themselves on an old legal text of July 29, 1881, inherited from the French colonialists and Diem’s decree on the press dated October 30, 1955, the new Saigon clique closed down 14 newspapers on the following astonishing grounds: “printing of a photo of Mrs. Nhu in a bath suit in the company of a high-ranking foreign personality”, “denunciation of Diem’s trick on general Ba. Cut who was put to death after having been invited to surrender to the government”, “propaganda in favour of neutralism in brazen opposition to the policy of the ‘Revolutionary Military Council’”. On January 16, 1964, the Saigon Ministry of Information published a six-point regulation applicable to the press and stipulating among other things “the interdiction of all writing likely to favour communism and neutrality and of all ill-willed criticism against anybody”. From now on, what was meant by “democracy in discipline” and “liberty within the framework of security and national defence”, was quite clear.

But that was not all, nor even the essential.

On November 6, Saigon Radio recalled the declarations of U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk about his hopes to see the new government take up arms as soon as possible against the communists with increased vigour.

On November 20, 70 U.S. military advisers conferred with McNamara, Harry Felt and Cabot Lodge in Honolulu on measures to be taken in order to intensify the war in South Vietnam. In pursuance of their decisions, the Saigon new clique took drastic measures.
Searches, raids and arrests were carried out at increasing tempo in the towns. There were 1,000 searches and 50 arrests in Saigon on the night of November 7 alone. On January 17, 1964, workers at the Vinatexco weaving mill, who demanded a wage lift, were savagely repressed: 200 dead and wounded, most of them women. Two battalions, under the command of two U.S. officers, attacked the strikers with bludgeons, tear-gas grenades and fire-hoses spouting liquid toxics. Armoured cars rushed at the crowd.

In the countryside where the so-called strategic hamlets continued to form the framework of the "pacification" work, hostilities increased. From December 26 to December 31, a series of operations, Duc Thang, Dan Thang 101, Phi Dieu, Phuong Hoang Bay, Dai Phong 35... were launched with increased effectives: two divisions for Operation Dai Phong 35. Gen. Stilwell himself commanded Operation Phuong Hoang Bay of December 30, 1963. On January 18, 1964, 3,000 men and 50 planes under the command of Gen. Le Van Kim, chief of general staff, accompanied by many U.S. advisers and even by the British commander of the R.A.F. in the Far East, were engaged against the guerrillas of Thanh Phu (Ben Tre province).

Chemical warfare restarted worse than ever from November 3. The provinces of My Tho, Can Tho, Gia Dinh, Darlac, Camau, etc., were successively visited by planes carrying toxic products. From December 1, 1963 to January 15, 1964, eight sprayings were carried out provoking the contamination of 5,700 persons (including nearly 3,000 children) and the destruction
Of thousands of hectares of crops. On December 23, 1963, in Khanh Binh Dong village alone (Ca Mau province) over 1,000 persons were hit, including 500 children. In the operation of January 8, 1964, at Play Holu (Darlac province) alone the number of victims amounted to 500. In just a few months, thousands of tons of toxic products were introduced into South Vietnam, among them arsenic and by-products, DNP, DNC, etc. By the end of November 1963, many dockers of Tourane were affected just for having handled these products.

The new leaders in Saigon were far from being strangers to the South Vietnamese people*. From their past records, the people knew what they were up to in the future. In their declaration of November 2, these men swore to "remain loyal to the free world and respect the agreements concluded..." Their "No. 1 organic text" of November 4, 1963 stipulated:

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* Duong Van Minh was an officer in the French army under colonialism. Officer in the puppet Bao Dai army during the War of Resistance, he threw in his lot with the Americans since 1954.

Tran Van Don, a former French officer, promoted chief of staff of the Diem armed forces, played a key role in the persecution of Buddhists in 1963.

Ton Thai Dinh, a former French officer, one of Diem's favourites, was known for the sinister part he played as military governor of Saigon in the repression of Buddhists and students.

Nguyen Ngoc Tho (prime minister), a former colonial official and a province chief in the puppet Bao Dai administration during the War of Resistance, was appointed minister then vice-president of the "Republic" under the Diem regime.
Art. 2... the executive and legislative powers are in the hands of the Revolutionary Military Council.

Art. 6. Existing decrees and decisions remain in force temporarily...

All efforts at patching up proved vain. *La Tribune des Nations* of November 8, 1963 noted:

...Thus the tennis match of which Count Sforza spoke would be interrupted only to change ball boys. "Big Minh", as the Americans familiarly called him, calmly resumed his place near the net.

*France Observateur* of November 7 came to the same conclusion:

A few words sum up the situation. They have been uttered by a Vietnamese personality in exile in Paris: "We have passed from the régime of American protectorate to that of direct administration."

The so-called "revolutionary" junta had taken Diem's place. They had also adopted his methods.

However, immediately after the coup d'état, the western agencies gave the alarm. *U.P.I.* of November 6 noted that the attacks had increased by 50 per cent. *Reuters* of November 15 affirmed that in the week from November 7 to 13, the guerillas had launched 1,021 attacks.

