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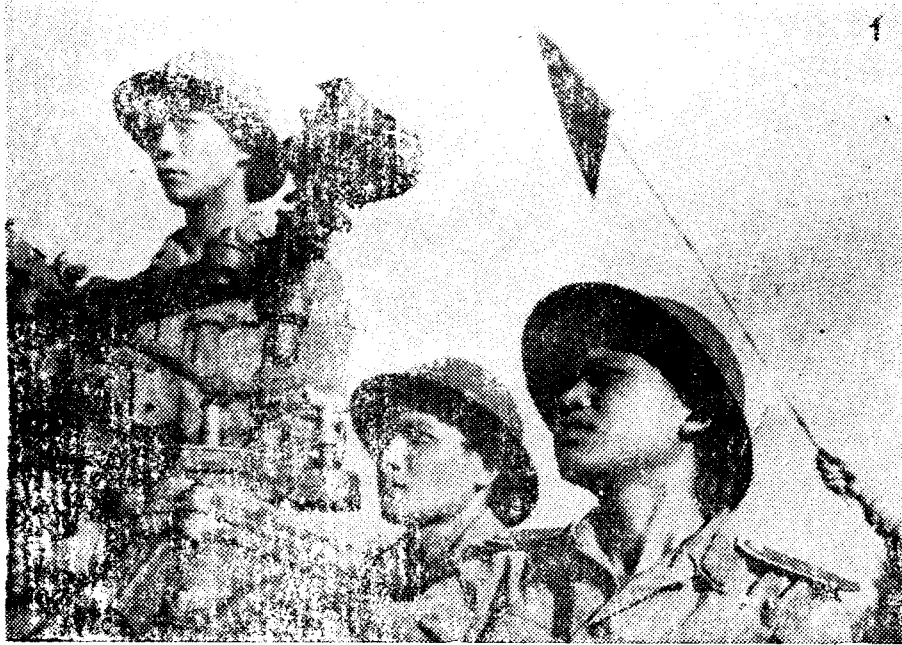
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THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES

1. Training anti-aircraft
defence

Photo: VNA



2. Time off for the sailors on Truong Sa Island

Photo: VNA

3. Lai Chau's borderguards on patrol

Photo: NGOC BAO



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Front Cover:

Borderguards and militia in Phong Tho, Lai Chau province

Photo: NGOC BAO

**Vietnam
Courier**

12 - 1981

OUR MONTHLY COMMENT

IN the late October meeting in Rome of the World Food Programme the US representative categorically opposed a 50-million dollar project to finance an irrigation work near Ho Chi Minh City, in South Vietnam, and threatened to withdraw the US contribution to the WFP fund should the project be adopted.

Last April the US State Department had already turned down a request by a US relief organization for a licence to send 250 tons of wheat flour to aid Vietnam.

Thus the screw is being turned in a concerted effort by Washington and Beijing to bring Vietnam to her knees. It is known to everybody that since 1978 the Chinese rulers have openly used the economic weapon in an attempt to fetter Vietnam by cutting off aid, withdrawing specialists, and staging an exodus of Hoa people from Vietnam, thus creating political and social disturbances while depriving her of a part of manpower in major economic links: Hongay coal-mines, Quang Ninh fisheries, etc. In February 1979 the Chinese aggressors deliberately destroyed many important economic bases in Vietnam's northern border provinces, including the apatite mine in Hoang Lien Son the product of which—fertilizer—plays a great role in boosting rice production.

Defeated in the first military operation of her expansionist schemes in Southeast Asia, China is desperately striving to "bleed" Vietnam, hoping to make us surrender. Apart from mounting sabotage right in Vietnamese territory (See: *The situation on the Vietnam-China border*), China has pressed those who are attracted by her four modernizations programme to cut off all aid to, and co-operation with, Vietnam.

In the meantime, Washington plays the Chinese card besides finding there a seemingly bottomless market for

investment and trade, Washington, unreconciled to its defeat in Vietnam, also wants to return to Southeast Asia. In a recent notorious statement in Beijing, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific John Holdridge said: "So we will seek, if we can, to find ways to increase the political, economic and, yes, military pressures on Vietnam, working with others in ways which would bring about, we hope, some change in Hanoi's attitude toward the situation." To this end Washington has not shied away from any base manoeuvre.

The concrete goal which both China and the USA, with the connivance of certain ruling circles in Western and Southeast Asian countries, hope to achieve by any means—including stopping the supply of food—is to reverse the situation in Kampuchea by compelling Vietnam to withdraw her troops and to set up a new administration in Phnom Penh which is to the liking of Beijing and Washington.

Time, however, has shown that this is and will remain a mere illusion.

We Vietnamese do not hide the legion difficulties accruing from an underdeveloped economy saddled with 30 years of war, many years of repeated natural calamities and the betrayal of the Chinese rulers. We also recognize our shortcomings and errors due to lack of experience in our first steps to build a new-type society and economy unprecedented in the Third World. But we know how to draw experience from our failures. Thus we have corrected some mistakes and achieved heartening results in the crucial field of agriculture by fulfilling our target of rice production for this year. The State has purchased an unprecedented quantity of food from our peasants who are satisfied with our new policy on prices. Moreover, the resolution of energy problems bodes well for the forthcoming years and this will lead to improving all other fields of the national economy.

Meanwhile, with their tried and tested resilience and the great and valuable support of the fraternal socialist countries, in the first place the Soviet Union, the Vietnamese have closely rallied around their leaders and consist

ently stuck to their national goals: to firmly maintain national independence, join efforts with the peoples of Kampuchea and Laos to build the three Indochinese countries into an outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia, and contribute to the cause of peace and security in this area.

We are rightly optimistic with regard to the situation in fraternal Kampuchea where everything is being gradually settled. Of course, its rehabilitation poses many problems due to the particularly grave consequences of the genocide. However, the worst days are over and a new Kampuchea has appeared—free of all oppression and exploitation—an achievement which the Kampuchean people are determined to preserve. Those who wanted to drive Kampuchea back to the hard life of the past suffered a new defeat last month; the prospects of an exile coalition government rigged up to replace the horrible Khmer Rouge administration have dimmed with Son Sann's withdrawal.

Realists in the West as in Southeast Asia recognise the objective truth in Vietnam and in Kampuchea. At the Rome meeting of the WFP, France, Denmark and Sweden disagreed with the USA. Many other countries in North and West-Europe have maintained or begun to resume relations of economic co-operation with Vietnam. Back from their visit to Vietnam and Kampuchea, parliamentary members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in Japan have requested their government to revise the policy toward Vietnam along a more realistic line. A number of personalities in Indonesia have also put forward similar views recently.

The USA is willfully ganging up with China to counter this new trend. With regard to Vietnam and Indochina all US presidents since F.D. Roosevelt have adopted erroneous policies and the Reagan administration is unfortunately no exception.

November 25, 1981

COMPOSITE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY OF VIETNAMESE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AGAINST US AGGRESSION

General HOANG VAN THAI

The following article appeared in Tap Chi Cong San (Review of Communism,) the theoretical and political organ of the Communist Party of Vietnam. We have deleted some short passages without altering the fundamental contents of the article.

Editor

THE war conducted by US imperialism against the South of our country was a neo-colonialist war of aggression. It was launched after the US imperialists had failed, even with their demagogic political moves and their deceptive slogans about "independence", "nationalism" and "democracy", to subjugate our people in the South. For they are indomitable revolutionary people led by an experienced Marxist-Leninist party, who are well trained in revolutionary struggle and who rose up together with the people throughout the country to carry out the August Revolution and defeat the French imperialist aggressors. Accordingly, the US imperialists had to fascize their ruling apparatus to a high degree especially through the use of brutal military means, in an attempt to suppress the revolutionary movement of our people.

