FACING THE SKYHAWKS

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WHENEVER the late John F. Kennedy appeared on television screens, one could rest assured that the word "peace" crop up scores of times in his speech. And in the interval between two speeches, the late President of the United States unleashed his mercenaries against Cuban beaches or set up a military command in Saigon. A good pupil, Lyndon B. Johnson has perfectly understood the lesson.

On August 4, 1964, at 11:35 p.m. (Washington time), President Johnson, in a televised speech, and after the usual glib talks about peace, raised his tone to announce to the American nation that the United States had been the victim of a scandalous aggression some ten thousand kilometres away from the Californian coast, in the far end of the Pacific.

"The reply is being given as I speak to you," emphasized the American President; "Air action is now in execution."

Half an hour before, Skyraiders and Skyhawks had thundered off the aircraft-carriers "Constellation" and "Ticonderoga" cruising off the coast of Indochina; on August 5, at 12:30 a.m. (Vietnam
time) the first bombs and rockets fell on various North Vietnamese localities. It was 1:15 a.m. in Washington: the honorable president of the United States, his prayers said and his conscience at peace, had retired, calmly expecting the communiqué of victory. When it was brought to him in the morning, he puckered his brow and did not believe his eyes: 8 planes downed, 3 more damaged, several airmen missing, one taken prisoner. “Impossible!” he said to himself: but one couldn’t fly in the face of facts: his subordinates could tell lies to the public, affirming that only two planes had been shot down, but to him, they had told the truth. He remained thoughtful for a long while, turning the matter over and over in his mind: how on earth had the North Vietnamese, with their rudimentary means, managed to shoot down so many modern, fast-flying planes?

For if the Douglas Skyraiders A-1H date from 1956 and fly only at 585 km. an hour, (and even so, they are much more modern than the old jalopies used by the French in the Vietnam war), the Douglas Skyhawks A-4B had come off the assembly line only in November 1962. They are equipped with two guns and can carry a load of 3,720 kilograms of various projectiles: bombs, 127-caliber or larger-sized rockets, air-to-air missiles, at a speed largely superior to 1,000 kilometres an hour. In the last World War, when Hitler’s Stukas, mere toys compared with Skyhawks, dived on their targets, rare were the gunners who dared face them: how did it come about that ultra-modern planes were hit in such large numbers by a modestly-equipped, anti-aircraft defence?
VINH razed to the ground during the national liberation war, is now a brand new town. New, the market building with its red-tiled roof; new, the power station on the bank of the river Lam with its towering chimney, supplying electric energy not only to the town, but also to the provincial irrigation networks; new, the Teachers' College which gives training every year to hundreds of teachers; new, the factories — the saw-mill, the oil-refinery, the sugar-refinery — filled with the hum of machines. Every day sees a new house built or a new street laid out. The town has come to life again, full of the vigour typical of this region, which had always been a revolutionary centre. Skyraid ers and Skyhawks were to nip in the bud this new life which is rising, — and the power station, the fuel dumps, in short, all the sources of energy which are to help in the modernization of the region's economy, had been the main targets of the Yankee planes.

It was 12:30, the time of the noon rest, so necessary in the heat of August. Only the chimney of the power station continued to pour out smoke, and the railway station, also newly-built, was bustling with activity, for the Hanoi train had just arrived. All of a sudden, the gongs sounded the alert. In barracks and factories, shouts were heard: everybody to his
combat post! In the twinkling of an eye, the anti-aircraft gunners were ready. They were all there — officers, men, political commissars, and also the cooks. A battery commander was on leave that day: one saw him come running back. A soldier on a bike rushed into the combat sector: he was having a stroll out of town when the alarm sounded; a peasant passed by, riding a bicycle; the soldier asked if he might borrow the vehicle to rejoin his combat post; just think! for a peasant, a bike is a precious possession, and the two men hardly knew each other; yet without hesitation, the peasant lent his bike.

Presently came the first planes, for the town is hardly ten kilometres away from the coast as the crow flies. Following a well-conceived plan, they had skirted the town by the south and debouched unexpectedly from behind the Hong Linh range. They immediately started launching bombs and rockets on the power station and other factories. They were received by steady gunfire. They had thought they could avoid anti-aircraft shells by flying close to the ground, their gun blazing away. Under those conditions, and considering the speed of jets, few gunners would dare face them, for the gunner bound to his battery and compelled to co-ordinate his action with that of his comrades — 'guns' and gunners being immobile butts — does not have the freedom of movement of the airman roaring down at full speed and showering bombs and bullets on his targets. But great surprise was in store for the Yankee airmen on that day of August 5, 1964. Their elders of the Second World War had told them that as soon as U.S. planes dived on
U.S. ACTS OF WAR AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM FROM JULY 30 TO AUGUST 5, 1964
them, Hitlerite S.S.s and Japanese soldiers fell into a panic and deserted their guns: they could fire on planes flying at high altitudes but not on those which dived on them or flew close to their positions — in which case every one of them ran for shelter. In 1964, the Americans have much more powerful planes than in 1945; on the other hand, Hitlerite and Japanese guns were much more efficacious than those now in the hands of North Vietnamese soldiers, who besides faced jets for the first time. In spite of all this, no sooner had the planes approached the ground than gunfire came from everywhere. Not only from the anti-aircraft batteries, but also from the roofs of factories and houses, from the boats and junks moored in the river, from trenches dug on the hillsides. Machine-guns, submachine-guns, rifles wove a dense and uninterrupted curtain of fire round the Skyhawks. Even when skimming over villages or ricefields in the neighbourhood of the town, the planes were shot at. The village militiamen were as ready as their comrade of the factories to use their rifles or submachine-guns on the Skyhawks which, in fact, proved much less invulnerable than they had thought. They could be hit if one had enough courage to wait for them without the quiver of an eyelid and shoot at them when they were at the lowest point of their dives or when they began to flatten out.

They had hardly expected that, the airmen who had taken off from the “Constellation” and the “Ticonde roga”: They had thought they would fall like eagles upon powerless and resigned quarries, drop their
bombs and launch their rockets then calmly go back to their aircraft-carriers to be acclaimed by their colleagues for having inscribed another feat to the credit of American wings.

The Yankee planes were immediately forced to climb to a higher altitude and to scatter. Bombs and rockets fell at random. Amidst the explosion, the clouds of dust and the bomb splinters, one could see standing on the edge of the casemates, close to the guns, the battery commanders and the political commissars, giving orders and exhorting the soldiers.