There was a rush of alarming news:

A 189,000-gallon petrol depot was set ablaze at Vinh Long (*U.P.I.*, January 7, 1964); 19 dead including a district chief, 69 wounded when the guerillas attacked a landing craft in the South of Saigon (*Reuters*, December 5, 1963);... The armed "Huey" helicopter Stillwell was riding in as an observer was hit six times by a number of bullets during nine strikes against an estimated company of communist troops dug into camouflaged foxholes.
A total of 20 helicopters took part in the operation. Fourteen of them including Stilwell's, were armed with rockets and machine-guns.

The general said, "It was a big day." He said his helicopter "took most of the beating!" (U.P.I. January 1, 1964).

Urgent appeals for blood donations were broadcasted by the U.S. armed forces radio station as casualties poured into Saigon airport (A.P. January 17, 1964).

— Students at the University of Hue are angry over the unexplained removal of the Dean of the Medical Faculty by government order... The students had called a protest demonstration. (Reuter, December 9).

— More than half of 80,000 farmers in Long An province located into strategic villages by the Ngo Dinh Diem regime during 1963 deeply resentful over the disruption of their lives, have fled back to their homes.

Of 219 strategic hamlets originally built in Long An only a scant 20 still are in government hands — the rest have been destroyed or taken over by the Viet Cong. (U.P.I., January 5, 1964).

Summing up the situation in November 1963, Reuter cabled on December 14, 1963:

November was the bloodiest month this year in South Vietnam's guerilla war, and the most disastrous for the government side. The ratio of weapons lost during the month of November for example was about 1,500 against 455 or approximately ten government weapons conceded for every three captured from the Viet Cong... Viet Cong-initiated incidents totalled 3,100 for the month, a high for the year. One week in early November was the heaviest week for the year with 1,021 incidents... The sources said several thousand people had deserted their strategic hamlets in various parts of the country as a result of Viet-Cong attacks or pressure during November...
Although more than 200 hamlets were on the books as having been completed, the number of viable hamlets was much less than Vietnamese statistics given by the former government would indicate.

Among important new developments mentioned by the sources during recent weeks were: the elimination of well over 200 military outposts which were not considered viable or necessary.

Reuter's assessments are still well below the truth. During the month in question, the people's forces caused to the enemy 4,846 dead including 31 Americans, 2,376 wounded including 15 Americans, and 914 war prisoners; dislocated units totalling 5,500 men, threw down 1,079 "strategic hamlets", shot down or damaged 71 planes, destroyed 30 M.113 and M.114 armoured carriers, liberated 32 villages, 685 hamlets and 5 urban centres comprising 500,000 people, took 2,100 weapons including 16 mortars, 47 machine-guns and F.M., tens of tons of equipment and materials, 345 posts and fortified camps including the Hięp Hoa and Cha La camps. Over two million people participated in the demonstrations.

"La Tribune des Nations" of December 13, 1963, wrote:

"During the past two months the Viet Cong have taken enough U.S.-made weapons to launch large-scale attacks with strong effectives. They reign on the Mekong delta as well as in the people's hearts. With Diệm, the defeat appeared imminent. With "Big Minh" and his clique, begins the period of decay.

The enemy did their utmost to try to reverse the situation in December. But in vain. December was marked by a series of resounding victories of the
guerillas chiefly at Bau Co (Tay Ninh province), Gi Tien (Ben Tre province), An Thanh Thuy (My Tho province). Noteworthy was the fact that the people's forces succeeded in storming strongly fortified camps near Can Tho on December 14, in Ca Mau on December 16. From December 11 to December 15, 6 planes were brought down.

In the two last days of 1963, the enemy lost 600 killed and five boats at O Mon; Battalion "Black Tigers" suffered a bitter defeat in Thu Dau Mot; 10 planes were brought down in Tan An.

The year 1964 started with a series of victories for the people's forces. The Second Congress of the L.N.F. was attended by many new delegates of all ideological, religious and social backgrounds and this immense political victory once more shed light on the extreme precariousness of the rotten puppet regime set up by the U.S.A.

In the military field, fighting became still more deadly: 2 platoons annihilated in Tan An on January 3; 100 dead in Bien Hoa where a sub-sector fell on January 4; the next morning, in My Tho, an operation launched with 3,000 men, 47 M. 113 armoured carriers and 20 planes was a fiasco: 250 dead, 4 M. 113 burnt, 2 planes brought down and 10 damaged. On January 6, in Vinh Long, a petrol depot of nearly one million litres was set alight.

The record of the month was but an appalling series of similar defeats, the most bitter of which was undoubtedly suffered on January 17 at Thanh Phu near Ben Tre when the famous "Flying Eagle" tactics (transports of troops by helicopters) was used. That
day 3,000 men supported by over 50 planes and an important flotilla launched a mopping-up operation on the territory of two communes situated on two small coastal islands. The losses were particularly heavy: 5 helicopters brought down; 15 others damaged, a gunboat sunk; 600 men killed and taken prisoner, including 10 U.S. officers and the British commander of the R.A.F. in the Far East.

Those were so many signs of the failure of the new tactics recommended by U.S. officers: withdrawal from some posts, regrouping of troops into mobile units to be engaged in large-scale mopping-up operations with a view to annihilating the bulk of the regular forces of the L.N.F.