Faced with such an enemy, the South Vietnamese people had to resort to political struggle, their fundamental strength, to strike at the Achilles' heel of the enemy. However, to defeat an enemy in a war, it is absolutely essential to smash his military control, hence we had to use military force.

The struggle between our people and the US imperialists was a very bitter one which went on daily and hourly on both the political and military fronts. The fundamental strategic guideline of the revolu-

tion in the South was to carry out a political struggle along with an armed struggle, both being essential and decisive. As a rule, the political struggle develops from the struggle for economic interests and democracy and against repression to armed uprising. As for the armed struggle, once launched it had to follow its own rule of war. The revolutionary struggle of our people in the South came under the impact of both these rules. However, once the revolutionary struggle has developed into a revolutionary war, the rule of war, that is, the rule of armed struggle, becomes the predominant one.

Firmly grasping the rule of war, we did our utmost to build our armed forces into three categories of which the regular army was the core. Accordingly, we were able to generate our on-the-spot strength to scatter, contain, wear out and destroy enemy forces anywhere while the ever-growing armies of our main force dealt decisive blows at the enemy on battlefields of our own choice. Along with the armed struggle we organized the masses into mighty political armies to directly confront the enemy and defeat their "pacification" policy. We also made great efforts to build on-the-spot rear bases to exploit the local potential in manpower and materials. Having determined our long-term strategic orientation we started building our battle disposition and preparing the ground for

our main force to engage in larger scale annihilation battles in order to effect a fundamental change of the balance of forces in our favour. At the same time, we made every effort to consolidate and build up the socialist North in all fields, politically, economically and militarily, bringing into play its role as the rear of the great front which was the South. In the North, we endeavoured to build our armed forces to make them become a regular and more and more modern army, strong enough to defeat all attacks by the enemy. The North also supplied the reserve forces for the whole country, and stood ready to move in and defeat the enemy in the South and to co-operate with the armed forces of the fraternal peoples on the Lao and Kampuchean battlefields.

Our political and armed struggles took place in all three strategic areas: the mountains, the countryside and the towns. We based ourselves on the immediate tasks and the balance of forces in each area, each locality, at each point of time to determine the appropriate level and size of our combined politico-military struggle. We laid the emphasis of our leadership on this or that region depending on the development of the revolutionary struggle in each specific period of time.

We had absolute superiority over the enemy in terms of political and moral strength and this

strength grew continuously in our favour. On the other hand, in the first period of the revolutionary war, we were inferior to the enemy in terms of armed forces and technical equipment, hence we needed time to gradually change the balance of forces in our favour.

Therefore, to carry out a long struggle and to grow and develop in the process was our aim.

But to carry out a long struggle does not in any way mean that we had to prolong the fight, "lie in ambush and bide our time" in waiting for a certain change brought about by some external factor. Instead, it meant that we had to do our utmost to change the balance of forces between us and the enemy. To carry out a long fight and to grow at the same time must be a continuous process of attacking the enemy in all spheres and in all the three strategic areas, repelling the enemy step by step; the first step preparing for the next one, and the latter yielding bigger victories than the first. To carry out a long struggle in the anti-US resistance was, as we saw it, to attack the enemy, contain it and force it to de-escalate step by step.

In a revolutionary war, there will be progress by leaps and bounds. But there will also be evolutionary progress in between two leaps, never a continuous leaping progress. Consequently, while persisting in our aim of fighting a long war and growing in the process, we made every possible effort to build and develop our forces in all fields, military, political, economic and diplomatic, creating the opportunity and quickly grasping the chance when it emerged to launch a "most resolute" and powerful attack to defeat all the military strategies of the enemy and win a decisive victory and eventually complete victory.

These twists and turns were actually the road followed by our people in more than 20 years of our struggle against US neo-

colonialism in the South. The "concerted uprising" of our people in the South in 1960 took our revolutionary struggle from a position of preservation of forces to one of offensive and eventually to a revolutionary war which defeated one after another the "special war" then a "local war" strategies of the US, driving it into a strategic impasse. The general offensive in the spring of 1968 directed at the nerve centres of the enemy in the South and the victory over the first US war of destruction against the North blunted the enemy's aggressive ambition and forced it to de-escalate. By defeating the US military venture in Kampuchea and helping the Kampuchean revolution move forward in 1970 and in coordination with the Lao People's Liberation Army, defeating and wiping out major enemy forces on the Plain of Jars and on Highway 9 and southern Laos in 1971, we smashed the enemy's scheme of isolating the resistance of the South Vietnamese people. Then, seizing the opportunity that had emerged, we took the initiative in launching a major counter-offensive, making short work of large chunks of enemy forces and completely defeating all its counter-attacks. This prepared the ground for the strategic offensive in 1972 in which we trounced whole enemy divisions and liberated more land in the South. At the same time, we defeated the second war of destruction against the North and the strategic blitzkrieg by US B52 bombers on Hanoi and Hai Phong in late 1972, dealing a crushing blow at the collusion between US imperialism and the reactionaries in Beijing. Thus, we had completely foiled the US strategy of "Vietnamisation of the war" and completely shattered the strategic plan of the US imperialists forcing them to sign the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and withdraw American and satellite troops from South Vietnam.

These great strides in defeating the military strategies of the enemy

and especially the enormous efforts of our people and army during the years 1973-74 created conditions for the emergence of a position from which to carry out the generalised offensive and uprising in the spring of 1975 which brought about the complete disintegration of the mercenary army of the US in the South, the complete liberation of the South and the reunification of the country.

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During the war, our Party mobilised, organized and built up all kinds of forces and fully developed their efficiency in many forms and by various methods in each strategic period as well as in the whole course of the war, in each strategic area as well as in each drive of attack and each strategic offensive and even in each battle and in the activities of each combatant. This greatly increased the strength of our forces.

To combine political struggle with armed struggle was the basic strategic guideline of the revolution in southern Vietnam.

Political struggle is a fundamental one involving diversified forms and methods, going from low to high, in order to gradually awaken the masses and mobilize, organize and train them into an ever-growing force so that when conditions are ripe they rise up in insurrection to coordinate with the revolutionary armed forces in overthrowing the enemy rule. This political force together with the armed forces and the agitation in the enemy ranks constituted three prongs of attack in all the three strategic areas and in all periods of the war.

Armed struggle is also a basic form of struggle playing an immediate and decisive role in the annihilation of the enemy military forces and constitutes a lever to stimulate and push ahead the other forms of struggle.

During the anti-French resistance, the combination of the political and military forces had created a major force for the people to defeat

the enemy. In the anti-US resistance this combination was effected at a still higher level, both on the qualitative and organisational planes, and with regard to its size, form and geographic scale. Accordingly, the strength of each of these two forces as well as their combined strength were multiplied manifold.

This combination was most manifest in the campaigns conducted by our strategic armies on battlefields of our own choice, in the coordinated campaigns in the countryside, during the major campaigns against the enemy in the towns, in the strategic offensive and uprisings aimed at defeating a definite military strategy of the enemy, and finally in the general offensive and uprising to completely smash the enemy forces and win total victory.

The fundamental goal of all revolutionary wars is to annihilate the enemy armed forces. That is why, while combining political struggle with armed struggle we made every possible effort to create the necessary military strength to defeat the enemy militarily according to the objective and tasks set for each battle, each military campaign and each strategy we had adopted... We attached great importance to the role of the armed struggle as the lever, ground-breaker and decisive factor, while never making light of the role of the political struggle and the political forces of the revolutionary masses.

To attack and rise up, to rise up and attack were the laws of the revolutionary war in the South. The revolutionary armed forces attacked the enemy armed forces while the revolutionary masses rose up to smash the enemy repressive machine. It is essential that military attack be combined with popular uprising, and that it creates the conditions for this uprising. Conversely, a mass uprising

must be combined with the offensive by the armed forces in order to take advantage of the gains of these attacks and also to create conditions for the following offensives. This combination was effected at all levels and degrees, from separate regions to the whole of the South and eventually developing into a generalised offensive and uprising. Its ultimate goal was to annihilate the enemy and win back power for the people.

