

1967



HAI THU

North Viet Nam against U.S. air force

HANOI-1967

*NORTH VIET NAM
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Early in Autumn 1964, it was obvious that the U.S. "special warfare" had fizzled out in face of the revolutionary tide in South Viet Nam. The White House decided to pass on to the air offensive against North Viet Nam, hoping, by this new adventure, to isolate the South Vietnamese people, destroy socialist building in the North and force the Vietnamese people to the conference table from a position of strength.

Started on August 5, 1964, resumed and intensified on February 1965, the savage U.S. escalation has not stopped since then. It continues stepping new rungs the latest of which was the bombardment of our coast-line by the U.S. Navy, the shelling of the D.R.V.N. territory by long-range artillery based near the demilitarized zone, the mining of our waterways, the systematic bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi.

How can the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam successfully withstand the fury of the war machine

of the most powerful imperialist country and thwart its machiavellian manoeuvres?

Without pretending to exhaust the question, this booklet tries, with the help of examples taken from the realities of life in the D.R.V.N. and the history of the Vietnamese people, to give a concrete answer to the foreign reader preoccupied by the Viet Nam problem.

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HANOI — 1967

“The war may last another 5, 10, 20 years or longer. Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed, but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated. Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.

“...For the defence of the independence of the Fatherland, and for the fulfilment of our obligation to the peoples struggling against U.S. imperialism, our people and army, united as one man, will resolutely fight till complete victory, whatever the sacrifices and hardships may be.”

President Ho Chi Minh's Appeal
to the Vietnamese people and army
July 17, 1966

I. THE D.R.V.N. IN 1964

1964. Ten years had elapsed since the Dien Bien Phu victory, ten years since the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina recognizing the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

In those ten years, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam had achieved in the enthusiasm of independence and freedom just recovered, a remarkable peaceful work.

The people's regime had succeeded in checking famine which was rife under colonial rule when 90 per cent of the population never ate their fill. In 1945, two out of fourteen million people in North Viet Nam died of famine. Twenty years after, tightening a little their belt during pre-harvest rice shortage periods, the poorest peasant families managed to make both ends meet round the year.

Food production increased by 50 per cent, compared with 1955, or doubled the production of the best year under the colonial regime. The mono-cultivation of rice was gradually replaced by a diversified agriculture, thus making it possible to harmoniously develop the growing of cereals, food and industrial crops, animal

husbandry. This agriculture made rapid and steady progress thanks to the extension of the hydraulic network, intensive cultivation, advanced farming techniques and the clearing of virgin lands.

Industrial production increased 20 times over 1954. A workshop or a factory was built every four days, North Viet Nam's young industry was embellished with new enterprises: the Hanoi engineering plant which supplied local factories and workshops with modern machines, the Vinh power station which gave light to the city and provided electric current to its industrial enterprises, the Thai Nguyen iron and steel complex which was equipped with the first blast-furnace in Viet Nam.

The part played by industry in the total value of industrial and agricultural output rose from 17 per cent in 1955 to 55 per cent in 1964. National industry supplied 90 per cent of consumer goods and part of small- and medium-size means of production.

Education and the public-health service recorded brilliant achievements. 95 per cent of the population, illiterate before the 1945 August Revolution, knew how to read and write in 1964. One out of four inhabitants went to school. In ten years, the number of students increased 23 times, and was 44 times as great as in 1939 when the three Indochinese States (Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos) were under French rule.

Many epidemics were stemmed. Social scourges were combated: most of the prostitutes and thieves were in their overwhelming majority re-educated and put on the right path.

The building up of a new man went on successfully. In a regime freed from exploitation of man by man, the former slaves have become collective masters, co-operated with one another on an equal footing, and decided their own destiny in the liberated half of their country. In North Viet Nam, many types of new men have come to the fore : the worker of State enterprises, the collective farmer, the people's armed forces fighter, the socialist brain worker.

All these political, economic, social and humane achievements assume all their meaning only in the framework of a country just freed from colonial yoke and bled white during twenty-five years of war *, of a backward agrarian country in which, over the centuries, the peasants tilled their tiny plots of land — one-tenth of an hectare per capita — with their buffaloes and rudimentary ploughs, and carried heavy loads with bamboo poles on their shoulders.

