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JPRS L/9390

10 November 1980

# Vietnam Report

(FOUO 10/80)



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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VIETNAM REPORT

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MILITARY AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INFORMATION ON VIETNAMESE MILITARY UNITS

[The following information on Vietnamese military units has been extracted from Vietnamese press sources published in Hanoi, unless otherwise indicated. Unit designators and subordination are as they appear in the original source. The remarks include a brief summary of the salient information available in the news item.]

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
2020th Engineer Gp, Air Defense Forces	Self support farming activities reported. (NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 1)
B.45 Gp	Located on the northern border. (NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 1)
1st MR Chi Lang Corps 01 Signal Gp B.31 Gp	Stresses physical fitness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 1)
Song Lam Infantry Gp	Photo of unit members on patrol. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 1)
N.73 Gp, 5th MR	Improves personnel living conditions. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 1)
Dong Bang Gp	Photo of unit members harvesting rice. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 2)
H.8 Transportation Gp.	In Feb 79 was on the northwestern border. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 2)
K.9 Gp	In Apr 79 was located at Cao Ba Lanh on the northwestern border. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 2)
27th Engineer Regt, 9th MR	Unit member rescues child. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 2)

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586th Troop Rehabilitation Gp	Letter complains of unit being denied television sets. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 2)
N.61 Gp, POL Forces	Stresses physical fitness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 3)
B.31 Tay Nguyen Gp	Held physical fitness meet. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 Sep 80 p 3)
Song Dao Infantry Gp, B.26 Gp	Located in a border location. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 1)
B.45 Gp	Assists in training militia of Ha Quang District, Cao Bang Province. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 1)
Transportation Forces	Check-rein applied to free wheeling unit members. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)
526th Truck Transport Regt	
Binh Tram 18	
26th Transport Gp	
Binh Tram 20	
525th Regt	
510th Regt	
410th Truck Transport Gp	
25th Truck Transport Gp	
26th Truck Transport Gp	
945th Truck Transport Gp	
33rd Truck Transport Gp	
649th Sea Transport Regt	
Binh Tram 23	
Binh Tram 16	
Binh Tram 21	
Binh Tram 60	
Depot 116	
Troop Reception Station 10.A	
Troop Reception Station 11	
Troop Reception Station 15	
Binh Tram 179	
56th Gp	
7th Co, 3rd Bn, 01 Navy Gp	Providing security for "X" Port in Kampuchea. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)
B.91 Gp	Photo of men raising vegetables. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)
34th Signal Gp	Unit repairman commended. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)

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M.68 Artillery Gp	Photo of unit members crossing barbed wire obstacle. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)
H.4 Regt	Does well in firing exercise. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 Sep 80 p 3)
3067th Air Defense Unit	Defending Ho Chi Minh City. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 23 Sep 80 p 1)
Dac To Gp N.18 Infantry Gp	Subordinate units include regiments. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 23 Sep 80 p 1)
4th MR Ly Thuong Kiet Corps [Binh Doan] H.06 Armored Gp H.16 Artillery Gp M.49 Signal Gp M.84 AAA Gp Dong Loc Recruit Training Gp Le Loi Recruit Training Gp T.85 Recruit Training Gp H.83 AAA Regt 80th Signal Regt H.14 Engineer Regt	Youth Union members display proficiency. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 23 Sep 80 p 1)
Signal Branch Signal Officers School Technical School NCO School 4th Gp 5th Gp 6th Gp 9th Gp	Subordinate units commended for following regulations. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 23 Sep 80 p 1)
Khanh Khe Gp, Chi Lang Corps	Unit member commended for physical fitness. (THE DUC THE THAO 20 Sep 80 p 2)
M.72 Navy Gp	Unit stresses physical fitness. (THE DUC THE THAO 20 Sep 80 p 5)
Ly Thuong Kiet Corps (Binh Doan) H.84 AAA Gp M.16 Field Artillery Gp H.06 Armored Gp B.49 Signal Gp	Conducts Party building activities. (TIEN PHONG 23-29 Sep 80 p 2)

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5th MR  
X.07 Infantry Gp  
B.15 Infantry Gp  
70th Engineer Unit  
X.5 Signal Unit  
M.2 Infantry Gp

Cultural activities of subordinate units reported. (VAN NGHE QUAN DOI Sep 80 p 144)

678th Corps [Binh Doan]

Cultural activities reported. (VAN NGHE QUAN DOI Sep 80 p 144)

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MILITARY AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INFORMATION ON VIETNAMESE MILITARY UNITS

[The following information on Vietnamese military units has been extracted from Vietnamese press sources published in Hanoi, unless otherwise indicated. Unit designators and subordination are as they appear in the original source. The remarks include a brief summary of the salient information available in the news item.]