The line of the Vietnamese revolution did not consist just of annihilating enemy forces and seizing power in the countryside and using the countryside to encircle the towns while the towns had to wait for the opportunity. Instead, it also advocated the combination of the struggle in the countryside and in the towns. The more the war developed, the more decisive the military attacks would become and would inevitably develop into a generalised offensive creating conditions for the masses in both the countryside and the towns to rise up and seize power throughout the land. The generalised offensive and uprising in the spring of 1975 was actually the culmination of this combination.

In the armed struggle, our Party has combined the three categories of armed forces: the regular army, the regional armies and the militia and guerrillas; combined guerrilla warfare with conventional warfare; combined big, medium and small attacks.

Guerrilla warfare and conventional warfare—the two modes of carrying out the revolutionary war—both have an important strategic position and both later developed into local people's wars and military campaigns by big detachments of the regular army. Guerrilla warfare should not be confined to scattered guerrilla

operations but must become a real armed struggle of broad revolutionary masses leading to uprisings to overthrow the local power of the enemy. It was widely conducted in all the three strategic areas in the South and became a widespread battlefield to scatter, contain, wear out and annihilate enemy forces, making them become small and weak in spite of their big numbers and their strong equipment. This guerrilla war made it possible for the regular army to launch major battles of annihilation to destroy important chunks of enemy forces and to turn the tide of the war.

As in the anti-French resistance, the armed struggle in the anti-US resistance followed the law of going from guerrilla war to conventional war and combining guerrilla war with conventional war.

Conventional warfare must mobilise the armed forces to carry out coordinated attacks on an ever wider scale. In the resistance against US aggression, the conventional war in the South which received direct military assistance from the Socialist North, progressed by leaps and bounds and played the immediate and decisive role in the annihilation of the enemy regular forces.

To combine guerrilla warfare with conventional warfare is a necessity for the defeat of a militarily strong enemy. This combination enables both kinds of warfare to develop strongly. Experience shows that it creates great strength to defeat every military strategy of the enemy, that in some places and under certain circumstances, even though we had at our disposal a major force of the regular army due to the weak operation of the guerrillas, the operations of the regular units were limited and sometimes we had to scatter the regular

forces and send them to help the guerrillas and even had to withdraw them from the battlefield.

To combine guerilla warfare with conventional warfare on the operational plane is to combine the operations of the three categories of armed forces: the regular army, the regional armies and the militia and guerrillas, and to combine big, medium and small battles in diversified forms. It consists in attacking the enemy while they are on the move or engaged in raiding operations, launching surprise attacks on their staging bases or on their outer perimeter by means of large-sized units combined with deep thrusts into enemy-occupied areas, striking at the enemy in the towns and cities, right at their headquarters and warehouses by means of specially-trained commando units. It also consists of disrupting enemy communication to prevent its supply, split its forces and decimate them, attacking enemy live forces combined with agitation among enemy troops in order to bring about their disintegration, destroy its live forces and war means, thus defeating its principal tactical measures in each of its military campaigns. All these forms of fighting have been summed up into six strategic methods of fighting in the liberation war in the South. Combined with the methods of fighting by the three categories of armed forces in the North in the fight against the US air and naval war of destruction they have brought the military art of people's war in both regions of the country to a high level.

While conducting the war against US aggression, our Party

attached great importance to the diplomatic struggle aimed at creating more favourable conditions for the development of our all-round people's war. Our Party has always held that while the victories on the battlefield, especially the military victories, played the most decisive role in the war, the diplomatic struggle was a very important aspect of the all-round struggle of our people. However, diplomatic victories are completely conditioned by the military ones. It was actually the victories of the strategic general offensive in the spring of 1968 and of the strategic military offensives in 1972 in the South together with the victory over the US war of destruction in the North that forced the US to sit down at the conference table and accept our terms at the talks, sign the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and withdraw American and satellite troops from the South.

The diplomatic activities of our State as well as of our people have made people throughout the world, including the American people, become increasingly aware of the aggressive, unjust and reactionary nature of the US imperialists and the justice of our cause, thereby winning for us the ever broader and stronger support and sympathy of the world people and isolating US imperialism to a high degree.

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The Vietnamese revolution is part of the world revolution. Our anti-US resistance stood at the forefront of the three revolutionary currents of the world

Accordingly, each victory of the three revolutionary currents will exert its positive effect on our people's struggle and vice versa. The combination of national strength and the strength of our time has resulted in the combined strength of our revolutionary war to defeat the US aggressors.

Guided by the principle of self-reliance, our Party has pointed to the whole of our army and people the national and international significance of our revolutionary struggle, inculcated into them a high sense of patriotism and internationalism and has not for a moment ceased to educate our army and people in both the North and the South about the close relations and unity of the national and international interests, hence to put all our efforts in discharging well our tasks at the frontline of the fight against US imperialism, at the same time to receive and make effective use of the assistance of the socialist camp and the sympathy and support of the world people.

With regard to Laos and Kampuchea, our Party has consistently held that only when Vietnam has brought its resistance to fruition could the revolution in the two neighbouring countries be successful, and inversely, only with the victory of the revolution in Kampuchea and Laos could the victory of the Vietnamese revolution be complete. Our people have spared nothing, not even their blood, to contribute to the revolutionary cause of the peoples of the two

(Continued on page 11)

CARE FOR WAR INVALIDS AND FAMILIES OF FALLEN HEROES

OVER the last three decades Vietnam has been subject to a succession of predatory wars, first by the French colonialists, then the US imperialists, and more recently the Chinese hegemonists. The situation in Kampuchea is now stable but the threat of war is still looming large on our northern border. The total of disabled soldiers from all these wars has risen to one and a half million, or 2.5% of the population(1). Accordingly, the policy toward disabled soldiers and fallen heroes has become both a pressing and long-term problem which requires the special concern of Party and administrative executives at all levels(2).

A correct handling of this question will have a positive effect on the building of the revolutionary armed forces and on the strengthening of national defence. It will also help to preserve and enhance political and ideological unity among the people, strengthen the relationship between the Party, State and people and stimulate everyone to do their best in national construction and defence.

The Vietnamese government and people have taken many measures, chiefly in these three areas: caring for the material and spiritual life of disabled soldiers and the families of fallen heroes, providing them with jobs and making the best use of their abilities.

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Caring for the material life of disabled soldiers and the families of fallen heroes, as

well as of soldiers in active service consists of ensuring for them a stable life of at least the same level as the families of average income in the locality. The first measure in this connection is effected in the form of State allowances — in cash or in kind — disability allowance, incapacitation allowance, allowance to those who have lost all family support, periodic relief grants, etc.

A disability allowance is provided monthly and its amount depends on the degree of disability. There are eight degrees ranging from light to serious. The monthly rate of allowance for the first degree is four per cent, and that for the eighth degree, 30 per cent, of the net salaries at the time they left the army. If they return to live in their home villages or towns they will receive from 6 to 20 per cent more. Those seriously disabled who return to their families and need constant attendance receive an extra allowance equal to ten per cent of their net salaries in the army. If for some reason they cannot return to their families, they are accepted into sanatoria or rest homes reserved for disabled soldiers. Those who have been incapacitated for life are supplied with functional aids such as artificial limbs and eyes, hearing aids... Disabled soldiers are exempt from compulsory labour for the building of community projects, enjoy reduction of transportation fares, are given priority at hospitals in their places of residence and of course given the same medical attention and health care as any State employee.

With regard to the families of fallen heroes, their next of kin (wife, husband, child, parents, long-time foster father or mother),

receive a monthly allowance according to State regulations. If they were officers or soldiers with many years of service, their families will receive, in addition to the permanent monthly allowance, a lump sum, depending on the duration of their service in the army. Old or incapacitated parents of fallen heroes or parents who have lost all family support are accepted into pension homes. Orphans of heroes are adopted by the State which provides their livelihood and education until they come of age. Many have been sent to study in socialist countries.

