

LAST CHAPTER

The Municipal Military Management Committee

I met with another surprise.

On 1 May, at the forward campaign headquarters, I was urgently carrying out several tasks: monitoring the attacks and uprisings which were taking place in the Mekong Delta; completing the organization of the column that would aid our forces in the Delta; reorganizing and redeploying the military forces in Saigon and eastern Nam Bo; and continuing to guide the mopping up of the remaining troop remnants scattered about in company--in places battalion--sized units in the jungles and maquis around Saigon.

Brothers Sau Tho and Bay Cuong arrived and announced that "Brother Ba has sent a message which said that the Political Bureau has decided that you will serve as chairman of the Military Management Committee of Saigon-Gia Dinh. You'd better leave now so you arrive in time."

Since the beginning of April, under the guidance of the Political Bureau and COSVN, and with the participation of Sau Tho, we had made provisions for everything. A detailed work plan had been drafted for the Military Management Committee and the committees to take over management of the installations in the city. The apparatus had been organized and appointments had been organized to personnel. The chairman of the Military Management Committee and the head of the Transition Committee had been appointed (I was not appointed to either position). The Political Bureau gave its approval and sent many cadres from the central echelon in Hanoi to the south so that we could have the capability to handle the enormous volume of work. As the columns were advancing on Saigon from all directions, the military management and transition apparatus followed close behind. Perhaps they had already begun work. Thus from the beginning of April, when the deployment of the combat units and uprising forces had been completed, the city's military management and transition forces were also organized. When the offensive and uprising plan was drafted the transition and military management plan was also drafted. Before one task had been completed another would have to be carried out. We were determined to win total victory and were fully confident of winning victory, so everything was provided for in advance.

I could not remember how many times I had been surprised in my work, but I was certain that I had not been surprised for the last time. There would be many more surprises, both good ones and bad ones. That was a truth of life, nothing out of the ordinary when there is work to be done and we are still breathing and able to work. Even when we are no longer capable of working, when we have "fading eyes, graying hair, a bent back and slow speech,"* that is also nothing out of the ordinary. There will be surprises until we return to dust, for only then will it all be over.

*"Nom" poem by Nguyen Trai, "Tales of Travel" (Poem No 14), from "Quoc Am Thi Tap."

Our convoy left the command headquarters, passed through the Dau Tieng rubber plantation, crossed the Saigon River, went to Ben Cui, and then to Trang Bang along Route 1 and to Saigon past Cu Chi, Tan Phu Trung, Hoc Mon and Ba Queo. Oh! The fruit orchards, the rows of luxuriant green bamboo, the fields on the edge of the village and the flowers. I felt so familiar with those surroundings, as if I had lived there only recently. The people we encountered along the way, in groups or standing in front of their houses or in their gardens, all friendly faces and bright eyes, as if we had met at least once before. I felt very moved. I wanted to visit each house and hug and kiss everyone I met. I wanted to photograph with my eyes and imprint on the bottom of my heart everything I saw that day, from the spacious fertile fields to the pure blue sky. It wasn't important what village, hamlet, subward, or neighborhood it was, or whether the person's surname was Nguyen or Le. They were all our relatives and villages, and they were all us! Thirty years ago we had been apart, near yet so far, close but seemingly strange. Now the sky and earth belonged to us. We were free and independent. Did everyone understand that?

When I remembered how I felt then I praise the poet Xuan Dieu, who wrote the poem, "I Want To Visit All of South Vietnam," the last lines of which are as follows:

"Oh! On the splendid wings of the phoenix bird of victory,

If only I could, I would imitate Khuat Nguyen and ride the phoenix through the pass, taking along a rainbow as his cockscomb.

To express my joy toward the nation,
I want to visit every village and house, every flower-fenced village in the south.
I want to turn my head and greet every mother,
And shout 'Forever!' to all appeals of our country."*

Coincidentally, my route into Saigon that day was almost the same one I took from Saigon to the resistance area in September 1945. Then I went to Go Vap and Ba Queo, then stayed for a while in Hoc Mon and Ba Diem. I then went to An Nhon Tay, Cu Chi, Duc Hoa, My Hanh, etc., and had to leave my beloved city to the occupation of the French and English. We were armed only with sharp stakes and a few muskets, and some Japanese rifles taken from the enemy. Before I left I participated in the fighting at Cau Bong, Ba Chieu, and Phu Nhuan, with a staff in my hand and a pistol under my belt. Many brave youths, shoulder-to-shoulder, marched to the cadence of a song everyone knew by heart: "Brothers! Let us set out together to attack the enemy." I cannot forget the image of the old man Pham Thieu, a famous teacher in Saigon at that time who, wearing a bamboo hat and holding a sharp stake, attacked the enemy along with us youths. Many of our comrades and compatriots fell and found their permanent resting place in Saigon. As for us, we set out empty-handed,

*From "Vietnamese Poetry, 1945-1975" [Tho Viet Nam, 1945-1975], New Works Publishing House, Hanoi, p 85.

rich only in spirit. We had confidence in the party and in a brighter future. We fondly bid adieu to the city, pledging to ourselves that we were going so that we could later return one splendid day to liberate our city and people. We were certain that that day was not far away. That turned out not to be the case: that day would be more than 10,000 days away. Time can be measured in terms of nights and days, rainy seasons and dry seasons, but I challenge anyone to recall how many kilometers our path had taken us. From village to village and hamlet to hamlet I, like countless others of our comrades, had lived with the loving care of the people in the outskirts of Saigon, then in all of the provinces of eastern Nam Bo, the marshy maquis and the jungle-and-mountains area, then in central and western Nam Bo and amidst the rivers and streams of Dong Thap Muoi. How can I recall the names of all the hamlets and villages or of the mothers, brothers and sisters. The young couriers of that time, who were only about 10 years old, today, if they are still alive, have gotten married and have children. Those hamlets and villages were named "Vietnam" and the family members were named "Mother Nam," "Mother Tam," "Uncle Hai," "Uncle Bay," "Master Ba," and "Master Tu," all of whom I regard as my relatives. The undertaking of one person is an undertaking of all. If I accomplished anything it was with the help of the people. After I returned to the city I would never forget the maquis, the sea, the jungle and the mountains. I had been able to fulfill my mission thanks to the people and now my mission was above all to serve the people. I was successful thanks to my friends, and now I would not forget them. Vietnamese virtue is love and justice, and is loyalty between people. Our eyes and hearts must be clear and pure: that is the law of a person's life.