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Factory M.1	Repairs communications equipment and power sources. (TAP CHI QUAN DOI NHAN DAN Jul 80 p 65)
Factory M.2	" " " "
Factory M.3	" " " "
Hospital C.17, 5th MR	Photo of unit herbal medicine garden. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 27 Sep 80 p 3)
50th Regt, 3d MR	ommended for growing herbal medicines. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 27 Sep 80 p 3)
Rear Services General Department 26th Signal Bn Officers School Rear Services Academy N.61 Gp, POL Department	Physical fitness movement promoted. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 28 Sep 80 p 1)
Air Defense Forces Air Defense Officers School Technical Department 2021st Regt 65th Div	" " " "

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7th MR  
Unit N.9  
Unit B.10  
Unit H.3  
Unit H.5  
Unit B.2  
B.77 Gp  
5th Gp  
16th Gp  
Subordinated units forge good discipline.  
(QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 29 Sep 80 p 1)

7th MR  
600th Gp  
Phuoc Long Gp  
Subordinate units assigned to economic  
construction duties. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN  
29 Sep 80 p 1)

7th MR  
Army Officers School #2  
59th Gp  
B.10 Gp  
23d Gp  
26th Gp  
5th Gp  
72d Gp  
600th Gp  
Rear Services Department  
Political Department  
Subordinate units or members of listed  
subordinate units commended for good  
training. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN  
29 Sep 80 p 1)

M.96 Gp  
Located in Lang Son Province. Photo  
of unit antiaircraft gun crew.  
(QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 29 Sep 80 p 1)

Quyet Thang Corps  
Chien Thang Div  
B.9 Div  
140th Signal Regt  
NCO School  
24.M AAA Brig  
Thu Do Regt  
Ba Vi Regt  
Tat Thang AAA Brig  
54th Depot, Rear Services Dept  
1st Bn, H.99 Engineer Gp  
Commended for good adherence to regulations.  
(QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 29 Sep 80 p 1)

B.9 Div  
Thach Han Regt  
Assisted with flood and storm counter-  
measures at the Hoang Hoa Dike on the  
Lach Truong River, Hoang Hoa District,  
Thanh Hoa Province. Deputy Division  
Commander: Phan Tran Thang [PHAN TRAAANF  
THAWNGS]; Deputy Division Commander:  
Nguyen Duc Tu [NGUYEENX DUWCS TUWJ].  
(QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 29 Sep p 1)

067 Gp, Ho Chi Minh City Air  
Defense Forces  
Unit member commended. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN  
29 Sep 80 p 3)

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Song Cau Gp, Cao Bang [Province] Forces	Maintaining combat ready state against possible PRC attack. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 29 Sep 80 p 3)
N.10 Transportation Regt	Vehicle maintenance stressed. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 1)
33d Transportation Regt	" " " "
21st Transportation Regt	" " " "
S.49 Transportation Regt	" " " "
Ba To Artillery Gp, 5th MR	Conducts training while maintaining combat readiness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 1)
247th Gp, Ha Tuyen Province Forces	Photo of recoilless rifle crew. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 1)
762d Local Forces Gp, Thanh Hoa Province	Fought flood following Tropical Storm #6 along the Ma River in Quang Xuong District. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 1)
Factory 27	Producing consumer goods. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 2)
Factory 59	" " " "
Factory 15	" " " "
Factory 19	" " " "
Factory 31	" " " "
Factory 13	" " " "
Factory 21	" " " "
Factory 29	" " " "
Factory 25	" " " "
Factory 76	" " " "
Unit 78, Border Defense Forces	Fought flood following Tropical Storm #6 along the Ma River in Quang Xuong District. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 1)
Unit 75, B.33 Gp	Self-support farming activities reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 2)
B.38 Gp	" " " "
Unit 113, Phu Khanh Province Forces	" " " "

