

A MAJOR FACTOR DETERMINING VICTORY IN THE WAR

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[Following is a translation of an article by Le Phong in the Vietnamese-language periodical, Hoc Tap (Studies), Hanoi, No. 1, January 1966, pages 65-70 and 78.]

The U.S. imperialists have been loudly claiming that they have the most modern weapons, such as phosphorous bombs, improved napalm bombs, germ bombs, poisonous gas tanks, supersonic aircraft bearing such terrifying names as "Thunderchief," "Phantom," "Skyraider," strategic B52s, which can drop thousands of tons of bombs in a single raid, etc. In order to exert pressure upon our people's morale, they have aggressively threatened to use "power, power on land, power in the air, power whenever it is necessary." (Johnson's reply in an interview with the newspaper, News Work, 25-7-1965.) In the aggressive war in our country, they have so far used all the modern weapons (except atomic bombs) they have, mobilized all "talented generals," and applied all the "new" strategies and tactics. But the results are poorer and poorer. Our people have been giving them deserving punishments and making them become more and more bogged down in the war they have created themselves. Although weapons would not save them from a shameful defeat, the U.S. imperialists still rely on weapons and consider the latter as their life-saving shield, for their reactionary, aggressive, and war-provoking nature and activities are completely contrary to the interests of the great majority of the people of the world, including the U.S. people. It is the U.S. imperialists' character going against the people and the revolution that prevents them from relying, and daring to rely, on men. On the contrary, as our army and people fight for noble ideals and stay ready to sacrifice ourselves for the good cause, we have a power that cannot be defeated. Further developing this factor of superiority, we can defeat the U.S. aggressors, no matter how modern their weapons are and what form of war they are waging.

While underlining the effect of human determination in war, we do not deny the important effect of weapons, for we clearly understand that weapons in the hands of politically-educated people would greatly increase the latter's fighting power; for instance, hero Huynh Van Danh in the south killed eighty-two enemies with eighty bullets, and hero Nguyen Viet Khai in the north downed four enemy aircraft with eight rifle bullets. However, while it is true that weapons constitute a means to fight a war, they can never determine the outcome of a war. Whether weapons can develop their effect is determined by men, who use weapons. A set of bamboo spikes, a rudimentary weapon by itself, becomes a weapon that terrifies the enemy when it is used

by the Vietnamese guerrillas; our infantry rifles have already downed U.S. supersonic aircraft. This does not mean that bamboo spikes are stronger than cannons and that infantry rifles are better than rockets, but they are powerful because of men. On the contrary, in the hands of the U.S. aggressors, modern weapons have only limited effects; in many cases, such weapons even have adverse effects upon their users. Even nuclear weapons, which have tremendous destructive power, cannot change the law and nature of war, nor can they solve the basic contradictions in society. Nuclear weapons cannot seize any territory; at the end, one must depend on men to obtain victory in war. Moreover, in the present world situation, nuclear weapons are not the kind that can be used in any war, on any battlefield.

In analyzing the victory of the Prussian army in the Austrian-Prussian war, after affirming the effects of weapons, Engels spoke very clearly of the decisive role of men: "...but those guns cannot shoot by themselves, and instead must be used by brave hearts and firm hands," "what leads to victory in combat is not guns, but men." ("Excerpts from the Military Essays of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin," Vietnamese edition, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1964, page 122.)

After the October Revolution, Lenin also said: "In any war, victory is ultimately determined by the morale of the masses who are shedding blood on the battlefield... The masses' understanding of the purpose and origin of war is greatly significant and is what guarantees victory." (Same book, page 116.)

The above Marxist-Leninist arguments about the effects of men and weapons in war have been proven completely correct by many historical facts.

In the Second World War, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, led by comrade Stalin, the Soviet people and army defeated Hitler's army, which had had superiority in both equipment and weapons, and finally won victory. The revolution of China, led by the Communist Party of China and comrade Mao Tse-tung, was also victorious despite the fact that Chiang's army, aided by the U.S., had had great superiority in weapons and equipment. In the 1950-1953 Korean war, the U.S. imperialists and their clique were many times more powerful than the Chinese volunteers' army and the Korean People's Army in regard to weapons and equipment, and were extremely ruthless. However, at the end, the victors were the Chinese volunteers and the Korean People's Army, not the U.S. imperialists.

