Is Nixon Planning to Intervene Forever?

Since presidential advisor Henry Kissinger announced that "peace is at hand" in October, following the achievement of a negotiated nine-point peace agreement with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Nixon administration has been rapidly backtracking, trying to alter the original agreement on behalf of its Saigon hirelings. While the U.S. has been procrastinating in Paris, it has been setting the stage for sabotaging a peace and maintaining a pro-U.S. regime in Saigon indefinitely, preparing for the eventuality that it finally cannot avoid making a peace agreement.

U.S. attempts to shore up the Saigon regime in the short run by massive arms shipments and in the future with clandestine military advisors, can prolong the war. But the Nixon administration's goals are as illusory as the earlier U.S. attempts to gain a military victory. It is equally illusory for the White House to expect the DRV to abandon the fundamental rights of the Vietnamese people, that the United States grudgingly recognized in October, even under the pressure of the most intense U.S. bombing of the war.

The fundamental error of the U.S. is its apparent assumption that DRV concessions in October represented weakness on the part of the liberation forces. This reality can be understood more easily by examining the accords themselves.

One of the basic elements of the nine-point agreement is the provision for the cessation of all U.S. military activity and complete U.S. military withdrawal from Vietnam. If the accords are signed and fulfilled by the United States, it will mean that for the first time in more than a century Vietnam will be free of the presence of foreign military forces. The U.S. would never have agreed to this if it were playing from a strong hand. A U.S. withdrawal would be a Vietnamese victory of incomparable magnitude; it would recognize that the Vietnamese have defeated all U.S. plans and strategies for turning back the tide of revolution in Vietnam and in particular, have defeated the Nixon administration's strategy for victory and waging indefinite war.

The Nixon administration pinned its hope on a multipronged strategy: "Vietnamization," the plan to create an Army for the Saigon regime capable of standing on its own feet, "pacification," whose main component was the CIA's Phoenix program of assassinating revolutionary cadres and to thereby break the backbone of the resistance in the South; and finally the attempt to isolate the resistance in South Vietnam from the North by the U.S.-Saigon invasions of Laos and Cambodia.

As is well known, the U.S. extension of war into Laos and Cambodia only resulted in crushing defeats for the Saigon army and a vast extension of the liberated zones of Indochina. The two other major components of the Nixon strategy collapsed during the 1972 offensive by the liberation forces.

The offensive proved that "Vietnamization" was a total failure, and were it not for the massive U.S. air and logistics support during its duration, it is reasonably safe to assume that Saigon's armed forces would have completely disintegrated. Logistically, the United States stepped (continued on page 4)
Dear Reader,

You may wish to know why we are publishing INDOCHINA.

We believe that recent events -- the stepping up of U.S. bombing to all-time records, the supplying of the Saigon regime with unprecedented quantities of military equipment and, finally, the apparent effort by the United States to reneg on the peace agreements reached in October with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam -- all demonstrate that the Nixon administration has not abandoned its bellicose aims and its efforts to salvage the American puppet regimes of Indochina. In the present situation, it is clear that all persons who want peace in Indochina must maintain and intensify their struggle against the genocidal war of the Nixon administration and the propaganda issued by that administration to confuse the negotiating situation now at hand. Those genuinely concerned for peace will work for the speedy conclusion of a peace agreement and the termination of all U.S. military activity in Indochina.

In this publication we intend to provide information and analyses as up-to-date as possible on the rapidly evolving situation, by focusing on the barriers to peace created by the United States and its retainers in Indochina. We will also present cultural and other material to help promote greater understanding of the Indochinese peoples and their aspirations. And finally we shall print articles on antivar activity in the United States and within the U.S. armed forces.

Vietnam declared its independence on September 2, 1945, following its August Revolution, and since that time the United States has been intervening, in one form or another, to suppress this independence and to oppose the unity of the Vietnamese people, as well as the independence of the Laotian and Cambodian peoples.

The dark record of more than a quarter century of U.S. intervention and war in Indochina and recent U.S. actions demonstrate that even if the Paris talks result in an accord, we cannot relax our vigilance. Even if a peace agreement is reached, there is every reason to question the good faith of the Nixon administration and its predecessors. There is every reason to expect that the Nixon administration will attempt to sabotage any eventual peace agreements, just as the United States sabotaged the Geneva agreements of 1954 by installing the Ngo Dinh Diem puppet regime and propping up the string of its successors in Saigon.

