

hinder the diffusion of the text of the accord, a vast movement was launched to demand the release of political prisoners. Who in South Viet Nam had not a relative, a friend, a brother kept in one of the numerous prisons built in all provinces? While the struggle was essentially waged by the working people under the guidance of the NFL, gradually all other social strata, especially the students, intellectuals, believers and priests of various religions, whose political consciousness and combativeness had grown with the events, participated more and more actively in the fight. The scope of US military, economic, and ideological intervention over the years had caused various elements to fall away temporarily from the national bloc and take refuge in abstentionism, but little by little those people had grown conscious of the need to fight in order to save the nation, its traditions, its good morals, the whole society, from total destruction. The "third force" thus came into being and manifested itself more and more frequently. Its militants went to prison together with those of the revolutionary movement, a most favourable soil for the policy of national concord. The same thing happened among Vietnamese residents abroad—especially in France where PRG partisans and other groups, including openly pro-American ones, joined forces to demand a strict implementation of the Paris Agreement and condemn the machinations of Washington and Saigon.

The growing opposition of the masses forced Thieu to reshuffle his Cabinet on several occasions and to stop imposing VAT on many goods. In June 1974 he had to forbid members of his administration, army

and police to join political groups. The opposition even spread to the "Lower House of Parliament". In July, 58 of its members signed a motion demanding explanations from the "government" on the execution of the Paris Agreement, corruption, smuggling, and other social evils. Committees and organizations were set up to demand the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and the release of political prisoners.

In July, 300 Catholic priests held a meeting in Can Tho to condemn the corruption prevalent in the Thieu administration. The movement against corruption grew in scope while Buddhist leaders stigmatized the administration's persecution of Buddhists on the pattern of the policy pursued by the late Ngo Dinh Diem and issued a call for the safeguarding of peace and the Paris Agreement. A Catholic-led popular committee against corruption held big rallies in Huê; other cities — Saigon, Bien Hoa, Can Tho — followed suit. In September in Huê, 30,000 people took to the streets to demand that Thieu renounce the use of force as a system of government and answer the corruption charges brought against his wife and himself.

It is significant that the Church, which had always extended vigorous support to Ngo Dinh Diem then Nguyen Van Thieu, should now keep its distance from the latter. The mass of the Catholic faithful had gradually awakened under the impact of events and no longer blindly obeyed the hierarchy. Young priests openly stood for national independence and social progress and went to prison together with revolutionary militants.

Boycotting of news diffused by the administration, marches by journalists, a declaration of opposition by barristers, a demonstration in the outskirts of Saigon by 5,000 Catholics, a protest meeting in Quang Ngai town by 17,000 people, an appeal issued by 40 "deputies" castigating the repression of Buddhist monks — the anger of the masses was rising. Washington was worried. While Thieu clung to his personal power and sought to eliminate one by one those who failed to agree with him, the American leaders were set on gathering together as many of the reactionary forces as possible behind Thieu. Pressure was put on Thieu to dismiss those of his agents with the worst reputation. Under the twofold pressure of popular opposition and the American services, Thieu had to dismiss in October four of his closest ministers, among them Hoang Duc Nha, his nephew and Minister of Information, hated by the press. Public opinion was far from being placated. In late 1974, the trial of three newspapers charged with having published the indictment of Thieu for corruption gave the alarm to the whole population. In order to prevent the holding of demonstrations the day of the trial — which was in fact to be postponed — 40,000 police were mobilized and a state of siege decreed. In a demonstration staged by tens of thousands of people against the trial, violent clashes took place with the police and many well-known personalities were wounded. In spite of seizures and interdictions, newspapers continued to publish accusations against members of the government. At Christmas students demonstrated against the government's cultural policy and in January they again

took to the streets to demand an end to repression and press-ganging. For their part, the trade unions held an extraordinary conference against dismissals and for the right to strike, and put forward economic demands which had become extremely urgent because of runaway inflation and unemployment.

Two years after the Paris Agreement, Thieu was more isolated politically than ever. The movement for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, peace, and national concord was irresistible. The watchword : "Overthrow Thieu ; set up a Saigon government ready for a scrupulous implementation of the Paris Agreement" was adopted by almost all social strata and political and religious tendencies. More than ever, the policy pursued by Washington and its agents was going counter to and clashing with the deepest aspirations of the Vietnamese people.



The strict implementation of the Agreement would lead to a political confrontation between a coalition of the various national forces and the pro-American forces. This was what Nixon-Kissinger, then Ford, as well as Thieu and the caste of war profiteers in Saigon sought to avoid at all costs. They chose to carry on with the military confrontation, still believing that the technical and financial power of the US would compensate for political and ideological weaknesses. The moderation shown by the PRG during the first months might have given them illusions, being interpreted by Washington and Thieu as a sign of feebleness.