Before our August Revolution, although our people did not have weapons, under the leadership of the party, we dared to face the French imperialists' big force. And after the Japanese fascists had come to trample on our land with arrogant attitude backed by the so-called "invincible power of the Imperial Army," our party, headed by President Ho, pointed to our people who were our friends and who were our foes, and helped our people to see clearly the enemy's temporary strength and the upgoing trend of the revolution; thanks to that leadership, all our people rose up to fight, defeated both the French

imperialists and the Japanese fascists, and established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). As we started the war of resistance against the French, our people's military force was still weak; our army not only was small, but also had poor weapons and equipment, difficulties in logistic facilities, and just a few combat experiences. However, armed with a warm patriotism and a great determination, our army and people had been bravely fighting the enemy for nine long years and gradually gaining strength from weakness, and finally defeated the half-a-million-strong French expeditionary corps, equipped with all sorts of modern weapons and aided by the U.S. imperialists.

In the last eleven years, the heroic people of the south were continuing to develop that glorious tradition. With two empty hands at first, they have risen up to kill the enemy with weapons seized from the latter, have gained strength from weakness, and have been defeating all the aggressive plans of the U.S. imperialists. Despite the fact that the U.S. imperialists have mobilized up to 200,000 troops, more than one-fourth of their regular officers, more than one-fourth of their naval force, almost all of their strategic reserve force in the Pacific; have sent (to South Vietnam) even "the strategic reserve force in the mainland"; and have been using all kinds of technical means and modern weapons, they have been beaten by the army and people of the south. Ever since they started a war of destruction against the north, the U.S. imperialists have mobilized a very large air force to attack continually night and day, and have been using all kinds of shrewd tactics; but the number of U.S. aircraft downed in the north is larger and larger. The army and people of the north have buried the myth about the so-called "absolute supremacy of the U.S. air force."

The revolutionary work in the world and in our country and our people's victories in both the north and the south have clearly proven that men, and not weapons, are the major factor that determines victory in a war. With bravery and determination, with a deep hatred for the enemy and warm patriotism, with a correct line on war, the revolutionary people and army, though poorly equipped, are completely capable of defeating the imperialists', even the U.S. imperialists', army equipped with modern weapons.

Who are the men that play the major role in determining victory in a war? The bourgeois military theoreticians also talk about men whom they consider as one of the three basic factors (men, weapons and military supplies, and money) of war. However, according to their concept, men are only the number of troops and the talent of their officers, but not the masses.

The U.S. imperialists have already relied on the generals, like Taylor, who they said were "the most talented" ones, and already sent 200,000 U.S. troops and troops from satellite countries to the south. They hope that their troops who greatly outnumber the Liberation Army of the south would win victory just because of their size. But those mercenaries, having no ideals to

serve, cannot beat our army and people even if they are further reinforced; on the contrary, the more troops the U.S. imperialists send to the south, the more shameful their defeat will be. This fact has been clearly demonstrated in the Van Tuong, Thuan Ninh, Danang, Chu Lai, Bau Bang, Pleime battles, in which the U.S. aggressors were badly beaten.

In the past, the U.S. imperialists suggested to the Diem-Nhu clique the use of various kinds of moral poisons, such as "spiritual personalism," "labor promotion," and "social progress," in order to create the human factor. The results of such deceitful measures of indoctrination led to the appearance of a number of devils who, with all their human senses gone, were "Americanized" to such an extent that they ate human liver, drank human blood, and disemboweled children just for fun. With such a "new moral value," which they kept repeating, and such men, whom they relied on, how could the latter become a factor to determine victory in war?

The men who we think play a decisive role in war are the masses. They are only the ordinary people, but thanks to their noble ideals they have been winning glorious battles and making big achievements in production.