This publication will cooperate with any other organizations dedicated to peace in Indochina. We will be working closely with the Vietnam Resource Center of Cambridge, Mass. and the Indochina Resource Center of Washington, D.C. and have agreed to share our information.

In our endeavor, we solicit the help of our readers in the form of suggestions and criticism for improving our work. We are also obliged to appeal to you to take out a subscription or to contribute generously to keep this publication going. Please help us so that we can help bring you information you can use.

The Song of the Fighters

by Thanh Hai

They rob us of our land and put it under their ploughs,
They raze our homes and build military posts,
Crying will not dissipate our anger,
Imploring pity will not open the way to salvation.

Guns and bombs are not our way of life,
We have never been friends of war,
But here they come, armed to the teeth,
Shall we resign ourselves to slavery? Never.

Let's rise up, rifles and knives in hands,
Let's defend our lands, our rivers, our marketplaces!
Cruel and truculent they are,
But for blood they will pay with blood.

Those who come to commit aggression,
Those who bring in elephants to trample their ancestors tombs,
We shall hold our rifles firm and crush them,
As we did their like years ago.

Night after night, under the palm trees,
Our land stirs, our people prepare for attack.
The fighters' eyes shine in the darkness,
They look at the stars, embrace the immense vault of heaven.
Forward they march, singing passionately,
Of their beloved land, their blood and bones shall be the ramparts.

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The Nguyen Hue Campaign

By TRUONG DINH HUNG

During their history of struggling for independence for more than two thousand years, the Vietnamese put an end to a thousand-year occupation of their country by feudal China and eighty years of French colonial rule. Thus they will never allow their independence to be taken away from them by the United States, no matter how hard the United States attacks. In their struggle to liberate South Vietnam from U.S. neo-colonialism, the Vietnamese have contributed some of the most glorious pages to their history.

The 1968 (Tet) Spring General Offensive, led by the Liberation Forces, greatly weakened the U.S. attempt to prop up the unpopular Nguyen Van Thieu regime. It not only crippled the ARVN and U.S. military efforts, despite intense bombing, but it shattered American hopes for a military victory in Vietnam.

More important, the 1968 General Offensive forced the Johnson administration to start peace negotiations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. The Offensive thus initiated a diplomatic struggle with the United States, like the one France faced in the wake of its Dien Bien Phu defeat. And like France, the United States ultimately will be forced to relinquish its neo-colonialist designs at the negotiating table.

Until 1972, however, the Nixon administration tried to maintain Thieu's dictatorship by "Vietnamization" and to relegate the Paris talks to a minor role. But this year, the Vietnamese have again forced the United States to acknowledge that its policies have failed.

In 1972, the Vietnamese launched the "Nguyen Hue" campaign, named after the brilliant Vietnamese strategist and statesman who in 1789 routed the Manchu invaders in five days in a lightning-like offensive and reunified Vietnam. The 1972 campaign led by the Liberation Forces similarly swept through many areas of South Vietnam. In only a few months, they succeeded in smashing the Vietnamization program and destroying the remnants of U.S.-Saigon pacification efforts.

Half of Saigon's million-man army was effectively put out of action under the initial thrusts of the Liberation Forces. Its strategic reserves of 20,000 elite troops were steadily depleted in hopeless and costly battles. Many ARVN battalions near An Loc and at least one whole regiment in the DMZ joined the Liberation Forces, exposing the shallowness of political allegiance to Saigon even within its own ranks. In some regions in central Vietnam, whole Army divisions and the administrative apparatus collapsed even before the advancing Liberation Forces could take over. Corruption and social decay predominate in cities like Hue and Kontum where only a semblance of Saigon's political authority remains. In the Mekong Delta, the political structure of the Thieu regime has steadily eroded and has been relegated to isolated outposts.

The "Nguyen Hue" campaign, like many historic battles in Vietnam's past, reflects the basic tenet of the South Vietnamese people's fight for national liberation — the combining of political and armed struggle. This campaign is the Thieu regime's Dien Bien Phu and thus politically it has greatly advanced the national struggle.

Since "Nguyen Hue" began, the monthly desertion rate in ARVN increased from 10 to 22 thousand men. The bulk of the Thieu army, mostly comprising fresh recruits forcibly drafted, no longer has the will or capacity to fight. Food shortages and acute economic conditions have plagued Saigon and other cities. Having lost the countryside and sensing further political isolation and erosion of his regime in urban areas, since May Thieu has been jailing non-PRG opposition elements at the rate of (continued on page 7)
The people of Trung Kien village, Quang Tri province welcoming the liberation forces during the 1972 offensive.

