In 1968, a U.S. presidential election year, Communist North Vietnam initiated the Tet Offensive, striking at almost all major cities and towns of South Vietnam. This general offensive was eventually defeated by the collective efforts of the Republic of Vietnam, United States and Free World Assistance forces. Four years later, in 1972—gain a U.S. presidential election year North Vietnam threw its entire military might behind an invasion to conquer the South. This time, however, South Vietnam had to fight for survival with only logistics and combat support provided by the United States. Almost all U.S. and Free World Military Assistance combat forces had been withdrawn when the first attacks began on 30 April 1972.

By all standards, the Easter Offensive of 1972 was one of North Vietnam's most significant initiatives during the Vietnam War. This all out effort involved eventually in excess of ten divisions on each side and affected the lives of well over a million South Vietnamese people. During the eight long months of fierce fighting, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces put Vietnamization to a severe test.

During the period of the Easter Offensive, I had the privilege of participating in some of its major battles, first as IV Corps and then as I Corps commander.
beginning in early May 1972. I visited many of our combat units as they fought the North Vietnam Army and commanded the RVNAF counteroffensive to retake Quang Tri City. My critical analysis of the enemy 1972 Easter Invasion, therefore, is based almost exclusively on my own personal observations, impressions and interviews with Vietnamese who were directly involved.

I am indebted to several distinguished officers of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces whose contributions I wish to acknowledge here. My gratitude first goes to General Cao Van Vien, Chairman of the Joint General Staff, RVNAF and my former airborne commander, who has provided me with several untold aspects of the offensive as seen from his vantage point and valuable guidance. Next, Lieutenant General Dong Van Khuyen, Commander of the Central Logistics Command, RVNAF, has contributed his unbiased comments on the joint RVNAF-US logistic effort to keep the areas under siege resupplied. Major General Nguyen Duy Hinh, who served in my corps as commander, 3rd ARVN Division and who successfully rebuilt and reshaped this division into a strong combat unit, has provided me with his critical comments and judicious observations. Finally, Brigadier General Tran Dinh Tho and Colonel Hoang Ngoc Lung, the J-3 and J-2 of the Joint General Staff respectively, have contributed significant information concerning combat operations and intelligence from the JGS echelon.

Finally, I am particularly indebted to Lieutenant Colonel Chu Xuan Vien and Ms. Pham Thi Bong. Lt. Colonel Vien, the last Army Attache serving at the Embassy in Washington, D. C., has done a highly professional job of translating and editing that helps impart unity and cohesiveness to the manuscript. Ms. Bong, a former Captain in the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces and also a former member of the Vietnamese Embassy staff, spent long hours typing, editing and in the administrative preparation of my manuscript in final form.

McLean, Virginia 31 August 1977
Ngo Quang Truong Lieutenant General, ARVN

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