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4th Gp, 32d Corps [Binh Doan]	Stresses physical fitness.(QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 1 Oct 80 p 3)
B.95 Gp	Located in Quang Ninh Province. Commended for combat readiness. (NHAN DAN 2 Oct 80 p 1)
5th Gp	" " " "
B.23 Gp	" " " "
771st Sea Island Gp	" " " "
772d Sea Island Gp	" " " "
790th Sea Island Gp	" " " "
Lam Son Gp	Photo of field radar units and antennas. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Oct 80 p 1)
X.14 Gp, Sapper Forces	Contributed rice to flood victims. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 2 Oct 80 p 2)
H.14 Engineer Force	Located in Nghe Tinh Province. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Oct 80 p 1)
80th Signal Gp	" " " "
Unit 12	" " " "
Unit 34	" " " "
Quyét Thang Corps 02 Armored Brigade 54th Artillery Regt Thu Do Regt Tat Thang Artillery Gp 299th Engineer Gp 241st AAA Gp	Subordinate units commended for maintenance of arms and equipment. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Oct 80 p 1)
1006th (Pac Bo) Gp	Photo of men working on tank. This unit is located on the "1st line." (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Oct 80 p 3)
26th Signal Gp, Rear Service General Department	Unit participates in a signal competition. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Oct 80 p 3)
9th Bn, 7th Gp	Photo of unit aidman administering inoculations to children in Kampuchea. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 3 Oct 80 p 3)
Air Defense Branch Thanh To AAA Gp Truong Son AAA Gp Thang Tam AAA Gp Tran Phu AAA Gp	Subordinated units self-support activities reported. (NHAN DAN 4 Oct 80 p 1)

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B.44 Gp, Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan]	Has three regiments. Located in Van Ban and Bao Yen Districts, Hoang Lien Son Province. (NHAN DAN 4 Oct 80 p 1)
Cam Duong Infantry Gp, Tay Bac Forces	Located on the 1st line.. (NHAN DAN 4 Oct 80 p 1)
Thong Nhat AAA Gp	Photo of gun crew. (NHAN DAN 4 Oct 80 p 1)
B.91 Gp, 12th Corps [Binh Doan] 1st Regt 22nd Regt 55th Regt 79th Regt	Stresses training. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 1)
Sapper Forces Sapper Officers School B.79 Gp X.13 Gp T.20 Gp	Since the beginning of 1980 conducted training for more than 1,000 cadres. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 4)
368th Gp, 5th MR	Photo of 105mm howitzer crew. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 1)
Song Thao Corps [Binh Doan] E.24 Gp M.74 Gp S.92 Gp A.16 Infantry Gp K.45 Infantry Gp X.55 Infantry Gp	Youth Union activities reported in subordinate units. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 1)
Border Defense Post 13, Dien Bien District, Lai Chau Province	Self-support farming results reported. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 2)
4th Gp, 32d Corps [Binh Doan]	Physical fitness freaks commended. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 3)
7th Gp	Unit operated in dispersed deployment in Kampuchea. Nguyen Si Thuy [NGUYEENX SIX THUYJ] is a deputy regimental commander in this unit. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 3)
Thanh Loa Missile Gp 57th Bn 93d Bn 94th Bn	Commended for high state of combat readiness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 8 Oct 80 p 3)
Dien Bien Missile Gp	Photo of rear end of two missiles on launcher. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 1)
H.48 Gp, Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan]	Working on Route 279. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 1)