Sabotage work within hundreds of “strategic hamlets”, the forced withdrawal from about a hundred posts led to actual disintegration of the power set up by the enemy in the countryside. In towns, the popular movement scored new successes. Tens of thousands of workers went on strike; the repression of strikers of the Vinatexco weaving mill—the most bloody repression of workers recorded in Saigon—deeply angered home and world opinion. The workers' protests encouraged manifestations of opposition and dissatisfaction from all circles, among students and officials as well as among small businessmen. On account of the military impasse in which the Saigon clique found themselves and the breakdown of the regime, the ideas of peace and neutrality put forth by the Front made big headway.
Before long, it was clear to everybody that the authors of the November 1, 1963 putsch were as incapable of keeping the situation in hand as Diem. Their set-backs sharpened their internal contradictions. The members of the “Revolutionary Military Council” set to cut one another’s throats. The *New York Herald Tribune* of December 10, 1963 revealed:

Experts here see a period in which the generals will square-off in bids for control, but none can yet point to the man who may eventually emerge as indisputed leader.

Other U.S. agents, kept out of the deal, took advantage of the difficulties encountered by the Saigon clique to plot a redistribution of the spoils. Diem’s placemen refused to let themselves be dismissed. Imperialist powers with interests in South Vietnam jumped at the opportunity. Again and again the American press, the Saigon clique and U.S. henchmen blamed the idea of South Vietnam’s neutralization put forth by Gen. de Gaulle.

Among American leading circles responsible for the hostilities and determined to carry them on divergences arose as to the methods to be adopted. Some regretted the liquidation of the Diem-Nhu tandem, others talked of dismissing Minh. There were two contradictory theses in the matter of strategy, either to abandon a number of posts in order to regroup the mobile forces or, on the contrary, to occupy still more ground. In early 1964, Gen. W.C. Westmoreland was appointed assistant to Gen. Harkins with a view to replacing him. And the *New York Herald Tribune* of February 4 noted:
Gen. Harkins, while militarily highly competent, has no inclination whatever to play a political role.

American fidgets, of which Diem had been a victim, now turned against the junta led by Duong Van Minh. A week after his appointment as President of the Republic, “Big” Minh until quite recently dubbed “big captain” and “competent leader”, was blamed for his hesitations and the coolness of the masses towards him. To the day of his downfall the American press spared his clique no harsh words. *U.S. News and World Report* of December 30, 1963 drew up a report on failure:

In Saigon, U.S. officials are disturbed by a ground of neutralist feeling.

It’s easy enough to understand reasons for it... Vietnamese are war-weary after 20 years’ civil war, and disappointed, so far, in the post-Diem regime.

...To prevent a dangerous development of neutralism and defeatism, the military situation must develop clearly in favour of the communists’ opponents.

And *Newsweek* of January 6, 1964 confirmed:

Above all, the new government must win the backing of the people and in this kind of political manoeuvring Gen. Duong Van Minh and his fellow junta generals are woefully unpracticed.

Indeed, immediately after his coup-de-force of January 30, 1964, Nguyen Khanh hastened to declare:

Three months after the putsch, the political, economic and social situation, chiefly in the countryside, does not show the least glimmer of hope as regards the future of the country. The administration has proved incapable.

This powerlessness was again used as a pretext in the decision which brought Nguyen Khanh to the head of the “Revolutionary Military Council”.
The reason for this instability of the Saigon puppet power was quite obvious: Washington was unable to repress the patriotic movement of the people of South Vietnam. Would Nguyen Khanh fare any better than his predecessors? Would he know how to set right, with forces weakened by repeated purges, an already precarious position in face of the revolutionary tide? World opinion doubted it. The New York Times of February 1, 1964 cast a look at the gloomy future:

There have now been two insurrections in three months. This would be contagious, and who knows, next time it may be the colonels against the generals and after that the captains against the colonels.

Without prophesying, one can affirm that this epidemic will irresistibly gain ground as long as U.S. imperialism persists in pursuing this war.
THE ONLY WAY OUT

When anger shakes an entire people, many surprises await the enemy. The following stories relate some of these surprises—there were thousands of them—reserved by the South Vietnamese people to the American "advisers" and their mercenaries.

"Viet Cong" morale

"The young (South) Vietnamese lieutenant fired three pistol shots into the ground, inches from the child's feet, and shouted, 'Where did your parents take their rifles? If you didn't answer, I will shoot through your foot.'

"The nine-year old boy stood silent and motionless, his eyes in a fixed glare. One of his hands was broken with bones showing through the skin. He had been caught running from a deserted cluster of huts, two grenades in his pockets and a coil of mine wire over his shoulder." (The New York Herald Tribune, January 10, 1964).
Here is my confession!

"She was called Bay, she was loved by all in the small village of Xuan Thoi Thuong near Gia Dinh where before 1954 she fought with the guérillas. When the Diem authorities began terrorizing the population, after regroupment of the people's forces to the North, she took the lead in all demonstrations.

In September she was leading a crowd marching to the district town for a protest when the police and army on orders from the deputy district chief, swooped down on six women, stripped them, and exposed them stark naked to the sweltering sun in the yard of the military post. Without being disheartened, the women prisoners cursed the sadistic brutes. Called in by the district chief, American "advisers" set their dogs on them.

The following day, under pressure of a still larger crowd the deputy district chief released the women except Bay.

"She is the ringleader", he told the police, "let her confess everything she knows about the network."

