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12. Chien Binh Commentary, "Heavy Blows Having Lasting Effects" *

The South Vietnamese people have scored a marvelous victory, unique in the history of war. In just the first week of attacks and simultaneous uprising, the Southern revolutionary forces have hit almost every position of the U.S.-puppet troops, have put out of action more than 250,000 enemy troops, have captured and destroyed millions of tons of weapons and war matériel, have occupied and strengthened their hold on many large areas and important cities and provincial capitals, have developed the revolutionary forces in such a way that twenty years of progress have been achieved in one day, and have taken advantage of their victories to surge ahead. The U.S. aggressors and their lackeys have been dealt a stunning blow. Even with 1.2 million troops, they are unable to prevent the fall of their empire, which is crumbling under the feet of millions of revolutionary people who have been surging strongly, like the rising tide.

Surprise is a very important factor. Our surprise attack has inflicted serious losses on many units. The Americans were surprised strategically, surprised as to the time and place where they were attacked, and surprised about the enemy's abilities and tactics. As far as timing is concerned, the U.S. aggressors did not anticipate that they would be so fiercely and continuously attacked at exactly the moment when U.S. General Westmoreland was boasting that the U.S. and Allied expeditionary corps had succeeded in driving the Viet Cong to the South Vietnamese borders, that they were achieving their third-phase victory, and that they would be able to pull out of Vietnam in 1968.

Regarding the area attacked, the U.S. aggressors expected attacks on the Northern area, as predicted by U.S. generals, but they did not expect attacks on almost every city and important base—the areas the U.S.-puppet troops firmly believe they absolutely control. As for the ability of their adversary, the U.S. aggressors did not think that their exhausted enemy, who has been repeatedly defeated by Johnson's speeches and messages, would be strong enough to launch, almost simultaneously, a series of large-scale, well-coordinated attacks on

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more than 100 of the enemy's innermost points. The enemy not only harassed his opponent and tried out his military tactics for a score of hours, as U.S. generals and field-grade officers claimed, but he also occupied and strengthened his hold on many areas and has repeatedly attacked more and more quickly.

With regard to the adversary's tactics, the U.S. aggressors did not anticipate that the enemy would use such flexible and complex tactics, which were not understood by the U.S. generals, who have boasted about being guerrilla warfare experts, because this was the first time they had encountered such tactics. Westmoreland swore that he was not surprised because, although he did not anticipate the scope and the speed of the Viet Cong attacks, he did predict them. Why then were the Americans unable to cope with such attacks? Is it true that those surprises were merely incidental, [words indistinct] as Johnson has loudly asserted in Washington? According to the U.S. President's explanations, if the head of the CIA and his personnel had been more assiduous in the performance of their duties, or had been more capable, or had more electronic machinery, the situation would have been different, and what happened during the last few days would not have happened. In giving such insignificant reasons to explain a series of such great strategic surprises, the U.S. Commander-in-Chief can only fool children. The strategic surprises encountered by the Americans are easily understood. They can be explained thoroughly. They are the inevitable result of the war's development and the following factors:

1. The Americans' conduct of the war is erroneous, and the recently committed errors are more serious than the old ones. Therefore the Americans are bound to fail and to encounter surprises. The recent strategic surprises encountered by the Americans are merely a continuation of a continuous course of surprises, but at a higher level. The main U.S. error to date in the conduct of the war has been ignorance of itself and of the enemy. The United States overestimates itself and underestimates others. In the light of recent events, it can be concluded that despite over ten years of battlefield contact with the enemy, the U.S. aggressors still know nothing about him. If they know anything about the enemy, it is mechanical, bookish, or derived from documents on guerrillas compiled in Washington, or from French experiences in the Indochina war. Moreover, the U.S. method of assessing its relative strength in relation to the enemy is too shallow; it entails nothing more than adding and subtracting the firearms, bombs, ammunition, tanks, guns, airplanes, battleships, and gasoline of both parties. Thinking only of their superior firepower, the Americans have consistently underestimated the enemy forces. That is why in the past ten years they have met with repeated failures.

