

Vietnam: The Signs of Stalemate



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U.S. marine wades through morass of Mekong River delta

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Aug. 6—A little more than two years ago, on July 28, 1965, President Johnson committed the United States more decisively than ever to the war in Vietnam by announcing the deployment of 50,000 more American troops to this stricken corner of Southeast Asia.

Last Thursday, in response to the urgent entreaties of his commanders, Mr. Johnson disclosed that he would send 45,000 to 50,000 more men, for a total of 525,000, by next June 30.

Between these two benchmarks of the most frustrating conflict in American history, the fighting has careened along, week by bloody week, through wet seasons and dry, through two Christmas cease-fires, through peace feelers and escalations.

By this weekend, 12,269 Americans had been listed as killed and 74,818 as injured, millions of artillery shells and billions of rifle bullets had been fired, and 833 airplanes had fallen to enemy gunners.

The war costs the United States more than \$2-billion each month.

And yet, in the opinion of most disinterested observers, the war is not going well. Victory is not close at hand. It may be beyond reach. It is clearly unlikely in the next year or even the next two years, and American officers talk somberly about fighting here for decades.

The official statements from Washington and Saigon seem optimistic, as they have been

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