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Big New Phase of the War Is Opening

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By **CRAIG R. WHITNEY**
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, April 5—With the use of artillery, tanks and mobile antiaircraft defenses in their current drive across the demilitarized zone, the North Vietnamese, it is clear, have opened a large new phase of the war centering on conventional combat.

The South Vietnamese forces, which have been trained by the Americans in similar conventional tactics, have been caught at a serious disadvantage. It points up their dependence on

American air power despite Vietnamization. The supersonic planes have not been able to fly because the North Vietnamese picked a week of heavy clouds and rain to begin their drive.

Intelligence analysts in Saigon have been impressed by what one of them called the very ambitious use of artillery—more than 10,000 Soviet-made shells and rockets fired from the demilitarized zone or the area above it. That shelling apparently persuaded the South Vietnamese to leave the 15 for-

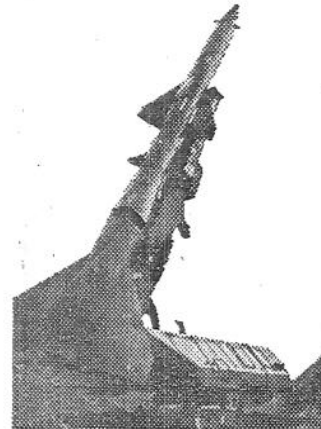
ward positions that have for years been their country's northern defenses rather than wait for North Vietnamese infantry assaults.

But the American pilots who have been able to get through the occasionally lifting clouds to strike at North Vietnamese tanks and trucks advancing openly along the main highway toward Dongha say there is something else that is new about the North Vietnamese tactics—the use of SAM-2 mis-

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Soviet PT-76, a light amphibious tank used as a reconnaissance vehicle.



SAM-2 rockets force U.S. jets down toward range of antiaircraft batteries.



Photographs from Sovfoto
Antiaircraft weapons of several types are being moved south of the DMZ.

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siles to defend troops operating south of the border.

"It's a major factor for the first time ever inside South Vietnam," said Lieut. Col. John P. O'Gorman, commander of the 421st Tactical Fighter Squadron in Danang, in a telephone interview. "It's the first time in my experience that they've ever used SAM's to support an operation in country."

"In country" is the military phrase for "inside South Vietnam."

"They're towing antiaircraft guns, everything up to .37 mm., behind trucks right down the road," he added, "and then they fire SAM's at us to force us down into the antiaircraft fire."

The surface-to-air missiles are not effective at low altitudes; antiaircraft fire is. The pilots have retaliated by firing air-to-ground missiles across the zone 10 times in three days.

None South of the Zone

Colonel O'Gorman and other senior officers say that the North Vietnamese have not brought any SAM's south of the demilitarized zone but are firing just beyond it and from its northern sector at planes across the border.

The North Vietnamese have increased their SAM sites in the southern part of the demilitarized zone by about 25 per cent in the last year. The exact number is not known, but there are probably some 30 launchers. The missiles, which have a 21-mile range at 40,000 feet, can hit planes in most of Quangtri Province.

As for tanks, the enemy used them in 1968 in attacks on American outposts on the Laos border west of Khesanh and in 1970 against the Benhet Ranger camp in the Central Highlands but never before have so many been used as in the current push toward Quangtri City.

Since bad weather has made

it difficult to fly photo-reconnaissance missions, intelligence experts do not know exactly how many Soviet-built tanks the North Vietnamese are using. Estimates range from 50 to 100, manned by 300 to 400 men—a combination of amphibious 14-ton PT-76's and 30-ton T-54's or T-55's with 4-inch guns.

New Weapon Being Used

The attackers have relied most so far on heavy artillery, also provided by the Russians. The newest weapon, being used for the first time in the demilitarized zone and believed first used by the North Vietnamese in their attack on Long Tieng base in Laos in January, is the 130-mm. gun. With a range of almost 19 miles, it can outshoot most South Vietnamese artillery. American-made 105-mm. pieces fire 6 miles and 155-mm. pieces fire less than 10; only the 175-mm. gun, of which the South Vietnamese have few, has a longer range—20 miles.

The South Vietnamese say they "spiked" several 175-mm guns—made them useless as weapons—before they pulled out of Camp Carroll, one of the northern bases below the demilitarized zone and west of Dongha, Sunday night.

The South Vietnamese response is, of course, the critical factor in the battles taking place below the demilitarized zone and expected to follow soon in the Central Highlands and possibly in Tayninh and Binhlong provinces, northwest of Saigon. Those are the fronts against which the biggest North Vietnamese main-force units are capable of moving.