She was sent to the most cunning rascal of the sector. He was incapable of extracting any information from her. The cops were obliged to lead her to her house where, in presence of her family, she was stripped, hung to a beam and put to the rack. Seeing her beloved ones in tears, Bay clenched her teeth, her eyes dry. Her torturers took her down, immersed her in a pond and, after taking her out of water, trampled on her abdomen. She fainted many times. But not a word came out of her lips,
In the evening, her torturers wanted to walk her stark naked back to prison along the village paths. She roused the village people by her cries, showed them her wounds and cursed her torturers who were compelled to give her back her clothes. In the jail, the tortures were resumed; pins were driven under her fingers' nails, each day more deeply, with a ruler. Her fingers were but a swollen mass of flesh. On the sixth day, before they had made a move, she took herself the pins and drove them into her fingers by striking the latter against the wall, shouting,

"Look, here is my confession!"

One morning, she vanished, nobody knew what had become of her." (Liberation, magazine of the Saigon — Cholon — Gia Dinh zone)

The same heroes as at Dien Bien Phu

"It was on the night of October 18, 1963. Lying flat on the ground, Thê observed in the pitch dark night the deformed and ominous angles of that mass seven metres high, the gaping loopholes of the first blockhouse which looked like monstrous eyes staring at him from behind the thick barbed wire of Cay Truong post. To blow up that blockhouse was the mission entrusted to him and his group. This was to be his first attack on an enemy post. His heart beat while he summed up in his mind the plan mapped out for each of them. Would his powder be wetted by the dew? Cautiously, he removed his shirt, wrapped his load and held it against his breast."
The was twenty seven. Born in Thanh Hoa near My Tho province, orphan from his childhood, he had grown up among the villagers in the restless atmosphere of raids and mopping-ups. At the news of the founding of the Liberation Front, he joined the guerillas. He served now in a shock unit of the regular army. First he was a scout. When the enemy undertook a mopping-up operation, he would penetrate deep into their lines and came back with a report. He was soon admitted in the Revolutionary Youth.

A flashing signal was given. Dynamite charges were blown up under the barbed wire. Machine-guns and rifles crackled amidst the howling of the assault men. Shadows were seen darting into a breach and two blockhouses fell in no time. However from the central redoubt, two machine-guns were strafing from loopholes at ground level. Three fighters of the assault group were wounded. Enemy soldiers who had withdrawn to the redoubt from various points of the post directed on us an infernal fire, awaiting reinforcements.

Braving the danger, Thê rushed forward. He was about to reach his target when he fell. He tried to get up but collapsed again. All his comrades had their eyes glued on him. He must be seriously wounded. Should this last bunker not be taken rapidly, the attack would take a bad turn. Enemy reinforcements might be air dropped in the night. But what! Thê was again moving. He crept toward the redoubt. Every inch forward required tremendous effort from him. Ten yards... nine... eight... seven... Suddenly, he
stopped to take breath and started again. A blinding flash in front of the loophole, then a deafening explosion. The machine-gun was silenced.

"Forward!"

Hardly had our men got up than the machine-gun started firing again. Our advance was checked. Thè rose and hurled two hand grenades. The machine-gun once more was silent. The assault resumed, but soon enemy fire also resumed and increased in intensity wounding several of our men.

Amidst the flashes of the explosions, Thè was seen crawling nearer and nearer the blockhouse. Everyone held his breath. Thè sprang up and rushed to the loophole. The flames belched out by the machine-gun were stamped out. Our men dashed forward and threw hand grenadpes into the blockhouse. Nine survivors among the enemy came out with raised hands. All the post had fallen into our hands.

There, in a blackened embrasure, Thè’s body was but a blood-soaked fleshy mass riddled with bullets, his arms clinging to the wall of the blockhouse through the loophole." (Liberation Press)

The battle of Hiêp Hoa

The small town of Hiêp Hoa, about thirty kilometres from Cholon was known to everyone for its sugar refineries and to the mercenaries for its insecurity. For an efficient control of the sector, the Saigon authorities made it a small province, with the headtown defended by over a battalion. Part of the
personnel of the U.S. mission M.A.A.G. had settled in a special commando training camp, one kilometre from the town.

This camp was a wide square surrounded by walls, and guarded by four big blockhouses each defended by a platoon of soldiers. The outermost defences were constituted by a deep moat and a thick network of barbed wire. At night, patrols would lie in ambush in the surrounding sugar cane fields. Apart from a company of guards, there were in the camp more than 200 officers on probation selected from the best commando units and destined for future "special missions". Thirteen American "advisers" and twelve South Vietnamese officers were in charge of the training.

After taking part in raids aimed at herding the local population in "strategic hamlets", here they were back in full strength in the camp on the night of November 23, 1963, anniversary day of the Cochinchina insurrection of 1940.

It was 11:45 p.m. After having annihilated two sentries in the south-western gate and taken the small post outside the enceinte without striking a blow the Liberation army men rushed straight away to the command post and the armoury. A bugle sounded the assault in the very centre of the post. The American officer commanding the group of "advisers" fell on the doorstep of his room. The night was streaked with the green flashes of bazookas; frightful explosions shook the air. The lights had gone out. Amidst the blaze, figures were seen running to the hutsments and the blockhouses. Taken between two prongs from
within and from without, the enemy had hardly time to react; the ground was littered with their corpses. Megaphones called them to surrender.