For its part, the PRG had carried out a wide diffusion of the text of the Agreement among the population, hoping that its adversary, drawing the necessary lessons from the past, would adopt a policy of peace and national reconciliation. PRG negotiators on several occasions advanced concrete proposals aimed at bringing about a cease-fire, the release of the political prisoners, the putting into effect of democratic liberties, the setting up of a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord made up of three segments, a solution to the problem of general elections and the demobilisation of the armed forces of the two parties.

At Washington's instigation, Thieu had always turned a deaf ear, while continuing the encroachment operations against PRG-controlled areas. The Le Duc Tho — Kissinger meeting in Paris in May 1973 and the signing of a joint communiqué in which both parties pledged to take concrete measures for a complete execution of the Agreement brought no change in the aggressiveness of the Saigon forces and the American leaders. On June 18, US Defense Secretary Schlesinger considered the possibility of resuming bombing operations against North Viet Nam.

In July 1973, while reaffirming its determination to strictly implement the Paris Agreement the People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF) command at Kontum had to give a warning: if the Saigon troops were to use aircraft, artillery and large infantry units against liberated areas, they would meet with appropriate counter-blows. Thieu went on with encroachment operations in Chuong Thien province, in eastern Nam Bo, and multiplied raids and "pacification" operations in

areas under his control. US reconnaissance aircraft flew over North Viet Nam.

In Tay Ninh province, in the Central Highlands, in the Mekong delta and in the plains of Trung Bo, Thieu launched division-size operations while his aircraft bombed many localities in the liberated areas. Washington even sent an aircraft-carrier to cruise off North Vietnamese shores. Also during that period, the American command intensified its bombing raids on the free areas of Cambodia.

In face of this stubborn continuation of the war by the other side, on 14 October 1973, the PLAF command issued an order to its troops and to the population: hit back vigorously at every war act of the Saigon forces in order to safeguard the lives and property of the population and guarantee the execution of the Paris Agreement. It was made clear that the liberation forces would not merely fight back wherever the enemy attacked but would pick the targets of their counter-blows.

Thieu by no means stopped his operations. He sent his bombers deep into the liberated areas and took advantage of the typhoons to intensify "pacification" operations. On November 6, PLAF artillery gave a severe warning by pounding the Bien Hoa airfield from which those bombers were taking off. Also in November seven Saigon aircraft were shot down in Quang Duc province. In December, while Saigon bombing raids over the free areas were stepped up, the liberation forces did not remain inactive. They set afire fuel depots in Saigon itself and destroyed ammunition depots near Pleiku.

The year 1974 began with warlike declarations by Thieu and Schlesinger. While the Pentagon sent Thieu ultra-modern F-5E aircraft Nixon asked the US Congress to give Thieu twice as much military aid. Saigon planes even strafed seats of the International Control Commission and localities chosen for the return of captured personnel. But the liberation forces and the population delivered ever more vigorous counterblows.

In February the patriotic forces attacked Quang Ngai airfield. In March they inflicted very serious losses (half its numbers) on the 62nd Rangers Battalion in Kontum province. In April the Tong Le Chan base, the springboard of many encroachment operations, was besieged and heavily shelled, and was later abandoned by its garrison. Thiệu sent his bombers to attack Loc Ninh and other localities for several days and broke off *sine die* the negotiations at La Celle Saint Cloud. Nixon and Kissinger were pressing the US Congress for a substantial increase in military and economic aid to Thiệu, arguing that the US had a "moral" commitment to the Saigon puppets. Since the Paris Agreement this commitment had manifested itself in the shipment of a million tons of bombs and shells, 1,100 tanks and armoured cars, 800 heavy guns, 700 aircraft, 200 naval and river vessels: American dollars and equipment had made it possible for Thiệu to launch, within the space of a little more than a year, hundreds of thousands of encroachment operations, artillery poundings, and air bombings.

In May a vast operation was under way in Ben Cat with three divisions supported by American-man-

ned F.5E aircraft. But in three months from May to July, PLAF counter-blows cost Saigon 8,000 soldiers, 182 tanks and armoured cars and 34 aircraft. To a *Newsweek* correspondent a Saigon officer declared that the troops' low morale was the greatest obstacle for the command, not any lack of material (13 May 1974). By the end of the first half of 1974, Saigon had lost 175,000 men, killed, wounded or run away. Desertions were increasing. In such conditions, the more Thiệu persisted in hurling his troops at the liberated areas, the more defeats they suffered, and the more rapidly they disintegrated. Even a massive influx of dollars and armaments could not reverse the situation. In July and August, in the coastal plains of Trung Bo, Saigon forces lost 160 posts and military positions from which attacks had been launched against the liberated areas. Da Nang and Bien Hoa airfields were pounded. The people of 16 villages, two districts, and 16 concentration sectors rose up and liberated themselves. The situation grew worse and worse for the Saigon forces everywhere, in the Central Highlands, in Trung Bo, in the Mekong delta. One by one the posts illegally set up by Thieu forces in the months following the Paris Agreement were eliminated.