They are the men who fight the enemy daringly and with intelligence and have nothing to eat but leaves in the forest for six months without slowing down their fighting, the girls who beat the enemy with bare hands and some tricks, the mothers who throw themselves onto the path of the enemy's cannon balls, the children who fight the enemy by putting sand in the enemy's barrels, the people who have suffered for more than twenty years from the enemy's ruthless tortures and still maintain their loyalty to the revolution...

They are the soldiers who shoot straight at the enemy's aircraft, the mothers who operate their junks under enemy fire to bring supplies of ammunition to our troops, the cooperative directors who offer their bodies as cannon holders right in the field, the militiamen who match their rifles with the modern U.S. aircraft, the children who know how to sacrifice themselves heroically for their friends...

They are also the people who are sweating to build a solid rear in order to increase the economic and military potentialities, thus serving the front. They are the young men who are concerned night and day with developing initiatives and improving techniques for higher productivity, the young women who see their soldiers-husbands off right in their back yards where they can start productive work without losing time, the teachers who are so much devoted to teaching children, the physicians who treat their patients with all their heart, the intellectuals who patiently study science and technology—all who are determined to defend our fatherland and the socialist revolutionary work, who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the revolution, the fatherland. It is these people who determine our victory in the war.

When we say men play a decisive role in war, we do not mean the number of men in our army, but we talk mainly about the fighting and combat-serving

spirit of our army and people. The size (of the army) of course has a definite effect, just like the way weapons play an important role in combat; that is why our party is always concerned with providing our soldiers with more and more modern combat means. However, the decisive factor here is not the number of soldiers, but their political quality and spirit. Talking about the factors that permanently act upon war, Stalin dealt with "the number and quality of the divisions," "the equipment, weapons, and means of war," "the organizing ability of the commanding cadres"; however, Stalin clearly demonstrated "the solidity of the rear" and "the spirit of the army" which he considered the important decisive factors. (Stalin: "About the Great Patriotic War," Russian edition, the State Political Literature Publishing House, Moscow, 1952, p.42.)

The fact that the U.S. army is losing does not mean that it has few men, or is short of weapons, or lacks the ability to fight on the part of the U.S. soldiers. In the past, in the war fought for independence, the U.S. rebellion army was short of weapons and had poor technical ability, but its men finally defeated the British colonial army equipped with new weapons and pretty good war techniques because they were fighting for a good cause and for their own interests--this explains why they had been able to overcome their weakness. But today the morale of the U.S. soldiers is low because they fight not for their own interests or for U.S. honor, as Johnson has tricked them into believing so, but for the safes of the top U.S. monopolizing capitalists. Moreover, before they set foot on Vietnam, they have been pessimistic because of the failures in China and Korea and scared by the resounding effects of the Dien Bien Phu battle; then, as they have to face the unbeatable strategy and tactic of the people's war, as well as the clever fighting method of our army and people, they tremble at the first sight of darkness and get panic-stricken when they see our guerrillas. In them, men and weapons seem to be two separate things, with the degree of efficiency of weapons and war means getting lower and lower; in many cases, in their panic, they use the same weapons to kill one another.

As to the puppet soldiers, they cannot have courage in fighting because they are despised and badly treated due to the fact that they have blindly followed the aggressors to kill their own compatriots and serve as a shield for the U.S. imperialists to get a few dollars. In the face of the successive and great victories of our army and people, the majority of the puppet soldiers more and more recognize the invincible force of the people and the clemency policy of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam; as a result, the phenomenon of desertion, mass desertions, uprising, and returning to the people with weapons is growing faster. Even Walter Lippman, the U.S. commentator, had this to confirm: "The army of the South (the puppet army) has not surrendered, but it has low morale and a great deal of desertions...." "money, medals are not the main ingredients for building a solid dike to hold the stream that always flows inside any Vietnamese soldier (of the puppet army)." (Newsweek, 12 April 1965.)