At the same time another unit of the Liberation army rushed to the north-western sector. The enemies sought to withdraw through trenches towards the eastern gate where the officers commanding the camp strove to counter-attack with two platoons they had managed to muster. The assailants who had just laid their hands on a machine-gun swept this faint show of resistance with an intense fire. Then the few resistance nests were quickly liquidated. The enemy was completely crippled. Their four big guns were wrecked.

The megaphones continued their work. Enemy commandos, who had lost their arrogant look came out of the sugar cane fields with raised hands.

That evening the enemy left on the battlefield 100 dead including 9 American "advisors". The Liberation army captured about one hundred prisoners, four of whom were American "advisors". (Liberation Radio).

The French colonialists would render a noteworthy service to the American imperialists by telling them that a people determined to win their freedom cannot be defeated. La Tribune des Nations of November 8, 1963 gave the following explanation:

"The Vietnamese people must rush to the defence of the anti-communist bastion, such is the watchword put up at the general headquarters in Saigon.

"The bastion is everywhere and nowhere. Blows rain only a few kilometres from Saigon with the complicity of the local population while, at Dalat, on the High
Plateaux, those who have got rich in the Indo-Chinese war, even before the coming of the Yankees, shamelessly bask in the sun.

"How to explain to the short-sighted military that the struggle, especially in their country, is waged from door to door, from rice-field to rice-field, that in short it has nothing to do with "fire power", but is a state of mind (a mind that has rebelled) and that the Pentagon and its henchmen will never be able to check or to contain it. The tidal wave will come from the mouth of the Mekong first by imperceptible wrinkles on the surface of the water, then ending in a great whirlpool."

* * *

In three years, since the founding of the Liberation National Front (L.N.F.) the people’s forces have inflicted on the enemy casualties amounting to 83,000 killed and 73,000 wounded and 15,320 prisoners. 774 Americans have been killed, 675 wounded and 12 have been taken prisoner. 30,000 weapons have been captured, 410 airplanes shot down and 455 damaged, 188 gunboats were sunk and 348 damaged, 1,000 cars, 32 locomotives, 343 carriages, 54 armoured cars (M. 113, M. 114 tanks) were destroyed. Besides there have been 91,000 cases of desertion and going over to the people’s forces, often by whole units.

The herding of the population into "strategic hamlets" met with stiff opposition in 1963. The insecurity of these new populated places compels the enemy to scatter their forces to countless small posts where they fall an easy prey to guerilla attacks. At the same time, their plans of regroupment are thwarted.
The political struggle waged in the countryside, closely linked to military operations, frustrate the enemy's attempts at occupying ground. It incites and stimulates the insurrectional movement in the towns, such as the struggle of Buddhists and youth in 1963 and the workers' strikes in January 1964, thus accelerating the splitting up of the rank of the collaborators of the enemy and increasing the isolation of the traitors. For the enemy, this means constant insecurity and in any case, the rottenness of their rear.

The balance of forces is tipped slowly but surely in favour of the patriotic forces. Like the French expeditionary corps before 1954, the American aggressors are taken in a vicious circle. The concentration of troops, which should enable them to launch a more vigorous counter-attack, would leave the whole country, except the barracks, without control. The extension of the zone of occupation would result, on the contrary, in the dispersion of troops and would expose them to fatal blows impossible to parry.

What tactics to adopt? Must small operations be continually launched to "clear" the outskirts of the towns? One would fall an easy victim to guerilla ambushes. Or should heavy blows be dealt? Large-scale operations call for time and money and preparations cannot be kept secret. And when the secret is out, failure is in sight.

One understands that the Pentagon and Saigon are at their wit's end. Hardly had McNamara and Taylor declared (on October 3, 1963) that the U.S. would have solved the South Vietnam problem by the end of 1965, at which time most of the U.S.
military personnel would be able to leave South Vietnam — than the State Department thought (end of December) that this opinion was groundless. On January 28, 1964, A.P. reported that McNamara before the American Congress recognized that there have been setbaks, but did not reflect any deepening gloom. But only two days later, on January 30, a putsch took place “as a result of the continued deterioration of the situation”.

Some Pentagon experts went so far as to advocate the sending of large American contingents, to which their colleagues, though no better acquainted with Vietnamese problems, were in a position to reply.

In December 1963 a solution came out at last of all these turgiversations, to the effect that posts defended by less than 150 soldiers, dubbed “execution chambers”, “concrete coffins”, “sources of supply for the Viet Cong!” by U.P.I. of December 26 were to be abandoned. Thus, it would be possible, the Pentagon men thought, to muster forces for large-scale mopping-up operations. But the events of January 1964 showed that this scheme was far from yielding the expected results.

There was nothing new in that American solution. In similar circumstances in 1951 and 1952, the French Marshal de Lattre de Tassigny was obliged to take the same measures. And the final result was Dien Bien Phu.

In September 1963, C. de Castries, another French general who had some experience in the matter, told American reporters, “In my opinion, the war in South Vietnam cannot be won”. Gen. Navarre, author of
the 1963 "plan for the pacification of Vietnam within 18 months", declared to the same journalists that, "South Vietnam's situation is rotten. A unified Vietnam is a necessity". (L'Express, September 19, 1963).