Besides the care they enjoy from the government, disabled or sick soldiers and the families of fallen heroes are also attended to by the local authorities and population. They are entitled to receive the best plots of land or plots nearest their homes allotted by the co-operatives on a fixed quota basis. They are supplied with the necessary farming implements, entitled to buy rice at a low price from the co-op during periods of food scarcity or preharvest days, allotted land and provided with free manpower to build their homes...

The Vietnam Fatherland Front, the Women's Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Federation of Trade Unions, have all worked out practical plans to help disabled soldiers. In particular, the Tran Quoc Toan movement initiated by the late President Ho Chi Minh among children and teenagers is exclusively aimed at providing care and help for the disabled and sick soldiers and the families of fallen heroes and soldiers in active service (See our article *Children's Organizations in Vietnam* in this issue). This year, the International Year of the Disabled, the authorities in Binh Tri Thien province have launched a movement for the contribution by each able-bodied person of one workday to raise funds for the benefit of the disabled and other handicapped persons. In Cu Chi district on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City, the population has repaired one hundred houses for the families of fallen heroes. The railway service, for its part, has opened a summer camp at Sam Son beach in Thanh Hoa province for disabled soldiers and victims of labour accidents.

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To care for the spiritual life of disabled soldiers and the families of fallen heroes is also an important aspect of government policy in this regard. It should give the beneficiaries the feeling that they are always surrounded by love and respect from their relatives and villagers, and the entire people and consequently will set their mind at ease during their hospitalisation or convalescence and later inspire them to work.

During his life-time President Ho Chi Minh used to visit sick or invalid soldiers and the families of fallen heroes as well as soldiers in active service, always leaving a small gift as a token of his esteem. On great anniversaries such as National Day (September 2), International Labour Day (May 1st), the founding day of the Vietnam People's Army (December 22), President Ho Chi Minh would invite representatives of war invalids, sick soldiers and the families of fallen heroes to Hanoi to attend the celebrations and State banquets. The present leaders of the Party and State are carrying on this fine tradition.

July 27, War Invalid Day, is solemnly celebrated throughout the country. On this occasion, public offices, schools and factories in Hanoi, as well as in the localities, organise meetings with disabled soldiers and the next of kin of the families of fallen heroes and soldiers in active service together with families with meritorious deeds towards the revolution. In many places, the Associations of Soldiers' Mothers collect medicines for the sick and disabled soldiers undergoing treatment in hospital.

As a tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the country, many streets, schools, factories and army units have been renamed after fallen heroes such as Vo Thi Sau (a girl messenger during the anti-French resistance), Cu Chinh Lan (an infantryman who distinguished himself during a battle against a French tank unit in the Hoa Binh campaign in 1952), Nguyen Van Troi (a worker in former Saigon who planted a bomb at the Cong Ly bridge in an attempt on the life of the then US Secretary of Defence McNamara in 1964), Nguyen Viet Xuan (officer of an anti-aircraft unit during the resistance against US aggression), etc.

Many projects have been built in recent years for the benefit of disabled soldiers including the Braille printing factory in Hanoi

with a capacity of 10,000 pages per day. Most of the workers there are ex-soldiers who lost their sight in the war.

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To provide jobs for invalid soldiers and the families of fallen heroes and make the best use of their abilities is considered the most essential aspect of the policy. It bears a very important practical significance both for the material and spiritual life of the disabled soldiers. On a practical level, employment and a better life for the disabled soldiers means a lessening of the State budget expenditures on allowances to needy families. At the same time more social products will be created. Psychologically speaking, an employed disabled soldier will be relieved of the harrowing self pity and the despondent feeling that he is a burden on society.

At present, the general guideline for the arrangement for disabled and sick soldiers still capable of taking light jobs consists in returning them to the places where they joined up. The local authorities and mass organisations have the duty of providing those capable of doing light work with jobs and educational opportunities. Those disabled soldiers, who either because of their disability or some special circumstances cannot return to their original workplace, will be sent on job training courses. On completion of these courses they may be given part-time jobs in production establishments exclusively reserved for disabled soldiers or in such departments or services as best suit their abilities. The local authorities and people also give them active assistance to found their own co-operatives or production groups to produce handicraft articles or repair metal utensils.

Disabled or sick soldiers are given jobs that suit their health and abilities. The crippled are usually assigned to quality control jobs. Those with brain injuries are given light jobs such as packing or box making.

Vietnam possesses a multitude of traditional handicrafts: making bamboo baskets, palm leaf hats, pumicing lacquer, knitting, embroidery, carpet making... jobs suited to the capacity of disabled soldiers. In recent years, factories which had been hiring out part of

their production lines to private families are employing more and more disabled soldiers for these jobs.

Thanks to a correct guideline and flexible and appropriate methods, substantial progress has been made in the question of employment for disabled soldiers and the families of fallen heroes. Up to July 1981 in Hanoi alone nearly 25,000 disabled soldiers and 4,465 other invalids had been given jobs. In Hoan Kiem precinct, one of the four most populous districts of the inner city, and also one with the broadest movement of caring for disabled soldiers and the families of fallen heroes, more than 95% of the disabled soldiers have jobs and a stable life.

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"Our disabled soldiers have shed blood to defend our country, protect our people and have demonstrated their absolute loyalty to the country and the people. They have fulfilled their tasks and have asked for nothing in return. However, with regard to those loyal daughters and sons, the government and people must return their services appropriately." (3)

"Disabled and sick soldiers and the families of fallen heroes and soldiers in active service have done meritorious deeds for the country and the people. It is our duty to show them our gratitude, to love them and help them..." (4)

These instructions of President Ho Chi Minh are being acted upon by the Vietnamese government and people in an appropriate and creative manner.

A.T.

1. Figures quoted from an interview of the publication *Vietnamese Studies with Minister for Disabled Soldiers and Social Affairs Duong Quoc Chinh*, No. 65, 1981.

2. See an instruction of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam in July 1975 concerning post-war policy toward disabled soldiers and social affairs.

3-4. Ho Chi Minh "Glory To Our Nation", pages 32, 41, published in 1972 by the Ministry of the Interior (in Vietnamese)

A GOOD HARVEST AT PHUC LE

A soft breeze from the mouth of the Nam Trieu fanned the golden ricefield. On the fragrant yellow carpet Phuc Le emerged like an island resplendent with its red tiles. Here on the outskirts of Hai Phong more than four thousand people live on less than 300 hectares of salt-acid land unfavourable to aquatic rice. One can imagine their tremendous efforts to make Phuc Le prosperous, particularly after a long war which devastated this village, as the scars left by B52 raids on Hai Phong and its surroundings nine years ago reveal.

"This prosperity," said village deputy-head Nguyen Van Xoang, "is thanks to the blood of the dead as well as the sweat of the living. In the war against the US aggressors 163 families lost loved ones at the various fronts from North to South, some families being bereft of two or three members. After the war we would have lived in peace but for Beijing's aggression and threats. At present, the sons of 565 families have been called up for military service, that is 1,148 men or more than one-fourth of the population. Nevertheless the agricultural co-operative and the people's committee have struggled to build a new life for everybody, including the families of soldiers, the disabled and martyrs. Thanks to collective help these families have brick houses like others in the village."

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More than seventy years old, Pham Van Mieu is the father of two martyrs. Widowed young, he

brought up his two sons alone until they went to the front and never returned. After their death he grew taciturn and cut himself off from society to be left undisturbed in his memories.

Together with Xoang I called at his two roomed brick house, which was the smallest in the village although still large for one man. The clean and tidy white-washed house showed its owner's care. In a corner lay a bamboo bed polished through use but the mosquito-net, mat and pillow were brand new. Old Mieu wore the traditional brown costume of the peasants in the Red River delta—but not the faded and sweat-ridden one described by some authors in the past.