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7th MR	Youth Union members commended. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
Unit N.9	
Unit B.10	
Unit H.3	
Unit H.5	
Unit B.2	
B.77 Gp	
5th Gp	
16th Gp	
Phuoc Long Gp	
600th Gp	
26th Gp	
72d Gp	
Ba Be Radar Gp	Photo of unit female personnel. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
Sao Do Air Force Gp	Youth Union members commended. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
B.61 Gp, Chi Lang Corps [Binh Doan]	Has been located on the northern border for the last 2 years. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
35th Regt, Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan]	Doing road construction work. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
12th Gp, Cuu Long Corps [Binh Doan]	Unit members commended for devotion to duty. (NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 3)
Capital Military Region	Stresses physical fitness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 1)
47th Gp	
"A" Infantry Gp	
81st Gp	
254th Gp, Hoang Lien Son Province	Photo of unit on field exercise. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 1)
Quyut Thang Corps [Binh Doan]	Tightening of discipline reduces number of infractions by unit personnel. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 9 Oct 80 p 1)
Division C	
Division Q	
H.99 Engineer Brigade	
Thu Do Regt	
Song Lam B Gp, 12th Corps [Binh Doan]	Self-support farming results are good despite unit being always on the move. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 1)
22d Regt	
M.22 Gp, Tay Bac Forces	Makes wide use of herbal medicines. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 1)

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Capital Military Region Gp "A" Gp "C" B.21 Gp	Subordinate units training new soldiers and local forces. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 1)
44th Missile Bn, H.63 Gp	Photo of men working on perforated dish antenna. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 1)
Quyét Thang Corps [Binh Doan] NCO School B.9 Gp "C" Infantry Gp Quan Tien Phong Gp Rear Services School 02 Armored Gp	Subordinate units stress physical fitness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 1)
70th Gp, 12th Corps [Binh Doan]	Political Officer: Lieutenant Colonel Hoang Xien [HOANGF XIEENF]. Political officer responds to criticism from person located at Letter Box 13R-180 Binh Tri Thien. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 10 Oct 80 p 2)

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MILITARY AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INFORMATION ON VIETNAMESE MILITARY UNITS

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<u>Unit</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
53d Bn, Dien Bien Missile Gp	Photo of missiles on launchers. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 12 Oct 80 p 1)
Artillery Forces, Quang Ninh Province	Quality of training improves. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 12 Oct 80 p 1)
B.95 Gp	
B.23 Gp	
B.28 Gp	
B.54 Gp	
B.58 Gp	
Hai Dao Gp	
H.21 Regt	Unit athlete quoted. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 12 Oct 80 p 3)
A.42 Factory, Technical Department Air Force Headquarters	Self-support farming results given. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 1)
Self Defense Navy Gp, Vietnam Maritime Transport Corporation	Recently activated. Has 20 large size vessels. Moves cargo between North and South Vietnam and "performing an international mission in Kampuchea." (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 1)
026 Truck Transportation Regt, Rear Service General Department	Located in the 4th Military Region. Providing transportation assistance to Laos. Made latest change of station in the third quarter of 1980. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 2)

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13th Gp	Located in 4th Military Region. During third quarter of 1980 moved into location formerly occupied by the 026 Truck Transportation Regiment. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 2)
M. 26 Gp 1st Bn 4th Bn 5th Bn 7th Bn 9th Bn	Unit cooperates with security forces of Haiphong in reducing criminal activities. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 12 Oct 80 p 1)
31st Engineer Gp	Fools four robbery attempts of government property. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 1)
Song Thao Engineer Brigade	Unit members commended for physical fitness. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 3)
94th Missile Bn, Thanh Lao Gp	Does well in practice alerts. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 13 Oct 80 p 3)
T. 55 Gp, Ha Nam Ninh Forces	Unit athlete commended. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 14 Oct 80 p 1)
32d Gp	Does well in track meet. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 14 Oct 80 p 4)
Thanh Loa Missile Gp	Tropical storms 3 and 4 destroyed or damaged 70 percent of unit structures. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 14 Oct 80 p 1)
27th Air Force Gp	Commended for maintenance of aircraft and armaments. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 15 Oct 80 p 1)
98th Gp, Truong Son Corps [Binh Doan]	Involved in road and bridge construction for the last 3 years. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 15 Oct 80 p 1)
Song Dao Infantry Gp	Assisted local people in moving corn and rice to depots. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 15 Oct 80 p 3)
18th Navy Gp, Border Defense Forces	Youth Union members commended. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 16 Oct 80 p 1)
N. 13 Regt, 3d MR	Saves rice from waterlogging. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 16 Oct 80 p 2)