The Americans did not expect the Ngo Dinh Diem regime to be overthrown so quickly. They did not expect the special war to deteriorate so fast; nor did they believe that with an expeditionary corps half a million strong they would be unable to carry out their strategic counteroffensive. This time, the Americans were again surprised. This is easy to understand. The only difference this time is that the U.S. surprise was closely related to serious failures that all took place within a very short period, and that consequently had a very sudden and grave character.

2. A prior victory or defeat sets the basis for bigger victories or defeats in the future. Obviously, therefore, the Americans' defeats and surprises during the past few days cannot be blamed exclusively on some low-caliber intelligence agents. The Americans' defeats and surprises resulted from a war situation that has taken shape and developed in a way increasingly disadvantageous to them. It is common knowledge that after the failure of their special war, the U.S. aggressors suffered two heavy defeats in their local-war strategy. After the failure of their Operation Junction City—the summit of their efforts—the Americans were forced to retreat. Since then, their defeats on the battlefield have been increasingly severe.

As for the Southern revolution, it has successively won ever-greater victories, with each one serving as a basis for future victories. Revolutionary evolution alternates between gradual and sudden development. Recently, the Southern revolution has won twenty years worth of victory in one day, because of its twenty years of continuous struggle, accumulated experience, and development of its forces. It is thanks to having both strength and power, as well as opportunities and correct leadership, that the Southern revolution has grown so quickly. This development is consistent with the scheme of things. Surely it is not fortuitous. Obviously, the recent strategic surprises that the Americans encountered were inevitable. If they had not occurred at this time, they would have later. They could not be avoided.

In war, the factor of surprise, though very important, cannot determine victory or defeat. The main factor leading the Americans to these severe defeats was the ineffectuality of the U.S. war machinery. What could the Americans do when the attacks broke out? After counting them carefully, we found that they carried out only five actions: (1) [U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth T.] Bunker hastily climbed aboard his helicopter and flew away; (2) Westmoreland dropped paratroopers on the roof of the U.S. Embassy; (3) Troops were sent to Hue, Saigon, and a number of other places on rescue missions; (4) They ordered the Thieu-Ky clique, as reported by Reuters, to strafe and bomb Saigon; and (5) Johnson forced the high-ranking military authorities in the Pentagon to sign a document guaranteeing that Khe Sanh would not fall (but several days later had to announce the fall of Lang Vei).

Considering the course of events, it seems clear that the Americans had no meaningful reaction plan and had not adopted any effective countermeasures. The fact that the Americans were caught by surprise has revealed their inability to understand their adversary. The most striking fact is the ineffectiveness of some 1.2 million U.S. and puppet troops in the face of their adversary's marvelous attacks. The powerful U.S. and puppet troops have become weak.

Commenting on the American defeats in six cities, 37 provincial capitals, hundreds of district capitals, and dozens of large military bases, many U.S. papers have said, "This climaxes the shame suffered by the Americans." This is not accidental. In truth, never before have American setbacks been as bitter as they are today. Never before have American setbacks shaken U.S. and world public opinion as at present. It is obvious that the U.S. aggressors have not only been shamefully defeated in the rural areas, but have also suffered ignominious defeats in all Southern cities, which they have boastfully referred to as bastions

of U.S. military strength, showcases of colonialism—in short, places where they have been overconfident of their strength.

The setbacks sustained by the Americans and puppets in various cities were comprehensive, by their own admission. On February 2, Reuters said, “With these attacks, the United States, the greatest military power in history, has become the loser in this war, which has many aspects—political, military, psychological, and xenophobic.” In just a few days the whole world has realized the true value of the power of the Number-One imperialists, who have called themselves giants. The Americans’ boasts about their strength have been refuted by the fact that although they have nearly half a million U.S. troops at their disposal, have been present in South Vietnam for thirteen years, and are spending some 66 million dollars daily, they have not been able to protect any land in the South, according to Reuter’s report of February 5. The Americans’ boasts about their powerful strength also have been refuted by the fact that even their last strongholds have been shaken, and that they have not been able to protect even their principal dens, the U.S. Embassy building and the Independence Palace.

The simultaneous attacks against two U.S. field commands, the command headquarters of a puppet army corps, the greater part of the command headquarters of a puppet division, and puppet administrative premises at various levels paralyzed the leading U.S. and puppet organs from the outset, and have disrupted the puppet military and administrative apparatus. Some thirty U.S. airfields have been attacked. They have lost 1,500 aircraft, 4,000 military vehicles, and hundreds of weapons and fuel depots and ammunition dumps. Part of the seasoned forces of the Americans and puppets have been put out of action and part of their most important war equipment has been destroyed.

One of the arts of war consists in identifying and striking accurately at the enemy’s weak points. Faced with the revolutionary forces’ simultaneous attacks and uprisings in various cities, the U.S. aggressors and their lackeys have writhed frenziedly. This permits us to conclude that the Southern armed forces and people have firmly mastered this art. The cities are crucial places. Yet does the strength of the Americans and puppets lie in the cities, as they have boastfully claimed? The facts emerging during the past few days have clearly proved that the view held by the Southern revolution is extremely clear-sighted. It is obvious that the cities are not only crucial places, but are also places where the enemy has many weaknesses and where the U.S.-puppet rule is centered. Although the Americans and puppets have used every means to cover up their country-selling and country-grabbing nature, it is more apparent in the cities than anywhere else. The cities are not only the focal point of the very acute contradictions between the Americans and their lackeys and the contradictions among the U.S. lackeys themselves. With their long-standing traditions of struggle, the urban people have a profound hatred for the Americans and puppets. Moreover, they have found themselves amidst the forward thrust of the revolution. Therefore, when the situation permits, they immediately rise up and struggle.

The U.S. aggressors are not only weak politically, but are also insurmountably weak militarily. It is obvious that with their fighting methods the Southern armed forces and people are fully capable of limiting or eliminating the temporary strong points that the Americans have relied on to wage the war

and of turning the Americans' strength into weakness. Aircraft, artillery pieces, [?armored] vehicles, and enormous quantities of bombs, shells, bullets, and fuel constitute the Americans' trump card and material strength, which they have often boasted about. Now that a substantial part of this material strength has been eliminated, the Americans' trump card has lost its value. The Americans have fallen into an extremely desperate situation. Their combat morale, fighting capacity, and mobility have rapidly declined.

The realities emerging from the battles fought by the people and revolutionary armed forces on the streets of the Southern cities have thrown more light on a significant fact: The U.S. troops have been organized, trained, and equipped for conventional war. For the past three years, they have proved unable to cope with the people's war. Now that they have had to cope with the marvelous attacks of the revolutionary masses and revolutionary armed forces, which have adopted skillful methods of fighting in the cities, the U.S. troops have become even more ineffective. The White House spokesman had to admit this in saying that "We cannot prevent the launching of attacks of this type," according to AFP [Agence France Presse] reports on January 3. In Saigon and many other cities, the U.S. troops have not only been unable to avert or cope with the revolutionary forces' attacks, but have also become panic-stricken and have recklessly opened fire on puppet troops. Is this not very obvious?

The ignominious defeats suffered by the Americans and puppets and the resounding victories won by the Southern armed forces and people are not, of course, accidental. These victories are the result of the unity and courageous fighting spirit of the Vietnamese people under the extremely clear-sighted military leadership of the Southern revolution, which has attached importance to both the rural areas and the cities and to both military and political struggles, and which has given attention to identifying the crucial points and weak spots of the enemy. For a long time, the Southern revolution has attached importance to developing the revolutionary forces in all the rural, mountainous, and urban areas. The new successes achieved by the Southern armed forces and people are the successes of the Southern revolution's creative leadership of the war. This leadership has not depended on outmoded experience.

Dangerous complications of an old illness

The Saigon administration, a yardstick of so-called progress which had been given top billing in Johnson's State of the Union message to Congress in mid-January, has completely collapsed beyond repair and exists in form only. The serious failure the Americans have had to suffer this time is that the political structure of the new colonialism has disintegrated not only in the hamlets and villages under their temporary control but also at the provincial, district, and central levels. The simultaneous attacks and general uprising of the army and people in South Vietnam have hit the snake right on the head and on every joint of its backbone. The Saigon puppet machinery is so paralyzed that they had to use loudspeakers to convene the puppet Congress. Yet only one-third of the Congressmen attended the session. Their lackeys in the provinces and districts have been punished or have fled like a headless snake. The control machinery in hamlets and villages, including almost 50,000 pacification cadres, has been

destroyed or has disintegrated as a result of complete neglect during the troublesome days in the cities, according to AFP on February 2. The puppet troops, the remaining prop of the puppet administration, have suffered severe defeats and one-third of their forces have disintegrated.

This is a new, miraculous victory for the South Vietnamese revolutionary forces, and a stunning blow to the U.S. aggressors. The *New York Times* on February 2 said: "This week's Communist victories are indicative of the weakness of the political structure on which the American military effort in Vietnam is based, and threaten to compound that weakness." The puppet administration in South Vietnam has collapsed. This is no surprise to the Americans. It merely represents dangerous complications of an old illness.

The lackeys of the Americans are country-selling Vietnamese punks who are hated and are being firmly rejected by the people. Five years ago, the Americans suffered a serious blow when the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, the puppet government the Americans thought would last for many years, suddenly collapsed and died a premature death shortly before the extremely violent general uprising of the South Vietnamese people. The U.S. imperialists, the cunning neocolonialists, clearly understand that without a stable and efficient puppet administration, they will be unable to carry out their neocolonialism. In sending their expeditionary corps to the battlefields of South Vietnam, the Americans had no other purpose than to reestablish at any cost a puppet administration that had disintegrated since the Ngo Dinh Diem regime collapsed. As the puppet machinery grows weaker, the Americans have had to send in more troops.

For the past three years, the Americans have had to establish an unprecedentedly tight bayonet barrier to support the puppets' administrative apparatus in its death agony. In the end, faced with the uprising storm of the Southern urban and rural people, the puppets' administrative machinery has become suddenly paralyzed and has seriously disintegrated. The collapse of the puppet Saigon administration constitutes a stunning blow to the Americans because it occurred at a time when Johnson was rejoicing over the recently founded Second Republic in Saigon, considering it an achievement of the some half a million U.S. troops there. The White House is panic-stricken by the [?lack] of stability and effectiveness on the part of the Saigon government. The *Washington Star* called this "the [word indistinct] true factor" in the entire war in Vietnam, and said that it cannot be stabilized and is completely disintegrating. The leading White House advisers have suffered more and more from the fact that despite the commitment of some half a million U.S. troops, they have failed to establish a workable neocolonialist political apparatus, and have had to stand by helplessly as the neocolonialist empire disintegrated and the pacification program got off to a very slow start and then collapsed. Here the U.S. troops' ineffectuality has been prominently, completely, and strikingly displayed.

What is particularly painful for the Americans is the fact that as AFP pointed out on February 2, the long-term, lasting consequences will be even more serious. This is not so because the puppets have been defeated, because they were defeated long since, when the Southern people began their uprising. The present collapse of the puppet army and administration is due in fact to the defeat of some half a million U.S. expeditionary troops. In other words, the really

[?decisive] factor in the war in Vietnam is not the stability of the puppets' machinery, but the question of the people's hearts.

The Americans and the puppets had been convinced that they at least had control of the urban people, their last bastion. They also believed that the revolutionary forces' offensive in the cities would be completely smashed in a few days. The painful truth confronting the Americans is that the urban people have risen up to deal the Americans and the puppets revengeful blows and continue to side with the revolution and attack them. This truth, too, is extremely frightening to the Americans and puppets, as AFP reported on February 7. After one night of the revolutionary forces' offensive, 90 per cent of the people of Hue joined the Viet Cong and many volunteered to work for the Viet Cong. Actually, besides Hue, the same thing happened in Saigon and other Southern cities. This explains why the *New York Times* on February 2 reported bitterly that the political consequences of the Viet Cong's surprising success this time were very dangerous. Bunker's forecast that the Southern people would oppose the Viet Cong was simply wishful thinking.

A heavy blow to Washington

Bewilderment, surprise, serious concern—these were the Washington ruling clique's first reactions to the violent assaults of the Southern armed forces and people. The *New York Times* said on February 3 that the assaults of the Viet Cong, that is, the Liberation Armed Forces, on the cities and towns throughout South Vietnam had dealt Washington a heavy blow. Indeed, the most widespread and significant victory of our Southern armed forces' and people's simultaneous attacks and general uprising is that they dealt the aggressive will of the Washington ruling clique a revolutionary blow. The bright picture of steady progress in the war of aggression in Vietnam that Johnson had painted for the U.S. ruling clique to fool himself and deceive others was torn to shreds. The Americans' total helplessness was exposed to the fullest and in the most concentrated manner as a result of the marvelous strength and the new step in the development of the Southern people's war.

The U.S. ruling clique, which usually boasts about U.S. military and political might of the so-called invincible power of the United States, has now lost its confidence and has become bewildered and embarrassed. The last hope of the hard-core hawks, who want the United States to win a military victory, was also destroyed. The U.S. ruling circles, although very stubborn, are unable to conceal their pessimism, their depressed and hopeless feelings. Even Johnson, a habitual liar, had to concede that serious errors had been committed in Vietnam, according to the *London Observer* of February 4. He said that he could not be as optimistic as usual, according to Reuters on February 3. Although hoping for a quick victory, Westmoreland, who only two weeks ago still clung to his four-stage plan for victory and his statement that U.S. troops would begin to return home in 1968, now had to acknowledge bitterly that the Vietnam war would be a long struggle that might last a generation, according to AFP on February 5. However stubborn, Dean Rusk had to admit that it would be impossible to estimate the impact of the attacks in a period of weeks, but that undoubtedly the Americans' morale would suffer, according to UPI on February 5.

The Americans' war-weariness has grown not only because of their loss of faith in victory but also because of the frightening prospect of final defeat, which has already appeared on the horizon. The defeat of the United States is no longer impossible, the U.S. government circles claimed. The situation points to the possibility that the United States will lose a major war for the first time in its history. The Americans have in fact lost this multifaceted war, said Reuters on February 2. It is also crystal-clear that the recent severe U.S. defeats, according to Western as well as American opinion, "Constitute the prelude to the last act of a great drama, a kind of defeat that we, that is, the Americans, shall have to suffer since we have put half a million troops on the battlefield," said the *Washington News* on January 31.

When the first massive numbers of expeditionary forces were sent in to carry out their strategy of local war, the Americans asserted that they would win. After two badly defeated strategic counteroffensives, they said that they would neither win nor lose, but still harbored the hope of victory. With half a million U.S. troops deployed on the Southern battlefield and after three years of almost all-out efforts, all the leading figures in U.S. ruling circles have had to admit in various ways that the United States has lost the war, has proved to be ineffectual, has fallen into a state of depressed morale and of lost belief in victory, that an agonized reappraisal of the overall situation must be carried out, and that the U.S. strategy and policy in the war of aggression in Vietnam must be thoroughly overhauled.

The U.S. aggressive will has been hit an extremely hard blow. This state of mind of the U.S. aggressors' clique is an inevitable result of the long struggle of many glorious victories and especially the recent storm-like attacks and uprisings of the Southern armed forces and people that struck them on the head like thunderclaps. Complete collapse is inevitable. The U.S. aggressors were dealt a sharp blow, whose delayed effects increase with time. Hardly had they parried the blow from the front when another blow struck them in the back. The U.S. aggressors have never been bogged down in such a bad situation as they are now. In Vietnam, they are facing a ruined structure. Their strategic effectiveness and combat capacity are diminishing rapidly. Half a million U.S. troops are not at all adequate, and have proved to be ineffective before the rising revolutionary movement in the south.