Before the visit I had been told by Xoang about my host: a fastidious and oversensitive man who did not like to bother other people or the collective, he was capricious like a child but easily moved by thoughtfulness. In the past he had lived in a thatched hut which leaked at the least rain but he turned down the co-operative's offer to build a small brick house. An enquiry revealed that a malicious man had insinuated that old Mieu had asked for more—which prompted him to die in his dilapidated hut just to prove the rumour false. Painstakingly the village cadres coaxed him: "Man is a precious thing. As you have contributed both your sons to the village and the country, now it is their turn to repay you. This is not only a kindness but also an obligation with regard to those who have shed their blood. A father of two martyrs living in a thatched hut while all other villagers live in brick houses is tantamount to discrediting the village

and the country. Why pay attention to groundless gossip and decline the good will of an entire community?"

Now old Mieu lives comfortably and sociably, increasingly aware of this feeling for him. Asked about his material life he answered:

"I am supplied with 13 kilogrammes of paddy free of charge by the co-operative, while others in similar conditions but with some labour strength left pay for it at reduced price. Each quarter I receive an allowance from the Funds for Disabled Service People and Social Affairs which the cashier of the Credit Co-operative brings to me, thus sparing me the trouble of going to the district, as in the past."

Encouraged by the old man's comments the village deputy-head then outlined the activities of the village Office for Disabled Service People and Social Affairs for which he was responsible. The office sends cadres on regular visits to every family, helping them in case of need. Every year, it holds two gatherings for the families of martyrs, disabled people and representatives of the village leadership, co-operative and people's organizations—on Lunar New Year's Day and War Invalid Day (July 27) to review the work done and listen to people's opinion on how to improve it.

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Nguyen Thi Hoan is the widow of a martyr who fell in 1969. Aged 40 she has led a top-knotch production team for the past ten years, taking charge only two years after the death of her husband. Her oldest son finished general education and enlisted in the army in 1981. Her second son is now in the ninth form and her daughter in the seventh.

I called on Ms. Hoan in the evening because during the day time she was busy with the harvest while her son and daughter who were on holiday were also engaged in family chores. She had a strong physique and a good nature, kindness written on her full face.

Hers was a house of medium size with brick walls and a tiled roof, clean and tidy. She did not speak of family losses but only of what she and her son and daughter were doing to improve life. I inquired about the way she had managed to bring up and educate her children throughout the past twelve years.

"When their father died," she answered, "I was very disturbed and anxious. My eldest child was only six years old and my smallest less than a year. However, I found great solace, comfort and assistance from my fellow villagers. My children were supplied with food at reduced price by the co-operative, which relieved part of my burden. As I was strong I got many work points and saved some money to buy furniture and clothes for my children... When the latter went to school they were exempt from tuition fees and followed extra courses free of charge. They were also given study aids, books and exercise books, sometimes clothes, by the Women's Union at the opening of each school-year..."

"What about the present?"

"Over the past few years," she replied, "many difficulties have been resolved. My children have grown up and help me more and more. They still receive the allowance for martyr's children and can buy food at a reduced price, except for my eldest son who has come of age. Thanks to their hard work, my family has taken up animal rearing and sold two hundred kilogrammes of pork to the State, thus getting a surplus income. Now my greatest difficulties are over and my family is moving ahead together with my village and my country."

At Phuc Le, there are about 40 families of martyrs who fell during the war against US aggression. All these families were well

looked after and lived a decent life.

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I had to wait many days to meet Nguyen Quang Thang, a 29-year old soldier who had lost his right arm in the war against US aggression. He had gone to Quang Ninh to buy some material for the co-operative. This young disabled serviceman, people said, had built a new life following many sad days. Now he has a wife and two small children, a cosy home, and works and lives in step with his fellow-villagers.

Thang lived near the village main road lined with sandal-wood trees. Standing on new ground detached from the hamlet, his house was among the finest in the locality: its light and fresh architecture, veranda with ornamented balustrade, green washed walls denoted an owner fond of aesthetics and life. Rapidly we made acquaintance with each other. Thang was tall, alert, open-minded and very energetic. We spoke of the hard years of war as soldiers evoking intimate memories. Thang did not hesitate to confide his innermost feelings.

"I lost an arm," he said, when I was just twenty-one, I grieved at thinking that I would be invalid for life. At demobilization I was still more afflicted at seeing my weak mother and the hard life at home. On top of that, because of my arm my sweetheart finished with me."

There was a silence. A little sad, Thang looked at the ricefield but rapidly changed his mood:

"Now my life is completely settled," he said with a smile. "At first, the co-operative made me a

warehouseman. However, I asked for another job as I felt strong enough to do it. This work is busy and exacting but I am glad. I still benefit from the State policies for disabled service-people, special allowances for wounds, food supply... In the co-operative, I get as many work points as a main labourer, thus earning a fair income."

Thang got married two years after demobilization. Now he and his wife have two children. In his house I saw beds, wardrobes, a transistor, a bicycle—which his parents would not have dared to dream of, even though they worked from dawn to dusk.

"Over the past seven-eight years", he said, "and particularly in the last five years we have worked hard and bought some furniture. My wife is strong and gets many work points in the co-operative. However, we could not have built a house but for the help of the co-operative."

This required about 5,000-6,000 *dong* at Phuc Le, the price of a tonne of rice, which was fairly cheap because such building materials as lime, brick, tile and the builders were supplied by the co-operative at reduced prices. Small wonder that house-building goes on apace at Phuc Le. What was noteworthy was that families of disabled service-people and martyrs were helped by the administration and the co-operative to build their brick houses before others.

"Five years ago," Thang went on, "when we married we wanted to have a solid and beautiful house of our own, but we were not able to realize it alone. At that time, the co-operative had granted loans to many families of martyrs and disabled service people to build houses—paid by instalments deducted from work points.

In our case, it supplied us with nearly all the funds we needed—which we shall pay off in two years' time. At Phuc Le there are about 300 such families who have been granted loans by the co-operative to tide them over their difficulties and build new houses.'

In this coastal zone exposed to winds and storms, a solid house means a settled life. In September 1968, storm number seven blotted out the entire village. At that time most houses had thatched roofs and mud walls. In summer 1977 a heavy storm caused only small damage because most families already had brick houses, although every family had then to eat rice mixed with cassava and sweet potatoes. Now the administration and the co-operative have fully implemented a plan to build houses for all families of collective peasants.

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I took leave of the village heads very early because the people's committee worked only from 6:00 to 8:00 to let cadres participate in the harvesting. The crèche and nursery school nearby resounded with children's chatter, and among them I recognized Thang's child. Cart after cart brought the paddy to the warehouse yard on the road between two rows of green trees and two rows of red-tiled houses. Also on the road many sturdy youths rode on bicycles towards the district centre for a medical check before enlisting in the army.

VU TRONG TRI

COMPOSITE POLITICO - MILITARY STRATEGY...

(Continued from page 6)

fraternal countries. At the same time, our Party has put a high value on the assistance of the peoples of these countries.

The militant alliance between the peoples of the three countries has become a tradition, ensuring the success of the revolution in each country and of all the three countries in the recent anti-French and anti-US resistance wars. It continues to develop in the present situation and is certain to become ever stronger as time passes.

Fully aware of their responsibility toward the revolutionary movement in general, and the national liberation movement in particular, our people have done their best and by every possible means to support the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of different countries. Conversely, we have received the sympathy and support of the whole world people including progressive people in the United States.

With regard to the great family of the socialist countries our Party has endeavoured to consolidate the solidarity and unity among the fraternal countries and together with them we have contributed to safeguarding the purity of Marx-

ism-Leninism in the interests of our people, of the whole socialist system and of the world people. Our Party puts a very high value on the assistance of the fraternal socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union, considering it to be a factor of prime importance to ensure victory for our people's struggle.