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5th Bn, Tay Tien Gp, Chi Lang Corps [Binh Doan]	Photos show unit conducting basic infantry training. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 16 Oct 80 p 3)
22d Border Defense Transportation Gp	Commended for self-support farming. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 17 Oct 80 p 4)
88th Border Defense Gp	" " " "
Chien Thang Div	Photo of infantry detachment on patrol. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 17 Oct 80 p 1)
M.2 Corps [Binh Doan]	Subordinate units construct roads and bridges, repair damage caused by recent tropical storms and contribute labor to local population. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 17 Oct 80 p 1)
B.70 Gp	
B.72 Gp	
B.84 Gp	
N.65 Gp	
B.34 Gp	
B.44 Gp	
B.73 Gp	
B.91 Gp	
79th Regt, B.91 Gp	
566th Regt, B.44 Gp	
17th Regt	
35th Regt	
974th Bn	
976th Bn	
978th Bn	
532d Regt	
Technical General Department	Subordinate units commended for proposing initiatives. (QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 17 Oct 80 pp 1, 4)
Factory 53	
Factory 27	
Factory 59	
Factory 31	
Factory 55	
X.12 Gp	Unit members do well in physical fitness tests. (THE DUC THE THAO 30 Sep 80 p 3)
1st Regt, Vinh Quang Div, Huong Giang Corps [Binh Doan]	" " " " "
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ECONOMIC PLANNING, TRADE AND FINANCE

BURCHETT INTERVIEW WITH TO HUU ON SRV ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French 15-28 Sep 80 pp 44-45

[Interview with To Huu, Vietnamese poet and deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs, by Wilfred Burchett--passages between slantlines originally published in italics]

[Text] The Vietnamese people fight the lack of land, fertilizer, and currency with their determination, their courage, and their sweat.

Threatened with attack by China, suffering under the economic boycott of the Americans, the Chinese, and many other countries under the influence of these two powers, Vietnam is still going through a difficult period. The population is still obliged to "tighten its belt;" more precisely, it has never been able to loosen it. The reasons for this have been explained; and accepted: with this stoicism born of patriotism and confidence in leadership that went on to victory through what were in other respects the most tragic circumstances through a half-century of struggle for independence and unity. But the will to revenge of the old oppressors deprives the Vietnamese people of the material gains which today should attend the sacrifices they accepted for the sake of victory for themselves or for other oppressed peoples.

The problems of the present situation were described concretely for me by To Huu, one of the most famous of Vietnamese poets, presently the deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs.

/"Some numbers will give a general idea of the situation,"/ he explained to me. /"The population has now reached 53 million, compared to the 25 [million] inhabitants we had in 1945; but the area under cultivation remains the same. This figure includes the newly cleared land that makes up for the areas put out of production by American chemical warfare. If one takes into account the regions that can produce more than one harvest per year, it can be said that we have 6,720,000 hectares. With two harvests yearly, we would have the equivalent of 10 million hectares. Out of this entire area--intensively cultivated--and without allowing for natural catastrophes, we can harvest 25 million tons of rice per year. Now we must reckon with a population of

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60 million people in the next few years, which means that we will need 30 million tons of rice. Now we are presently producing 13 million. This shows sufficiently that our real battle is for sustenance. We are clearing new land, but this is very hard work. The levels of mechanization are very uneven. We want to get to our "green revolution," but we lack fertilizer of any kind. Up to now, we have succeeded in importing a million tons of chemical fertilizers a year. This year, we will only be able to buy a half-million tons: the harvests are obviously going to suffer."/

"Food, Food!"

/"We are presently producing 240 kilos of rice per person per year; and for those who are living right on the official rations, this becomes truly an "art" of living--or surviving, one should say. If we get enough fertilizer, if we can irrigate enough land, we will be able to increase our production up to 20 million tons of rice in the next few years.

/"The top priority is the battle for rice; but we must also increase our fish production. Before the American war, we were fishing 600 or 700 thousand tons up and down our coasts. The destruction of our fishing fleet and the lack of modern equipment have caused this to drop to 500,000 tons.