The first minute of emotion gone, everyone without exception had remained at his post; not a single man had deserted it, in spite of the bombs and rockets that exploded and the bullets that whizzed around; not a single soldier, not a single worker of the factory security services, not a single town or rural militiaman, armed as he was with a mere rifle. The wounded men continued firing as long as they could stand on their feet. Those men who for the first time in their lives faced jets, behaved like battle-hardened soldiers. One should rather say, those men and women, for a great number of women workers and peasants participated in the fight at the side of their brothers or husbands. That was why such fast-flying and deadly planes had been shot down in such great numbers: the weapons were not all quite modern, but those who handled them had the courage to wait for the planes to swoop down on them to hit out at them, the courage that Hitler's S.S.s and the Mikado's warriors had lacked.
At Hong Gai, the same thing happened. Alone, the 3,000-odd rocky islets which were dotted about in the Bay of Ha Long, with their crowns of trees and lianas mirroring themselves in the blue waters of a calm sea, would not have attracted the airmen from beyond the Pacific, who had rather been educated in the contempt of things of beauty. But beyond the Bay, on its bank, lay the coalfield, one of the most important industrial centres of the young Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Ah, if one could deal a deadly blow at this young industry, which constitutes a real challenge to imperialist powers!

It was 2:30 p.m. when the air raid signal sounded in Hong Gai. Work was in full swing in the mines and factories. Holiday-makers and tourists were enjoying the sight of the sea rippled by a light breeze, where thousands of rocks and islets seemed to be engaged in a gigantic game of hide-and-seek. Among them was the Cuban ambassador. With the emotion that one could easily imagine, he followed the Yankee attack on the town and give loose to his enthusiasm when planes were hit. There was also the Korean journalist Pac Tung Kiu, who later reported what he witnessed:

"I was sitting on a stone bench before our hotel, looking at this wonderful Bay, when a flight of Yankee jets, flying close to the surface of the water, then unexpectedly debouching from behind the hillocks, started their attack on Hong Gai. Furiously, they launched bombs and rockets, which sometimes exploded quite near the place where we were. Simultaneously, the people’s militia and the armed forces began their riposte. At the second dive, one saw one of the planes fall headlong into the sea, leaving
behind a long trail of black smoke; and one heard the enthusiastic cheers of the people. This unexpected blow threw panic into the Yankee pilots who fled to a higher altitude and lost their dash. They now began strafing at random, taking fishing boats for their targets.

"I saw how gallantly the Vietnam People's Armymen fought. With admirable calm and courage, they waited for the planes to reach the lowest point of their dives to hit out at them. In some imperialist countries, anti-aircraft gunners are chained to their guns so as to prevent them from running away at the approach of the enemy planes, for in actual combat, the anti-aircraft gunners need undaunted heroism not to run for shelter. Despite the terrific speed of the Yankee jets, the Vietnamese gunners always waited for them to start splitting bombs and rockets before firing on them. It was certainly not an easy task. One must really be animated with the greatest patriotism and love of the people to show such sang-froid and heroism.

"Modern anti-aircraft defense, besides, asks for faultless co-ordination among the various units. If this is not realized, one cannot hit fast-flying planes. Not only did the Vietnamese gunners show extraordinary heroism, but their technique also proved of a high level.

"Debouching unexpectedly from behind the hillocks and rocky islets, the Yankee planes poured down bombs and rockets; but in two shakes of a duck's tail, two of them were hit. This testified to the competence of the commanders and the celerity of the gunners, and especially to the perfect co-ordination between the soldiers and their officers.

"I also witnessed the splendid unity between the army and the population. Together with the soldiers, men and women of the people's militia fired off their individual weapons. While the fight was raging, people went and cut boughs from the trees and brought them to the gunners to help them camouflage themselves."
"I saw the second plane hit crash into the sea; the Yankee airmen lost their spirit, climbed to a higher altitude, circled high above and at some distance from the town, then turned tail."

At Vinh, Hong Gai, Lach Truong, at the mouth of the river Gianh, everywhere the aggressors ran into the same kind of riposte — calm, resolute, effective. Towards the end of the afternoon, after the last wave of planes which had attacked Vinh around 4:30 p.m. had turned tail, a count was made; the bag was quite impressive:

One plane downed off Cua Hoi (Nghe An province).
One plane downed at Ha Tu, north of Hong Gai.
One plane downed at Cua Giua, near Hong Gai.
Two planes downed at Lach Truong, Thanh Hoa province.
One plane downed at Huong Son, Ha Tinh province.
One plane downed at Ly Hoa, Quang Binh province.
One plane downed at the mouth of the river Day (1).

Three more planes had been damaged and, as we have said, one pilot had been captured. Probably, neither Johnson nor McNamara had foreseen such a disaster. The airmen who came back on the "Constellation" and the "Ticonderoga" were certainly in lower spirits than when they left them a few hours

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(1) It was possible that other planes had fallen into the sea while trying to rejoin their carriers.
ago. How proud they were when they took off from their carriers, "intoxicated with heroic and brutal dreams":

"With ponderous grace, the huge aircraft-carrier heels over and turns into the wind, its creamy bow wave cresting across the blue-green waters of the South China Sea. On the flight deck, a jet fighter strains at the catapult bridle. The plane's tail pipe belches fire, the engine whine howls to banshee pitch. Then a yellow-jerseyed catapult officer casts his upraised arm downward; the catapult vomits steam and the plane hurtles skyward like a falcon unhooded." (Newsweek of August 17, 1964).
A Chicago Sun Times cartoon is indicative of the spirit in which the Yankee pilots had been educated: under a shower of bombs and rockets, a Vietnamese peasant, clothed in rags and armed with a slingshot of the kind used by little school-boys, is shown running away as fast as his legs can carry him.

The airmen of the Seventh Fleet had thought that they would have to deal with poor creatures, frightened out of their wits, who would start scampering off like mice when they saw Skyhawks coming down on them, spitting fire and death. They had instead run into real men.

A big surprise was in store for lieutenant Everett Alvarez: before one could say Jack Robinson, his plane was hit smack on the nose and he had to bail out and make a parachute descent over this famous Ha Long Bay whose marvels he could admire for the first time. Another surprise was awaiting him when he found himself in the water: hardly had he time to recover himself when a boat was on him, with armed people shouting to him to surrender. Everywhere people were ready. Here, even fishermen carry weapons and stand ready to shoot at and to jump on the first enemy to appear. Fishermen who, rather than run for shelter when he, Alvarez, and his colleagues
showered bombs and rockets on Hong Gai, had stayed at their posts, and fired on ultra-modern planes with their rifles!

