each individual, each unit, and each local area displays excellent subjective efforts, nobody can say that we won't have the capability of securing the decisive victory in the Winter-Spring Campaign. [sic]

- Problem of securing a decisive victory:

- A decisive victory is not a complete victory.

- It is a victory gained by one step; but it is a very basic one, creating favorable conditions for us to move one step forward toward gaining complete victory.

- This decisive step means that the Americans will accept to withdraw their troops, a coalition government will be established, and the Revolutionary forces will be stronger than the Counter-Revolutionary forces.

- At present, we have made an important step forward = the enemy was defeated in the North; he has to talk with the Front ((NLF/SVN)) in Paris and discuss the problems of troop reduction, withdrawal of troops and coalition government.

- But, with a stubborn nature and a large force in hand, the Americans want to end the war in a strong position: If the Americans withdraw their troops, North Viet-Nam must

withdraw its troops too, thus making the Counter Revolutionary forces stronger than the Revolutionary forces.

- Thus, the way to secure a decisive victory is by attacking and inflicting heavy losses in personnel and materials on the Americans, causing them to be more and more bogged down and defeated and to be incapable of consolidating the Puppet Government - We must also inflict heavy losses on the Puppet Army and disrupt and neutralize the ((enemy)) oppressive control machinery at the infrastructure-level.

- Willingly or unwillingly, the Americans must accept defeat, and end the war in the way desired by us.

- In such a hard situation, when shall we secure the decisive victory?

- It is obvious that our subjective efforts will have a decisive effect: Whether the time ((necessary to secure the decisive victory)) will be prolonged or shortened, whether the victory will be great or small, will depend on our subjective efforts.

- For this reason, the concept of securing the decisive victory in either the Winter-Spring or Summer Campaign, is not relevant.

Đ E W C U O N G

I. - THANG LỢI ĐỢT XUAN:

- Đó là một thắng lợi rất to lớn, hết sức toàn diện, có một ý nghĩa chiến lược.

- Như thông báo số 13 đã vạch rõ.

Ở đây nêu một số khía cạnh của các lĩnh vực quân sự, chính trị, kinh tế có tính chất khai quật và nhận định, có tác động đến vấn đề chiến lược, đến ý chí xâm lược, phương hướng điều khiển chiến tranh của Mỹ.

Quân sự: Lần này sinh lực Mỹ bị thiệt hại nặng hơn, hơn cả đợt 1 tết Mậu Thân. Các đơn vị tinh nhuệ (F bộ binh số 1, số 25, F kỵ binh không vận số 1, sư American) đều bị thiệt hại nặng.

Việc này rất quan trọng vì âm mưu của Mỹ là kéo dài chiến tranh, nhưng phải bảo vệ sinh lực Mỹ, bị ~~khuyết~~ duy trì và phát triển sinh lực Ngụy, rung ẽp ta phải thương lượng ở thế yếu.

Sinh lực Mỹ bị thiệt hại nặng là một đòn đả kích vào âm mưu chính trị nói trên, thực đây phong trào nhân dân Mỹ, đòi chấm dứt chiến tranh, vận hội hòa bình, rút quân về nước (như các cuộc biểu tình ở Mỹ các ngày 5-6/4/69.)

Nội bộ chính quyền Mỹ càng mau thuận:

- Sinh lực Ngụy cũng bị thiệt hại nặng.

Việc này càng quan trọng, Ngụy quân, ngụy quyền lung lay, hoang mang, dao động thì không thể làm cho sự vùng vác của chủ nghĩa thực dân, kiểu mới âm mưu kéo dài chiến tranh, ý đồ xâm lược càng bị đảo lộn.

Thụt lùi về mặt chiến lược: Từ chiến lược tiến công, rút về chiến lược nửa tiến công, nửa phòng ngự (tự vệ và bình định)

Nhưng với chiến lược quét và giữ, mặc dù đã chuẩn bị đối phó chúng vẫn bị đánh, bị đánh mạnh, đánh sâu và đã bị thiệt hại nặng nề. Đứng sinh lực đông nhất đã chiến đấu ác liệt, chúng phải mình mẩy chịu những đòn tiến công sấm sét của ta.

Đứng các cụm cứ điểm, căn cứ quân sự thì Đồng dù, Trảng Lớn, Long Bình liên tiếp bị đánh phá.

Đe dọa vệ Sài Gòn, phải xây dựng hệ thống căn cứ bao quanh (Đồng dù, Long Bình, ..) Căn cứ bị đánh, Mỹ đang lâm vào một tình trạng rất bị, tổ chức nhiều căn cứ kho để bảo vệ căn cứ lớn, triển khai thêm lực lượng làm nhiệm vụ bảo vệ càng sa vào thế phòng ngự.

Đang sa vào thế phòng ngự, lực lượng đã thiếu lại càng phân tán không tổ chức các lực lượng dự bị chiến lược, cả chiến dịch bị đánh thì đối phó nhỏ giọt đưa từng C, D ứng phó, càng dễ bị tiêu diệt.

Mỹ càng sa lầy vào thế dây mầu thuận:

- Giữa tập trung và phân tán.

- Tận công và phòng ngự.

- Bảo vệ mình và tiêu diệt địch.

* Ta có một lối đánh độc đáo, sáng tạo, dùng ít đánh nhiều, phát huy truyền thống của các đặc chủng rất Việt Nam là đặc công, biệt động, pháo binh bắn thẳng.

Ta đánh được dài hơn, chưa sử dụng hết lực lượng: