SEES 1968 TET AS START OF U.S. DEFEAT IN VIETNAM


I. Tet Offensive Was Turning Point.

The year 1968 will be marked in our nation's heroic history as a year of unyielding struggle, the greatest victories, and a new turning point. As for the enemy, 1968, one of the darkest years in the U.S. imperialists' history of aggression, was marked by their three great strategic defeats: they were forced to put an unconditional end to all bombing raids against the entire DRV territory, to return to a comprehensive strategy on the South Vietnam battlefield, and to accept talks with the NFLSV at the quadripartite Paris conference. Moreover, in 1968 the U.S. President was compelled to resign, the U.S. defense secretary was obliged to withdraw, and the commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces in South Vietnam was forced to go home. All this strikingly reveals the bitter U.S. defeats. All this happened following the stormy general offensive and uprisings of our armed forces and people.

The general offensive and uprisings in late January and in early February 1968 were, in essence, a wonderful, great strategic assault by our armed forces and people on all battlefields over a territory of more than 1,000 kilometers long -- from Quang Tri to Ca Mau -- on all battlefronts, especially in cities which are the most strategically important for the enemy, embracing over 40 cities and towns. This offensive shook the entire United States and the five continents, marking a leap forward of our people's resistance and suddenly overturning the U.S. strategic position.
Far from being developed, the 1968 two-pronged attack plan was abandoned. The Americans had to hastily and definitively revert to the comprehensive defensive strategy, one they did not want to resort to as it had not been prepared for or introduced to their forces. Abrams' so-called "clear and hold" and "defense in depth" strategy was the very manifestation of this defensive strategy. With this strategy, the enemy's three main objectives were to defend the cities, military bases, important communication lines, and strategically important populated areas, prevent heavy U.S. losses, and help the puppet army and administration escape disintegration and collapse. Throughout most of the past year, it was obvious that the three objectives in this comprehensive defensive strategy were receiving mortal blows and becoming bankrupt.

Since the early spring general offensive and uprisings, almost all cities, military bases, communication lines, and delta areas temporarily controlled by the enemy have been attacked. In many places, the enemy has been struck on several occasions, unable to counterattack.

In recent days, the enemy's accelerated pacification plan has also dealt heavy blows. He has tried to defend his positions, especially cities. But during May, in Saigon, about a hundred U.S.-puppet battalions could not prevent our troops and people from staging attacks and uprisings in many precincts, where we fought for a month and a half, annihilating many large enemy units, destroying tanks, and downing aircraft right in the city. Many high-ranking diehards were punished. In many places, our people won the mastership right. Since then, the political and armed movements of Saigon have developed incessantly. In a battle, about 100 diehards were annihilated by our forces right in the largest lair of the U.S.-puppet clique.

The Americans could not even defend Da Nang, the second largest city after Saigon and a big U.S. military base, even though it was protected by two U.S. divisions, one Park Chung Hee brigade, five puppet regiments, and a myriad of barbed wire strung as far as 30 kilometers from the city. During August, our troops and people staged large-scale attacks on Da Nang, winning great victories. There, the political movement has also developed strongly.

With the Saigon and Da Nang victories, our resounding victories in Khe Sanh in June and July, in Tay Ninh in August and September, and in Ben Tre were a death sentence for the U.S. aggressors' "clear and hold" strategy.
The Americans tried to keep U.S. troops from sustaining heavy setbacks. But, never have U.S. and satellite casualties been so high as in 1968: about 230,000 as reported in the PLAF command's communique No. 11. This toll approached the U.S. casualty toll of the past 7 years. In all, in 8 years, the Americans suffered about half-a-million casualties of 540,000 U.S. and satellite troops, nearly the total number of U.S. troops present in South Vietnam at their highest peak, representing one-sixth of the total number of troops of the United States and far exceeding the U.S. casualty toll in World War I (320,000), the Korean War -- about 390,000 -- half the U.S. casualty toll in World War II -- about 1.7 million.

The Americans also tried to limit puppet casualties, but never have puppet casualties been so high as in 1968 -- about 400,000 -- and never have the puppet forces disintegrated so seriously as in 1968. They have been unable to fulfill their plan to increase the number of puppet troops. Even worse, hundreds of thousands of additional puppet troops are needed to make up for the casualty toll.