The Viet Nam of 1964 lacked everything, even sewing thread and needles. It was necessary for her to spare each grain of rice, the tiniest bolt, in order to enlarge investments. Her children had to learn painstakingly to acquire modern science and technology. The building of the Vinh power station, of the Thai Nguyen iron and steel complex, of the Hanoi engineering plant — though of ordinary scale in industrially developed countries — required from her tremendous efforts.

It is this peaceful work which is the target of relentless air attacks by the American warmongers, who make no bones about "bringing North Viet Nam back to the Stone Age".

* Since World War II in 1939.

II. THE COST OF JOHNSON'S ESCALATION

On the night of July 30, 1964, several units of the Seventh Fleet shelled Hon Ngu and Hon Me islands off the coast of Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces. Two days later, four T.28 planes coming from Laos attacked the Nam Can post and the Noong De village, west of Nghe An, while the destroyer *Maddox* stepped up its provocations in the territorial waters of the D.R.V.N.

The Pentagon hullabalooed that on August 2 and 4, four Vietnamese torpedo-boats had attacked two American warships in international waters.

On August 5, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the Seventh Fleet fighter planes to bomb and strafe many localities along the North Viet Nam coast.

By this action, the White House expected to bring the D.R.V.N. people and government to their knees, and to force them into accepting its conditions. It expected that the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation — the embodiment of the will of the South Vietnamese people — would surrender.

But the Vietnamese people did not yield to the American diktat. From North to South, united more

than ever, they were resolved to fight to the end for independence and freedom. They were backed by the fraternal socialist countries and friendly countries, by progressive opinion all over the world, even in the United States where a violent wave of protest was running wild against Johnson's adventurous decisions.

On the South Viet Nam theatre, the victory of the people's armed forces at Binh Gia * tolled the knell of the neo-colonialist war called "special war", and heralded the irremediable collapse of the puppet army and administration.

On February 7, 1965, Johnson unleashed the U.S. air force against Quang Binh - Vinh Linh, allegedly as "reprisals of the Pleiku attack" **. Since the air raids on February 8 and 11, 1965, U.S. escalation which began to cross the 20th parallel in the D.R.V.N. was covered up by the new pretext of "aggression of South Viet Nam by North Viet Nam", that is, the aggression of the Vietnamese against their own country.

In 1965, American aircraft flew 26,000 sorties (*Air Force*, April 1966), dropped 30,000 tons of bombs on the D.R.V.N. territory (*New York Herald Tribune*, February 8, 1966). General W. Momyer, commanding

* In Ba Ria province, from December 8, 1964 to January 3, 1965, Saigon troops lost 2,000 men, 57 aircraft, 37 military vehicles including 14 M.113 amphibious cars. This marked the complete fiasco of the U.S. armoured-car and heliborne tactics.

** On March 7, 1965, the L.A.F. stormed the C.P. and airfield of Pleiku in South Viet Nam, putting 234 Yankees out of action and destroying or damaging 31 aircraft.

the U.S. 7th flying group in South Viet Nam, said that in 1966, the activities of U.S. aviation in North Viet Nam increased 6 times in comparison with 1965 (*A.F.P.*, January 6, 1967). *U.S. News and World Report* of January 2, 1967, estimated that 637,000 tons of bombs had been released on the two zones of Viet Nam in 1966*. According to *A.P.* of April 26, 1967, 77,000 tons were dropped in March 1967.

On June 29, 1966, Johnson reached the most dangerous rung of the air escalation by giving orders to bomb and strafe the suburbs of Hanoi and Haiphong (the largest port of North Viet Nam). On December 2, 4, 13 and 14, attacks were again mounted on the populous quarters of Hanoi, both in the centre and in the suburbs of the city**.

Johnson's adventure in North Viet Nam has proved costly.

On August 5, 1964, when escalation began, 8 Skyhawks and Skyraiders were downed, many others damaged, Lieutenant-pilot Everett Alvarez captured in Ha Long Bay.

* According to *La Tribune des Nations* of October 14, 1966, during World War II, the bomb tonnage dropped in the Pacific theatre of operations (including China, Burma and India) by all the Allied forces reached 656,400 tons. In the four years of the war, Japan received only 160,800 tons. During the three years of the Korean war, the bomb load released by U.S. air force totalled 448,366 tons.