Poor Alvarez! He had thought he would come back a hero, and here he was, a prisoner. Ah! If he could only have a look at this town he had thought he would smash to smithereens. If only he could pass along the streets, the wharves, and before the factories; he would have seen something surprising: everywhere men and women in arms; beside the cranes, on the roofs of houses, on the ships and launches, on the hillsides, everywhere, rifles, submachine-guns, machine-guns pointing skywards! Alvarez would have understood what had happened to him, the strange feeling that had crept into him when on his diving plane he heard the whine of all kinds of projectiles, in addition to flak bursts. All these workers and fishermen that he had imagined without power to react, had all shot at the planes coming down on them instead of taking to their heels. Alvarez would have immediately realized what had happened: shots had come from everywhere. From the ack-ack guns, the motor launches, and the fishing boats, from the machine-gunners posted on hillocks and roof-tops, from the workers hiding behind their cranes and lorries, had come a thick flight of missiles weaving a deadly net around the planes. And it was the Yankee supermen who had taken fright. At the exhibition of the remnants of the planes, held in Hanoi, one saw many a foreign military attaché linger before the
small bullet holes visible on the carcasses of Skyhawks. Any weapon could serve, if handled by real men.

* * *

THE battery under Luyen's command was ready when the alert sounded. It received the first planes diving on Hong Gai with a steady fire. None of them was hit but the flight was obliged to scatter. The planes regrouped and again swooped down on the town, dropping bombs and launching rockets. The anti-aircraft batteries were their special targets. All around the gunners, bullets and shell splinters whizzed; the roar of the plane engines and the crash of the guns were deafening. Luyen, standing motionless like a statue outside the casemate, his eyes glued on the planes, seemed to see nothing besides them. From time to time, he raised his arm, then cast it downward, shouting, "Fire!" White flak bursts surrounded the planes which hastily went up.

"Thanh, you're wounded," someone said, and was about to bandage the gunner's wound. "Never mind, I'll get it dressed later," said Thanh. His sight was dimmed by blood trickling from his forehead. He tried to wipe away the blood. It now smeared his whole face, and there was a taste of salt in his mouth. But he paid no more attention to his wound for here was a plane diving straight on his battery. Fire! Before he could press the trigger, however, the plane had gone up again. It took another dive. This time
it was hit, for a long trail of black smoke gushed from the fuselage and the plane started zig-zagging like a drunkard. Cheers and clappings came from all sides: he had made a bull’s eye!

Luyen and Thanh were only young adolescents, and Hong Gai was their first fight. But like their elders at Dien Bien Phu, they were ready.

* * *

At Vinh, battery commander Cat used to say to his men:

“Like all our comrades in the Army, we must avenge our Southern brothers. But it is incumbent on us to fulfil a special duty: defend the land of the Nghe An Soviets, defend Uncle Ho’s native place!”

During the fight, he alternated his commands, “Fire!” with exclamations, “Let’s defend Uncle Ho’s native place!” and stood undisturbed amidst the flying bullets and bomb splinters. After the first wave of planes had made off, he and his men immediately set to clean their guns, in anticipation of another attack, discussing the while. He asked Xiong, one of the men, “How’s everything with you?”

“I had a minute of emotion, comrade, when the planes roared down on me, but after I had fired the first shot at them, everything became all right!”

*Vinl is the provincial capital of Nghe An which was the seat in 1930 of a workers’ and peasants’ insurrection, called the Nghe An Soviet. It is President Ho Chi Minh’s native province.
"The Yanks," said Cat, "are like a nasty dog. If you take fright, it will run at you, but if you give it a kick on the nose, it'll run away."

Hours passed. Someone said, "They won't come back. We've clipped their wings."

"Don't be too sure of yourself," said Cat, "They want to catch us napping. Keep a vigilant watch!"

In fact, at 4:30 p.m. another wave of nine planes turned up. Diving on their targets, they ran into even heavier and more precise anti-aircraft fire: the gunners had drawn precious experience from the previous engagement. The attackers had to give up their set targets and turn on the ack-ack batteries. All around the gun emplacements, shells and bombs dug big craters. Cat remained standing, a red flag in his hand, directing the fire of his battery. Suddenly, an acute pain shot through his shoulder: a splinter had penetrated deep into his flesh. Blood oozed out, but he did not turn a hair. When the planes had gone up again, his comrades dressed his wound, then fighting was resumed. Cat's wound soon started bleeding again. His comrades begged him to come down into the shelter, but he roared, "Nonsense! Watch out, they are coming down again. Angle... Inclination... Fire!"

A volley was sent up. Cat shouted: "Let's defend Uncle Ho's native place!"

A shell exploded close to the casemate. A splinter punctured Cat's thigh. He collapsed, but clutching the edge of the casemate, he stood up again: "Let
nobody abandon his post! We must defend Uncle Ho's native place to the last drop of our blood!” The planes took another dive. Cat's voice was again heard: “Angle... Inclination... Fire!” and his hand was seen raising and lowering the red flag. With each salvo, the gunners shouted in chorus, “Let's defend Uncle Ho's native place!”

When the attack ended, Cat, his face livid, his clothes wet with blood, collapsed on the ground, and was taken to hospital. He had held out to the very last second.

* * *

On seeing Bui Ty's junk gliding on the calm waters of the Bay of Ha Long on this sunny day of August 5, one would think it was carrying tourists. But it was Ty and his mates on patrol duty along the coast. No sooner had they seen planes flying close to the surface of the sea than they opened fire on them with their light machine-guns. For a junk to provoke reprisals on the part of modern planes, means to condemn itself to be the target of deadly attacks. But that day, Ty and his comrades didn't have a second's hesitation firing at every plane which seemed within the range of their arms. Nor did anybody on the boats moored in the port hesitate to do so.