Since the Americans were compelled to completely and unconditionally stop the bombing and strafing of the north and to talk with the NLF/SV in Paris, a new, increasingly far-reaching change has taken place among puppet troops. A widespread aspiration for an end to the war has emerged from defeat. The antiwar and desertion movement has developed more vigorously than ever. The puppet army's fighting strength, its campaigns, and its strategic effectiveness have declined extensively. Despite American efforts to maintain the puppet administration, its power, organizational stability, and prestige have drastically declined.

In recent days, because of their shameless sabotage of the unconditional cessation of U.S. bombing and strafing of the north and their stalling of the four-sided Paris conference, the puppets have been subjected to the vigorous protests of all our people, including numerous people in the upper social strata, officers and men of the puppet army, and personnel of the puppet administration, and to the condemnation of the world's peoples. The puppet clique's doom is imminent.

Frustrating the Americans' efforts to achieve their strategic objectives, our armed forces and people have defeated their main tactics in carrying out their "clear and hold" plan.
Faced with the low morale and limited fighting strength of infantry troops and with the need to keep U.S. troops from sustaining serious losses, the Americans have relied mainly on their aircraft, especially B-52 strategic aircraft, and artillery. But it is obvious that U.S. aircraft of various types -- from B-52's and other jet aircraft to armed helicopters -- and artillery have been unable to save the Americans from increasingly serious defeats. This has been irrefutably proven by our great victories in Saigon, Da Nang, Hue, Khe Sanh, A Shau, and Tay Ninh, where the enemy has employed the most intense firepower.

On the other hand, the larger the number of aircraft and artillery pieces the Americans use, the better will be our record for destroying or downing enemy aircraft and destroying enemy artillery.

In their defensive operations, the Americans have established multilayer defense lines around each city, each base, each zone, and so forth. As a precautionary measure against our attacks, each defense line comprises fire support, operational bases and supply, and mobile troop movement routes. In the rural areas, they have established small strongholds. To protect their strongholds and communication lines, they have adopted extremely barbarous measures to clear the terrain and insure very strict defense. Coordinating static defense with mobile defense, they have regularly conducted police operations, encirclement operations, reconnaissance operations, operations aimed at breaking up our offensive preparations and at preventing our attacks, and so forth.

During these operations, they have generally resorted to armored vehicle tactics, relying heavily on tanks and armored vehicles. But obviously their tactics have failed. A series of their fire support and operational bases have been destroyed, especially in Tay Ninh. Our ambushes have continually taken place along roads and waterways. The enemy's frontlines resemble a bare hedge before a flash flood, a net before a tempest -- in some areas, destroyed by large chunks, in others, sidestepped. No cities, no bases have been inviolable. Other U.S. tactics and maneuvers -- such as using pacification groups, Phoenix spies, and rangers to carry out leapfrog tactics to reconnoiter and destroy our bases and corridors, to nibble at our liberated areas, to undermine and check our offensive and uprising movements -- have been and are being doomed. All tactics for carrying out this strategy have failed. None of its objectives can be achieved. All forces deployed to defend this strategy have been bitterly defeated. Abrams' so-called "clear and hold" strategy has been swept into history's garbage can; and Abrams has no way to safeguard it.
II. Enemy Side Has Inherent Contradictions

The United States has been obviously defeated. Its clear-and-hold strategy has obviously failed. This is because the United States has run against many insurmountable difficulties and contradictions, and resembles a patient who is affected by all sorts of incurable diseases.

1 -- Contradictions between the U.S. aggressive plot and the new epoch of mankind

The war in South Vietnam not only bears the characteristics of a fierce national and class struggle, but also bears the characteristics of a deep struggle between the socialist and imperialist camps. It reflects the characteristics and content of the great epoch in which we are living -- an epoch of the world revolution's offensive, an epoch of irremediable defeat and collapse for imperialism whether it follows old or new colonialist policies, an epoch of inevitable victory for socialism and the national liberation movement, especially when socialist countries have formed a powerful camp and have become the factor deciding the trend of the development of world history and a source of abundant aid and strong support to the movement of socialist revolution and national liberation.

It is precisely during this epoch that the United States had to wage its cruel war of aggression. After being forced to admit that old colonialism had disintegrated completely, the United States manifested its stubbornness and craftiness by inventing neocolonialism. Yet, eventually it had to use expeditionary troops to carry out its aggressive plot.