In order to win victory in our war of resistance against the U.S. for

national salvation, we must do our best to develop revolutionary heroism, to strengthen the revolutionary will and sentiments of our army and people, and to build the men in our society in such a way that they become solid fortresses unaffected by any U.S. weapons or psychological-warfare arguments.

Why can our soldiers fight more courageously and cleverly than any imperialist armies? Why have our people created such heroic masses as those at Con Co, Quang Binh, the Nguyen Viet Xuan Antiaircraft Company 3, the 7th Naval Squadron, air units, etc.; and so many extremely heroic acts, such as those demonstrated by soldier Liem, who tore off the eye hit by an enemy bullet and continued to move forward to kill the enemy; by hero Nguyen Kim, who had stepped on a spike, but carried it with him while jumping into an enemy post to kill the enemy; by Tru Van Tho, who used his body to fill a hole for the cannon to stand on; by Nguyen Viet Xuan, who asked his comrades to cut off his badly wounded leg so that it would not bother him, and continued to lead and to encourage the cadres and soldiers under his command to keep shooting at the enemy; by Dang Dinh Long, who continued to bring in more ammunitions and to encourage his fellow soldiers to keep fighting in spite of his wounds; by Tran Hanh, that brave, intelligent, active pilot who defeated many modern U.S. aircraft; and by so many heroes who set brilliant examples everyday?

First of all, we must say that the main reason is a deep understanding of the class and national interests. For those who now stand near the cannons, on a ship, or on a battlefield, they know that their parents, their brothers, or they themselves used to live miserably, shamefully under the ruthless rule of the imperialists and feudalists. They hate the enemy very much, hate the regime of oppression and exploitation, and are determined to destroy the enemy to gain and to protect the fruit of the revolution.

President Ho has said: "Our people has a warm love for our country. It is our precious tradition. Throughout our history, whenever our fatherland was invaded, that spirit was once more aroused. It formed into an extremely powerful wave that would break any dangers, any difficulties. It sank all the traitors and aggressors." (Ho Chi Minh: "Political Report at the Second Party Congress," Selected Works, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, page 366.) Our people's patriotic tradition has been inherited and brought up by our party with the most progressive ideology of our times, the socialist ideas, and therefore is now many times stronger.

Compared with the level attained during the war of resistance against the French, the level of understanding of social classes and national matters among our people in the north is much higher. During that war of resistance, the working people of our country were barely liberated, but today the working people in the north are completely liberated—they are the masters of their own lives—and therefore find their strength not only in their being liberated but also in their being collectively organized. The new production relations in society, the relations among comrades and in the collectivity constitute an extremely important factor that helps create our people's revolutionary heroism of today. At present, our people not only understand that we are fighting

for freedom and independence for all our country, but also understand what the revolution and the socialist system have brought to us and that we are fighting to protect what have become ours today and to move toward a bright socialist future with plenty of food and clothing and a prosperous life.

We must also say that our people understand that they are fighting for the revolutionary work and the common work for peace of people all over the world.

Understanding the motivations behind our people's heroic acts, we need to strengthen further the heroic men so as to win victory in our war of resistance against the U.S. for national salvation. In the work of strengthening men, we must first heighten the proletarian stand and views; make our people be capable of distinguishing friends and foes, and recognizing the stubborn nature of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys and the good cause in our struggle; and consequently sharpen our hate for the enemy and heighten our will to fight and our confidence in victory. Our effort to heighten the proletarian stand and views must be combined with the teaching of patriotism and proletarian internationalism so that our people would know how to combine the national and class interests, and the revolutionary interests of our country and those of the world. Fully confident in the Marxist-Leninist views, we must do our best to step up political and ideological education among our cadres, soldiers, and people. On the basis of sound revolutionary stand and ideas, we must also mobilize our people's spirit and desire to understand fully the technical knowledge connected with both combat and production. Having good political stand and high spirit makes one's learning and use of techniques better; having superior techniques helps to raise further one's spirit, confidence, and determination, and consequently provides him with more favorable conditions so that he could fulfill all his tasks in both combat and production.

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