IS NIXON PLANNING TO INTERVENE FOREVER?

(up its air deliveries of military supplies to Saigon from a monthly average of nine million pounds to more than 60 million pounds in May, which is just one indication of Saigon's military dependence on the United States after 3½ years of "Vietnamization." During the offensive, the Saigon regime had to remove its troops assigned to pacification in the countryside, where the program consequently collapsed. More recently, it has been revealed in the Western press that despite the Phoenix program the NLF "infrastructure" remains solid and intact, contrary to U.S. claims that the 1972 offensive represented Hanoi's last ditch effort to save the NLF which was allegedly making its last gasps.

Now it is clear that what the U.S. and Thieu fear most about a peace settlement is the political strength of the resistance. If the accords are signed and carried out, with democratic liberties restored in South Vietnam, Thieu and his whole regime will be quickly swept into oblivion.

That is why the U.S. is now procrastinating and backtracking in Paris. In the past month, it has provided Saigon with more military equipment than it normally delivers in a year. And at the same time, the U.S. is hastily setting up a network of clandestine U.S. military advisors, first revealed on Nov. 3 by A.P., and more fully described in the Nov. 27 New York Times.

U.S. actions and words about preserving anti-communist regimes in Indochina make it evident that the United States does not intend to respect any accords it may sign. Ominous as this appears, it also reveals that the essential U.S. weakness is the fragility of its client regimes in Indochina. By official American admission, more than two-thirds of Laotian and Cambodian territory are now out of the control of the U.S.-backed regimes.

In Vietnam, the liberation forces are even stronger. Unlike 1954, they will not regroup their forces and depend upon the goodwill of the intervening power and its retainers. If the U.S. directly or indirectly tries to sabotage peace accords, the liberation forces will be ready to resume the resistance. More likely, however, the Thieu regime will collapse politically under any accords which recognize the fundamental Vietnamese rights, regardless of any U.S. subversive efforts. If the U.S. remains completely obstinate in Paris and tries to legitimize its intervention by the use of accords, then the resistance will continue both militarily and politically.

Whatever illusions Nixon may have, the Thieu regime cannot remain indefinitely because it is a regime which has pursued war and emulated U.S. genocidal policies. Its actions thereby only serve to strengthen the Vietnamese popular will to end its existence, once and for all.

R. E. Ward
The Secret War in Laos

Several recent articles in the St. Louis Post Dispatch (Nov. 5 - Nov. 12) reveal publicly for the first time that covert raids, commando, and sabotage missions have been and are still being carried out by top-secret assault units of the Special Forces called "Command and Control" (C & C).

The Post Dispatch's disclosures contradict the U.S. government's official denial that any such combat troops exist outside South Vietnam. On February 17, 1971, President Nixon gave a news conference in which he stated that "we are not going to use ground forces in Laos" or "advisors." More recently, on September 22, 1972, the Department of Defense declared in a letter to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees, that "the Department of Defense has no personnel on the ground in the combat areas in Laos, Cambodia or North Vietnam...." The 1971 Military Appropriations Act forbids the introduction of U.S. ground troops into Laos or Thailand. The 1971 Foreign Aid Act also explicitly forbids the introduction of any U.S. combat troops or advisors into Cambodia.

The revelations in the Post Dispatch are based on confidential interviews with nine former participants in C & C operations. One source reported that when he left Bien Hoa (in the highlands north of Saigon) three months ago, 100 Special Forces troops were on C & C missions and were being reinforced by troops from Okinawa.

Aside from adding fresh evidence to the charge that the United States is lying about the use of American military personnel in Indochina, the fact that sabotage-assassination missions are occurring at this moment, during negotiations for a cease-fire and a settlement, leads to the strong suspicion that this type of sabotage will continue and indeed may increase. Since any Indochina-wide peace accords will require the removal of the remaining U.S. military personnel in Indochina, the reliance on covert sabotage missions is likely to increase, on a familiar pattern of CIA operations abroad. It is clear that C & C missions in Laos are CIA directed since they are identical to the CIA use of the Army's Special Forces in the Phoenix assassination program in Vietnam. The "Pentagon Papers" (Bantam and Beacon Press editions) have revealed, moreover, that the CIA used the same methods in 1955 to subvert the Geneva Accords -- as in commando raids into North Vietnam directed by Col. Lansdale.