Our Party has resolutely opposed and rejected all manoeuvres and schemes of the ruling circles in Beijing in collusion with US imperialism who wanted to prevent and undermine the resistance of our people against US aggression for national salvation.

It can be said that ever since its founding, our Party has, both in its revolutionary line and method, always closely associated our people's revolutionary cause with that of the world people. In the anti-US resistance this association was brought to a very high level. That is why, our people's revolutionary struggle has a profound national and epochal character. Here also lies the success of our Party's line of upholding the two banners of national independence and socialism.

THE WIDE, COMPREHENSIVE **AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT** **OF THE SOVIET UNION**

TRAN QUYNH

Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers

THIS summer many important long-term agreements—economic, trade, scientific and technical—for 1981-1985 and the subsequent years—were signed between Vietnam and the Soviet Union in a hitherto unprecedented quantity. This great support of the Soviet Union aims primarily to create favourable conditions for Vietnam to develop its strong points in manpower, land, forestry and maritime products, minerals and other natural resources so that we can strengthen our national economy. It will also help us overcome our difficulties and the imbalance and instability of our people's living conditions, consolidate national defence and the security of the country, and build the initial material and technical bases of socialism, particularly with regard to the most urgent targets of the 1981-1985 five-year plan.

According to the agreements, in the years to come, the Soviet Union will continue to provide Vietnam with complete sets of equipment in projects in the key branches of agriculture, light industry, raw materials and energy, mechanical engineering, transport and communications, etc. In particular, many important ones such as the 640,000 KW Pha Lai thermoelectricity plant, the 1,920,000 KW Song Da hydro-electricity plant, the 280,000 KW Tri An hydro-electricity plant, coal mines with an overall output of 6 million tonnes per year, the 1,200,000 tonne

Bim Son cement plant, the enlarging of the Lao Cai apatite mine, the Lam Thao phosphate fertilizer factory, some transport and communications projects, and some cotton plantations.

As regards long-term economic co-operation, in the spirit of mutual help and with common benefit, the Soviet Union and Vietnam will boost co-operation in various fields: planting and processing tropical plants such as rubber, coffee, tea, vegetables, fruits, as well as in textiles, clothes, woollen carpets and in exploiting and processing some kinds of useful minerals, especially oil and natural gas which are found on the continental shelf of the southern part of our country. Thanks to this co-operation, jobs will be created and exports will be increased to meet demand.

The exchange of goods between Vietnam and the Soviet Union will continue to expand. Aware of our present difficulties, the Soviet Union continues to provide us with many kinds of raw materials, combustibles and equipment, spare parts and staple consumer goods. They also take into consideration, with favourable prices, transport, as well as loans and non-refundable aid to make up our trade deficit.

Training technicians and economic managers is of capital importance for us. The Soviet Union will continue to help us to train cadres for all branches, particularly

for modern factories which require a high level of management. The Soviet Union also sends many experienced specialists in technical production and economic management to help Vietnam to perfect organisational structure and production planning in all branches.

In the scientific and technical fields, the Soviet Union continues to help implement Vietnam's unified "Policy on Science and Technology" elaborated with Soviet help. It also continues to help us equip our scientific and technical institutes free of charge to carry out various programmes of scientific and technical co-operation and plays host to thousands of Vietnamese scientific and technical cadres who are in the Soviet Union for practical work and research.

The wide, comprehensive and effective support of the Soviet Union embodies the international socialist spirit and a close, warm and deep comradeship. This special and valuable support is one of the factors conditioning the building of socialism and the defence of our beloved socialist country in foiling the plans of the Chinese expansionists, US imperialism and other reactionary forces.

Editor's Note: The above text represents large excerpts from an article which appeared in Nhan Dan on November 3, 1981.

IT IS OUR INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATION TO DEFEND CUBA

U.S. that has threatened Cuba over the past twenty years, interfered in her internal affairs and invaded the country. Having been defeated at Giron beach years ago, and been repeatedly unsuccessful in its attempts to isolate Cuba economically and put pressure on her, the U.S. imperialists entertain the idea of tarnishing the image of the heroic Cuban people. Over the past year, Washington has greatly stepped up its activities against the Cuban revolution. Now that Reagan has succeeded in entering the White House, his policies are getting more and more aggressive. Directing their spearhead at Cuba has been one of the objectives of the global strategy of the reactionary circle in the United States with a view to fuelling their arms race against socialism, revolution and progress. Following the campaign of slandering Cuba on a large scale is a criminal scheme on the part of the U.S. authorities against Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada on the one hand and the revolutionary movement of Latin America on the other. Those who hold high posts in the Reagan Administration have gone to the lengths of menacing to "punish Cuba" and not to rule out using military measures against her. After such a threat, the U.S. Administration held a military caucus with its puppet authorities in Latin America to discuss their new plans for their machinations. Once again the Cuban people are facing the danger of an invasion from the arch-imperialists.

By making a fuss about the so-called "Cuban intervention" into the internal affairs of Latin America, the U.S. imperialists are attempting to cover up the real cause of the ever-rising revolutionary wave in this part of the world. But the Latin American peoples have already laid bare their true nature: it is the imperialists that are their enemies and their brazen exploiters. The uprisings against the

U.S. imperialists by the people in many countries of this region are a just cause. And the Cuban people are completely entitled to support such a just cause, to oppose oppression, exploitation and to protest against intervention and aggression.

The U.S. imperialists are now attempting to attack Cuba; nevertheless they should remember the Vietnam lesson. They will, by so doing, court another Vietnam-like defeat right on their doorstep. Naturally, the aggressors may know how the war will start, but they can hardly know how it will end.

Reality shows that their twenty years of hostility towards Cuba has come to nothing. On the contrary, it only makes her more determined. Today the Cuban people are much stronger and are a hundred times better prepared in terms of military strength, political consciousness and enthusiasm than twenty years ago, when they smashed the mercenaries' assault at Giron beach, as Comrade Fidel Castro reaffirmed. The Resolution of the 2nd Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba points out: "Cuba is prepared to defend herself against all military intervention or any aggression by the U.S. imperialists. On Cuban soil, the fight will not end so long as there is still a patriot capable of fighting; and in Cuba there are millions of people who are ready to struggle to the last drop of blood."

The U.S. Administration's threat against Cuba has kindled a flame of indignation among progressive and peace-loving forces, because Cuba is

a member of the socialist community, an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, a staunch champion of peace and the rights of all peoples. In their statement at the Conference of the Secretaries of the Central Committees of the Communists' and Workers' Parties, the participants appealed, "Let all the progressive and peace-loving forces be well aware of the gravity of the U.S. imperialists' new provocations, and raise their voice to defend Cuba and her independence and sovereignty!"

Our people continue to express their comradeship-in-arms and wholehearted support for the cause of safeguarding the country of the fraternal Cuban people. For all of us Vietnamese, the name "Cuba" evokes an admiration and affection, based on their heroic mettle and their extremely dear fraternity and comradeship. At this juncture, we bear in mind all the more the Cuban people's devotion to us—"For Vietnam's sake, we are prepared to donate our own blood," and "For Vietnam we will spare no effort to build her ten times as beautiful as she is today." We solemnly pledge to our dear Cuban comrades: The Vietnamese people wholeheartedly support you. Your struggle is also ours. Let us Vietnamese people and soldiers close ranks by the side of our Cuban sisters and brothers as well as the peoples and revolutionary forces of the Caribbean region and Central America!

NHAN DAN Editorial
(Nov. 11, 1981)

THE SITUATION ON THE VIETNAM-CHINA BORDER

Interview
with Nguyen Duc Thieng,
Vice-President of the Committee
Investigating Chinese War Crimes.



