

# WAR

no. 3 APRIL 21, 1972

# BULLETIN

ARVN Outflanked

## FIGHTING NEARS SAIGON

### Attacks Spread in Cambodia



Vietnamese Liberation forces

While world attention focuses on the bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong, the Liberation Forces' offensives have proceeded methodically toward their present objective: the destruction of the main force units of the Saigon army throughout South Vietnam. Besieged in their ever lessening number of firebases or milling around in disorganized passivity, what remains of Thieu's main force units are paralyzed while the Liberation Forces press forward around them.

Except for scattered pockets of holdouts, the once great chain of "defensive perimeters" stretching from the DMZ in the north to the Mekong Delta in the south has been smashed. Thieu seems to have only one option left—to pull his forces back into the towns and cities, turning them into *urban firebases* such as has already happened to Dong Ha in Quang Tri province.

The Liberation Forces' offensives are rapidly reaching the end of one stage: wrecking Thieu's forces in their defensive perimeters, liberating the villages and towns of the countryside throughout Vietnam, and preparing for the next stage in the struggle: the liberation of South Vietnam.

#### Defense Perimeters of Saigon Destroyed

By attacking An Loc, 60 miles north of Saigon, two weeks ago, the Liberation Forces enticed Thieu to send thousands of relief troops (including the entire 21st Division from the Mekong Delta) up Highway 13 from Saigon to rescue the besieged forces in the provincial capital. The Liberation Forces then proceeded to pin down and systematically wipe out the relief columns, which are now not only cut off from their destination at An Loc, but are prevented from retreating southward to Saigon by attacks from the rear. As the New York Times put it "the guns of many tanks were trained back down the road they had travelled."

On April 18, while Thieu's forces were pinned down on Highway 13, the Liberation Forces opened a new front by cutting Highway 1 in Cambodia between Phnom Penh and Saigon. This front has drawn westward remnants of the 21st Division which were still able to move. The following day, this same ARVN Division found itself outflanked to the south by Liberation Forces which had attacked the nerve center of all ARVN operations in the region at Kai Khe, just 25 miles north of Saigon on Highway 13. With the 21st Division moving westward, the ARVN remnants on Highway 13 are decisively cut off, with little hope of rescue.

Meanwhile, by his effort to protect the northern defense perimeter of Saigon on Highway 13, Thieu has left the Mekong Delta to the south of the capital without a regular army defense. U.S. newspapers have said very little about the Delta, but Radio Hanoi has reported an endless string of uprisings, village liberations, defeats of local ARVN units, and a general dismantling of pacification. On April 13, Hanoi's "Peoples' Army Daily" hailed the victories in the Delta as among the most important in the current offensive.

#### Strategy for the Saigon Front

The Liberation Forces' strategy on the Saigon front is now clear. Attacking in Binh Long province northwest of Saigon, they provoked Thieu into sending the only available main force units that remained after an original 10,000 men had been sent to the DMZ to defend Quang Tri. Thieu ordered them to hold onto every inch of territory. While they were trying to hold on to inches in An Loc, the Mekong Delta could only be held with "regional and popular forces" and some sub-standard main force units.



## National Student Strike

In response to the U.S. escalation of the war in Indochina, at least 61 colleges and universities have voted to join the National Student Strike scheduled for Friday, April 21. In addition, schools in North Carolina, New Hampshire, and the Boston area have agreed to joint action in their respective areas over the weekend.

In Washington, 50 anti-war leaders have signed a statement calling for a National Moratorium on Thursday May 4, to press the following demands upon the Nixon administration: (1) stop all American bombing in Indochina, (2) set a date for the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Indochina, (3) end support for the Thieu regime in South Vietnam, (4) return to the Paris negotiations.

## USAir Attacks Bring Limited Results

The American air war effort continues to intensify in all areas of Vietnam, as the number of tactical support missions flown in the south approaches the level reached at the time of the Tet offensive of 1968 and raids over the north continue south of the 19th parallel.

Within a period of a few hours on Monday, April 17, U.S. airmen flew over 1000 missions in support of beleaguered South Vietnamese troops in the northern provinces, the Central Highlands, around Saigon, and in the Mekong Delta. On Wednesday, April 19, B-52's bombed liberation force positions within 50 miles of Saigon, the closest B-52 raids to the capital in the entire war.

#### Continuing Raids on North

Over 1000 sorties have been flown over North Vietnam since April 6, including the raids on Hanoi and Haiphong last Sunday. Although no new raids on those major cities have occurred since that time, CBS news reports that new raids against Haiphong are under "active consideration" in Washington. The U.S. command in Saigon claims that only "military targets" in the north are being hit by B-52 and fighter-bomber raids; Radio Hanoi continues to report hundreds of civilian casualties.

American pilots interviewed by U.S. newsmen have been reporting a great increase in the level of anti-aircraft and surface-to-air missile defenses in North Vietnam. "Now they're being shot at for the first time," says one Air Force officer of his fellow pilots. "They're reporting SAM's missing them by only 500 feet—and that's close." The increased capacity of the defenses of the DRV is underscored by the attacks on the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Gulf of Tonkin by MIG jets, surface craft, and shore artillery batteries.

#### Air Capacity Strained

The huge air armada of close to 1000 planes which the U.S. has assembled in Indochina is working overtime in southern and northern Vietnam, yet is unable to provide air support to ARVN troops facing heavy attacks in Cambodia.

continued on page 4

## Bay Area Protest April 22

Faced with the current crisis and the possibility of even greater escalations, the anti-war movement has a great responsibility. Historically, the anti-war movement has had a crucial role to play in determining U.S. policy in Vietnam—particularly at times when the U.S. government, facing an imminent collapse of its policy, began to consider new escalations. After the U.S. defeat in the 1968 Tet Offensive, Johnson was unable to send the 206,000 additional troops requested by Westmoreland because of the mass sentiment against the war in the U.S. In 1970, mass protests prevented Nixon from turning the invasion of Cambodia into a permanent occupation.

Again U.S. policy in Vietnam is at a critical juncture. The current offensive of the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam clearly demonstrates the bankruptcy of Nixon's Vietnamization policy. The situation for the U.S. grows more desperate day by day. With the collapse of Vietnamization imminent, Nixon has bombed Hanoi and Haiphong, threatened to "attack any target in North Vietnam," and even suggested a blockade of Haiphong Harbor.

In large measure, the course Richard Nixon will choose will depend upon the political pressure exerted by the people of the United States. Already demonstrations by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War have sparked large rallies in many American cities and a national student strike. This is a beginning.

The importance of our actions at this time was underlined by an April 17 statement by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam: "We call upon the American people that for the sake of peace, justice and honor of the United States they act resolutely to stop the escalation of the war ordered by Nixon."

On April 22nd people from throughout the Bay Area will demonstrate to stop a further escalation of the war by Nixon and demand an immediate halt to the bombings of North Vietnam, and all Indochina. At 10 a.m. people will assem-

continued on page 4

continued on page 3