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2 $\frac{1}{2}$ wars--

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PLEIKU, SOUTH VIET NAM--There now appears to be 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ distinct wars in Viet Nam.

The half-war, which could easily touch off a global war, is being waged 200 north of here, across the 17th parallel in North Viet Nam.

Within South Viet Nam, the other two wars can be most readily seen in the Pleiku, 100 miles north of Saigon and headquarters of II Corps Command 250 north of Saigon, where the military war in Vietnam is most ~~serious~~ crucial. ~~2~~ This is an off-again, on-again conventional war in which an increasing number of North Vietnamese Army units--sometimes operating in regimental strength--hold virtual control of the countryside and are now swallowing up government district headquarters, towns. Three of these towns have fallen into their hands in this area.

American policymakers, since the departure of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, clearly plan to reaction of the North Vietnamese military escalation by bringing in more American troops.

Spectacular fighting on this ticket

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Increasingly bloody battles are predicted on this in this war of momentary, but mobile frontlines. This war may become, in the words of an American sergeant, "a little Korea."

A second war is becoming increasingly important, however. It is largely largely un-noticed against the background of spectacular, bloody fighting. It is little recognized by American policy makers. The simple fact is that the Communists are gaining more and more control of the people in this desperate section of the countryside. country. The reason why ~~human beings are not fighting against the Communists~~ is becoming increasingly unrelated to whether or not the population prefers Communism or Americanism; or whether they have any logical or emotional reasons for freely supporting either side. The reason is increasingly in this area a basic Mao-Tse-Tungism: "Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun."

Not far from Peking city this week, the Communists wanted some of the primitive Montagnard villagers to sing a propaganda song. They refused; the Communists threw a grenade into the crowd, killing 12 and wounding 26.

"This is the way the Communists gain control of the population," one American colonel explained. "Through terror they gain the control. Seldom is persuasion the decisive factor for the poor people."

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In many cases, the population, especially among the Mont Montagnard tribesmen in this region, are being forsaken by the government forces, which are unable to provide adequate security in their isolated villages and outposts, and which are unwilling to pull the population into a major security zone. — *Have U.S. can C. Defiant.*

These two wars, running in parallel, can be graphically described as a pyramid. The peak of the pyramid is growing higher and higher with the increased escalation of North Vietnamese units in South South Viet Nam. But more inconspicuous, the base of the pyramid is also growing ~~broader and broader~~ broader and broader as the Communists increasingly tighten their grip on the population, not only in the countryside, but also in the towns, and through unarmed suberv subversive agents in Saigon.

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The current American strategy within South Vietnam is to attempt to knock off the peak of the pyramid by bringing into the war a preponderance of manpower, firepower and ~~air~~ airpower. This strategy is designed to force North Vietnam to accept political negotiations, or, on the military side, to force the internal Communist forces to collapse once the regular units are pulverized—if that can be done.

Reliable sources consider this to be the crunching gamble of the war.

For the primitive Montagnard tribesmen in this area of the ~~c~~ countryside, the war is a total war, involving every facet of his life. Since he lives unprotected in the countryside, ~~thier~~ they are virtually kidnapped into ~~into~~ serving the Viet Cong or induced to serve in the ~~gover~~ American-financed government forces by relatively large salaries. Within the cities, all the roads into the ~~c~~ from the countryside are effectively cut, covering supplies of food and communications. Even within half-mile from the corps headquarters the Communist stop food producers, refusing to permiet permit them to sell vegetables in the city of Pleiku.

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The price of rice has doubled in Pleiku city--if it can be found on the black market. In the outlying outposts, rice is in such demand that the dependents of a Vietnamese Army private must pay one month's wages of for five days of rice.

Politically, even within the city of Pleiku, "each Vietnamese is suspicious of another, fearing they are Communists," in the words of a Vietnamese clerk. Sociologically, Montagnard families living in areas under Viet Cong control--even if that control lasts only for one night--are often forced to move deeper into Viet Cong zones. In many cases, ~~gux~~ villages within government controlled areas often disappear overnight--house and all--and are rapidly re-located into Viet Cong areas.

"American pilots flying over the countryside often report they see houses walking down the road," an American advisor to the Vietnamese province staff explained. "The Montagnard tribesman simply put their wooden houses on their backs and move away. I have to tell the pilots 'What the hell do you want me to do about it'. There's nothing I can do.

"I fly all over the province every day," the provincial advisor explained. "Sometimes I see a Communist squad marching down the road in strict formation. They all stop instantly and start firing at the helicopter. Or sometimes, I see Communists digging up a road the government used to control. They stop digging and wave at me."

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Militarily, within the past three months, there has been no offensive operation in the Pleiku area of the country; all operations have simply reacted to Viet Cong initiated incidents or road-cuttings.

A major problem for the Vietnamese government and American planners is to supply rice, blankets and other necessary items to refugees from areas under Viet Cong attack. This is treated as a logistical problem--a top-priority logistical problem--but there is currently no imaginative program on the part of the anti-Communist side to re-settle the refugees in major security zones which can become centers of ~~human~~ prosperity to attract more defectors from the Communist side. The ~~at~~ plan is simply to move the refugees back to their ~~major~~ native villages--which can not at this time or in the foreseeable future be adequately secured.

In his description of the French defeat ten years ago, the Communist commander-in-chief General Vo Nguyen Giap, in his brilliant book "People's War; People's ~~2~~ Army," described the people's war in these words, "...the Vietnamese (Communist) Army, though very weak materially was a people's army. This fact is that the war in Vietnam is not only the opposition of two armies. In provoking hostilities, the aggressive colonialists had alienated a whole nation. And, indeed, the whole Vietnamese nation, the entire Vietnamese people rose against them. Unable to grasp this profound truth, the French generals who believed in an easy victory, went instead to defeat. They thought they could easily subdue the Vietnamese people, when, in fact, the latter ~~rose~~

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were going to smash them."

After following American Secretary of Defense throughout the II Corps area around Pleiku, which were dotted with the charred remains of the French Indo-Chinese China War, one Western observer quipped, "The Americans will have to write a new book called 'People's War; McNamara's Army'."