Obviously, in so doing it was stepping into an endless tunnel, along a path of unavoidable defeat. These are the most fundamental contradictions for the United States.

2 -- Contradictions between the objectives of the war of aggression and the defensive strategy

The objectives of the war of aggression are to annihilate enemy forces and seize enemy resources and territory. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to employ an offensive strategy. However, the Americans have not only failed to achieve any of the objectives of their war of aggression, but have been faced with comprehensive, serious challenges and, consequently, have had to employ a generally defensive strategy which definitely cannot help them achieve their objectives. Therefore, the longer they prolong the war, the more serious defeats they will suffer.
To retrieve themselves from defeats in South Vietnam, the Americans had to wage the war of destruction against the northern part of our country. But faced with serious defeats in both parts of the country, they were compelled to stop the bombing and strafing throughout the north. This constituted defeat for half of their war, a defeat which has shattered the U.S. war of aggression. In the remaining half of their war of aggression in the south, the Americans have suffered serious defeats and encountered growing difficulties. This has unequivocally testified to U.S. defeat.

The Americans' basic contradictions have given rise to many other contradictions in U.S.-puppet command and leadership, seriously impairing the combat ability and morale of the U.S.-puppet troops who, although they remain numerous, are unable to overcome these contradictions.

3 -- Contradictions between the U.S. troops' strongpoints, tactics, equipment, and organization and the strategy adopted.

Because U.S. troops have been trained primarily for offensive operations, their organization and equipment are very cumbersome. Excessive importance has been paid to mobility but defensive ability is limited. Now that they have been compelled to shift to a defensive position, many of their strongpoints in weaponry and technology have been restricted. The exercise of command and the employment of tactics have become highly confused. For example, when tanks were deployed in dug-in positions to defend strongholds, they completely lost their offensive mobility and the effect of their firepower was impaired.

Because it has been spread out to defend strongholds, the U.S. air cavalry division which was inherently a strategic reserve force, has lost its so-called marvelous mobility, which was lavishly praised by its foster father, former U.S. Defense Secretary McNamara. Thus, the Americans have had to rely upon weak points at the expense of many of their so-called strongpoints. As a result, they have become stalemated strategically and highly confused tactically.

4 -- Contradictions between the force-employment requirements and the methods of employing forces.

The U.S. troops have served as the core force in the war of aggression in Vietnam. Despite the U.S. troops' inability to perform the core-force tasks, the Americans, faced with the political, military, economic, and financial requirements of the United States and the requirements of the...
U.S. global strategy, have had to attempt to "de-Americanize" the war. Despite the fact that the puppet troops' strength has seriously declined, they have had to gradually take over the burden of the war. This has clearly revealed U.S. confusion and stalemate.

In 1965, because the puppet army was unable to cope with our armed forces and people, the Americans had to send their troops to directly wage the war of aggression, using both the U.S. and puppet strategic forces. But since the U.S. troops were introduced into the south, the puppet troops' strength declined so extensively that the Americans had to assign them the house-keeping and pacification-support tasks. Today, despite the fact that the U.S. troops themselves have been faced with the danger of being completely defeated, the Americans have reemployed the puppet troops in the hope of warding off defeat. This is like having a drowning person save a sinking boat.

5 -- Contradictions between the requirements of political deceit and cruel military maneuvers of the Americans

To impose their neocolonialism, the Americans have advocated striving to deceive the people, to prove themselves to be good friends in order to "win the hearts and minds" of our southern people, and to pretend that they respect the southern people's right to self-determination in order to deceive the world's people. As far as the puppets are concerned, they have tried to make believe that their regime is democratic, nationalist, constitutional, and legal.

Nonetheless, faced with the violent reaction of the southern revolution, the U.S.-puppets have had to resort to extremely barbarous, cruel offensive maneuvers against the southern people, including urban people. As a result, the Americans' inherent contradictions have become extremely acute. The Americans have also experienced contradictions between the need to consolidate, enlarge, and strengthen the puppet army and the difficulties encountered while trying to satisfy this need. They have experienced contradictions between the requirements of the heavy tasks set forth and the very limited quality and ability of the U.S.-puppet troops, who have proven impotent not only in offensive operations, but also in performing defensive tasks; contradictions between the need to acquire sufficient, numerous forces and the very limited ability to build up forces; and contradictions between concentration and dispersion of forces and between the need to protect the cities, bases, and communications lines and the ambition to control the rural areas.
As a result of all these contradictions, difficulties and stalemate, the U.S. war of aggression is faced with the danger of being completely defeated, and the aggressive determination of the top U.S. warmongers has been truly shaken. However, the U.S. aggressors have displayed unexcelled stubbornness. Relying upon the remaining, relatively numerous forces at their disposal and upon the relatively large quantities of weapons, bombs, shells, and ammunition available, they have continued to squirm frenziedly, trying to remedy their defeats, cover up their difficulties and shaken determination, and gain as much as they can.