Vietnam Courier: Since the defeat of their February 17, 1979 aggression against Vietnam, the Chinese administration has continued to declare publicly that another aggression against Vietnam might be carried out. The situation on the Vietnam-China border in 1979-1980 was tense. What about 1981?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: China's plot of aggression and her actual sabotage of Vietnam continue as in the past, but at an increased rate. In view of the war she is expanding roads and airfields to step up the transport of weapons and war material to the south. She is also consolidating and expanding her military bases on Hainan island and Vietnam's Paracels archipelago which she has illegally occupied. At present, China is deploying 15 divisions on the Vietnam-China border with a rear support of 6 army corps. Military provocations and land-grabbing have not only increased in number (nearly 2,000 cases in the first nine months of 1981) but they are also carried out on a larger scale and for longer. A characteristic of the situation in 1981 is that the

Chinese side makes attempts on heights with military value. Early in May 1981 they fired shells and missiles for days on end, then sent many infantry battalions to attack: Height 400 in Cao Loc district, Lang Son province, 250 metres inside Vietnamese territory; Height 1800a and 1800b in Vi Xuyen district, Ha Tuyen province, 1,500 metres inside Vietnamese territory. Once there they dug trenches, built fortifications and opened roads to link Chinese territory with the newly-grabbed heights. Every day from these heights they fired on surrounding villages; on average 400 shells from Cao Loc, 80 from Vi Xuyen. On October 5, 6 and 7 particularly the number of shells from Cao Loc ran into the thousands. The number of places grabbed and used for such crimes has gone up from 12 after the February 17, 1979 aggression to 31 (including 20 deep inside Vietnamese territory).

One case of serious intrusion took place on October 6, when a platoon of Chinese soldiers sneaked into Cao Lau village, Cao Loc district, nearly one

kilometre inside Vietnamese territory, and fired on the population, killing and wounding many people.

These are provocations on the ground. Intrusions into Vietnamese sea and airspace by Chinese armed boats and fighter planes in 1981 are also more numerous than in the past two years, running into thousands. Meanwhile, China keeps on sending many scouts and commandos into Vietnam to gather intelligence, kill or kidnap cadres, soldiers and civilians to extort information or to press them into their service and foment rebellion in Vietnam. Since early 1981 the Vietnamese side has checked 108 such intrusions and arrested 193 men.

Vietnam Courier: The arrested Chinese scouts have revealed their mission in Vietnam and the way they entered the country. Could you tell us about that?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: Here are a few instances:

Ye Qi Ming, leader of an intelligence squad arrested on July 12, 1981 in Meo Vac district, Ha Tuyen province, disclosed that he belonged to the intelligence platoon of a company of special missions, Second Infantry Regiment, Independent Division, Yunnan Military Region, Kunming Greater Military Region. Before entering Vietnam in May 1981 he was told by his regimental deputy political commissar that China would attack Vietnam to improve the situation on the China-Vietnam border and assist the movement in Kampuchea and Thailand.

According to Ye, the new offensive began when Yang De Chi, former deputy-commander of the southern front in charge of the February 17, 1979 aggression against Vietnam, became head of the Chinese general staff. During an inspection tour of the Yunnan Military Region early in April 1981 he ordered, "Remove the nail embedded before us". Ye's Second Regiment was, therefore, assigned to attack Meo Vac district of Vietnam's Ha Tuyen province. The soldiers were forbidden to write home or go on leave. In April 1981 his regiment carried out a rehearsal of joint attack and three drives of hatred-rousing against Vietnam. Then scouts were sent ahead and his squad was entrusted with gathering intelligence about Heights 21, 22, 23, 24 in Meo Vac, during which mission he was arrested.

Here is the evidence given by border security agent Nong Jin Dong arrested on May 26, 1981 at Che Ma, Loc Binh district, Lang Son province. Before

attacking Height 400, his unit was told by the higher command that "China must occupy Pha Khoa Mount (Height 400) at all costs because from there she can have a commanding view over Lang Son". The prisoner also said that the attack had been carefully prepared long before with many drives of hatred-rousing against Vietnam.

Evidence from other arrested scouts show that the Chinese reactionaries strive to incite their soldiers to commit crimes against the Vietnamese people. Thus the Political Bureau of the Chinese army used a special plane to carry a picture of nine majestic war-horses which were to be presented to the nine soldiers with most crimes at Lao Chai village, Vi Xuyen district, Ha Tuyen province.

The sending of intruders into Vietnam is carefully prepared, each squad in a different way: sometimes they do not bring anything apart from clothes and a few personal belongings; sometimes they carry fake documents, maps and notebooks, other times malefactors are sent to Vietnam for intelligence gathering to redeem their offences, and sometimes so-called opponents of Deng Xiao-ping even try to worm their way into our rank.

Vietnam Courier: So those scouts kill or kidnap people and gather intelligence for military operations. What about psychological warfare?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: Psychological warfare is part of their all-round war of destruction against our country.

Along the border they have set up 20 broadcast stations with a dense network of loudspeakers directed towards Vietnam. Each station is organized like a small radio station complete with editors, linesmen and mechanics. They issue broadcasts in Vietnamese and minority languages which distort the lines and policies of the Vietnamese Communist Party and Government, and encourage people to uprising, riot and subversion. Moreover, they also relay broadcasts in Vietnamese from Beijing, Washington and London. In some places broadcasts in Vietnamese from Beijing Radio are relayed 12 times a day. That is not all. This October, says an AFP report, a "Voice of Vietnam radio" was set up, allegedly by a faction opposed to the present Vietnamese regime, but in

South China like many radio stations of so-called Southeast Asian countries established by China on her own territory.

Together with the many broadcasting sessions tens of thousands of leaflets are dumped in Vietnam and rumours are spread to confuse the masses. The people on both sides of the border are related by blood or ethnic grouping and are close neighbours. In many places they till a common field, hunt or collect firewood in a common forest, and go to a common market... Leaflets are dropped from balloons, or carried by rafts downstream to Vietnam. They are also stuffed into emptied gourds which are later smashed at the markets, or inside thermos flasks and torches. Rumours are spread threatening that Chinese troops will attack on such and such a day to divert people from production. On some market-days the news that "Chinese troops are coming" makes people flee helter-skelter. Horses also disappear for their tethers are cut, but they come back a few days later loaded with leaflets and gifts from President Hua (Hua Kuo-feng then President of the Chinese Communist Party).

Vietnam Courier: Are the gifts sent indiscriminately?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: Indiscriminately but sometimes also personally.

Capitalizing on Vietnam's economic difficulties, lack of adequate communication lines and consumer goods in the highlands, the Chinese reactionaries send gifts (mainly household goods) to buy off people into serving them. Gift-recipients are leaders of Party committees, administrative committees, mass organizations, and people's militia in the countryside. The gifts are brought by people from China who come to hunt or visit the markets allegedly for relatives or acquaintances. Those who keep on receiving gifts will be induced to serve as spies. Those who hand the gifts over to the administration or the border forces later receive two of each item from the Chinese to mollify them, thus they have only to hand one piece over to the administration to stay in their good books. Such perfidious tricks make some people lapse in the long run. It creates suspicion and bad feeling among the population just like the "smearing" of cadre once practised by the Americans in South Vietnam.

On Yunnan Military Region and Kwangchow Military Region there are 7 centres for political military and spy training to cater for the "special-guerrilla companies" used against Vietnam. "Black clad divisions" are being established to the same end. These forces undertake the greater part of the psychological and spy warfare against Vietnam.