A small coaster was approaching Hong Gai when the planes turned up. Immediately, machine-guns and submachine-guns were set on deck and joined their
fire to that of other arms all over the town. The planes
took the boat for target. The pilot tightly grasped the
helm and steered the boat on a zigzag course to avoid
projectiles. Suddenly, he felt a piercing pain in his
leg, which a bullet had punctured. He clenched his
teeth, clutched at his wheel, and remained at his post
to the last minute. Nguyen Sinh — that was his
name — 22 years old, was a native of Haiphong and
the son of a worker. When the battle was over and
people came to congratulate him, he said: "My father
often tells me about his miserable life as a workman
in pre-revolutionary days. He was illiterate, whereas
I have been able to go through the ten forms of
secondary school. I know what I owe the Revolution.
I shall defend it to the end."

Truong Son was even younger. He had been in the
army only since Feb. 1964; only six months of
training before his first battle. He was in charge
of telephone liaison between headquarters and one of
the batteries. Seeing his commanders and elders per-
fectly calm under the attacks of the planes made him
feel completely reassured. An explosion suddenly
threw him on the ground. The battery commander
cried to him," Son, are you wounded?" Son passed
his hand over his face: his nose was bleeding. "It's
nothing, comrade" he said, "I can go on".

But now he heard nothing in his earphone. The
wires had been out. Bullets were whizzing; the bomb
explosions were deafening. Leaving his shelter, Son
crawled out and made the repair. I could imagine
the Chicago Sun Times cartoonist, referred to above;
making the acquaintance of those Vietnam People's
Armymen; they were by no means the frightened starvelings he had tried to represent them to be. They all had something to fight for, something which the airmen taking off from the huge carriers of the Seventh Fleet had not.

* * *

Could one understand the determination shown by sailor Hang and his friend Dieu if one did not know the story of their lives? They had been in the same unit for some time, with this common feature that neither of them knew his precise age. The reason was that both had lost their parents, who had starved to death under the colonial regime, in the year of the great famine, 1945, when they were mere kiddies. Of that year, they kept identical reminiscences: the interminable days without a grain of rice in their bellies, the weary hours spent rummaging in garbage heaps in the hope of finding something they could eat, their parents, brothers, sisters collapsing on the roadside, dying of hunger, their bodies but bags of bones and their legs swollen with oedema. Those common recollections made them inseparable.

Hang began the fight without his pal, Dieu having gone ashore. He had fired several volleys when a bullet pierced through his right thigh, completely paralysing his leg. At that very moment, his gun got jammed. Under normal circumstances, a quick jump would take him over to the other side for the necessary repair. This time, he had to crawl round the gun
mounting to the place where the repair had to be made then come back to his post in the same way. He resumed his firing. Another bullet injured his left leg. Clinging to his gun, Hang said to himself, "A sailor ought to die by his weapon".

For his part, Dieu had grown jittery when he saw that the fight had begun without him. He rushed to the port, jumped aboard a boat and rowed with all his strength. As soon as he was on board his ship, he darted towards his gun and, seeing the puddle of blood on the flooring, was aware that his friend Hang had been wounded. The latter could no longer stand up; Dieu took his place. Suddenly, a blinding flash; a terrible pain came shooting up his side. Dieu was about to cry out but checked himself. Slipping his hand under his shirt, he felt a bit of his bowels sticking out, tucked it into his belly and resumed his shooting. When the fight was over, both friends were found lying close to their gun, and later, they found themselves in the same hospital ward.

When asked about the motive behind their heroic conduct, both had the same answer: If we left the imperialists free to subjugate once again our people and our land; our children would again have to rummage in garbage heaps for their food**.

**

CHILDREN searching refuse heaps for food, vagabonds wandering in long files on the roads, millions of people penned up behind the barbed wire.
of “strategic hamlets”, patriots tortured, disem­bowelled by tens of thousands — all this came to the minds of the Vietnamese fighters with the dismal roar of the Yankee jets. But they thought also of the glorious battles of Cao Bang and Dien Bien Phu, of the Yankee helicopters downed by their Southern brothers, of the millions of women, old folk and children storm­ing the strategic hamlets. Could men like Johnson and McNamara ever understand what put such spirit into such young girls as Bich Nga, Thu Thuy, Thi Mën, Thi Vinh?

Bich Nga was playing with the children entrusted to her care when the air raid signal sounded. She was in charge of the kindergarten under the Hong Gai provincial committee: 18 kiddies, who started crying and getting frightened when they heard the roar of the planes and the explosions of the bombs. Calmly, assisted by a friend, the young girl took two children in her arms and carried them over to the air shelter reserved for the kindergarten. The shelter was not far away, only a hundred metres, but there was a fairly steep slope on the way. Sweating, she and her friend made the trip several times, while bullets were whizzing and bombs exploding. Once in the shelter, the kiddies, feeling secure, started playing. Bich Nga’s calmness had not left her for a second.

Thu Thuy was working on the ground floor of the Hong Gai post-office when the planes came. She went up immediately to the telephone exchange room upstairs, remembering that her friend Thi Mën was still a novice in the work. At the other end of the wire, gunners were shouting, “Hullo, don’t ring off, try to
hold the line, we must remain in communication.”—
“Don’t worry, comrade gunners, I shall remain at my
post to the end. You just shoot down as many of these
planes as possible!” And Thi Mên, with the help of
her friend Thu Thuy, calmly went on with her work.
A few days ago, they had heard a talk on the heroic
fight of our Southern compatriots, who were downing
planes and helicopters every day, Thu Thuy whispered
in the ear of her comrade:
“Go down to the shelter, I can do the work alone”.
“But if something should happen to you,” said
Thi Mên, “who would maintain the communications?”
And both had stayed on. One could imagine their
joy when they heard the headquarters’ communication
to the various units: two planes had been downed,
the rest had turned tail. That was their greatest
reward.
Thi Vinh, aged 20, had a job which was by no
means a soft one: directing traffic at the most
important crossroads of the town, just before the
State Department Store. Hardly had the alert sound-
ed when the planes appeared. On the roadway, on the
pavements, vehicles and people were crowding.
Calmly, Thi Vinh directed the people to the shelters,
then climbed onto the dais placed in the middle of
the crossroads to regulate the traffic. The planes
dived in a sinister roar, bullets and splinters were
flying on every side. Thi Vinh calmly went on with
her duty and her courageous attitude reassured many
a person who otherwise would have fallen into a
panic. When the crowd had entirely scattered, she
went and locked the door of the State store. Together
with her comrades of the security service, she went her rounds in the streets of the town during the whole time that the attack lasted.

At Vinh, it was market day; from every corner of the province had come carts and boats laden with goods. Thousands of bikes were scattered about on the market place. Going to the shelters, their owners wondered what would happen to their property. But the security service was there; under bombs and rockets, men and women put the bikes under shelter and when the raid ended, handed them back to their owners.

