

## MORE AND MORE, AN AMERICAN WAR

SAIGON—Increasingly, the conflict in Vietnam is becoming one dominated by U. S. forces.

For the first time, the toll of U. S. dead and wounded is running ahead of South Vietnamese losses.

Latest casualty figures show that 95 Americans were killed in combat during the week that ended April 9, compared with 67 South Vietnamese soldiers. An additional 504 Americans were wounded, and four were listed as missing.

During the first 3½ months of this year, 1,361 Americans died in combat. This was 19 more than the total of U. S. fighting men killed in action in all of 1965.

Besides ground casualties, the U. S. has lost 306 planes since the start of the Vietnam conflict.

U. S. fighting forces here—now totaling about 240,000—are fewer than half the number of South Vietnamese under arms. But the political crisis which imperiled the Government of Premier Ky drained off thousands of South Vietnamese troops for civil-disturbance duty. Also, there appears to be a growing tendency to let the Americans take over the toughest missions.

An example of what U. S. troops face came on April 12 when a Viet Cong battalion ambushed an American rifle company in the jungle 40 miles east of Saigon. At least a third of the U. S. company of about 170 men were killed or wounded.

As the U. S. war effort intensified, Communist North Vietnam became, for the first time, a target for Guam-based B-52 bombers. On April 12, the Red supply line to South Vietnam was hit by 30 of the B-52s, which dropped 700 tons of bombs. The raid—heaviest since World War II—sealed off a strategic pass on the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Another incident: Red China, on April 12, claimed destruction of a U. S. warplane—identified as a KA-3B jet tanker—over South China.