

THIS year, spring came rather soon in the Western Plateaux. In the warm sun, apricot flowers blossomed into a riot of gold, breathing youthful freshness.

Leaving the forest, we took National Route No. 14. On dozens of kilometers, this famous strategic artery looked like an immense exhibition area. From the vicinity of Kontum through the H'Ring river, Dien Binh, Tan Canh, Dakto to the border of Quang Nam province, everywhere could be found evidences of the enemy's loathsome crimes and of our liberation armed forces' feats-of-arms.

We passed by bombed-out churches, common graves where were buried victims of US chemical weapons, thickly-craterized orchards and fields, wreckages of copters and artillery pieces, smashed,



rusted tanks and armour looming here and there amidst sweet potato and cassava fields or on the roadside.

However, among this shambles, a sapful new life was budding.

On the banks of the Poko river

Standing on a height formerly called "Base No. 24", a young liberation fighter waved his hand in a circular motion.

"This whole region of Dakto-Tan Canh, he told us, a proud note ringing in the voice, will soon become a new economic zone with coffee, tea and cassava plantations all over. Cassava, you know, is a blessing to us, feeding us with its tubers in the hard days of the resistance. It can now be used in manufacturing a lot of foodstuffs: sugared jelly, sweets and pastry of all kinds".

After lunch, we attended the inauguration of an irrigation ditch on a former battlefield. The ditch canalized the water of a stream to service the fields in the surroundings of Tan Canh township. We had been present at many inaugurating ceremonies of water conservancy works that much bigger than this, however, never before had such a strong feeling taken hold of us. In seeing those boys and girls who tirelessly riveted their eyes upon the fresh current rushing down the mountain slope and who jubilantly mingled their shouts with the sounds of cymbals and drumbeats, we realized how much they had toiled and what great hope they pinned on this. The area, not long ago charred by napalm and churned by bombs, was regaining life.

The construction site of Dien Binh dam, like the Tan Canh irrigation channel, lay next to Route

No. 14. It was a small-sized work, but, taking account of the scanty manpower and technical means available in the Western Plateaux, one could easily understand what an amount of exertion was needed for this. In these closing days of the year, the site was constantly bustling with activity. Units of the Union of People's Revolutionary Youth affiliated to services of Kontum province, worked even in Sundays. Delegates to the provincial Congress of the Youth Union dedicated a whole day to the construction work.

By this shaping reservoir, was held an artistic festival in which took part by representatives of all nationalities living on the banks of the Poko river: sturdy Bana, Ede, M'ong boys with their shield dance, drum and cymbal dance, lovely Sedang girls with their revolutionary songs on national tunes.

On one of these soirées, we made acquaintance with A Mon, a young Sedang national, commander of the village militia unit. At the head of his men, he had fought tough battles in enemy-held areas. After liberation in 1972, he led his fellow-villagers into an ebullient campaign to build the free zone.

A Mon is one of those most typical representatives of the youth in the Western Plateaux, who are shaping the perennial spring of their native land.

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The battle for the 300 million dollars

THE 300 million dollars requested by Ford from the US Congress are both superfluous and insufficient. If they are for the purchase of munitions and fuel for the Saigon army, there is a residue of 182.5 million dollars from the 700 million already granted, 517.5 million only having been spent by the end of January 1975, according to the Pentagon data. Moreover the US President has had US stocks transferred from Thailand to Saigon and Phnom Penh. Thus the client troops' ammunition will last them up to July 1st, 1975. There was some substance to Thieu's boast that he would be able to hold the ground until the end of 1975 and the inadequacy of US aid would make itself felt dangerously only next year.

US News and World Report of February 17, 1975 added, after revealing the above figures, this breakdown of the expenditures contemplated for the extra 300 million:

Munitions :	198 million
Spares and machine-guns :	36.9
Maintenance and transport :	39.1
Total	274 million

It is safe to say that all those expenses have been already defrayed by the Pentagon, like those of the Utapao-Pochentong airlift, undertaken by US civilian air-lines with planes bought from US Air Force.