The American general John Murray, who headed DAO in Saigon, confessed that the losses suffered by Saigon in 1973, as well as 1974, surpassed the 100,000 mark, while Thiệu himself admitted that he had lost "many villages and districts and even a town" (*AP*, 29 January 1975). The figure given by the PRG for those losses suffered by the Saigon side was 255,000 men killed, wounded or deserted. While Ford and

Kissinger were striving to get more aid for Thieu from the US Congress, the *Times* reported on 17 January 1975 that according to Western military sources, the morale of the Saigon army, more than any shortage of military equipment, was to be the decisive factor in the months to come.



Instead of implementing the Paris Agreement, Nixon, Ford, Kissinger and Thiêu had chosen to use force, to take the military path. Who sows the wind... It was on the military plane that they were to suffer the worst setbacks. The defeats Thiêu sustained in 1974 had not blunted his aggressiveness but the PLAF, fired by their successes, started to attack in late 1974 and especially from early 1975 the military sectors and posts from which encroachment and pacification operations were launched.

In December, the liberation forces began offensives in several provinces, especially in Phuoc Long (capital : Phuoc Binh) northeast of Saigon, along the road to the Highlands, in the western part of the Mekong delta, in Rach Gia, Can Tho and Binh Tuy. (The reader is advised to find the names of provinces on the map, page 54, before getting into the detail of military operations in the pages that follow.) Their regular forces using powerful means did away with the posts and fortifications while the guerillas took on the administrative and para-military organizations. On 6 January the capital of Phuoc Long province was liberated, 3,000 Saigon troops put out of action and 650

others taken prisoner, 12 heavy guns captured and 10 aircraft brought down. For the first time a whole province with its capital was liberated. This had repercussions in public opinion at home and abroad, which Thiêu and Washington sought to exploit through a noisy propaganda, but to no avail.

In early March, the attacks were mostly aimed at Tay Nguyen (Central Highlands) and the northern provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thiên, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, Quang Ngai, Quang Duc. From 5 to 9 March the PLAF cut the strategic highways leading to the major towns of Tay Nguyen : Highway 4, the north-south artery ; Highway 19, the major transversal road linking Qui Nhon with Pleiku ; Highway 21 running from Ninh Hoa to Buon Mê Thuôt. The military sub-sectors and important posts controlling the access to Buon Mê Thuôt were eliminated.

On 10 March, after a violent artillery barrage, the liberation forces made a direct thrust into the central part of the town where the command posts were, not even caring to attack the outer defences. The radio and command posts were quickly neutralized and the defence thus paralyzed. The capture of the airfield and the ammunition depot completed the demoralization of the Saigon troops, who disbanded. On 11 March, the town was liberated ; 2,000 men had been captured and 25 heavy guns and 200 vehicles seized. Helicopters had come from Saigon to take away the American advisers but two of the latter had been captured. The Saigon general Le Trung Tuong had been wounded ; his deputy, Colonel Vu The Quang, killed. The 23rd Infantry Division had been liquidated. The Saigon air forces

had shown themselves completely powerless. A counter-offensive was attempted by Saigon troops assembled at Phuoc An, northeast of Buôn Mê Thuôt, but this locality was quickly taken by the liberation forces. With Buôn Mê Thuôt, the whole province of Darlac was liberated. The routed Saigon troops had not had time to destroy the immense ammunition depot (1.5 kilometres long, nearly one kilometre wide), which proved that they had by no means run short of armaments.

The rapid fall of Buôn Mê Thuôt was a painful surprise for Thiêu and his American masters. The best Saigon units had quickly disbanded, leaving behind their equipment. The population of many villages had risen up, resulting in the provincial capitals being completely isolated, and complete freedom left to the liberation forces to launch direct attacks on the major centres.

It had now been proved that the liberation forces were capable of attacking the important centres of the Tay Nguyên highlands, now isolated. The only solution left to Saigon was to order a general retreat of its forces stationed in Kontum, Pleiku, Hau Bon (Cheo Reo). This retreat was carried out in an atmosphere of panic in the direction of Tuy Hoa, over Highway 7, by a jumble of regular forces, armoured forces, administrative services, para-military forces and members of their families. Saigon soldiers and police forced part of the population to follow them in their withdrawal, destroyed their houses and even their cooking utensils, and spread the rumour that the "Viet cong" would massacre those remaining

behind. The civilian people thus forced to join the exodus would serve as a shield to the Saigon armed forces for the Saigon command knew that the PLAF would never fire on the population. Seven thousand soldiers were captured by the patriotic forces together with 700 vehicles and 91 artillery pieces.

By 19 March, the whole of Tây Nguyên could be considered liberated. The posts of Kien Duc and An Khê on the periphery were to be seized on 22 and 23 March. In less than three weeks Saigon had lost an area of 48,000sq. kilometres with 800,000 inhabitants belonging to 30 different nationalities and important natural resources. The Tây Nguyên highlands stretched without an interruption over 800 kilometres, from the 17th parallel to about 100 kilometres north of Saigon, and border the liberated regions of Cambodia, as well as Lower Laos. This is a strategic region of the utmost importance not only for South Viet Nam but also for the whole of Indochina. Ever since 1954 Washington had always hoped to turn it into a strategic base, a political bastion (by sowing discord among the various ethnic groups) and an economic base of great importance.

Four provinces — Kontum, Gia Lai, Darlac, Phu Bon — had been liberated. Saigon had lost 40,000 regulars, 80,000 auxiliary and para-military troops, 1,250 military vehicles, 110 heavy artillery pieces and large quantities of ammunition. A very hard blow had thus been dealt not only to the Saigon army but also to the whole of the neo-colonial system.

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In Quang Tri province, guerrilla actions combined with uprisings by the populations of the villages started on 8 March, and ended in the rapid liquidation of many military posts, the liberation of many villages and the isolation of the provincial capital, which was liberated on 19 March. Six hundred and fifty Saigon troops were put out of action while many functionaries and members of the Thiêu army and police surrendered and offered their services to the PRG.

In the same period, the people of Thua Thiên province, together with the regular liberation forces, freed the six districts surrounding the ancient capital, Huê, which was now isolated, for the road southward to Da Nang had been cut, especially at the Hai Van pass (Pass of the Clouds.) On 19 March, the PLAF attacked the HQ of the First Infantry Division which defended the capital, and the military sector of Mang Ca and the Tay Loc airfield inside the Huê citadel. On the 22 and 23, the posts on the periphery of the city came under attack ; on the 24 the Phu Bai airfield was violently pounded. On the 25, the PLAF penetrated into the city, and the Saigon forces made a precipitate withdrawal to the sandy stretch along the coast near the Thuan An estuary. The PRG flag fluttered on Huê, the old capital of the Nguyễn kings. On the 26 the city was completely liberated : the houses, public services and monuments were almost intact. In their hasty withdrawal the men of Saigon, who met with resistance from the population and part of their own soldiers and functionaries, had been unable to carry out the planned destruction. On the

27 and 28, the Saigon forces regrouped at the seashore were unable to get on board their ships which were fired at by PLAF artillery. Exhausted, many of them surrendered.

The battle of Thua Thiên and Huê cost the Saigon administration its First Infantry Division : 15,000 men were taken prisoner, among them about a hundred senior officers, 1,000 vehicles and 300 artillery pieces.

Thua Thiên province, with an area of 5,670 square kilometres and 600,000 inhabitants, together with its capital Huê, a political, cultural and historical centre of major importance, and Quang Tri hold a key strategic position. During the first Indochina war, the Huê-Da Nang sector had always been firmly held by the French. The Americans had transformed Huê into a military bastion and an important political and cultural centre because of its proximity to the North. In 1968, the population and the patriotic forces had liberated the city but the Americans had done their utmost to retake it. In 1972 the American command had also spared no effort to defend it.

Meanwhile the liberation forces in other provinces had not remained inactive. On 20 March, An Loc, 70 kilometres northwest of Saigon, was liberated. The whole of Binh Long province, which includes An Loc, came under PRG control, and Tay Ninh province as well as its capital was seriously threatened. On the 24, Tam Ky, capital of Quang Tin province, was liberated. On the 25, the whole of Quang Ngai province and its capital came under PRG control. On the 26, the town of Tam Quan in Binh Dinh province was freed. On the 27, the notorious base of Chu Lai, one of the

largest military bases set up by the Americans in South Viet Nam, fell into the hands of the liberation forces. In the provinces of Binh Dinh, Phu Yên, Khanh Hoa, that is all along the coast of Trung Bo, everywhere the rural population, in concert with the patriotic regular forces, rose up and posed a grave risk to the Saigon administration and army. On the 28, Bao Loc was liberated, which left Dalat city completely isolated.

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The fall of Huê in the north, that of Quang Ngai in the south, and the liberation of the surrounding rural areas completely isolated Da Nang, a particularly important city and port for the whole of South Viet Nam from both the military and political angles. It was in Da Nang that the Americans landed their first Marines ; it was there that they set up port and military installations which commanded and supplied the northern provinces of South Viet Nam and an important part of the Tay Nguyen Highlands. It was to Da Nang that the retreating Saigon troops withdrew in the hope of either holding out there or being taken by ship to Saigon. They had forced part of the population of the countryside and of Huê city to follow them to Da Nang. In the last days of March, Da Nang was a beleaguered city where the most complete disorder reigned. Saigon units refused to obey orders ; soldiers looted shops and private homes ; those seeking to get away assailed the airfields. An American aircraft-carrier, the Hancock, was sent to some dis-

tance off the coast of Da Nang while Philippine and Taiwanese vessels berthed to take refugees.

On 25 March, liberation forces pounded the military positions of Da Nang. On the 28, they penetrated into the city and on the 29 occupied the airfield. Saigon units mutinied, crossed over to the PLAF's side. The people rose up, defended their quarters against Saigon soldiers and hunted down Thieu agents. The Saigon command and the puppet administration were unable to cope with the situation which was moving too fast for them. At 15.30 hours on the 29, the People's Revolutionary Committee set up headquarters at the City Hall. By the 30, the city, the port as well as the whole province of Quang Nam were liberated. Within a matter of hours, the city, which had been the scene of the most complete chaos, recovered calm and order. The whole population joined in the enthusiastic effort to reorganize life on a new basis.

#### **IV. An impossible dream**

The liberation of the whole of Tay Nguyên, the cities of Huê and Da Nang, and almost all the coastal provinces of Trung Bo was a real disaster for the Saigon army and regime and for Washington. Had the American leaders and strategists foreseen it? Certainly not. On 29 January 1973, two days after the signing of the Paris Agreement, US Defense Secretary Melvin Laird declared before the Armed Forces Commission

of the House of Representatives that the "Vietnamization program", which had cost 5.3 billion dollars, would allow the Thieu regime to stand on its own feet (*US News and World Report*). With such a support to be renewed each year — 5.3 billion dollars is twice the country's national income — Thieu would be able to hold on indefinitely. What other prospects could take shape in the minds of Nixon, Kissinger and other hawks who were used to reckon everything in terms of dollars, tanks, aircraft, bombs and shells? How could they imagine that an army of more than a million men, equipped with ultra-modern weapons, carefully trained by American advisers, would give way before an adversary who was of course battle-seasoned but was much less well-equipped and was thought to have been considerably weakened by the immense destruction caused by American weapons? What was the use of the 1,800 aircraft, 2,000 tanks and armoured cars, 1,600 heavy guns and 1,600 naval and river vessels which Washington had so generously given to Saigon and which had made the latter, at least in terms of the number of aircraft, into the third military power in the world?

The men in Washington were wrong when they thought that the Paris Agreement was a mere scrap of paper that they could tear up and get away with it. They failed to realize the important historical turning-point represented by the signing of such an agreement and the modification in the correlation of forces that resulted from it, both in Viet Nam and elsewhere. For the Vietnamese people, it represented a decisive step in their long march towards independence and free-

dom, in the fierce struggle opposing them for decades to imperialism, Yankee imperialism in particular. The signing of the Agreement had breathed new vigour into the national struggle waged both by the forces rallied behind the banner of the NFL and the PRG and by forces of other tendencies. It speeded up the process of disintegration within the Saigon army and administration, aggravated the isolation of those who stubbornly opposed the trend toward national reconciliation and concord, toward independence and peace. North Viet Nam, which was rapidly healing its wounds of war and building socialism in new conditions, was more than ever the great rear base of the liberation struggle, while the liberated areas in the South, which were being gradually rebuilt, were solid bases and a pole of attraction for the entire population of South Viet Nam.

The USA, after the Paris Agreement, was not the same as before. To speak of defending the security of the USA in Viet Nam would provoke, if not indignation at least scepticism. The American people had other worries : Watergate, oil, the Middle East, Latin America, Europe, inflation, pollution, crime. Urged by public opinion, the US Congress no longer granted as much generous aid to the Saigon puppets as it had done previously. To send American boys to faraway Indochina to get killed was something few American leaders dared to recommend.

Besides, Viet Nam was not the only problem. In Cambodia neither the bombing raids carried out not long before by American aircraft nor the abundant supply of arms and dollars had prevented the Phnom Penh puppets from visibly losing ground. Phnom

Penh, supplied by an American airlift, was but an islet in the midst of an almost wholly liberated Cambodia. A few more hundred million dollars would bring no great change to the situation. In Laos, the American attempts to regain control over the country, which was irresistibly heading for national union, independence, and neutrality, were to no avail. Thailand, until now completely subservient to Washington, was stirring and the Bangkok government under popular pressure had to declare that it was asking Washington to remove the American bases from the country.

The American leaders seem to have been completely ignorant of that important change in the correlation of forces, both in Indochina and in the world at large. In 1973, they had persisted, as they had twenty years before, in their dream of setting up an indigenous military and police machine, a neo-colonial apparatus capable of crushing the national and revolutionary movement. They had also apparently forgotten this lesson: the Saigon army and police had been unable to perform that task and more than half a million GIs had been needed to come and rescue them. For anyone who has at all followed the history of Viet Nam it is unbelievable that the Saigon army and police would be able, without the GIs' support, to hold their own let alone win militarily over the forces of liberation.

And yet, the men in Washington, intelligent and clever men, have harboured such a dream and tried to execute their scheme. The imperialist policy and neo-colonial strategy that inspire them and their belief in the decisive power of armaments have blinded them.

Intoxicated by their own propaganda they have not seen that on the Vietnamese side it is a veritable struggle for liberation that has been going on for decades. The latest successes of the NFL and the PRG have had the character of a national liberation more than that of pure military victories : in most cases, the rising up of the populations, combined with attacks by regulars or guerillas and the desertions and mutinies of Saigon units, has resulted in the puppet forces being quickly routed. It is not a case of an army being defeated by another army ; it is an entire people mounting the assault and having partisans even in the ranks of the enemy's forces.

In the liberated localities and towns, in an unprecedented atmosphere of enthusiasm, life has been quickly reorganized thanks to the efforts of all, in spite of the ruins and mourning accumulated by long years of American intervention. The most generous clemency shown by the PRG to the members of the Saigon army and administration has greatly helped to win over those men and women, who have quickly put themselves at the service of the new regime. The policy of national reconciliation and concord has been applied to the letter. No slanderous propaganda could shake the cohesion of an entire people resolved to regain their independence and freedom.

In his impotent fury Thieu has sent his planes to bomb the liberated towns and localities, adding a new felony to the long list of his crimes against the country. For its part, Washington has tried to bolster the Saigon regime and to blacken in the eyes of international opinion, the Vietnamese national and revolutionary

movement. Under the pretext of rescuing refugees, Ford has sent American naval units to Viet Nam and organized a California-Saigon airlift. It is certain that the USA still has the financial and material means to prolong the survival of the neo-colonial regime in Saigon. For long years to come the neo-colonial policy of Washington will be to hold on to the end, to maintain for as long as possible bastions in Viet Nam and Indochina, so as to delay as much as possible the liberation of the Indochinese peoples and hamper to the utmost the building of a new society in the countries of Indochina.

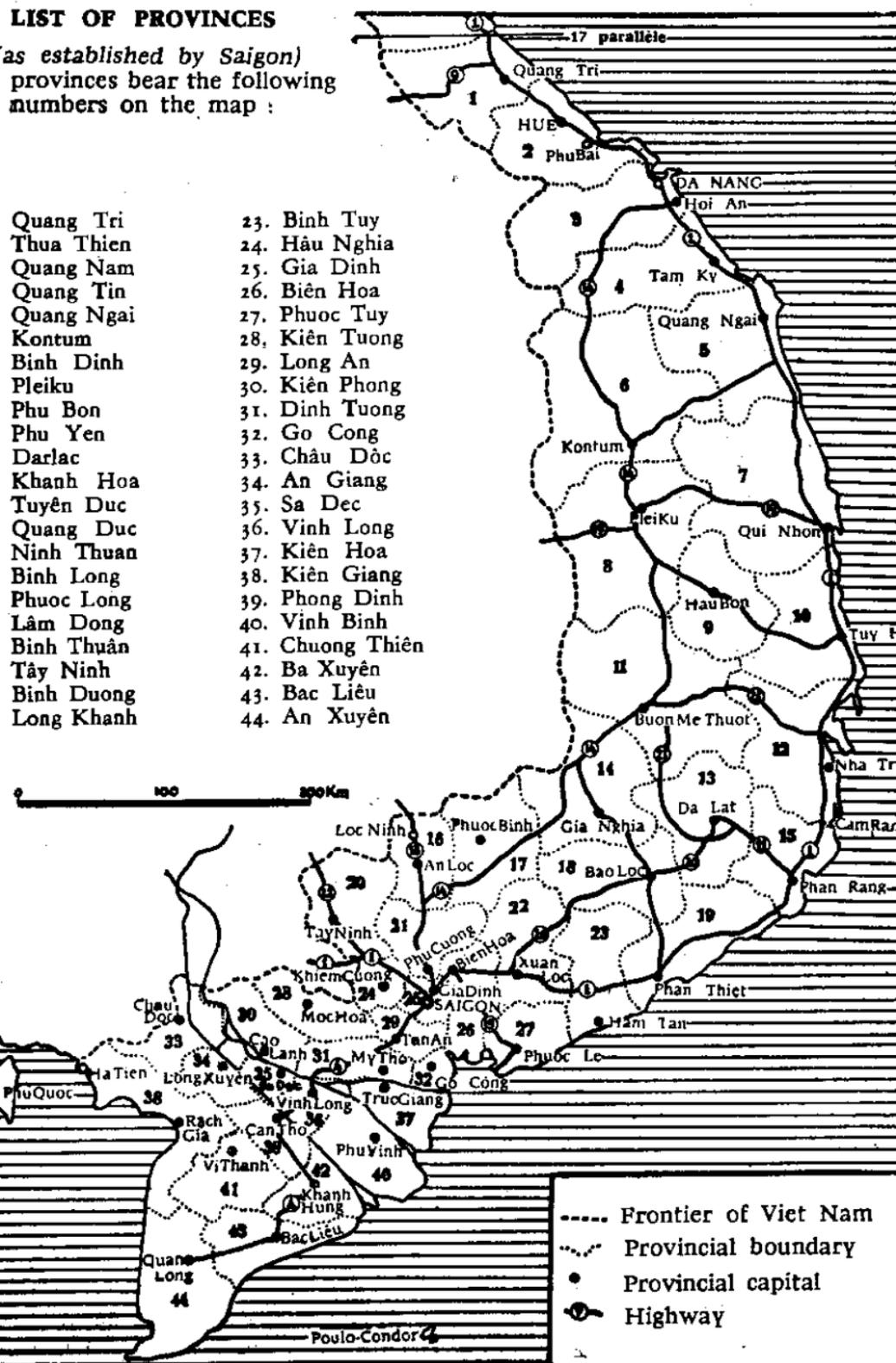
But it is no less certain that a severe, if not mortal, blow has been struck at that policy, which is now doomed sooner or later. No power in the world can any longer bar the road of national liberation to the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao peoples.