But after having traveled every path in our country and having endured every hardship and danger, now we were returning. I automatically ran a hand over my body: luckily, I was still in one piece. I had encountered bombs and shells many times, but they had been very considerate toward me. Perhaps if I didn't think about them they would avoid me. But it was really just a matter of luck. Nguyen Trai once wrote the line, "When the warfare is over there is great happiness." In his poem, "Writing Poems on Mt. Con After the Battle," Nguyen Trai wrote:

"Ten years away from home,
The pine tree will be ragged when I return.
I've promised the forest and the streams
that I won't break my oath.
How pitiful are those who endure hardships.
I dreamed that I had returned home,
Happy to still be alive, although the fighting hasn't ended.
When will we erect our huts down from the mountains?
A rock is my pillow and I brew my tea with stream water."

(translated by Khuong Huu Dung)*

*From "Poems and Prose of Nguyen Trai" [Tho Van Nguyen Trai], Education Publishing House, Hanoi, p 83.

But not everyone comes through a war unscathed. Many of my comrades and friends gave their lives in one part of the country or another. They gave their lives so that we could return and, on behalf of those who left in the fall of that year, tell the people that we had kept our word. Families that have suffered losses and have members who have not returned should regard us as their children, brothers and sisters, and work with us in building the new life we have long desired.

I still remember, as if they were extremely pretty pictures, the villages of Vietnam every time there is foreign aggression. That year groups of young men and women of all strata--workers, intellectuals, etc.--with strong hatred and determination greater than a mountain, left the city. Some went to central Vietnam--to which the French had not yet gone--to request the Central Committee to equip them and organize units so that they could return to kill the enemy and defend the nation. Others remained behind, banded together, equipped themselves with weapons captured from the enemy, and attacked the enemy, even in the outskirts of the city. I and my younger brother Viet Chau joined the latter group. There were nights when I and sister Nam Bi (i.e. Colonel Ho Thi Bi, now retired) went to the Ba Diem area, entered the former base of the Japanese troops, and dug up dry wells to search for Japanese weapons in that manner. I met with the Provincial Party Committee of Gia Dinh Province and issued a resolution regarding the organization of guerrillas from Hoc Mon, Duc Hoa, and Ba Diem districts to form the "Hoc Mon-Ba Diem-Duc Hoa Interdistrict Liberation Unit" based at My Hanh village. The people in that beloved area called us "our troops" to distinguish us from the troops who refused to fight the enemy but often harassed the people. From that time on our men fought continually, with the support of the people, developed into detachments 12, 14 and 15, then into Military Region 7, Military Region 8, etc., and became increasingly powerful. Now we were returning, returning with artillery paratroops. On the sidewalks there were even more: backpacks, caps, and cartridge belts had been thrown everywhere. Hundreds of thousands of puppet troops had fled to Saigon in terror, and there could be seen in all parts of the city the disastrous disintegration of a mercenary, hired-murderer army of a traitorous regime. Anything that is not virtuous or beneficial to the people, or is unjust, although prospering for a time, is only temporary and superficial. Such was their fate.

Our car sped along on the asphalt road. Then we turned onto broad Thong Nhat Boulevard (now 30 April Street) and went directly to Independence Palace. There our cadres had already set up the headquarters of the Municipal Military Management Committee. Everyone was there. But before beginning work I went all over Saigon for old time's sake. Nothing could have been happier than driving around in the tanks of sharp stakes and muskets. We had returned to overwhelm enemy forces which were also much stronger than those in the past, and to defeat an imperialist chieftain that was much stronger than the French colonialists in the past.

That was revolution and the just cause.

Obedying Uncle Ho, under the leadership of the true party, with pure hearts and iron will, we had the strength to move mountains, fill in the ocean, and do anything we wanted.

As I traveled that day I was deep in thought. It was a moving experience to look at the city and the people. Now I returned. I elatedly looked at the streets red with flags of victory. Everyone's face looked as fresh as a flower. From Hoc Mon into the city our car ran over clothing, shoes and socks that had been strewn along the road by puppet infantry and middle of our free, recently liberated city, looking at one street after another and at our people, who were gleeful and happy, and who saw in me a liberator who had just returned, as a liberator with "half a head of gray hair." Perhaps I was looking for relatives who had become lost in the course of events. A number of people reluctantly asked me if that was the case. It was far different in 1973, when I was head of the military delegation of the DRG of the RSVN at Camp David at Tan Son Nhat airfield. Then, every time I went into my city I had to be "escorted" by puppet MP's, who prevented me from freely moving about or from meeting the people. An MP jeep would lead the way, its siren screaming, past the vehicles and people along the way, and running red lights at intersections, out of fear that the people would gather around the liberator.

First of all, I went directly to the bank of the Ben Nghe canal, crossed Quay bridge, and went on to Ben Nha Rong. I was there, where Uncle Ho set forth in the past; his feet walked but his eyes nostalgically looked at his beloved city, and at a part of the homeland that our ancestors had built up over the course of several thousand years. Uncle Ho was distressed over having to leave our people, who were still in wretched straits and in chains. Swallowing his hatred and steeling his will, Uncle Ho departed to find a way to save his country and people. Uncle Ho delineated that path. We followed that path and resolutely and bravely pursued the truth illuminated by his truth. Now we had reached our goal and had retraced Uncle Ho's footsteps. We were there!