The Command and Control operations in Laos, which started in the early 1960's, are directed by a top-secret group in the U.S. military command headquarters in Saigon called the "Studies and Observations Group," although they were nominally under the Fifth Special Forces until January 1971, when that unit was withdrawn from Vietnam, and then under a group called "Task (continued on page 6)
Secret War

(continued from page 5)

Force One Advisory Element" based in Nha Trang.

Actual operations have originated from at least eight different bases in South Vietnam, mostly located near the Laotian border. Special Forces officers and NCO's commanded the missions, utilizing montagnard, Thai, Cambodian, and Chinese mercenary troops.

There have been three main types of missions, all dependent on special helicopter transit and support:

- Commando raids, into Laos and Cambodia, to gather intelligence on troop movements, to "disrupt" main force units, to locate and assassinate North Vietnamese officers and political cadres, to take prisoners (including civilians). Teams vary from 6 to 15 men, including 1 to 3 Americans. Some of these mixed mercenary teams were sent into North Vietnam during the late 1960's. Bridges were blown up in the DMZ.

- Assault troops, called "hatchet" forces, for more dangerous targets, dropped into Laos and composed of larger units of montagnards and U.S. officers, to blow up bridges, destroy supply and communication lines.

- SLAM (Search, Locate, and Annihilate) missions, less frequent, and involving more than 100 men per mission to strike truck parks and unit headquarters. All three kinds of operations relied on a secret U.S. radio relay station in Laos called the "Eagle's Nest" for communication with control headquarters in Saigon.

Covert operations in Indochina of this nature are not just the special preserve of this newly uncovered C & C group. It has been known for some time that M16 and Thai mercenaries in Laos under Gen. Vang Pao, financed and directed by the CIA, conduct sabotage missions in the Pathet Lao liberated zones. These mercenaries were sent in so frequently that when Richard Ward visited the liberated areas in 1970, the Pathet Lao felt it necessary to provide his small group with up to twelve guards (as reported in the Washington Post, August 2, 1970) in case of attack by any mercenary war parties. Other CIA financed mercenaries are known to operate in Cambodia. The disclosures in the Post Dispatch also quoted a former Ranger paratrooper who admitted he had participated this year in "Hunter-Killer" raids but didn't state where.

Despite these macabre details, it is doubtful that C & C missions have been that successful for the United States, since losses in men and materiel have been very high. Whole teams have often been entirely wiped out once discovered. This is not to underestimate, however, the number of Laotian civilians (including women), and lower-ranking military personnel reported to have been kidnapped or killed. A real danger is the continuation of these sordid missions once a cease-fire is in effect.

Mr. Luong Toan, 84, amid the ruins of his pensioners home in Nam Ha province, DRV, hit by nearly 30 U.S. bombs on Sept. 20, 1972 which killed five other residents.

'Good Will'

At the time of the announcement of the 9-Point peace agreement in October, President Nixon said he was limiting bombing of North Vietnam to below the 20th parallel as a "good will" gesture.

The following is a partial compilation of U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, from official statistics in the press, for the period of the past weeks' peace talks in Paris. Needless to say, only "military targets" are listed in official U.S. bombing statistics. But you don't need much imagination to see the vast destruction of non-military targets and the numerous civilians killed or maimed by these attacks.

- A.P. Nov. 22. "During the 18-hour period from noon Tuesday (Nov. 21) until 6 a.m. Wednesday.... about 2.4 million pounds of bombs were dropped along Highway 7 leading westward from North Vietnam's coast to the Barthelemy Pass, the supply gateway to northern Laos, and along other routes leading southwest across the DMZ into South Vietnam.

- A.P. Nov. 23. "B-52 downed by the North.... The crash came at the end of a day during which B-52's flew their heaviest raids of the war over North Vietnam."

- A.P. Nov. 24. "B-52's flew 12 three-plane missions in the 24 hours ended at noon, the United States command said.... the B-52 bombing of the North was described as the heaviest of the war."

- New York Post Nov. 25. "U.S. B-52's have launched at least 200 strikes in the past five days against North Vietnam dropping more than 5000 tons of bombs in the heaviest raids of the war, military sources reported. They indicated the heavy air strikes had a political objective as well as a military one: to signal Hanoi that the U.S. will not let up its bombardment below the 20th parallel until a Paris peace agreement is concluded."

- A.P. Nov. 25. "The United States command said that 14 missions of three B-52's each were flown against supply concentrations near the North Vietnamese cities of Vinh and Dong Hoi in the 24 hours ending at noon."