Everywhere the security services had functioned during the whole time of the air raids. The first attack of the planes set ablaze a shop of the Thong Nhat saw-mill in Vinh. Immediately, workers came out of their shelters to salvage the machines. The chief-engineer and workers of the Vinh power station stayed at their posts to ensure the functioning of the plant; all lines cut were immediately repaired.

The American attacks had met not only with an army which was ready to wage a resolute riposte, but also with a whole nation, a whole people who were ready and kept a sharp look-out. The day before the raid on Vinh a delegate of an international body, stopping in the town and seeing people dig trenches, said to them, "Why waste your efforts, the American government is so attached to peace!" The following day, he was the first to ask for a good place in the shelters. If there were still people in the world who kept a naive belief in the will for peace of Kennedy, Johnson and their likes, one could not count the
Vietnamese people among them. While some people were lending a complacent ear to Johnson's blether: “We still seek no wider war. Peace is the only purpose of the course we pursue,”* the Vietnamese people got ready to give a worthy reception to the Yankee planes and commandos. Here, everyone knows the price that must be paid if one wants to defend one's national independence and safeguard one's freedom, when imperialism is still reigning over one part of the globe.

* Johnson's speech on television (Aug. 4) and in Syracuse (Aug. 6).
WHENEVER the president of such a nation as the United States addresses himself to the world public, or his delegate pleads a cause before an international assembly, one is tempted to believe them, for people of such importance can hardly be expected to stoop to lies. However, when Messrs. Johnson and Stevenson talked about the U.S. Seventh Fleet being the victim of an attack by North Vietnamese P.T. boats, many were the press commentators and people of good faith the world over who asked themselves: “Attack the Seventh Fleet with small P.T. boats? Who would be rash enough to do so?” The details supplied by the American Defense Secretary only caused incredulity: according to him, the North Vietnamese P.T. boats had been sighted as early as 7:30 p.m.; they had begun the engagement at 9:30 p.m. and the fight had lasted until 1:30 a.m. of the following day.

Thus, a few coast-guard boats, of small tonnage and short range of action, had ventured on the high seas where they were deprived of the protection of shore batteries, to confront for several hours on end a naval formation which was one of the most powerful in the world. For the Seventh Fleet comprises 125 vessels of all tonnage, among them three aircraft-carriers, one anti-sub aircraft-carrier, and about
thirty destroyers. It has besides about 650 planes and its effectives amount to 60,000 men. It is divided into five task forces, each centered around an aircraft-carrier. The following ships were involved in the Aug. 5 attack:

— Aircraft-carrier “Constellation”, 66,500 tons, 4,600 men, 90 to 108 planes on board, 319 metres long, 33 knots, four 127 mm. guns and four Terrier launching pads with 80 missiles;

— Aircraft-carrier “Ticonderoga”, 33,100 tons, 3,300 men, 80 planes, 276 metres long, 33 knots;

— Destroyer “Turner Joy”, 2,870 tons, 338 men, three 127 mm. guns, four 76 mm. guns, four torpedoes, two MK. II missiles;

— Destroyer “Maddox”, 2,200 tons, 345 men, six 127 mm. guns, six torpedoes, one helicopter. Launched in 1964, it has an ultramodern electronic equipment.

A naval formation of “extraordinary fire power and mobility”, said Newsweek. On the evening of Aug. 4, in the Gulf of North Vietnam, were deployed the two task forces Constellation and Ticonderoga: the aircraft-carrier “Constellation” with the destroyers “Preston”, “Fechteler”, “Maddox”, “Turner Joy”, and the frigate “Gridley”; the “Ticonderoga” with the destroyers “Samuel More”, “Edison”, “Harry Hubbard” and “Berkeley”.

It was against that powerful formation that the small North Vietnamese P.T. boats, it was pretended, had clashed:

“As President and Commander-in-Chief, it is my duty to the American people to report that renewed
hostile actions against U.S. ships on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin have required me to order the military forces of the U.S. to take action in reply."

In spite of the solemnity with which President Johnson expressed himself, his declaration was received by many people with scepticism. That a few sparrows should go and challenge a flight of falcons would sound too much like a fable.

In fact, during the night of Aug. 4, there had been a great bustle in the area mentioned; flares had illuminated a vast area; planes had circled above the U.S. vessels, which had fired several salvoes. But when American officials were asked to produce at least a photo evidence of the P.T. boat attack, or some remnant of the attacking vessels sunk, all that ultramodern detection apparatus was unable to supply the least proof. It then came to everybody's mind that the United States, besides super-weapons, also detains the secret of dramatic stage setting, Hollywood fashion; the "second incident in the Gulf of Tonkin" irresistibly evokes the explosion of the Yankee battleship "Maine" in the port of Havana in March 1898, a timely explosion which made it possible for Yankee imperialism to trigger off the Spanish-American war and lay hands on the Spanish colonies: Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines.

World public opinion had not let itself be taken in. From everywhere, ordinary people asked President Johnson the following question: What right have American warships to conduct "routine" patrol some ten thousand kilometres away from the American
PROVOCATIONS BY THE U.S.S. MADDOX IN THE TERRITORIAL WATERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM FROM JULY 31 TO AUGUST 2, 1964

Withdrawal route of the U.S.S. Maddox

August 2, 07.30 hrs. Provocation and harassing activities against fishing boats near Hon Me Island

Night of August 1, 1964
Provocation with use of lights and acts of intimidation against fishing boats

August 1, 1964, 15.00 hrs
Provocation at Hon Mat Island

August 1, 1964, 14.30 hrs
Provocation and acts of intimidation against fishing boats
PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA

At 14.30 hrs August 1, 1964
Provocation at 'Hon Mai Island

August 1, 1964, 14.30 hrs
Provocation and acts of intimidation against fishing boats

Night of July 31. Provocation with use of lights on several occasions

July 31, 1964, 05.30 hrs
Provocation between Mui Doc and Hon Gio, five miles off Mui Doc

LEGEND

- Itinerary of the U.S.S. Maddox
- Limits of the territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam
- Places where the U.S.S. Maddox engaged in provocation
- Area where the U.S.S. Maddox encountered patrol boats of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam

Scale 1:1,000,000
coast? What would Mr. Johnson say if some country were to send its fleet patrolling in the Caribbean Sea?