"Uncle Ho is like the light of morning, illuminating the path I am taking."*
"Give me big mountains and long rivers, give me the sword that has been honed a thousand years."**

I remembered the first time I met Uncle Ho, in 1948, at Viet Bac. Since the outbreak of the Nam Bo resistance on 23 September 1945, that had been the first time a Nam Bo delegation, including military, political and Front cadres, and headed by myself, had gone from Dong Thap Muoi to Viet Bac to report to Uncle Ho and the party Central Committee. Our route passed largely through areas temporarily occupied by the enemy. We had to organize ourselves into a well-armed combat unit so that we could be prepared to defend ourselves and fight our way through when necessary, although when passing through the localities gave us their all-out assistance. We walked all the way along the eastern side of the Truong Son range, climbing mountains and crossing rivers and streams. Along some sections we had to travel at sea, such as at Cam Ranh Bay and Nha Trang, and traveled 6 months without rest. The French were monitoring us very clearly, and tried to block and ambush us, such as in the mountain region of Phan Rang, at Doc Mo, and in Khanh Hoa. Finally, they parachuted

* and ** From the poem "Send My Heart to Father," by Thu Bon. "Vietnamese Poetry 1945-1975" [Tho Viet Nam 1945-1975], New Works Publishing House, Hanoi, pp 30-31.

troops at Van Dinh west of Hanoi, hoping to capture our entire delegation by surprise, but each time they failed. Uncle Ho and the Central Committee sent people to meet us. When we reached Viet Bac we were anxious to meet Uncle Ho to satisfy a long-held desire. When we met Uncle Ho, we were all moved: there was our teacher, our father, the incarnation of the homeland, the image of our people. He had a high forehead, a thin beard, a pair of bright eyes, a kind face and a fragile, relaxed demeanor. I did not yet know about his great ideas and his noble virtue. Just looking at him, I suddenly felt that I had limitless confidence in him, respected him, and felt very close to him. His skill conquered all. He was the quintessence of talent. It was so fortunate that our people gave birth to such a person, whom millions of people followed and loved. On the day our delegation returned south, Uncle Ho, the Central Committee and the government held a going-away dinner. In the presence of everyone, Uncle Ho called me over, presented me with a very attractive sword, and said in a warm voice that reached the bottom of my heart:

"I'm giving you this valuable sword so that you can take it back to the people of Nam Bo and use it to kill the enemy. Tell the people the party and I will always be beside them. If we are united in serving the country we are certain to win!"

His words have never faded from my mind or from the hearts of the people of Nam Bo.

On another occasion, in 1963, I returned south to fight the Americans. I had been named commander of the liberation armed forces in South Vietnam. Uncle Ho invited me to his house for dinner before I set out. He handed me a box of cigars made in Cuba and said to me, "I only have this gift--sent to me by comrade Fidel--to give you. Take it with you and pass them out to the cadres in the south. When you smoke them, remember my ardent interest--and that of our Cuban brothers--in the South. Do your best to enable me to visit our people in the South."

I could never forget his admonition. Now our country had been completely liberated and Uncle Ho was resting in peace. I am neither a writer nor a poet, so I cannot describe my feelings. Thu Bo expressed my feelings in his poem "Send My Heart to Father":

"Give me an arrow
That I can fire from the rampart.
Oh Vietnam! Descendant of the celestial dragon.
Four thousand years of making flowers of rosy blood.
Send my heart to father,
The nation's victory is a great bouquet"*

When I left Ben Nha Rong I went all over Saigon and then to old Cho Lon. When we reached Thuan Kieu Street we got out of the car to commemorate comrades Le Thi Rieng, member of the Saigon Municipal Party Committee, head of the Women Proselyting Section of the Municipal Party Committee, and a member of the

*From "Vietnamese Poetry 1945-1975" [Tho Vietnam 1945-1975], New Works Publishing House, Hanoi, p 32.

Central Committee of the NLFSVN. I had known her since the arduous but heroic anti-French resistance war years in eastern Nam Bo. I met her again in the jungle base area of eastern Nam Bo during the years of the anti-U.S. war. She volunteered to go into the city and proselytize among the women and organize them to struggle against the enemy and to protect women's rights. Brother Kieu was also a member of the Municipal Party Committee and was deputy head of the Municipal Worker Proselyting Section. Unfortunately, the enemy captured them and imprisoned both in Chi Hoa Prison. During Phase 1 of the Tet Mau Than general offensive and uprising the puppets brought Sister Rieng and brother Kieu from the prison to that street and murdered them. Such a cowardly act against unarmed people is totally incomprehensible. They committed many other barbarous acts, such as the puppet Gen Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting a bound prisoner on the streets of Saigon. The puppet troops chopped their bodies into many pieces, as if they were butchering animals. It does no good to speak of the inhuman Vietnamese traitors, but ask the Americans, their teachers and father, who often speak out on human rights, what they would call such acts? Today we are the victors. How did we treat the million puppet officers and enlisted men, many of whom could be regarded as war criminals? There was no revenge and no bloodbath as they had ballyhooed. Who is civilized? And who knows respect for mankind?

I went to Minh Phung Street and the surrounding area, which was the scene of fierce fighting during the second phase of Tet Mau Than, during which our regiments came in and occupied that area. The enemy used helicopter gunships in combination with armor and artillery in insane counterattacks. Comrade Hai Hoang sacrificed his life there. As commander of the "Gironde" Battalion he victoriously commanded the famous Ap Bac battle at the beginning of 1963, in which we successfully countered the enemy's tactic of moving troops by helicopters and armored personnel carriers for the first time. In 1968, when commanding the Long An Province troops, he lost his life in that area. Also in that area, on Minh Phung Street, comrade Nguyen Thi (Nguyen Ngoc Tan), a talented writer and a brave soldier, fulfilled her duty to the nation during the second phase of the general offensive and uprising in 1968. Comrade Nguyen Thi had been present during the anti-French resistance war period in eastern Nam Bo and at that time took up arms to kill the enemy and began to write short stories which all of our soldiers liked. During the anti-U.S. resistance war period she continually volunteered to go to the front and live and create with the liberation troops and under combat conditions. Was she not exemplary of the qualities and souls of Vietnamese writers during the nation's glorious war years?