** On April 20, 1967, Haiphong was savagely pelted. Since April 25, 1967 Hanoi and Haiphong have been systematically attacked.

On February 7, 8, and 11, 1965, 22 U.S. jets were shot down and Major Robert Shumaker, a prospective cosmonaut, taken prisoner.

On March 31, 1965, the D.R.V.N. anti-aircraft defence brought down the 100th U.S. plane in Ha Tinh province.

On April 3, 1965, the Viet Nam Air Force received its baptism of fire. On April 3 and 4, in close co-ordination, the militia, A.A. defence of the Army, the Navy and Air Force downed 57 American planes.

In 18 days ending April 17, 1965, the D.R.V.N. defence shot down another 100 aircraft in the raids on the D.R.V.N.

On July 26, 1965, Vietnamese missile units entered the lists, knocking down at one time 3 Phantoms so much boasted by U.S. air force technicians. On the same day, Phu Tho downed the 400th plane.

The 1,000th plane was knocked down over Bac Thai on April 29, 1966, and the 1,500th over Nghe An on October 14 the same year. On June 5, 1967, at 11.20 a.m., the 2,000th U.S. aircraft, a F.8E-992 reconnaissance plane was brought down in the Ham Rong bridge area, Thanh Hoa province. Its pilot, Major Collins Haines born in New Jersey on June 3, 1932, registration No. 393,915 VFP83, based on aircraft-carrier Bonhomme Richard, was taken prisoner.

2,000 aircraft of about fifty most up-to-date types* are not a negligible air force, even for an industrially developed country. Japan possessed only 1,104 planes

* See Annexes.

in 1967*. On the eve of World War II, the U.S.A. had no more than 593 planes in the Pacific theatre of operations.

Many a time, the Pentagon has admitted that the number of American planes lost in North Viet Nam was beyond its previsions. Max S. Johnson, former head of the U.S. Army Military Institute, bitterly noted on May 8, 1967 that "U.S. plane losses over Viet Nam are unimaginable". *U.S. News and World Report* (June 13, 1966) put the number of U.S. planes downed every day over North Viet Nam at between 3 and 7, which represents a pretty big loss.

The tempo of American losses was so quick that reconnaissance planes had to be converted into fighter-bombers (*A.P.*, October 25, 1966).

Robinson Risner, the commander of Squadron No 67 based in Korat (Thailand) captured in Ninh Binh, made it known that Wing No 18 had lost 67 per cent of its planes.

According to information released by the U.S. Navy, apart from the planes on aircraft-carriers moored at "Station Yankee" off North Viet Nam coast, all the other fighting squadrons of the U.S. Navy are lacking either planes or pilots, sometimes both.

The Senate Stennis sub-commission disclosed that "the most serious problem is the lack of crews and planes" (*Air Force*, September 1966).

Evaluating American losses in terms of dollars, *Newsweek* of November 21, 1966 said that "the United

* *The Nippon Shimbun Weekly*, Nov. 26, 1966.

States has already spent an estimated 5.8 billion dollars on the air war," and added that "it has already lost 2.5 billion dollars worth of aircraft in the North and has dropped 1.5 billion worth of ordnance there".

To face this situation, the U.S. Navy contemplated to fill the vacuum by training jet planes of reserve flying squadrons such as Lockheed T-33. Its combat squadrons received from the reserve forces A-4B planes used since 1956. These had been discarded from combat actions and replaced by more modern types (A-4C, A-4E, A-4F).

The U.S. Air Force was in the same predicament. Except for two squadrons reserved for Southeast Asia, the Tactical Air Command now plays but the role of a non-operational training centre. All its squadrons had been sent to Southeast Asia or other parts of the globe.

Hanson W. Baldwin explained that the serious shortage in aircraft and pilots was due to the growing losses suffered by the United States in the air war in North Viet Nam plus the losses caused by other activities in the world, and to the fact that the various arms did not retain enough skilful young pilots (*The New York Times*, October 10, 1966). Other reasons should still be given concerning aircraft production and pilots.

The lack of qualified manpower and some raw materials has slowed down the tempo of production of aircraft and their delivery to the army.

No type of U.S. aircraft could stand the ever more deadly counter-blows of North Viet Nam A.A. batteries.