In a televised speech, Mr. Johnson tried to supply an answer:

“Our government is united in its determination to take all necessary measures in support of freedom and in defence of peace, in South-East Asia.”

But Asian, African, and Latin American opinion retorted with one voice: Who gave the American government the right to interfere in South-East Asian affairs?

And by the way, who gave it the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Congo, to “defend” the “freedom” of Tshombé, to give support to the Khmers Serei against Prince Sihanouk, and to the dictators of Venezuela and Colombia against their peoples? And just think of some power wanting to send arms and “advisers” to defend the freedom of the twenty million American negroes!

On Aug. 6, in his Syracuse speech, President Johnson again tried to give some justification to the aggression by Yankee planes:

“For ten years the American president and the American people have been actively concerned with threats to the peace and the security of the peoples of South-East Asia from the Communist government of North Vietnam.”

What maternal solicitude for the Asian peoples! And before the United Nations, Mr. Stevenson complained of the aggressivity of North Vietnam—a real menace to the poor United States! The Yankee
Tom Thumb threatened by the North Vietnamese ogre — what a beautiful theme for a story-teller! If one was to believe Mr. Johnson, the American lamb would not give in before the threats of the North Vietnamese wolf:

"Firmness in the right is indispensable today for peace. That firmness will always be measured. Its mission is peace.

"There is no threat to any peaceful power from the U.S.A. But there can be no peace by aggression and immunity from reprisals."

And the American president went back to the source of the events:

"President Eisenhower sought, and President Kennedy sought, the same objective I still seek: that the governments of South-East Asia honor the international agreements which apply in the area that those governments leave each other alone, that they resolve their differences peacefully, that they devote their talent to bettering the life of their peoples by working against poverty and diseases and ignorance."

Once again, many thanks for the paternal advice given to Asian governments and for the constant concern shown by Yankee presidents for the welfare of the disinherited peoples. But let's put a stop to pomposous tirades and let the facts speak for themselves. Let's briefly recall that Eisenhower started the process, ten years ago, by reinforcing the American military mission in Saigon, whereas the Geneva Agreements strictly prohibited any introduction of foreign military personnel into Vietnam; that
Kennedy greatly strengthened this body of "advisers", going the length of setting up an American military command; that the American weapons introduced into South Vietnam, and the American military bases built there, always in violation of the Geneva Agreements, have cost billions of dollars, that after failing to suppress the South Vietnam patriotic and popular movement through savage repression, the Kennedy administration unleashed a so-called "special" war which is still going on; a war in which every means has been put to use: helicopters, amphibious carriers, napalm, toxic chemicals, together with the penning up of the whole rural population in so-called "strategic" hamlets. All these facts are quite well-known, so we won't give a detailed account of them. But it is necessary to recall them, in order to realize what peace and freedom mean in the mouths of American leaders. Behind the speeches of the American presidents, loom the sinister shadows of Diem and his thugs, and of planes and helicopters showering napalm bombs and toxic chemicals on peaceful villages.

However, there exists one fact that the Yankee presidents, in spite of their solence, have not been able to foresee: the indomitable heroism of a people determined to remain free. Thus Lyndon Johnson, on coming to office, inherited a situation described in the following terms by a C.I.A. report of June 8, 1964:

"The guerilla war in South Vietnam is in its fifth year and no end appears in sight (...) There remains serious doubt that victory can be won, and the situation remains very fragile. If large-scale U.S.
support continues and if further political deterioration within South Vietnam is prevented, at least a prolonged stalemate can be attained.

"There is also the possibility that internal political evolution and new international developments may lead to a kind of negotiated settlement based on neutralization."

To obtain at best a prolonged stalemate, and that at the price of financial and military effort relentlessly pursued for ten years and still to be greatly intensified. One must own that the result is not a brilliant one, mostly in full electoral period. This means the failure of the whole neo-colonial policy of the United States, a failure which may endanger its political and economic domination in Latin America, and its attempts at taking the place of decaying old colonialisms in Africa and Asia. Helicopters are downed by the guerillas in South Vietnam; strategic hamlets are destroyed by a population roused to revolt. In spite of the setting up of a Yankie military command and the presence of 25,000 American "advisers", the Saigon troops have been forced to evacuate two-thirds of the territory and, in the first six months of 1964 alone, lost over 82,000 men. All military plans — Staley plan, McNamara plan — have gone bankrupt. On the political plane, the puppets have proved unable to regroup reactionary forces and are at daggers drawn.

The Johnson administration, driving tandem with Khanh and the Dai Viet harnessed to its carriage, had thought it could, on the one hand, keep a tight hold on the military, and on the other, control a political
force. But that was nursing a lot of illusions about the real strength of those puppets. The so-called Dai Viet party was but a pack of adventurers jockeying for power: Nguyen Ton Hoan, Dang Van Sung, Phan Huy Quat, Ha Thuc Ky, etc. Khanh, as befits a military man, didn’t want to share his power, and the Dai Viet was quickly ousted. Meanwhile, military disasters succeeded one another, and in the towns and cities, students, Buddhists and all other sections of the population openly showed their discontent and demanded a change of regime. After Diem, what was the worth of Khanh? In early August, the American Newsweek wrote:

“A top U.S. official said: ‘We must give Khanh six months to see what he can do.’ Last week, the six months were up and about the best that could be said for Khanh’s performance, is that he managed to hang on to power, a feat in itself. But rumours of new coups are in the air, relations with the U.S. have taken on a strained tone, and doubts are growing about Khanh’s ability to direct the complex military and social struggle against the Communist guerrillas. (...) Khanh, in a secret meeting with his generals last week, is said to have agreed with their consensus that the war could never be won unless the U.S. can somehow be talked or pushed into striking hard at North Vietnam.

“What Khanh must do, in short, is defeat the Communists and achieve a social revolution at one and the same time. To accomplish all this in half a year would take almost a miracle and Nguyen Khanh is no miracle man.”
Khanh was no miracle man, not any more than Diem had been. The American neo-colonial policy had got bogged down in South Vietnam, militarily and politically. What could be done about it? “Deeply attached to peace, we seek no wider war,” Mr. Johnson had been crying from the rooftops, leaving Senator Goldwater to demand the use of A bombs in South Vietnam. Meanwhile, American services worked out plans and made preparations. The commandos sent to North Vietnam for the past several years had all been captured, most of the time by the popular militia. The same fate had befallen those sent from Formosa. In early 1964, the American press made public Plan Rostow-6 which included:

- the blockade of the port of Haiphong;
- the bombing of several coastal regions of North Vietnam; and, if need be,
- the bombing of Hanoi.