The Americans have not yet opened their eyes to the fact that the longer they prolong the war the more serious will be the defeats which they will suffer. On the other hand, they have carried out the following sinister plans:

1 -- Readjusting their strategic force deployment, they recently moved units of the 1st Air Cavalry Division from the Tri-Thien region to eastern Nam Bo in order to defend this area and the Saigon-Gia Dinh area at all costs.

2 -- They have hastily rallied a band of henchmen to carry out the so-called "accelerated pacification plan" aimed at seizing control of 1,000 hamlets and winning over 1 million people living in contested areas. Another band of henchmen have been formed into "Phoenix" commando teams specialized in assassinating or harming the patriots.

3 -- Frenziedly carrying out activities aimed at "preventing Viet Cong attacks," they have resorted to very barbarous, cruel tricks. They have erected barriers along roads and waterways, blocking border routes, using B-52's and [words indistinct] incendiary bombs, and bulldozers, razing one hamlet after another, burning one forest after another, and destroying one ricefield after another in an attempt to establish "white belts" around their dens, thus driving a countless number of our compatriots into a miserable life. They have clamped a curfew on the cities, restricting the people's movement, conducting searches, making arrests and ruthlessly killing people, thus trampling upon all of our people's rights to a decent livelihood and democracy.

4 -- They have brought their vast psychological warfare apparatus into full play to ballyhoo about their so-called powerful strength, victories, good will, and so forth, with a view to deceiving our people, impairing the morale of our cadres and combatants, and sowing disunity between our armed
forces and people and between the people and the NVLSP. But they have made another miscalculation! They wanted to defend eastern Nam Bo and the Saigon-Gia Dinh area. But these areas, with their revolutionary traditions, have been shining with armed exploits in annihilating the Americans and defeating the puppets.

The brilliant examples during the general offensive and uprisings are mightier than ever. Recently, in 40 days they seriously mauled the 1st Air Cavalry Division, annihilating three battalions and six companies and destroying 70 planes. Surely, they will completely crush the new U.S.-puppet plots against their native land. Along with eastern Nam Bo and the Saigon-Gia Dinh area, our entire south, including the areas from which the enemy has just withdrawn his troops, will surely advance in an unprecedentedly heroid way, determined to win the greatest victories.

The enemy is speaking about accelerated pacification, is he not? He is stupid and crazy! Has he forgotten that he wantonly carried out his pacification scheme and failed bitterly? After that failure the enemies insulted each other and accused each other of impetuosity and formalism and so forth. The enemy later shifted to steadfastly carrying out the pacification of key areas.

Has he forgotten that his scheme for pacifying key areas failed and that his entire pacification program was completely burned by the fire of the early spring general offensive and uprisings of our armed forces and people? Now, with a new impulse, our armed forces and people will surely sweep away those who are being terrified by sound beatings and who are pursuing a task which has failed several times, and will bring about the complete bankruptcy of the accelerated pacification program, sweep away the Phoenix spies, and those who are plotting to use the tattered three-stripe flag to deprive our people of the revolutionary achievements for which our troops and people have sacrificed much blood and many bones.

They wish to stop the attacks and uprisings of our armed forces and people, do they not? But this is only an old plot which is being carried out through old tricks, measures, and tactics, which has been ignominiously defeated, and which will surely suffer more ignominious defeat. Concerning their psychological warfare, how can those who will surely be defeated and are being terrified and confused intimidate and deceive our troops and people -- glorious victors who are advancing quickly to win the greatest victory?
We will never relax vigilance in face of the enemy's cruel acts. But when dealing with the U.S.-puppets, we must constantly see their defeats and strategic weaknesses, strengthen our ideology and offensive spirit, direct our attacks against the fundamental, serious contradictions of U.S. strategies, launch attacks and attack continuously and we will definitely win victories. At the same time, during our attacks, we must be constantly vigilant, determined to crush all the enemy's plots and concrete acts and overcome all difficulties and hardships in order to advance step by step toward complete victory.