All over Saigon-Gia Dinh, practically every place was the scene of a glorious feat of arms of our sappers, commandos and armed young men and women. There were not only such famous attacks as those at the presidential palace, the U.S. Embassy, the radio station, the puppet GHQ, Y Bridge, etc., during Tet Mau Than, but also during both the anti-French and anti-U.S. resistance wars. In all periods there had been resounding victories in Saigon. Not only armed soldiers, but also political cadres and cultural cadres, had struggled in all ways in the city of Saigon-Gia Dinh against the country-stealing, country-selling troops. It is not possible to speak of all the many and varied feats of arms, or know all of the unknown soldiers who sacrificed their lives in that beloved city for our total victory of today.

They were the people who brought about the victory. They sacrificed so that the S-shaped country on the western shore of the Pacific Ocean could become increasingly advanced and strong. They wrote pages in the dazzling, heroic history of Vietnam. We must be eternally grateful to them in future generations, when we can stand equal to others, holding our heads high and watching the sun shed its rays on the splendid scenery of our country. We must also be grateful to the fathers and mothers of those who gave their lives for the great spring victory. Never forget the past, so that we can build a brilliant, secure future. If there has been no past there can be no future.

I returned to Independence Palace. In accordance with the instructions of the Political Bureau, I declared the release of all key members of the puppet regime, who had been detailed by our troops in a room in the palace since the day Saigon was liberated. I met with only the leaders: Duong Van Minh, the president; Nguyen Van Huyen, the vice president; and Vu Van Mau, the premier, of the puppet regime. I explained to them that the policies of the revolution were just, upright, moderate and lenient. "It uses justice to defeat brutality and replaces cruelty with humanity." I emphasized that everything that had happened would be relegated to the past. We would be concerned only with their future attitude and actions. I hoped that they could understand the great national victory that had just been won and be proud that they were also Vietnamese.

They appeared to be moved. Duong Van Minh said, "I am happy to be a citizen of an independent Vietnam." Nguyen Van Huyen said, "As a citizen of Vietnam, I can be proud of the glorious success and victory of the nation. However, when I look back I can see that I was in error." Vu Van Mau also appeared to have become enlightened: "April 30, 1975, the day the revolution was successful, was also the day I escaped from my delusion. I am happy and proud to be a citizen of an independent, unified Vietnam."

We took them for their word. How sincere they were depends on the virtue of each of them. The policy of the revolution was carried out.

That was also in accordance with the humanitarian line of the party and the tradition of our forefathers, about whom Nguyen Trai wrote, "Since heaven opposes killing, we give the enemy a way out." And Uncle Ho, with his limitless mercy, said the following of people who had gone astray, "Among them, no matter what, patriotism cannot have been completely extinguished, but is still glowing like an ember. We must help them kindle it into a flame." The Military Management Committee announced the registration and reporting of all generals, officers and enlisted men, as well as the personnel at the various echelons of the puppet regime, and arranged study for them regarding the revolutionary line, their attitude toward the homeland and the people and the concepts of independence and freedom. All of those things were intended to contribute toward achieving national solidarity and developing the nation.

We had shed much blood to arrive at that glorious day, and we wanted to waste no more Vietnamese blood. We are a heroic people and are also a civilized people. We know how to value the dignity of mankind. We want to do everything possible to enable everyone to be friends and to have a society made up entirely

of good people. That was far different from the people who, thinking that everyone else was like them, thought that there would be a terrible "blood-bath" of vengeance. That was far from the Americans and puppets who, when one of their adversaries fell into their hands, barbarously mistreated him or tortured him so cruelly as to be beyond imagination. They regarded people as animals, murdered people at will and deliberately crippled--both physically and mentally--the people they captured. Once again we have the right to pose the question: who is civilized? who knows how to respect mankind?

On 7 May 1975 the Military Management Committee held a ceremony to present itself to the people of Saigon-Gia Dinh. Throughout the night of 6 May and the early morning of 7 May the entire city was excited and all of Saigon spent a sleepless night. Every person and every house prepared and every mass organization and precinct prepared. Everyone anxiously awaited a tomorrow bathed in rosy rays of sunlight. It would be an epoch-making moment. It had taken our country 117 years to arrive at that day, which was the greatest event in that city on the Ben Nghe River during the past 400 years. Although it was an initial military management administration, it was a revolutionary administration which had been built on the sacrifice of the people of our nation and of Saigon. It was our army and our administration, one of the people and for the people. Beginning early in the morning, groups of people coming from all precincts and districts inside and outside the city, with banners, flags and slogans celebrating the victory of the revolution and the Military Management Committee, filled the grounds of "Independence Palace." Saigon was truly a big festival, a festival celebrating total victory after more than a century. The happiness and pride of a people, the joy and delight of people who had truly become the masters of their beautiful country, spread all over the city. On the grounds of Independence Palace, where in the past large numbers of puppet MP's and police chased the people away from the restricted area, there were orderly groups of people. Old people with wrinkled skin and white hair, who had lived through the dark periods of suppression by the colonialists, brought their grandchildren to witness a scene which manifested what was most precious and sacred: the freedom and independence of the nation and of the people. Young children enjoyed themselves because nothing threatened their happiness and their lives. But the largest group, that with the fullest realization of their splendid future, was made up of young men and women. They wore their most attractive clothing and held fresh flowers and entered the palace grounds shoulder-to-shoulder, as if ready to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and elder brothers in order to write additional pages of history, no less majestic, in building and defending the country.

On behalf of the Military Management Committee I read the coming-out speech and appealed for everyone in all strata to participate in all ways in maintaining order and building a well-off, happy life. I stressed:

"Vietnam, from Lang Son to the Cau Mau Peninsula, is for the first time in more than a century, completely free of the malevolent shadow of foreign aggressor troops.