/"Food, food, food!, this is the problem of the hour."/

The only positive element that could be extracted from such a frank presentation of things is that, now that the shooting war is over--at least for the time being--the Vietnamese leadership is no longer trying to hide the harsh realities of the situation. They were hidden before, so that the Pentagon should not think that the Vietnamese people were at the end of their rope and that a few more bombs would finish them off. But To Huu also had some pleasant things to say.

/"Oil! We know now that we have reserves of 4 billion tons in the Eastern Sea--what the Chinese call the South China Sea--off our coasts. There have also been discovered immense reserves of natural gas in the northern and southern regions, and they are readily exploitable. We are banking heavily on that."/

The Vietnamese would have been delighted to let the various American companies that did the first drilling and made the first discoveries tackle the stage of commercial exploitation. Terms favorable to both sides were agreed upon. But to the great misfortune of the American companies, the State Department intervened and imposed its economic boycott against Vietnam: the American firms could do nothing but withdraw. Now the USSR, Italy, West Germany, and France--/"waiting for their chance,"/ as To Huu said--are making exploitation proposals.

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Till the End of the Century

/"Also we have reserves of high quality iron; and millions of tons of it,"/ To Huu continued, /"and furthermore, besides the anthracite reserves exploited for decades in the Hongay-Campha region, nearly 3 billion tons of lignite that we have discovered in the Red River delta. The construction of hydro-electric and thermal power plants offers us good prospects for long-term utilization of electric energy; this will also make it possible for us to process our bauxite ore into aluminum.

/"We have also trained more technical personnel, of which we now have 500,000, out of a total work-force of 25 million people.

/"Also, in the Central Plateau--which forms the border with Laos and northern Cambodia--we have planted 400,000 hectares of rubber-trees and 200,000 of coffee. We eventually plan to plant a million hectares.

/"In the long run, our prospects are good,"/ To Huu continued. /"We have good reason to believe that we are going to build an industrialized state and a prosperous society. But it will take us till the end of the century. Until then, we will be poor and we will be hungry.

/"Life will be hard: we can be under no illusions. Of course, we suffer from the pressures of the Chinese and, behind them, of the Americans. They have 20 divisions--5 army corps--permanently stationed along our border. We are ready for any contingency, but their very presence affects the economy; for it immobilizes the manpower we need so much."/

To my questions about the South and particularly about the development of cooperatives in the Mekong delta, as well as about the clearing of virgin land in the economic New Zones, To Huu replied: /"Three [million] of the five million [hectares] of cultivable land is in the Mekong delta. Things are going well--slowly but surely--including formation of cooperatives. One must not be precipitous about things. The poorest peasants are forming at this time cooperatives of from 20 to 40 hectares, which utilize a work force of 50 to 60 people. About 20 percent of the peasants down there are part of the affluent middle class. One gets nowhere forcing them to establish cooperatives. 70 to 80 percent of the agricultural labor in the South is mechanized, and we lack spare parts: this is a serious problem, having machines imported from Japan or the United States."/

The American Boycott

/"One must have machines to be able to open up new land to cultivation: here again we run into the problem of the economic boycott. As we run into the problem of the availability of foreign currency: when we have oil to export, at least the currency problem will be solved!"/

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It is clear, when one listens to To Huu, that the economic boycott by the United States and China, which is extending little by little to their allies and the international organizations under their influence, is a basic factor in the economic development problems, including even minimal food production. /"France uses 1,500 kilos of fertilizer per hectare. Bulgaria 500 kilos; we ourselves, at best, are able to utilize 70 to 100 kilos..."/, To Huu also observed.

These deficiencies are exacerbated by the lack of skilled labor in all sectors of the economy. And to prove his words To Huu explained to me that it had been a mistake to establish cooperatives of 500 to 600 hectares. They were manifestly too large for the present level of organization, and they had to be reduced to an average area of 200 hectares. This critical realism, this optimism without illusions, with which To Huu analyzed the situation and prospects, is typical of the new attitude that prevails now in Hanoi at all levels. There is no effort to hide the problems that the Vietnamese people will have to face in the next two decades. But at the same time they preserve an optimistic vision of the future.

A vision that relies on the fact that this future is right now being built by the Vietnamese people--with their own hands.

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