Le Figaro, which cherished no more illusions, wrote on December 23, 1963,

"With unlimited resources, the Americans believed that their superiority in material would be sufficient to vouch for their victory.

"The helicopter venture, for instance, had given them the lie... Many helicopters were hit or shot down. From now on, each heliborne operation should be preceded by a heavy shelling of the 'drop zone'. The operation is thus slowed down. The surprise factor does not work anymore. In its turn the miraculous formula goes bankrupt. Then one comes back to the same conclusion: The Vietnamese should show themselves keener on the fight.

"But this is a flimsy way out, for the very problem would be to know why the Vietnamese have not shown themselves keener on the fight while the 'Viet Congs' have fought with unusual courage. The French had been unable to find a satisfactory answer to the same question.

"In their turn inasmuch as the final objective is to win the war, the Americans cannot avoid being caught in an intricate situation: to send to Vietnam ever more guns, more men. Like the French ten years before them, they are bogged down in the Indo-Chinese war."

The Staley-Taylor plan (the purpose of which was also the pacification of South Vietnam within 18 months) ended in fiasco. This was the failure of the initial stage of American strategy, the bankruptcy of the shooting war and of the policy of concentration of the population. This was also the failure of the
tactics of heliborne operations and surprise attacks (the disasters suffered at Ap Bac, Loc Ninh, Cha La). Hence the recent tendency to come back to the old colonial tactics which had long since gone bankrupt.

The victorious resistance of the South Vietnam people has an immense significance. The failure of the Staley-Taylor plan is not merely a defeat suffered by the Pentagon generals in a phase of the conflict, but it is also the confirmation of the correctness of the position of the L.N.F., the sharp rising of its prestige in the world. The famous “strategic hamlets” which tumble down one after another like houses of cards, prove that the rural population cannot be concentrated against their will, by trick or by violence. During these last few years the South Vietnam countryside has been living under the sign of resistance against the herding of the population and it is the peasants who have been working for their own liberation.

In the military field, the people’s forces have proved themselves capable of checking all new tactics of the enemy. When violently attacked with an overwhelming superiority in material, the guerilla fighters would give the enemy a temporary advantage in order to encircle them and soon deprive them of the initiative thanks to the great mobility of guerilla warfare, to political work among the masses as well as among the mercenaries, and to the extraordinary courage of patriots.
The overwhelming superiority of the enemy in the field of armament is compensated by the high morale of the people's forces, conscious of the motives of their just struggle and supported by the nation and by world opinion. With primitive weapons, the guerillas succeed in checking the advance of the enemy who land themselves on iron-spike traps. This is not to mention the valuable booty in modern weapons which come to improve the armament of the resistance members.

This general struggle enriched by the contribution and initiative of everyone takes often unexpected forms which the modern aggressors can hardly ward off in time. It is a people's war in every sense of the word, first because it involves the entire people and then because it makes use of means available only to the native people. The struggle in South Vietnam which is, above all, a war of resistance against aggression — the Saigon puppet administration is but the tool of a foreign power — also takes within the neo-colonial framework the form of a civil war. Aggression and civil war, the hostilities are aimed at serving the interests of U.S. imperialism and its policy of hegemony. Henceforth the L.N.F. has counteracted by correctly advocating a protracted struggle with both a political and a military aspect. However, from the time when the enemy started using armed aggression as the main tool for their action, they inevitably called for a violent riposte: armed struggle.

To the shooting war tactics is opposed the strategy of protracted resistance by the people. This strategy particular to under-developed countries in their just
struggle for national liberation, hogs down the enemy and obliges them to witness the growth of the forces of resistance until the final onslaught, unable to win back the initiative.

Above are the reasons why led by such a clever staff as the L.N.F., the South Vietnam people are firmly confident in their victory.

* * *

While the aggressors and their henchmen march ineluctably towards a new Dien Bien Phu, the people of South Vietnam build in the intervals between battles, a new life in the extensive areas liberated by the L.N.F.

The resistance to American aggression is closely linked to the agrarian policy. The manifesto and programme of action of the L.N.F. stipulate explicitly:

— To carry out land rent reduction, guarantee the peasants' right to till their present plots of land and ensure the right of ownership for those who have reclaimed waste land, the right of ownership by peasants of the plots of land distributed to them;

— To abolish the "prosperity zones" and the herding of the people into "agricultural settlements". To permit those forcibly herded into "prosperity zones" or "agricultural settlements" to come back to their own land;

— To confiscate the land usurped by the U.S. imperialists and their agents, and distribute it to landless and land-poor peasants, to redistribute communal land in an equitable and rational way.
— Through negotiations the state will purchase from landowners at equitable prices all land held by them in excess of a given area, fixed in accordance with the concrete situation in each locality and distribute it to landless peasants and land-poor peasants; this land will be distributed free of charge and with no conditions attached.

This sound policy has been warmly welcomed by the population. In the large areas liberated by the L.N.F. the peasants have become masters of the countryside. The lands taken from the American or pro-American land grabbers, amounting to one million and a half hectares, have been redistributed. Land rents have been lowered by from 40 to 80 per cent compared with the period prior to the founding of the L.N.F. The taxes, duties, levies, requisitions, corvées, and fines fixed by Saigon have been completely suppressed.