On June 1, in Honolulu, forty high-ranking U.S. officers held a conference with Dean Rusk and McNamara to discuss the extension of the war to North Vietnam, with a view to redressing the critical situation in South Vietnam. It was also decided at this meeting that aero-naval forces would be concentrated in the Gulf of North Vietnam for the purpose of intimidation. On July 7, Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, the highest-ranking military personality in the United States and the promoter of “special” warfare, arrived in Saigon as... ambassador. The tenth of the same month, the New-York Herald Tribune revealed that concrete and minute plans for
the bombing of North Vietnam were ready, and on the 13, U.P.I. confirmed that bombing raids and a naval blockade had been seriously envisaged.

On the night of July 30, naval units shelled the islands of Hon Me and Hon Ngu, a few miles off the coast of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces. On Aug. 1, T.28 bombers coming from Laos strafed the frontier post at Nam Can and the village of Noong De, in Nghe An province. On Aug. 2, AD-6 and T.28 bombers, also coming from Laos, again bombed Nam Can. Meanwhile, from July 31 to August 2, the destroyer "Maddox" penetrated deeply into the territorial waters of North Vietnam, perpetrating several provocations. It was driven out of North Vietnamese waters by P.T. boats. On Aug. 3, at 11:00 p.m. four small vessels escorted by two bigger ships opened fire with 40-mm. guns and 12.7-mm. machine-guns on the locality of Ron, in Quang Binh province. On Aug. 5, it was the big raids on Vinh, Hong Gai, Lach Truong, and the mouth of the river Gianh.

On Aug. 6, McNamara, in the course of two press conferences and a televised interview, declared that reinforcements continued to be sent to the Far-East, including:

— a group of aircraft-carriers from the First Squadron (the aircraft-carrier "Ranger" of 60,000 tons left San Francisco on Aug. 5);
— more fighter-bombers and interceptors for South Vietnam;
— fighter-bombers for Thailand;
— squadrons of interceptors and fighter-bombers for advanced bases in the Pacific;
— an anti-sub naval task force for the South China Sea; and
— “specially selected” forces and marines ready for action.

Why all these reinforcements if it was a matter of replying to an attack by small coast-guard boats? Senator Goldwater's enthusiastic approval — "I am sure that every American will subscribe to the actions outlined in the President's statement" — and the active preparations of the U.S. armed forces suggested that the American government was getting seriously prepared for an extension of the war, and that the Aug. 5 raids had long been premeditated and minutely prepared.

On Sept. 18, the Seventh Fleet again framed a sham battle off the coast of North Vietnam, and Washington leaders again raised an outcry about the "new incident in the Gulf of Tonkin." But neither Johnson nor McNamara could give any detailed information on the time and place of that "engagement." One thing was certain: the Seventh Fleet would continue cruising in the area, with a view to new provocations.

It is evident that the American policy of aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam will be continued, as long as American armed forces are stationed in South Vietnam. But it is also certain that new aggressions on the D.R.V. shall meet with even more resolute riposte.

The Johnson administration's words and actions irresistibly evoke those of Hitler in the years that preceded 1939.
ALTERNATING provocations and threats with promises of peace, Hitler succeeded in 1938 in making the governments of Western Europe give way and the Czech bourgeois government capitulate. The Western bourgeoisie presented the concessions made to Hitler as an earnest of peace; in fact those concessions constituted a decisive encouragement for Hitler to trigger off the Second World War.

Mr. Johnson isn’t so lucky. He finds himself facing not a bourgeoisie ready to bow to tanks and planes, but a whole people determined to safeguard their independence and freedom. In 1945, the Vietnamese people had only a few thousand old rifles, and no war experience; the country had hardly recovered from a famine which had carried off two million people; the newly-established government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had in its coffers only 1,250,720 piastres in all. China was still under the sway of Chiang Kai-shek, and Vietnam was encircled on all sides by the imperialist world. All this had not prevented the Vietnamese people from resisting victoriously to colonialist aggression.

At present, the Vietnamese people have behind them an experience of nine years of armed struggle against French troops, and ten years of struggle against the Yankee imperialists in the South; the Democratic
Republic of Vietnam's economic and defence means are no longer those of 1945. The world is no longer that of 1945, still less that of 1938. The D.R.V. government, like the whole of the Vietnamese people, is always ready to negotiate, but it is pure illusion to think that one can intimidate it by brandishing rockets and atomic bombs, and that one can bring the Vietnamese people to their knees; in April 1964, at the first session of its third legislature, the D.R.V. National Assembly unanimously voted a resolution which said:

"If the American imperialists and their lackeys are rash enough to extend the war to North Vietnam, all our compatriots of the North will rise up as one man and, together with our compatriots of the South, inflict total defeat upon them; the peoples of the socialist countries, the peoples of the world, including the people of the United States who have until now protested against the American aggressive policy, will support still more actively the Vietnamese people in their just struggle."

For its part, the South Vietnam Liberation National Front issued on August 7, 1964 a declaration which said in substance:

"If the American imperialists and their henchmen are reckless enough to run headlong into a dangerous military adventure, and do not abandon their plan to carry the war to North Vietnam, the 14 million South Vietnamese people, united as one man with their brothers of the North, will resolutely struggle
until final victory and the complete annihilation of the American aggressors and their lackeys in the whole country.

"To liberate the South and defend the North, such is the unshakable will of the whole Vietnamese people, in the North and in the South.

"If the American imperialists and their henchmen persist in their plan to extend the war to Cambodia and Laos, the whole Vietnamese people will closely unite with the troops and peoples of those brother countries to annihilate the enemy."

Coming from a people who for twenty years have been fighting arms in hands for their independence, those words are not empty talk. The quick and vigorous riposte to the air attacks of Aug. 5 is the best evidence of it. Thenceforth, Washington knows that the Vietnamese people are not to be intimidated, and what an extension of the war would cost.