*1 April 1975*

# LIST OF PROVINCES

as established by Saigon)  
provinces bear the following  
numbers on the map :

- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| Quang Tri  | 23. Binh Tuy     |
| Thua Thien | 24. Hâu Nghia    |
| Quang Nam  | 25. Gia Dinh     |
| Quang Tin  | 26. Biên Hoa     |
| Quang Ngai | 27. Phuoc Tuy    |
| Kontum     | 28. Kiên Tuong   |
| Binh Dinh  | 29. Long An      |
| Pleiku     | 30. Kiên Phong   |
| Phu Bon    | 31. Dinh Tuong   |
| Phu Yen    | 32. Go Cong      |
| Darlac     | 33. Châu Đốc     |
| Khanh Hoa  | 34. An Giang     |
| Tuyen Duc  | 35. Sa Dec       |
| Quang Duc  | 36. Vinh Long    |
| Ninh Thuan | 37. Kiên Hoa     |
| Binh Long  | 38. Kiên Giang   |
| Phuoc Long | 39. Phong Dinh   |
| Lâm Dong   | 40. Vinh Binh    |
| Binh Thuan | 41. Chuong Thiên |
| Tây Ninh   | 42. Ba Xuyên     |
| Binh Duong | 43. Bac Liêu     |
| Long Khanh | 44. An Xuyên     |



- Frontier of Viet Nam
- - - - - Provincial boundary
- Provincial capital
- ⊙ Highway

**COMMUNIQUE OF APRIL 6, 1975  
OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM PLAF HIGH COMMAND**

This communiqué was issued after the writing of this booklet. We print it to acquaint our readers with the results of recent military operations :

To punish the Nguyen Van Thieu clique, the henchmen of the USA, for their persistent sabotage of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the people and armed forces throughout South Viet Nam have, since early March 1975, launched repeated attacks, staged strong uprisings and won great victories of strategic significance.

The people and their armed forces have wiped out and brought about the disintegration of a large military force including all the live forces, ammunition, technical and other war means in the whole of Military Regions I and II. They have put out of action 270,000 enemy troops, wiped out and brought about the complete disintegration of 6 puppet regular divisions (including 5 infantry divisions, and 1 marine division), the 3rd Paratroop Brigade, 21 multi-battalion

"civil guard" and ranger units, 10 armoured regiments, and 19 armoured battalions, 35 battalions, 9 companies and 70 platoons of ground artillery, and 5 A-A artillery battalions. They have also dissolved all the enemy "militia" and "popular defence" organisations.

Following the victories of the people and armed forces in the Mekong River delta and Eastern Nam Bo, where the local people and liberation armed forces overran and forced the evacuation of thousands of posts and strongholds, took control of many key areas and completely liberated Phuoc Long province, the people and liberation armed forces smashed the enemy's strongest defence system in the Tay Nguyen Highlands and an area stretching along the length of the coastal plains of central Viet Nam, brought about the disintegration of the whole military force and coercive machine of the enemy in vast areas, including many key sectors of very great political, military, economic and cultural significance. They completely liberated 5 big cities : Hue, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Nha Trang and Da Lat, and 16 provinces : Kontum, Gia Lai, Darlac, Phu Bon, Quang Tri, Thua Thiên, Quang Da, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Quang Duc, Binh Long, Lam Dong, Khanh Hoa and Tuyen Duc, together with many district towns, military sectors and sub-sectors belonging to Eastern Nam Bo and the Mekong River delta.

