

# 'The Human Cost of Communism'

*'If the North takes over the South,  
what will the bloodbath be?'*

By ROBERT THOMPSON

LONDON—The present invasion of South Vietnam and the intense fighting of the last few weeks draw attention once again to the human suffering caused, on an almost unprecedented scale, to the Vietnamese people by the continuing war. I am not here considering the battle casualties which, although on each side they have probably reached 500,000, can at least be regarded as "legitimate" in war.

Nor am I considering the refugees who, although their plight may be tragic, are at least still alive.

What should most concern us is the number of civilians who have been killed in both halves of Vietnam, and those who may yet die in the future, as part of the human cost of Communism.

The Western conscience is immediately pricked by an American-committed atrocity, such as Mylai, and by the civilian casualties caused by the bombing of the North (although such casualties are now likely to be far less than during 1965-68 because of the development of the extremely accurate "smart" bomb).

Little or no attention, however, and certainly no equivalent reporting, has been given to similar Vietcong or North Vietnamese atrocities which have occurred on a scale that makes Mylai almost insignificant. These have not occurred because of some aberration, accident or inaccuracy of bomb-

ing. They have occurred, both selectively and indiscriminately, as a matter of deliberate policy.

At the time Hanoi complained of six civilian casualties, as a result of the first American raid on the North after the invasion began, she was firing 122-mm. rockets indiscriminately into Saigon and Pnompenh, killing more than ten times that number.

Her Russian 130-mm. guns have pounded Anloc and Quangtri to rubble. They will do the same to Kontum and Hue if they get within range without any consideration whatsoever for the civilian population.

Everyone has heard of Mylai, but who has heard of Caihe where the Vietcong, after its capture, lingered only to murder the wives and children of all the local militia? Or of the Montagnard village of Dakson, where they moved from hut to hut with flame-throwers incinerating more than 250 villagers, two-thirds of them women and children?

Most people have heard of the massacres at Hue in 1968 where the Vietcong and North Vietnamese, after its capture, executed 5,700 people (as assessed from the mass graves found afterwards) but who knows that in captured documents they gloated over these figures and only complained that they had not killed enough? These were not aberrations, nor savagery for savagery's sake, nor the work of undisciplined soldiers acting in violation of

instructions, but part of a ruthless deliberate policy designed to break a people who would not otherwise bend to their will.

The world cannot plead ignorance because it has all been well documented. The evidence has been authoritatively put together in a compendium prepared, surprisingly, for the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary (the meat was obviously too red for Senator Fulbright and the Foreign Affairs Committee).

There are distressing implications for the future. If the invasion succeeds and the North takes over the South, what will the bloodbath be? Four years ago I estimated that it would be several hundred thousands.

I now wish to amend that figure to well over one million (out of eighteen million people).

The critics of the war may claim that the forecasts are exaggerated. But Colonel Tran Van Dac, a North Vietnamese officer who defected after twenty-four years in the Communist party, stated that the Communists, if they win, would slaughter up to three million South Vietnamese, and another colonel, Le Xuan Chuyen, who defected after twenty-one years, stated that five million people in South Vietnam were on the Communist "blood debt" list and that 10-15 per cent of these would pay with their lives. When asked in an interview if the possibility of a bloodbath had been exaggerated he replied: "It could not be exaggerated. It will happen."

*Sir Robert Thompson is the British expert on guerrilla warfare who has undertaken secret missions for President Nixon to report on events in Vietnam.*

"Bunker Says Civilian Toll  
Runs Higher Than at Tet,"  
NYTimes 16 Jun 72, filed  
Indochina.

Memo on other comments  
on bloodbath filed  
Nix Ad 5 Nov 69.