"The entire nation has won complete independence and freedom....

"Our people will from now on certainly endure and develop....

"No reactionary power can impede the progress of our people who are advancing and creating for themselves a well-off, happy life....

"Only the U.S. imperialists have been defeated.... All Vietnamese are victors....

"Anyone who has Vietnamese blood has the right to defend the nation's common victory.

"All Vietnamese who think about their compatriots and their country cannot but be very happy over the expanded horizon of their homeland.

"The grandchildren and children of all strata of the new society will from now on be able to grow up with a spirit of national pride, hold their heads high, be happy, be provided for, and be able to work in the most brilliant period of development of their country....

"We are not ashamed of the thousands of years of our past history....

"We have not betrayed the love and respect of our brothers and friends all over the world....

"Our historic victory is a victory for our people's heroic tradition, which had been built up in the course of our 4,000-year history of struggle to found and defend our nation. The revolution has gone all-out to maintain that tradition and has continually developed it....

"Our epochal victory is a victory of the only correct revolutionary line and completely accurate revolutionary guidance, which led our country's revolution from one victory to another, to total victory and to a splendid future....

"At this sacred moment the hearts of all of us focus on the divinity of the great President Ho Chi Minh, and remember his enormous merit....

"The glory of today belongs above all to the people of our entire nation, who for 30 long years sacrificed and struggled for our people's great cause, and did not fear bombs, shells or jail....

"Glory belongs to the heroic people's armed forces, which have been completely loyal, fulfilling all missions, overcoming all difficulties and defeating all enemies....

"The people of Saigon-Gia Dinh have become the complete masters of their city....

"The revolution has brought about and developed the people's mastership right and has liberated the limitless creative capability of the masses....

"Everyone understands that after 30 years of continuous warfare, in the initial period after the restoration of peace, it is not possible to avoid difficulties in life and work. The war crimes of the U.S. imperialists will adversely affect the lives of our people for many years to come. The chief traitor lackeys of the U.S. imperialists, who for their own vile, selfish benefit, brought a fox into the chicken coop and brought an elephant into the graveyard, must accept full responsibility for the long-range serious consequences of the neocolonial policy of the U.S. imperialists in our country....

"All patriotic Vietnamese must work together to rebuild their home area and quickly bind the wounds of war, and resolve all serious consequences of the many war crimes committed by the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, which caused suffering for every person and every family....

"No matter how great our present difficulties are, they are no greater than fighting and defeating the U.S. imperialists....

"Our people, who have defeated the U.S. imperialists, certainly have sufficient spirit, intelligence and capability to resolve all problems in order to rapidly recover and solidly develop the life of the nation....

"To have independence and peace, and for the people to have conscience of mastery, is to have everything...."

Clearly, we knew that there were many difficulties, even during the days of the resounding victory. We were also aware of the unavoidable missteps in the initial period, which is always the case. The 30-year war which was concluded by the great spring victory in 1975 had its origins in the difficult days of 1945, 1957, 1959, etc. The many missteps and errors in each period of progress provided us with additional experience. If we had had no sharpened stakes we could have had no artillery or tanks.

"Without the desolate scenes of winter
There could be no brilliant scenes of spring."

(from Uncle Ho's poem "Self-Advice")*

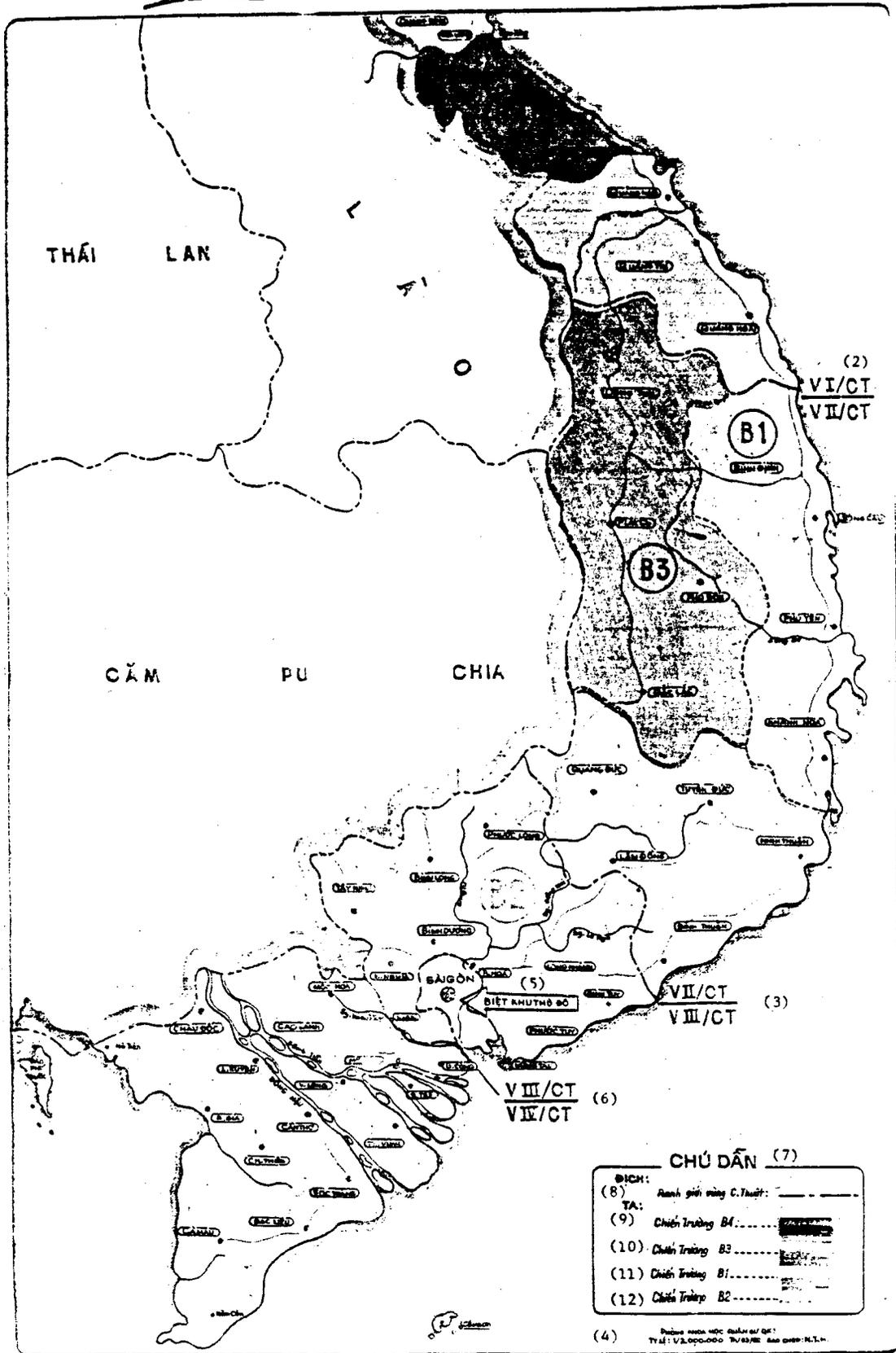
We were determined to bring about the great spring victory of the socialist revolution and create a well-off, happy life, so there is no reason why we cannot overcome the difficulties and missteps of the first years after the victory. That is the will of Vietnam.

