

The Vietnam Crisis

The Johnson administration is sinking every deeper into its quagmire of lies about the war in Vietnam. Now, as these lies come into ever greater confrontation with reality, they are becoming more openly ludicrous. Is there anyone left who really believes that the latest phase of remarkable Viet Cong victories represents the “last convulsive gasp” of the virtually defeated enemy? If it has done nothing else, the administration has added a great new law to military strategy: the more you’re being defeated, the more this simply means that the enemy is becoming “desperate.” The more you lose, the closer you come to “winning.” How many more such “victories” can we stand?

Recently I wrote that the crucial new fact about the war in Vietnam is that the VC has permanently seized the strategic and tactical initiative in the war, an initiative which we had had during the previous dry seasons (approximately November to May), and which the Viet Cong had now obtained. But even I underestimated the swiftness and the force with which the VC would seize and push that initiative; even I underestimated the extent to which the VC is now winning the war.

The last stronghold of the U.S. and Saigon puppet forces had been the cities, and now they are strongholds no longer. For the VC launched a phenomenal simultaneous attack against seventy South Vietnamese cities — including thirty-five of the forty provincial capitals in the country. The VC still holds part of many of these cities, including Saigon and Hue, the

largest. This means that they will remain there permanently, and that now we are permanently faced — short of wiping out the entire urban Vietnamese population, people we are supposedly fighting to “defend” — with guerrilla warfare in the urban as well as the rural areas.

The success of the VC in storming the cities reflects their overwhelming support among even the Saigonese and urban population, and the overwhelming public defection from the Saigon puppet regime. For how did the VC suddenly manage to pop up in the cities? By sneaking arms and equipment in among the civilian population in advance, and then walking into the cities in civilian guise. This can only be done with the overwhelming support of the population that aids you and secretes your arms in advance.

The VC also succeeded in capturing and raiding all the major South Vietnamese arsenals, and has won mass desertions from the Saigon army. Whole battalions of Saigonese troops have either returned to their home villages or have gone over in a body to the VC. How else can one explain the fact that U.S. infantry was needed to hold onto Saigon itself?

There are no safe areas whatever for American troops in Vietnam; there is no safe military rear area; the front is everywhere, and we are losing rapidly. We had best get out, and get out fast. If General [William] Westmoreland leaves the 6,000 American troops isolated and surrounded — by about 30,000 men — at the northwest outpost of Khe Sanh, we will probably get another Dien Bien Phu, and such a massacre will accelerate the getting-out process.