

# Hanoi Says Saigon Can No Longer Get Its Men Out of Laos

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HANOI, North Vietnam, March 22 (Agence France-  
Presse)—A high-ranking North  
Vietnamese officer wrote today  
that the South Vietnamese  
forces were in the midst of a  
"bloody retreat," but that it  
was "too late" for the bulk of  
their troops to escape from  
southern Laos.

Analyzing the situation in  
Laos in the army newspaper  
Quan Doi Nhan Dan, "Com-  
batant," the pseudonym of a  
high army official, said the  
South Vietnamese units in Laos  
"are now in a dead end, and  
cannot either advance or re-  
treat."

The article said:

"[President] Johnson man-  
aged to get out of Khesanh  
with his units, but Nixon, two  
years later, is having to give  
up without having withdrawn  
a single battalion intact."

The paper said that the Khe-  
sanh base and other bases in  
northern South Vietnam were  
encircled and under cannon  
fire, and that "all possibilities  
of withdrawal have now been  
rendered precarious."

"Combatant" then raised the  
question heard frequently on  
the streets of Hanoi: "Now  
that the Vietnamization pro-  
gram had met with a fiasco,  
what new Indochina strategy  
will Washington adopt in view  
of the presidential elections to  
be held in South Vietnam and  
in the United States?"

Though the paper does not  
try to answer this question, an  
opinion widely held here is  
that the United States com-  
mand may now be tempted to  
"go all the way" by attacking  
North Vietnam itself and using  
atomic weapons.

This impression is believed  
here to be confirmed by the  
heavy weekend air attacks  
against targets in North Viet-  
nam.