Spring of 1982

*"Compilation of Vietnamese Literature" [Tong Tap Van Hoc Viet Nam], Social Science Publishing House, Hanoi, p 662.

Pages 225 through 243 Omitted

50906: CHIẾN TRƯỜNG MIỀN NAM VIỆT NAM (1)



CHÚ DẪN (7)

(8) BÍCH: Ranh giới vùng C. Thuật:
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 (9) Chiến Trường B4:
 (10) Chiến Trường B3:
 (11) Chiến Trường B1:
 (12) Chiến Trường B2:

(4) Phóng to theo MỐC QUÂN 67/ĐK
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Map 1

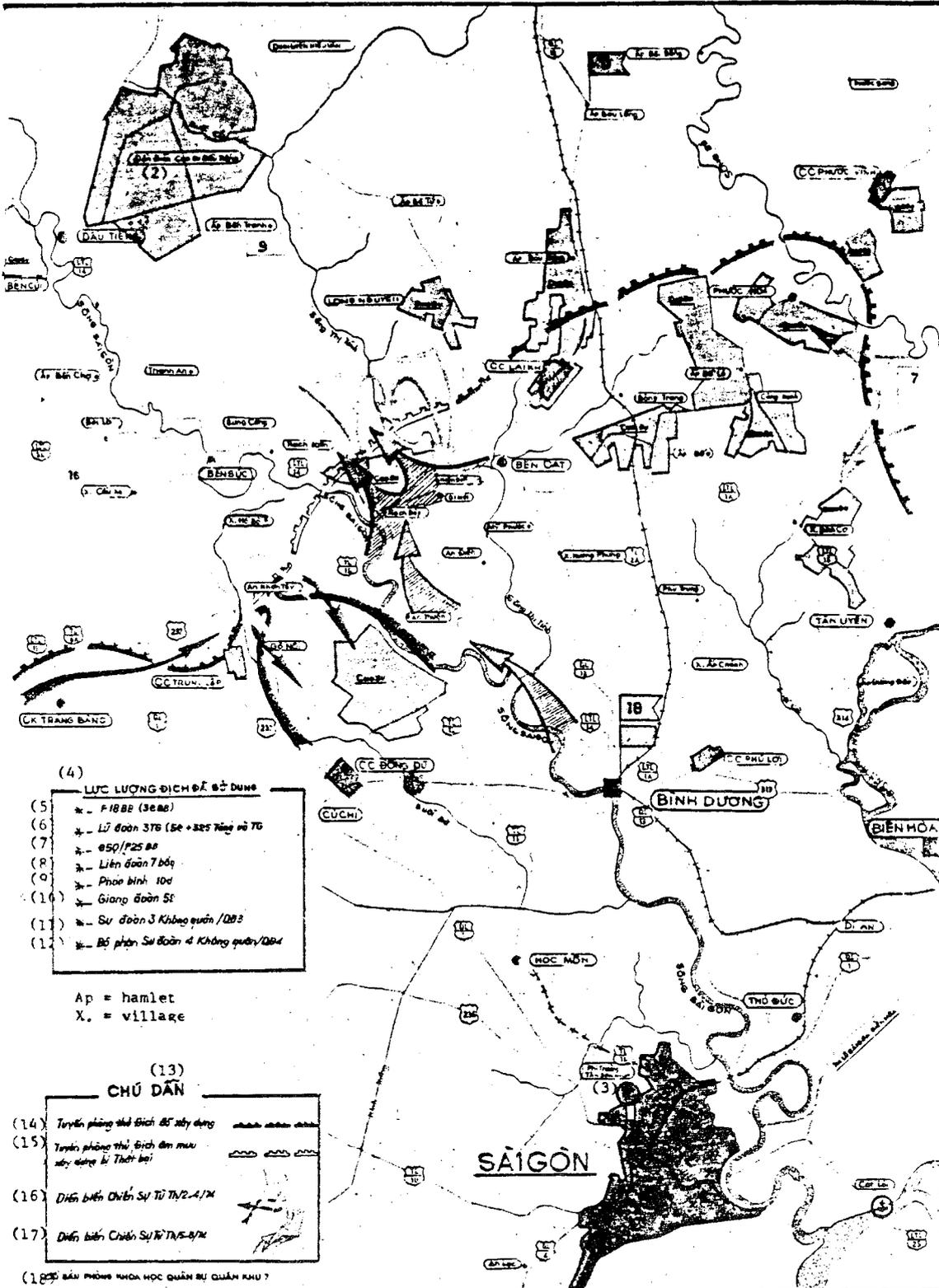
Key to Map 1

1. The South Vietnam Theaters
2. I Corps Tactical Zone/II Corps Tactical Zone
3. II Corps Tactical Zone/III Corps Tactical Zone
4. Military Science Office of Military Region 7
Scale: 1/3,000,000 March 1982
Cartographer: N.T.H.
5. Capital Special Zone
6. III Corps Tactical Zone/IV Corps Tactical Zone
7. Legend
8. Enemy: Border of tactical zones
9. B4 Theater
10. B3 Theater
11. B1 Theater
12. B2 Theater