By attacking North Vietnam, did Mr. Johnson succeed at least in consolidating somewhat the puppet regime of the South? The result was the contrary of what he had expected. The Aug. 5 failure was a serious shock to puppet morale and a big stimulus for the struggle of the Southern popular masses. The Saigon troops have completely lost the initiative, in spite of their superiority in number and equipment, in spite of the taking over of command by Yankee officers, in spite of the influx of planes and other arms. Continuous demonstrations have been held by the city population. In spite of the fact that Khanh had a state of emergency proclaimed on Aug. 7, himself nominated "President of the Republic" on
Aug. 16, and a "constitutional charter" issued to concentrate power in his own hands, hundreds of thousands of people, in Saigon, Hue, Da Nang and Qui Nhon, turned out in the streets, shouting: "Down with Khanh's dictatorship!" — "No American interference in our affairs!" — "Down with the Yankee aggressors!" In Da Nang, the Americans fired on the crowd, killing and wounding over one hundred people, but the demonstrations were continued. On August 25, only nine days after he had had himself appointed "President of the Republic", Khanh was forced to relinquish that post and to revise the "constitutional charter"; power was handed over to a triumvirate composed of three generals — Minh, Khanh and Khiem. On Aug. 29, under pretext of illness, Khanh fled to Dalat after having appointed Nguyen Xuan Onh acting prime minister. Vainly did the U.S. government reaffirm its support for Khanh. The people’s struggle continued. Other generals were jockeying for power. On Sept. 5, over one million Saigon people attended the funerals of two demonstrators who had been killed. Khanh sacked a whole string of generals and other high-ranking officers. On Sept. 13, four battalions of the Seventh Division occupied the main government building in Saigon without firing a single shot. The putsch was directed by three generals: Khiem, Phat, and Duc. Faced with Washington’s opposition, the latter were compelled to give way. Khanh came back to power. But was there still a power in Saigon? Generals Ton and Phat were arrested. Many officers refused to obey Khanh’s
orders; popular committees were set up in Hue and Qui Nhon which seemed to ignore the central administration.

Taylor no longer knew which way to turn. He left for Washington and came back a few days later to find the situation even worse. Neo-colonial policy and special warfare plans looked all right on Washington desks. But what a terrible snafu on the spot! With what kinds of arms to fight the guerillas? What man should one stick to, politically? Khanh, Minh, Duc, Khiem... all of them were but straws for a drowning man. One of these days, the necessary lesson should be drawn from those ten years of neo-colonial policy and those few years of special warfare.

Washington, sinking into quicksands, has sought an escape by rushing forward. It has intensified the war in Laos, attacked Cambodia, unleashed its planes against North Vietnam. Everywhere, it has faced, not submissiveness of the kind shown by the Czech bourgeoisie in 1938, but a bronze wall. Everywhere, united behind their leaders, the Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian peoples are determined to check its aggression.

Perhaps, one could throw dust in people's eyes by bringing in the United Nations, as in the Congo, or in Korea? The scheme, however, fizzled out, for the D.R.V. government refused to recognize any U.N. competence in Vietnamese affairs, and so did the Cambodian government concerning Cambodian affairs.

Could one try to involve one's allies of the "free" world in this hornets' nest? During the whole second half of August, Johnson sent Cabot Lodge on a tour
in European capitals. An outright refusal from France, a more polite reception from other countries—but not a single precise commitment. With the capitalists, it is a rule that they won’t stir a finger unless they smell some profit. In Vietnam, they had already burnt their fingers. Finally, it was from the most insignificant allies, those who could hardly stand on their feet, that came the most noisy offer to help: the Philippines, Formosa, South Korea.

Couldn’t Washington hope at least that world public opinion would be lulled into some kind of torpor, which would permit it to perpetrate its misdeeds on the sly, and escape condemnation? But here also, its plans miscarried. World reaction was immediate.

In the world of 1964, one can’t do violence to a people struggling for their independence and get away with it. Many peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America always remember that it was Vietnam which victoriously inaugurated the armed struggle against colonialism. Everywhere, it is common knowledge that South Vietnam is being used by the United States as a proving ground for methods of warfare and domination which will be applied in other places, should they prove successful. Following the American aggression a roaring tide of protests surged up, coming from Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, Japan, Uruguay, Algiers, Bamako, Cairo, Pakistan, India, Venezuela, Chile, and many other countries. Every Asian, African or Latin American nation felt that the attack was directed against itself.
An Asian country, the D.R.V. is also a socialist one. The governments and peoples of China, the Soviet Union, Albania, Hungary, Rumania, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, Bulgaria, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea immediately voiced vigorous condemnation of the American aggression and warned the United States of the serious consequences of its action.

The Chinese government and people in particular have stressed that to attack the D.R.V. means to attack China, that the two countries are like "the lips and the teeth" and that any attempt on the security of one endangers that of the other. "We shall not look on with folded arms!" the Chinese government has declared, and so have shouted tens of millions of demonstrators in Peking, Shanghai, Canton, Wuhan, Kunming, etc.

Need one recall the enthusiasm which roused the Cuban people on hearing the news of the failure of the American air attack, and the perfect communion which causes Cuban and Vietnamese hearts to beat at the same rhythm? The Cuban ambassador, who was present at Hong Gai, declared: "I have seen with my own eyes Vietnamese comrades shoot down U.S. planes and capture one U.S. pilot. I shall immediately report this to my government so that Cuba may rejoice at this heroic feat of the Vietnamese people in their struggle against American imperialism."

In the imperialist countries, public opinion has not allowed itself to be lulled into inaction. In France,
England, Italy, Austria, Japan, etc., at the call of the Communist parties, meetings were held and protests sent to the U.S. embassies.

In the United States, in spite of the omnipotence of official propaganda, a good part of public opinion was not taken in, and its views were voiced by Senator Morse when the American Congress debated the attack of Aug. 5:

“Our action in Asia today are war-making. (...) All Vietnam is not worth the life of a single American boy.”

It is not possible to give a detailed account of all the manifestations of solidarity and sympathy of the world peoples as regards Vietnam these days. May we simply be allowed to cite those lines written by the Malian ambassador, Birama Traoré, on the visitors’ book, at the exhibition of the remnants of the Yankee planes shot down, held in Hanoi:

“May the solidarity between our peoples manifest itself with even more forcefulness so as to discourage all aggressors and make all aggression impossible. Long live the sacred struggle waged by the whole Vietnamese people for the complete liberation and the unification of Vietnam.”

The lesson of Munich has remained present in the minds of the peoples: one cannot safeguard peace by giving way before blackmail and threats, by yielding before aggression. Only a resolute struggle against imperialism, Yankee imperialism in particular, constitutes the best guarantee of peace. This truth is now so well understood by the peoples that Johnson himself tried to find his account in it when he.