At present on the Southern battlefield, the Americans have to do everything: defend bases, clear blocked communication lines, come to the aid of endangered battlefields, shore up the cities and cope with revolutionary uprisings. All these tasks have to be assumed by the Americans. Not only have the U.S. troops been spread extremely thin, but they also have been pulled apart everywhere. Their strength is declining, their combat position is becoming more and more confused, their difficulties are growing, and the Americans are surrounded by dangers. In addition, U.S. [?effectiveness] not only has been limited, but an important part has been lost. The U.S. strategy is not in the last section of a blind tunnel, but actually at the very end. The U.S. situation on the battlefield, after three years of great efforts, is worse than it was when U.S. troops were sent in to rescue the puppets, when the strategy of the special war went bankrupt.

With the United States entering an election year, Johnson has been the target of criticism from all directions. Public opinion has also demanded that

Westmoreland be dismissed. In the world, the United States is encountering numerous troubles, U.S. prestige has waned tragically, and the U.S. position has weakened markedly. The Americans, who are suffering a loss of face over the affair of the spy-ship *Pueblo* off the Korean coast, have been put in a still more awkward position by their setbacks on the South Vietnamese battlefield. Relations between the United States and its Allies have reached the point where the Americans are left to fend for themselves. Even British Prime Minister [Harold] Wilson, who has always given the Americans a helping hand in their war of aggression in Vietnam, had to warn Johnson against losing patience in a fit of anger. It is crystal-clear which side has the balance of power on the battlefield. The lightning war has rapidly changed the political and military balance of power in South Vietnam in favor of the Communist forces, that is, the South Vietnamese revolutionary forces, according to Reuters on February 2.

The revolution in South Vietnam is growing at a new pitch. Never has the spirit of revolutionary offensive been so great and seething as it is now. Never have the South Vietnamese revolutionary forces taken such great steps as they are taking now. These forces are attacking the enemy incessantly and at an accelerated pace. The prestige of the revolution is unprecedentedly high. The revolutionary forces of the South Vietnamese people are growing and developing quickly, and advancing toward the most advanced forms of struggle. The armed forces of the South Vietnamese revolution grow stronger as they fight. Not only have they fought well in the jungles and mountains, but they have also joined their urban compatriots in attacking and occupying cities and controlling them for many days. From their militant strength, capabilities of fighting relentlessly, combat experience, strategic command standards, and ability to coordinate battles on a national scale, the political and armed forces and people in South Vietnam have made new progressive steps.

The tragic problem for the Americans is not the thoroughgoing reappraisal of the whole situation that they have to undertake. What is more tragic for them is that they do not know what they can or should do to save their disintegrating colonialism and prevent their quick collapse. The White House and the Pentagon have been perplexed by a series of problems: How can they hold back their collapse, how can they increase the strategic efficiency of the U.S. troops, what can they do to restore the puppet troops, how can they put together the shadow of the puppet administration which is being disintegrated like the ashes of a firecracker. How can they cope with the coordinated attacks of the revolutionary forces, and how can they cope with the general uprising of the South Vietnamese people? Johnson's only answer is "We will take extraordinary measures." Johnson has never been so bewildered and has never made such a vague statement. Basically stubborn, the Americans will pour in more troops and money, but under the present circumstances in South Vietnam such a step is like attempting to control a fire with one bucket of water.

The Americans are being defeated not because they are under-strength in coping with the miraculous fighting methods of the army and people in South Vietnam; the Americans may be said to be under-strength and over-strength at the same time. In fact, is it not true that half a million U.S. troops have been unable to cope with the attacks and uprisings of the people and armed forces in South Vietnam? Basically savage, the Americans will frantically and foolishly

carry out temporary relief measures. They will use troops, airplanes, guns, and tear gas to massacre the people in an attempt to put down the uprising of the South Vietnamese people and step up their escalation of the war of destruction in the North. However, that is only to continue ineffective and desperate measures. The only result will be to pour more oil on the revolutionary fire that surrounds them, causing them to commit suicide more quickly.

The revolutionary undertaking in the South has been making rapid progress. The war waged by the South Vietnamese people has been progressing vigorously and inventively. It is not like any war in history. The attacks of the army and people of South Vietnam have been growing like a windstorm that buffets the enemy. Although decisive tests still lie ahead, the army and people of South Vietnam are steadily persevering and have been capitalizing on their victories to surge ahead and strike the exhausted enemy with repeated stunning blows to bring about the total victory of the revolution.