New forms of production have appeared, chiefly mutual aid teams.

Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the L.N.F. was in a position to declare on December 20, 1963:

...An immense rear has been established from the 17th parallel to Cape Camau, and from the three-frontier region (bordering on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) to the seacoast of Nam Bo, including the major part of the mountain regions and the countryside, with five towns, in all, two-thirds of South Vietnam territory. These liberated lands are inhabited by half the total number of our compatriots, tempered by the struggle, who have taken their destiny into their own hands and are organizing a new life. Under the leadership of the L.N.F., through such
organizations as the administrative committees, the liberation people's councils, the autonomous nationality committees they have elected, the people rule the liberated zones and set up a genuine democratic regime in which individual freedoms are fully guaranteed. Under trying circumstances, the people of the liberated zones have buckled to re-habilitate and develop the economy in all spheres, increase production, carry out an economic policy, establish regional transactions, constantly improve the living conditions of all social strata and contribute actively to the resistance war. In three years, 300,000 hectares of land in the liberated zones have been cleared or reclaimed, and 5 million gía* of paddy harvested thanks to the multiplication of yearly crops. Living standards especially among people of the Khmer minority and various nationalities in the Western High Plateaux have doubled, even tripled compared with the years under enemy occupation. Most of the liberated villages and hamlets have their own primary schools, complementary courses, dispensaries, maternity homes, dancing and singing groups and even artistic ensembles. Newspapers and news bulletins reach regularly even the smallest centres.

In order to defend the fruits of the revolution and the resistance bases, each village, each hamlet has become a bastion which is strengthened day by day. Everyone takes an active part in the patriotic struggle under most various forms, regardless of sex or age.

Under the leadership of the L.N.F. the liberated zone has become the bulwark of the national resistance, the foundation of a new society in South Vietnam, the first material basis of an independent, democratic, peaceful and neutral South Vietnam.

It is undeniable that by successfully establishing and defending this vast and powerful liberated zone, the South Vietnam people have won a victory of paramount importance.

* One gía equals 20 kilograms.
In a report delivered in January 1964 at the Second Congress of the L.N.F. Lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho pointed out:

...Our political superiority reinforced by our military potentiality has allowed us from now on to take the initiative in the development of the situation in South Vietnam.

These most important successes are due to the following factors:

1. The indomitable fighting spirit of the South Vietnam people. We can say that it was with empty hands that we started our resistance against the "special war". The test we have undergone during these last two years is a confrontation between brutal violence and a just cause. It is not owing to the might of our weapons that we have won glory in this long period. Our strength lies essentially in our patriotism, in the mettle of our heroes. At this hour, we are still writing pages of glory in our national history by making the heaviest sacrifices with boundless courage.

Resting on these steady foundations, we stand up to the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys without fear and misgivings, full of confidence. We have not yet won final victory; during these last two years, the South Vietnam people have made headway at the price of unflagging and most strenuous efforts to stand enormous tests. The U.S. imperialists and their henchmen have caused us countless difficulties and sometimes losses. We must be aware of all these difficulties in order to value accurately the successes we have won at the price of tears and blood.

Today more than ever the victorious power of revolutionary heroism is clearly shown in the just struggle of the Vietnamese people, on the front-line, in the streets, in jails. Fourteen million people facing death fearlessly, are sure to drive away American troops, whatever their numbers and their weapons. The greatness of our material strength comes also from this spiritual force. By our will and courage, we have been able to equip ourselves sufficiently to carry the day.
We are proud of living in such a highly significant epoch as ours, of being on behalf of all our people in the forefront of the resistance and, as anti-imperialist fighters, on the front-line of the special war; we pledge ourselves to foil the aggressive scheme of the U.S. imperialists so that the experience they want to draw in South Vietnam will only be a negative one. The U.S. imperialists have made a miscalculation by using our soil as a testing ground. Whatever may be their tactics, they shall not be able to prevent their defeat and our victory.

2. The union and internal cohesion of our people. The most obvious fact after so many years is the failure of all attempts of the U.S. imperialists and their stooges at dividing our people. Our compatriots in the South are aware that their unity is their strength and a marvellous talisman capable of checking all evil schemes.

The working class, the toiling people, the peasantry, the patriotic intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie are closely united on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance bloc. Their ties grow stronger and stronger and on the basis of this the national united front grows ever broader....

3. Our determination to wage the armed struggle to the end.

As we know, the forms taken by the struggle put up by our people for their right to live are subject to many conditions. How hard these forms are depends first of all on the attitude of our opponent.

From 1954 to 1959 our opposition to the U.S.-Diem clique was but a political one; in 1960 and 1961 our armed struggle was merely for self-defence. However since the day the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen unleashed a large-scale aggressive war, our people have had no other alternative than to rise, arms in hands, against them.

This legitimate riposte is precisely one of the factors of our present-day victory. The fact that the South Vietnam people, like all peoples of the world, deeply love peace, does not mean that we will bow our heads under the yoke of slavery.
The will of our people is shown in their determination to fight the enemy, with arms in hands and to fearlessly oppose the imperialist war by a people's war. By calling on the entire people to resist to the end, the Central Committee of the L.N.F. has taken into consideration every aspect of the situation and affirmed straight away that our resistance will win...