(1)

CHIẾN DỊCH ĐƯỜNG 7 NGANG (BẾN CÁT - BUNG CỎ)

Tháng 5 và 6 Năm 1974



Map 2

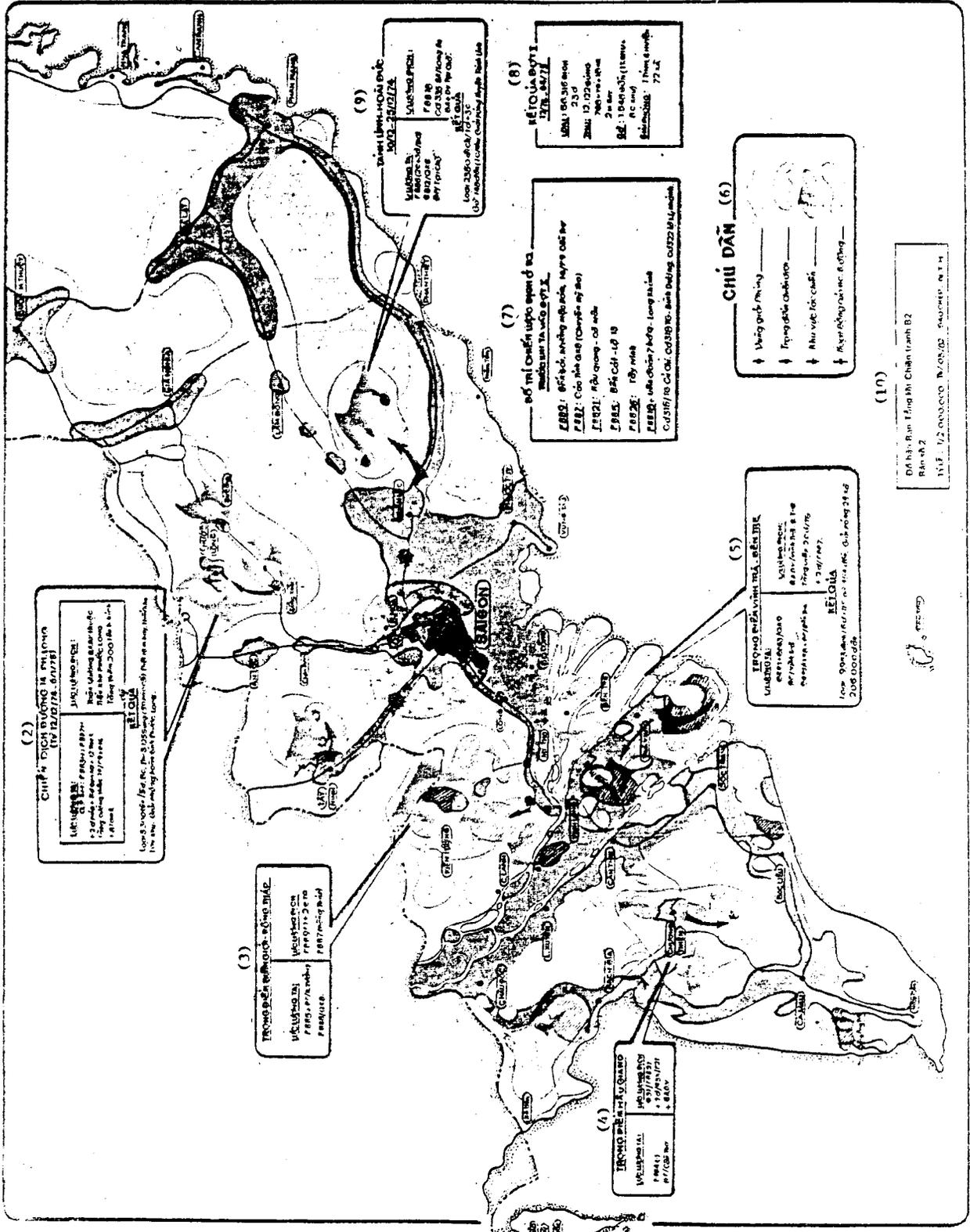
Key to Map 2

1. The Lateral Route 7 Fighting (Ben Cat-Bung Cong), May-June 1974
2. Dau Tieng Rubber Plantation
3. Tan Son Nhat Airfield
4. Forces used by the enemy
5. 18th Infantry Division (3d Infantry Regiment)
6. 3d Armored Brigade (5th Regiment plus 325 tanks and armored vehicles)
7. 50th Regiment/25th Infantry Division
8. 7th Ranger Group
9. 10th Artillery Battalion.
10. 52d River Flotilla
11. 3d Air Division/III Corps
12. Element of 4th Air Division/IV Corps
13. Legend:
14. Defense line set up by enemy
15. Defense line enemy failed to set up
16. Combat developments, February-April 1974
17. Combat developments, May-August 1974
18. Map by Military Science Office of Military Region 7

CÁC CUỘC MUA KINH 74-75 ĐÂY

(1)

TỶ THỨC 1:500.000 (1/500,000)



(2)
CHỈ DẪN ĐƯỜNG M. WILLIAMS
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(3)
TRUNG ĐỘI QUÂN QUẢN LÝ ĐƯỜNG
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(4)
TRUNG ĐỘI QUẢN LÝ QUẢN
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
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 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(5)
TRUNG ĐỘI QUẢN LÝ QUẢN
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(7)
ĐỘI MỸ QUẢN LÝ QUẢN
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(8)
REIGONA ĐÂY
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

(9)
TRUNG ĐỘI QUẢN LÝ QUẢN
 (1/12/72 - 04/73)
 LƯU Ý: Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam. Các đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.
REIGONA
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Bắc đang chuyển sang Miền Nam.
 Đơn vị thuộc Bộ Chỉ huy Quân sự Miền Nam đang chuyển sang Miền Bắc.