Therefore the 300 million clamoured for are superfluous if they are meant for the purchase of munitions, and very inadequate if the war is to be kept up. On the strength of Edward Kennedy's and Aspin's data, Senator Edward Brooke, member of the Senate Appropriations Committee stated on last February 24 over Washington Radio that South Viet Nam needed 2 to 3 billion a year and for many more years (Reuter from Washington Feb. 24, 1975).

As a matter of fact, an airlift was mounted as early as in November 1972 to fly from US bases to Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa and other South Vietnamese airfields 116 F.A.'s, 32 C.130's, 102 tanks, M.48 and M.41 and a considerable quantity of other war engines. This makes up with the weaponry left behind by the GI's huge stocks whose replenishment will cost many billion dollars.

Meanwhile Mr Ford has been leaving no stone unturned to get the 300-million additional aid.

In an interview to the *Washington Star News* on February 16, he elaborated on his February 9 and 11 statements and went to the length of warning Congress of a popular reaction in case Phnom Penh fell for the want of an emergency US aid. He affirmed that the 300 million were only a minimum with which he would make a point of shoring up the Saigon regime the same way as Lon Nol would be saved by a shot in the arm of another 222 million dollars.

A Congressional mission is leaving for Saigon on a fact-finding tour. In anticipation of this, Thieu has sent to Washington a group of his senatorial stooges for lobbying. A delegation of beggars, comment Saigonese. In point of fact, they have to get the 300-million bill through Congress. Their shortage of juridical arguments will be made good by lamentations and kowtows to the "great American ally" whose credit is said to be associated with generous gifts to vassals and valets. It is a pity that the beggars should be all millionaires led by millionaire pharmacist Tran Van Lam and that their paunches should be so conspicuous. And Lam was one of the signatories to the Paris Agreement. How could he bring home to the US legislators whose majority are jurists that under the international instrument the US was committed to provide unlimited and indefinite military aid to the Thieu regime, while its Article 4 has stipulated just the opposite?

The *International Herald Tribune* ascribed on February 11 and 14, 1975 a "psychological", and not military significance to the 300-million request.

To us, South Vietnamese, who have been confronting US imperialism for decades, the question is very simple. The harsh reality has taught us that it is in the nature of imperialism to never change its spots and to cling to its prey until it is driven off from it. We have had no illusion about the fact that the force of circumstances brought it to the conference table to sign a pledge of respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental nation: 1

rights and of cessation of its military involvement or political intervention. But the Ford-Kissinger tandem has just been carrying on the Nixon policy without Nixon and hanging on to South Viet Nam, seeking every means to involve the US Congress in their nefarious adventure.

But the latter has revealed its intention with the slash from one billion dollars to 700 million as aid to Thieu. The Ford-Kissinger request for the 300-million complement shows the duo's aim to get Congress back into the quagmire of the neo-colonialist aggression.

At a time when the Americans are preparing for the bicentenary of their glorious Declaration of Independence, it is an utter irrelevancy on the part of Ford and Kissinger to invoke false commitments, never taken by the American nation and completely at variance with the real ones, solemnly proclaimed before the world.

The America of government by the laws and not by men has dismissed L.B. Johnson in spite of his jeremiads and overthrown Nixon notwithstanding his apparent diplomatic feats.

Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger are playing a losing game. Even if they succeeded in prolonging with immoral methods the survival of the tin-horn tyrant Thieu, it would only be only a temporary lease of life before the final jump into the abyss of defeat and dishonour.

The Paris Agreement not only meets the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights but also the Americans' aspirations for peace and equality. Therefore both peoples must join efforts in having it honoured and implemented and this at once, and in foiling the Ford-Kissinger attempt to pressure Congress into granting 300 more million dollars for the continuation of the killing in South Viet Nam.

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