III. U.S. Deadlock Shown in Five Ways

The deadlock of the U.S. military strategies has been clearly manifested by the following points which have been admitted not only by public opinion the world over, but also by the most obdurate ringleaders in the White House. These points can be summarized as follows:

(1) About military effectives and weapons: For its local war of aggression against South Vietnam, the United States has used the largest number of troops and greatest volume of its most modern weapons. These figures have exceeded those set forth by U.S. strategists. The United States has sent so many U.S. expeditionary troops to South Vietnam that this action has strongly affected all aspects of U.S. activities. Yet, its strategic goals have not been attained. The United States has had to talk about withdrawing, extending, or concentrating troops. This clearly proves that U.S. strategies are at a dead end.

(2) About deceitful political tricks aimed at hiding the unjust aggressive nature of the U.S. war and slandering the just struggle of our people: The Americans have resorted to all these tricks. Now, no one believes in the specious U.S. statement about "protecting freedom." Even the ringleaders cannot add anything to embellish their allies. The lackeys stated bluntly: "The Americans are aggressors, Texas cowboys." The more the Americans slander the just cause of our people, the higher the NFLSV banners are hoisted in the United States and the world. Indeed, the U.S. imperialists are unable to produce any more modern masks to cover their faces and those of their lackeys. In this field, the Americans are also in a dead end.

(3) The United States has come to a dead end in its military schemes, tactics and strategies: the two-pronged strategic plan about which they had incessant boasted is no
longer spoken of. The pacification scheme has proceeded from an impetuous phase to a "specific areas or concentric advance" phase. Their plan of "pacification with specific areas," which they consider the most modern strategy, is now doomed. Now they resort to an accelerated pacification plan. Their 18-month and 12-month plans being doomed, they now wish to succeed with their 1-month or 2-months plans. Since small military raids brought no results, they then resorted to large-scale military operations. And now that their large-scale military operations have failed, they are resuming the small military raids. In carrying out their plans and schemes, the U.S.-puppet clique has shown that it is caught in a dark, vicious circle.

(4) About military expenditure: the United States has spent a huge sum of money for this war -- about 100 billion dollars in 4 years, or the entire U.S. budget for a year -- and yet the problem cannot be solved. The U.S. economic situation, which is seriously affected, requires a cut in U.S. expenditures. Americans also demand that the government reduce its expenses. Thus, the United States is rich, but it has reached a dead end in the expenses for the aggressive war in South Vietnam.

(5) The backbone of the U.S. neocolonialist scheme is to create a kind of puppet administration and armed forces, capable of oppressing and fooling the people. The United States has had to name the diminutive man Nguyen Van Thieu, a former first lieutenant of the French partisan forces, as president of the republic, and Nguyen Cao Ky, a former pilot of the French forces and a cowboy and hooligan who used to pimp for U.S. soldiers, as vice president of the republic. And yet, the problem cannot be solved satisfactorily. Indeed, these two puppets have insulted each other as lackeys. Puppet officers have displayed their disappointment and puppet soldiers have shown they are tired of fighting. With 4,500,000 troops and millions of tons of bombs and shells in hand, the Americans are unable to save the puppets from rottenness and collapse. On this point, the Americans have shown they are caught in a deadlock. All this clearly reflects the dead end of the U.S. military strategy.

The study of these various aspects of the U.S. military strategy lets us firmly conclude that the Americans will certainly be defeated and we will certainly be victorious, that the Americans were defeated, are being defeated, and are sustaining increasingly bitter defeats. Indeed, as of this day, the longer they are obdurate, the greater difficulties and more serious defeats they will sustain. We realize that
Johnson wanted to stop bombing the north to safeguard the U.S. Democratic Party and increase his personal prestige. But he stubbornly demanded reciprocity and displayed hesitation and slowness in making a decision. Finally, he had to stop the bombings against the north, but the U.S. Democratic Party could not be safeguarded. The situation has become more confused and deadlocked. This is a striking fact. Therefore, an important conclusion can be drawn for the Americans: in their dead end, their stubbornness can only bring them heavier and more shameful defeats. All our armed forces and people are facing a great historical opportunity. Let us raise high our determination to continue to fight until the last aggressor is driven out of the country and to hold aloft our just cause and determination-to-win banner.