4. The sympathy and the ever broader and more energetic support of the world's people.

The patriotic resistance of the South Vietnam people is at present drawing the attention of the whole world. We are fighting at a time when deep-going changes are happening in the world. Colonialism is gradually abolished while the movement of the colonial peoples rises with unprecedented vigour in Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America. The forces of peace and democracy are growing. The balance of forces in the international arena has changed radically. Imperialism can no more impose its hegemony of yore.

The imperialists are compelled to fall back everywhere. Though the threat of a world war is still looming due to the fact that the nature of imperialism and its aggressive plots remain unchanged, the world's people are in a position, with the forces available to them, to avert this war just as they would win victory in all conflicts kindled by imperialism.

In such historical conjuncture, our resistance naturally enjoys the sympathy of the peoples; at present they support not only our just cause but also our armed struggle which is the most effective form of struggle against the enemy, in the present conditions of South Vietnam. This support, which manifests itself every day and everywhere and is moral as well as material, is for us the best encouragement and a guarantee for the total victory of our resistance. We are quite aware that the world's people trust us and consider our struggle as part and parcel of the forward march of mankind towards national independence, social progress and the defence of peace.
... On behalf of the fourteen million people of South Vietnam, the Liberation National Front avails itself of this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the peoples and governments which have staunchly supported it, chiefly to the brother peoples and governments of Cuba and the People's Republic of China, to Chairman Mao Tse-tung for his stern and resounding condemnation of the U.S.-Diem clique for their repression of Buddhists and for the particular attention he has paid to the revolution in South Vietnam, to the brother peoples and governments of the People's Republic of Algeria, the Indonesian Republic and the Soviet Union. We are deeply grateful to the international organizations which have constantly extended us their support, particularly the World Federation of Trade Unions. We are deeply grateful to the personalities, journalists, intellectuals and religious dignitaries throughout the world who have sided with us. Particularly we send our heartfelt greetings and thanks to people of good will in the United States who have protested against the aggressive war unleashed by their government and against the bloody regime of the quislings of South Vietnam. We wholeheartedly thank our neighbour, Cambodia, and her Chief of State, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, for their sympathy and their concern in our struggle.

In this report we wish to emphasize the inestimable value of the support granted by our compatriots in the North, our blood brothers, a support inspired by the fraternal love between citizens of the same nation bound by the same historic mission. We know that they share our joys and sorrows, that they will never forget the South and that they are doing their best to help us effectively...

The way out for the Americans and their lackeys is shown by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on November 25, 1963:
...The only correct solution for the urgent settlement of the South Vietnam problem lies in the respect for and correct implementation of the 1954 Geneva Agreements by the parties concerned, including the South Vietnam authorities. The American government should immediately put an end to its unjust and criminal war, to its policy of intervention and armed aggression in South Vietnam and leave our people to settle their own affairs.

To the patriotic forces in South Vietnam, the L.N.F. suggested in its statement of February 3, 1964:

...The coup d'état of January 30, 1964 has prompted the South Vietnam patriotic forces to fight more energetically for peace, independence and neutrality. Notwithstanding certain divergences on the question of peace and neutrality, we believe that all patriotic forces in South Vietnam can unite on a two-point minimum programme of action:

1. The U.S. Imperialists shall stop their war and withdraw all troops, weapons and other means of warfare from South Vietnam.

2. The parties, sects and forces in South Vietnam shall negotiate a reasonable settlement based on peace and neutrality in South Vietnam and on the principle that the South Vietnam people shall themselves settle their internal affairs, placing national interests above all else.
Many times victim of the scourge of war in the course of their history, the Vietnamese people have no keener aspiration than peace.

Many centuries ago, soon after twice driving back the invasions of forces one million-strong commanded by Gengis Khan's grand-son in person, one of our generals lauded peace in the following verses:

At Chuong Duong harbour, we blocked spears and pikes.
At Ham Tu pass, we checked the stream of barbarians.

Peace is there; let us strive hard and safeguard our eternal Fatherland for ever.

In the 15th century, Nguyen Trai, a great poet and writer as well as a skilled strategist and statesman, after having liberated the country from the Ming's army also proclaimed:

A peaceful era opens up, all our love goes to her.
Freedom fills our hearts, for her we have consented every sacrifice.
At present a South Vietnam Liberation armyman writes:

_ I have taken up arms._
_ So as never to see a weapon again._
_ We have drawn our swords._
_ So as never again to resort to them._

"The South Vietnam people who have continuously suffered from the horrors of war for nearly a quarter of a century (since the beginning of Japanese occupation in 1940 during World War II) are keener than anyone else on seeing the establishment of peace on their land. Why are they ready to sacrifice their lives without regret?"

"The answer is the following."

During nine and a half years, from July 1954 to December 1963, violating the Geneva Agreements, the U.S. has built in South Vietnam 110 airfields, a great number of naval bases, barracks, fortifications and strategic roads. It has illegally introduced 25,000 militarymen, 700 airplanes of every description, including H.U.I-B jet helicopters and supersonic bombers, 20 war vessels some of them of up to 4,000 tons burthen, 500 barges, 150 M. L. 115 and M. L. 114 amphibious carriers, a great quantity of flame-throwers, automatic guns, mines and other up-to-date weapons, including chemical weapons. In February 1962, an American operational command was set up in Saigon to speed