So far, 9,300,000 people from the 17th parallel to Cape Ca Mau have been completely liberated.

In face of the high tide of attacks and uprisings of the people and liberation armed forces and in

response to the revolution's call, many units, tens of thousands of soldiers and thousands of officers of the puppet army have refused to obey combat orders, or mutinied, and crossed over to the revolutionary side, bringing along their weapons.

The extremely great victories of the South Vietnamese people and the very heavy setbacks of the enemy in a short period of time have brought about rapid changes in the situation in South Viet Nam. We are progressing in leaps and bounds and the balance of forces between us and the enemy has radically changed. We have a clear advantage over the enemy who is critically demoralized, organizationally disintegrated, materially and technically depleted, and doomed to an irremediable defeat.

The extremely great victories in the past month have ushered in a new and extremely favourable situation for the people and liberation armed forces to continue their advance to even more splendid victories.

These victories of our people and armed forces are splendid successes of the correct and creative revolutionary line, the will that believes that "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom", the strength of the unity and iron-like determination of our people and armed forces in the fight for peace, independence, democracy and national concord.

They are also splendid victories of the close militant solidarity between the three brotherly peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, of the precious sym-

pathy, support and assistance to Viet Nam from the fraternal socialist countries, and friends throughout the world.

The South Viet Nam PLAF High Command mentions in dispatches the officers and men of all arms in the three categories of troops who have shown a firm resolve to fight and to win, launched overwhelming attacks and fought in close coordination, thus winning brilliant victories and giving effective help to the popular uprisings for the seizure of power.

It warmly congratulates our fellow countrymen in various regions and of various nationalities who, continuing the revolutionary traditions of the entire people in general and the local population in particular, have shown their strong solidarity, bravery and skill, and have risen up to free themselves from the enemy's grip and made an effective contribution to the PLAF victories.

At the present time our army and people are winning big victories. The Nguyen Van Thieu clique have suffered heavy defeats. Bright prospects are opening up before us. In their death throes, the US aggressors and their quislings are continuing to commit crimes against our compatriots. They are compelling them to leave their homes and fields and follow them in their stampede, thus condemning them to wander homeless and end up in the concentration camps at Con Son, Phu Quoc, becoming tools to serve their dark designs. Now the enemy are gathering their remaining forces to attempt to resist our army's waves of attacks and our people's uprisings. The American imperialists have

done their best to breathe new strength into the Thieu clique. They have pushed their barbarity to the lengths of killing and taking away thousands of our children.

The struggle of our armed forces and people will remain a very fierce and complex one ; but the situation is irreversible. However obstinate and perfidious they may be, the enemy will not escape defeat, and we shall certainly win even greater victories.

Our consistent stand has been to strictly implement the Paris Agreement, but we are resolved to mete out due punishment to the American imperialists and their henchmen for their obdurate continuation of the neo-colonialist war and their sabotage of peace and the Paris Agreement.

The PLAF High Command calls on all officers and men of the regular army, the regional units, militia and guerillas, in view of the new situation and in order to fulfil the tasks entrusted to their units and their areas, to strengthen their determination to win, to show even greater courage and initiative in order to unite with the uprising population to smash all the enemy's hopes for its neo-colonialist war and gain new victories.

The PLAF High Command calls on all the people living in enemy-controlled regions to rise up and close their ranks to defend their sacred right to live, to safeguard their lives and property and seize power, resolutely frustrating all the enemy's attempts to compel them to emigrate.

The PLAF High Command hails the officers, soldiers and policemen of the Thieu administration who have already mutinied to join the ranks of the revolution, acting for the salvation of themselves and their families and for the salvation of the nation.

*Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.*

*In the momentum of the recent victories, let our people march forward to win new and ever greater victories !*

## ANNEXES

THE PARIS AGREEMENT AS SEEN BY  
WASHINGTON AND NGUYEN VAN THIEU

*Nixon :*

"The United States will continue to recognize the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam as the sole legitimate government of South Viet Nam".

Televised address on Jan. 28, 1973

*Kissinger :*

"As a signatory of the Paris Agreement... the United States committed itself to strengthening the conditions which made the ceasefire possible... With these commitments in mind, we continue to provide the Republic of Viet Nam with the means necessary for its self-defense and its economic viability...

We have thus committed ourselves very substantially, both politically and morally, While the South