American advisers in Hue have been critical of the defensive mentality the South Vietnamese have shown in the last week. They chose to pull out of their defense lines, abandon half of Quangtri Province to the enemy and improvise a defense line from Dong-

ha and Quangtri to the coast. The South Vietnamese also have heavy tanks, but they have not gone north of the defense line to challenge the enemy's armor. Instead the tanks have dueled back and forth across the Cua Viet, an estuary.

Gun Movements Reported

There were reports from Quangtri that the North Vietnamese had taken advantage of the 10 miles of terrain abandoned to them by the regrouping Government forces to move a few 130-mm. guns below the demilitarized zone to points within easy range of Quangtri City.

Their attempts to get tanks through the South Vietnamese line of defense at the Cua Viet have been reported unsuccessful so far, although some military sources believe they may

have succeeded in getting one or two across. The South Vietnamese say they have put 50 tanks out of action, mostly with slow-flying A-1 Skyraiders, which can go under the clouds to bomb.

In the meantime, the North Vietnamese are reported moving reinforcements east from the mountainous jungle and have driven Saigon's forces out of bases in the foothills west of Quangtri—Fire Base Annel yesterday and Fire Base Pedro, 10 miles south of Quangtri, today—and appear to be trying to encircle the city and cut route 1, linking it to Hue and the south.

So far, despite territorial gains by default, the North Vietnamese have not committed much of the 15,000-to-21,000-man force estimated to have infiltrated into Quangtri Prov-

ince. Most are believed to be in the mountains of western Quangtri, where they are harder to detect and hit.

The North Vietnamese will apply large-unit conventional tactics in the same way in the two other likely battlegrounds, in the Central Highlands and near the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon, if only because they are believed to have no 130-mm. guns or SAM missiles there.

Their most effective artillery in those areas consists of 122-mm. rockets with a range of seven miles. They have also been used to good effect in Quangtri Province.

A Prediction From Hanoi

Earlier this year Hanoi emphasized the belief that the increasing withdrawal of American forces had prepared the way for "big, annihilating attacks" by regular forces. "These attacks are steel-like to annihilate the enemy in an important manner and rapidly change the balance of forces and the situation on the battlefield," said an editorial in December in Quan Doi Nhan Dan, the army newspaper.

That sounds like what happened in Quangtri Province last weekend. The recent infiltration of the 320th Division to the Central Highlands area and the eastward movement of elements of the Third, Fifth, and Ninth Divisions from Cambodia toward the South Vietnamese border at Tayninh and Binhlong Provinces suggests that similar large actions may be planned there soon. The North Vietnamese are known to have some tanks and many mortars in both areas.

Small-unit actions have played little part in the North Vietnamese strategy so far.

"It's forming up rapidly as a conventional war," an American officer said. "This is the kind of war we were accustomed to before the war in Vietnam started."

A Yale Melee Cancels Talk by Westmoreland

Special to The New York Times

NEW HAVEN, April 5—Gen. William Westmoreland canceled a planned address to the Yale Political Union Monday night as 600 loud and occasionally violent demonstrators swarmed into the Yale Law School, where the speech was scheduled.

Groups protesting the Army Chief of Staff's association with the Vietnam war waved signs and chanted obscenities. Campus policemen attempted to cordon off the crowd inside the building by locking arms and pushing back the demonstrators, many of whom were not Yale students. The meeting was open only to Political Union members.

Several policemen and demonstrators were cut and bruised. Political Union officials read

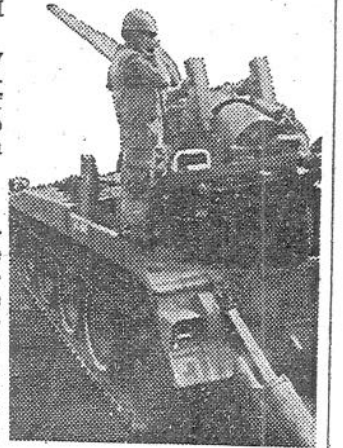
a statement to the crowd from the general as several hundred students in the auditorium itself chanted "Ho Ho Ho, Chi Minh, the N.L.F. is going to win."

The general offered an open invitation to Political Union members to call at the Pentagon and meet him "with dignity and respect."

The secretary of the university, Henry Chauncey Jr., said the general had decided not to speak after his security men estimated that he could be physically abused and shouted down by the crowd. General Westmoreland had attended a reception and dinner with 40 Political Union members before the scheduled speech, which was to have been on the Army's role in the search for peace.



U.S. M-48 is the main battle tank of the South Vietnamese ground forces.



The huge 175-mm. gun finds a match in 130-mm. gun used by Hanoi army.



United Press International

The 105-mm. howitzer is Saigon army's answer to enemy's 122-mm. rockets.