- N.Y. Times Nov. 26. "United States B-52 bombers yesterday maintained the intensive level of aerial bombardment of North Vietnam that began on Monday (Nov. 20) -- the day the peace talks resumed in Paris. B-52's flew 14 missions against North Vietnam during the 24 hours period that ended at noon yesterday."
This book is the only modern history of Vietnam published in English which shows the deep historical and cultural roots of the Communist-led resistance struggles against the French and the United States. Although Marr's study treats exclusively the period 1880-1925, its relevance is clear for understanding why the DRV and the PRG (and before them, the Viet Minh) have been able to sustain their cause against France and the United States and why they will ultimately win. The book succeeds in giving the reader a sense of the continuity of the anticolonialist movement in its specific Vietnamese context and why leadership of this movement passed from royalist restaurers to modern revolutionaries. The author draws heavily from Vietnamese language sources and has included some interesting photos.

This book, in French, is a collection of the best essays written by Nguyen Khac Vien, editor of "Vietnamese Studies" and one of North Vietnam's leading writers. It gives a Vietnamese viewpoint, based on the personal experiences of the author (who is the son of a mandarin), on the relevance of a socialist revolution to a developing country like Vietnam (and likewise to other developing countries), on the necessity for creating a people's army to fight a war of national liberation, and on the need for land reform to fight such a war and to forge a modern agriculture. The text is easy to follow in French and is superbly written.

The founding of the GRP on June 3, 1969, the result of an alliance between the NLF (headed by Nguyen Huu Tho) and the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces (headed by Trinh Dinh Thao), 15,000 per week. His repression has been wholesale: Catholic priests, Buddhist monks, women, and children. A single token opposition paper has been allowed to continue only intermittent publication. The regime has also closed high schools and universities, jailing or forcibly drafting youths into the army. People already in jail, especially long-time members of the Resistance, have become targets of a more systematic liquidation. Since last August at least six hundred political prisoners have been assassinated on Phu Quoc Island where a total of fifty thousand are detained. A similar number have died on Con Son, Saigon's Devil's Island.

Thieu is even more isolated now from the people. He depends on a 130,000 man police force for his political security but the real pillar of his regime is his support by the Nixon administration.

Despite Thieu's "urban pacification," the political struggle there has greatly intensified. Even among the 300,000 political prisoners, there is organized political activity. Prisons in fact have become universities for the broadly based national revolution. Many people in Thieu's own administration have begun to seek accommodation with the Resistance. The Saigon Army Commander for Manpower and Logistics has changed sides, to the PRG. A broad spectrum of religious groups in South Vietnam, including Catholic bishops and Buddhist dignitaries, has called for the formation of a new government.

Under such conditions, the forthcoming political struggle in South Vietnam will be decisive. The fundamental strength of the Liberation Forces lies in the political arena, precisely where the Thieu regime is the weakest. And it is in this arena where the people will defeat him.

Consequently, if the 9-Point Agreement, which provides for an honorable withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, is signed in Paris, the political struggle will undoubtedly accelerate, continuing until the last vestige of U.S. neo-colonialist presence is removed. The Agreement spells out modalities for insuring that the United States recognizes the fundamental unity of Vietnam. However, peace will only be a full reality when the Vietnamese are able to live united, from the liberated South to the North.

TRUONG DINH HUNG, a prominent Vietnamese living in exile in America, is a proponent of a coalition government for South Vietnam. He is an associate of the Vietnam Resource Center. His father, Truong Dinh Dzu, advocated peace negotiations with the NLF as a presidential candidate in South Vietnam in 1967, and has been imprisoned by the Saigon regime since then.
Books
(continued from page 7)


This is the most detailed guide to date on the proliferation of U.S. counterinsurgency agencies and programs established specifically for the Indochina war and designed for general use in any such "limited wars." It gives a well documented run-down on university contracted and governmental research programs to develop counter-guerrilla equipment, third world police equipment and training, biological and ecological warfare, and the specific technology which has become known as the "electronic battlefield." There is an important section on the strategy of training mercenaries abroad. The book has useful appendices in the back, including statistics on expenditures for research programs, and foreign military and police training programs.


The argument made by President Nixon and others that if the PRG assumes power in Saigon, there will be a "bloodbath" of the regime's opponents is dissected and thoroughly refuted, point by point, in this timely essay. Porter traces the bloodbath myth to allegations made by Hoang Van Chi about an alleged "bloodbath" during land reform in North Vietnam. Porter proves that in fact no such bloodbath occurred in North Vietnam. He shows that Hoang Van Chi blatantly and deliberately misrepresented the truth and doctored the sources he used, for personal and occupational reasons.

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