CHỈ DẪN (6)

- ↑ Hướng gió thịnh hành

(10)
 Địa bàn: Bản Tổng Đồ Chiến tranh B2
 Bản M2
 Tỷ lệ: 1/2.000.000 (1/2.000,000) SAIGON, VIỆT NAM

Key to Map 3

1. 1974-1975 Dry Season Fighting, Phase 1
2. Route 15-Phuoc Long Campaign (12 Dec 74-6 Jan 75)
Our forces:
4th Corps; 3d Infantry Division (minus); 7th Infantry Division (minus). 2 artillery battalion plus 5 antiaircraft battalions plus 12 tanks. Reinforced by 1st Regiment/9th Division and 16th Regiment plus 8 tanks.
Enemy forces:
All Phuoc Long Sector RF and civil defense units, reinforced by 200 airborne rangers.
Results:
Knocked out of action 3,300 of the enemy, 5 battalions, 8 companies; captured 3,125 weapons (50 artillery pieces and mortars); shot down 15 airplanes; took 1 sector and 10 subsectors.
Completely liberated Phuoc Long Province.
Border-Dong Thap Focal Point
Our forces: 9th Infantry Division plus Kien Tuong local troops
Enemy forces: 5th Infantry Division (minus) plus 2d Armored Regiment; 7th Infantry Division (Dong Thap).
Hau Giang Focal Point
Our forces: 4th Infantry Division (minus); Can Tho local troops
Enemy forces: 31st Regiment/21st Infantry Division; 1st Battalion/33d Regiment/21st Infantry Division plus RF and civil defense forces.
Vinh Tra-Ben Tre Focal Point
Our forces: 887th and 883d Regiments/Military Region 9; Vinh Tra local troops; 881st Regiment/
Military Region 8 plus Ben Tre local troops.
Enemy forces: Vinh Tra-Ben Tre RF and civil-defense forces, reinforced by 2 armored brigades and 2 battalions of 7th Infantry Division.
Results: Knocked out of action 9,943 of enemy, 6 battalions, 11 companies; overran 454 posts; liberated 24 villages and 206,000 people.

6. Legend
Liberated areas
Focal points of campaign
Operational zones
Sapper-Commando activities
Enemy's Strategic Deployments in B2 Theater (Before we began phase 1):
9th Infantry Division: Ben Soi, Kien Tuong-Moc Hoa;
1st Regiment/9th Division, Can Tho
Provinces of Military Region 8
(focusing on My Tho)
7th Infantry Division: Hau Giang, Ca Mau
5th Division: Ben Cat-Route 13
25th Division: Tay Ninh
18th Division plus 7th Ranger Group: Long Khanh
315th Armored Brigade: Cu Chi; 318th Armored Brigade, Binh Duong; 322d Armored Brigade, Route 1-Long Khanh
8. Results of Phase 1 (December 1974-April 1975):
Knocked out of action: 56,315 enemy troops, 23 battalions
Captured: 12,122 weapons, 768 radios, 18 vehicles, 2 airplanes
Overran: 1,548 military posts (1 sector and 8 subsectors)
Liberated: 1 province, 4 districts, 72 villages
Tanh Lanh-Hoa Duc (10 December-25 December 1974):
Our forces: 6th Infantry Division (2d Regiment plus 3d Sapper Battalion)
Enemy forces: 18th Infantry Division, 335th Long An RF Brigade, local forces
Results: Knocked out of action 2,350 enemy troops, 1 battalion, 3 companies. Overran 148 posts (1 subsector); Liberated Tanh Lanh District
9. Map No 2, B2 War Recapitulation Section
Scale: 1/2,000,000 March 1982
Cartographer: N.T.H.
- 10.

Key to Map 4

1. 1974-1975 Dry Season Fighting (Step 2, Phase 2)
Beginning in April 1975, Ho Chi Minh Campaign
2. Legend
Operational zones, Step 1, Phase 2
Operational zones with coordination of internal mass infrastructures.
3. Our forces participating in Ho Chi Minh Campaign:
North: 1st Corps of High Command plus one B2 sapper regiment.
Northwest: 3d Corps of High Command plus one B2 sapper regiment.
West: 232d Corps/B2 plus sappers.
South: 24th Regiment plus 88th Regiment of Military Region 8 plus
271st Regiment of Regional Command
East: 4th Corps/B2 plus 2d Corps of High Command plus one B2 sapper
regiment.
4. Enemy troops defending Saigon
Inner Perimeter
East: 4th Airborne Brigade plus 951st
RF Group of Go Vap plus Precinct
9
North: 9th Ranger Group plus Quang
Trung Training Center, Hoc
Mon-Tan Thoi Nhat
Northwest: 7th, 8th ranger groups,
Vinh Loc-Ba Hom
South: RF and civil defense forces
of Nha Be and Nhon Thanh
Outer Perimeter
18th Division: Long Khanh-Bien Hoa
2d Marine Brigade: Long Binh-Bien
Hoa
3d Cavalry Regiment: Bien Hoa
1st Airborne Brigade: Ba Ria,
Vung Tau
5th Division: Ben Cat, Lei Khe
25th Division: Route 22, Go Dau,
Tay Ninh
22d Infantry Division: Tan An,
Ben Luc
5. Map No 3, B2 War Recapitulation Section.
Scale: 1/2,000,000 March 1982
Cartographer: N.T.H.

5616

CSO: 8058/0292

- END -