Vietnam Courier: You have dealt with the Chinese reactionaries' sabotage of Vietnam in the military and

psychological fields. What about their destruction of our economy and production?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: Most serious in this respect is the appearance of a series of border marks. These are called "toad" marks because they shift from one place to another, selling general goods to buy off people, distribute leaflets and spread news of impending war as mentioned above. Another important aim is to buy local agricultural produce like aniseed and cinnamon... These grow in large quantities along the border and constitute precious medicinal plants and valued industrial crops. However, the "toad" markets do not buy cinnamon bark or aniseed flowers as is usual, but purchase the roots of those trees at a high price from avaricious people who dig them up in the forest. Other products bought are dried buffalo nails and eyes. In some places one kilogramme of dried buffalo eyes is worth 15,000 Chinese yuans—a Machiavellian device to weaken the draught power of the highland agricultural cooperatives. A Vietnamese paper currency (printed by China) unused since 1978 has now been reprinted for use in those markets. As goods are sold cheaper in exchange for that currency, this constitutes a plot to depreciate the present currency and upset the monetary situation. Among other wicked schemes on a smaller scale are the poisoning of wells, the mining of fields, the sending of diseased cattle into Vietnam, etc.

Vietnam Courier: Is there any prospect of settlement for the complicated tension on the border?

Nguyen Duc Thieng: The tense situation on the Vietnam-China border could easily explode into a large war of aggression. We have put forward many good-willed peace initiatives, but the Chinese side does not want to negotiate. Its refusal to carry out a third round of talks reveals its intention to maintain a permanent state of instability on the border.

To defend our security and territorial sovereignty our soldiers and people on the border have firmly rebuffed and effectively punished the other side's criminal deeds. We have fought unremittingly over the past two years. In the last nine months our people and armed forces put 2,132 enemy troops out of action, including 1,900 killed and 200 taken prisoner. Nevertheless, we still have to show great vigilance in the face of China's provocative acts of sabotage. We call on the peace- and justice-loving people and forces throughout the world to give us strong support to compel the Chinese rulers to put an end to their hostile policy towards our country.

Recorded by PHUONG ANH

SEA FISHING IN VIETNAM

SEA fishing has a long history in Vietnam. The country abounds in fish and shrimps thanks to good natural conditions: a tropical monsoon climate, the presence of both hot and cold currents in the sea, a high concentration of mineral salt in the water disgorged by big rivers into the sea, a vast continental shelf, and the existence of many offshore islands.

The sea around Vietnam is the habitat of about 2,000 species of fish, which live in large schools in depths varying between zero and 50 metres. At places density can reach up to five tons per square kilometre. At greater depth, from 50 to 500 metres, density may decrease by 50 or 75 per cent. The best low-level grounds are in the Tonkin Gulf and the Gulf of Thailand.

Fish in the Tonkin Gulf number more than 900 species, about 50 of which are noted for their big numbers. The most common are Madras snapper, lizard fish and red mullet.

Surface and middle-level species are more numerous than those living at the bottom. With the exception of surface fish, they rarely form big schools in the Tonkin Gulf. Pacific herring, horse-scad mackerel and sprat are the most common surface species, which make up as much as 70 per cent of the average annual catch of 180,000 tons. At the bottom, however, fishing grounds stretch from shallow areas close to the shore to the mouth of the gulf. Further out tuna, mackerel and chub mackerel can sometimes be had when they come in from the Eastern Sea under specific weather conditions.

Over the past years fishermen at Cat Ba Island in the gulf have greatly increased their catch by using a new method: luring fish with electric or gas lights. One man can net around 10 tons a year. Some can even get 17 tons.

In central Vietnam, where the sea is deep, bottom species are less numerous than in other areas: about 50 species only, 10 of them living in big concentration. The surface, however, holds greater reserves than in any other regions, both in quantity and in

diversity. Here, surface fish account for up to 90 per cent of the catch. Near the shore live small species like banana fish and horse-scad mackerel.

Farther out bigger species are found, among them tuna and mackerel. An average school here can give between 10 and 15 tons. On rare occasions output can exceed 100 tons. Once an unusually large school of chub mackerel was seen which covered an area of 4,000 square kilometres. The most important fishing grounds in central Vietnam are Da Nang (30,000 tons in 1969), Khanh Hoa (42,000 tons), and Thuan Hai (84,000 tons). Experts estimate that surface reserves in the whole of central Vietnam may total 500,000 or 600,000 tons.

Estimates for bottom reserves in areas further south stand at 450,000 tons, of which up to 270,000 may be put to use. However, the catch now totals a little more than 170,000 tons only.

Surface fish in Eastern Nam Bo are not as diverse as in central Vietnam, but they live in bigger concentration and nearer to shore. On the 8,000 square miles around Con Dao Island dozens of big schools of tuna and different varieties of mackerel can be spotted at any time and each can give up to 100 or 150 tons.

The most important fishing grounds are to the Southwest where the coast stretches over 300 kilometres and where there are as many as 102 islands, the biggest of them — Tho Chu — at about 200 kilometres from the coast.

Estimates a few years ago put annual output in the Gulf of Thailand at around 250,000 tons. Moreover, fair weather makes it possible for fishermen to go out more than 200 days a year.

Fish, carried by a current from the Eastern Sea and by another from Malaysia, converge in vast swarms in the gulf. Local fishermen can recall schools which stretched over a hundred kilometres, with tight knots of big fish which emitted a sound similar to the grunting of hogs!

The sea around Phu Quoc Island, calm all year round, is an ideal resting place and spawning ground

for large schools. Quite often fishermen have to jettison part of the catch lest their boat should keel over, or share a haul with their neighbours.

Shrimps are another important resource. Sea shrimps are both tasty and nourishing, and can be prepared in many different ways.

From 70 to 80 different shrimp species can be found in the sea around Vietnam, the best of them all belonging to the same group as prawns. Big schools can be found in Quang Ninh, Haiphong, Thanh Hoa, Da Nang, and especially in Ca Mau.

Shrimps live at depths of less than 40 metres. Biggest of all are lobsters which sometimes can weigh more than 10 kilograms apiece. They generally dwell in rocky holes. Some species prefer a sandy or muddy bed. In summer whole schools move to brackish waters at rivermouths to spawn. These constitute the natural source for coastal shrimprearing.

To raise shrimps in salt or brackish water is a paying proposition which involves little effort and costs. In Ca Mau where shrimps abound, at least 100,000 hectares of coast swamps can be turned into excellent breeding grounds simply by building low dykes around them. Annual per hectare output can be as high as 500 or 600 kilograms. In fact the province is producing well over 10,000 tons a year both from its breeding grounds and from coastal fishing.

Sea fish and shrimps are Vietnam's major exchange earners. Frozen shrimps and other seafoods produced by Vietnam are in great demand abroad. Phu Quoc Island is well known on domestic and foreign markets for its fish sauce which is produced at a rate of 10 or 12 million litres a year.

Despite present low output, which is due to primitive methods and lack of proper equipment, Vietnam has great prospects in fishery, what with its long coastline, vast continental shelf and favourable climatic conditions. Better organization and modernization of the fishing fleet, for instance the addition of refrigerating and canning ships, can easily increase by several times the present output of around one million tons a year, to better meet demand both at home and abroad.

DUY THE

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN:

CHILDREN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN VIETNAM

LISTEN to me, a man who has always wished that you would become good pupils. In this new school year, do your best to study; listen to your teachers, emulate your friends. Eighty years of enslavement has weakened our country. Today we must rebuild it, the legacy bequeathed by our ancestors, so that it will not lag behind other countries. In this work, the Government pins great hopes on you. Whether Vietnam will be glorious or not, whether it will catch up with other nations or not, depends a great deal on your present study." (1)

This was the content of a letter sent by President Ho Chi Minh to children on the occasion of the first school year after the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in September 1945. Twenty-four years later, three months before his death, on June 1, 1969 he gave the Government Departments the following advice: "Children are the prospective masters of the country. Consequently their education must be taken up by the Party and the people and must be carried out perseveringly." (2)

As the education of children was the great concern of President Ho Chi Minh, the State has worked out an appropriate policy and built up an organization to take care of children. Article 65 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (promulgated in December 1980) stipulates that "The State and society shall pay attention to the protection and education of children; they shall gradually broaden this work so that the activities, study and education of children are guaranteed." In November 1979 the Government issued the decree "On the protection, care and education of children."

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Children's and Pioneers' Brigades, in 1961,

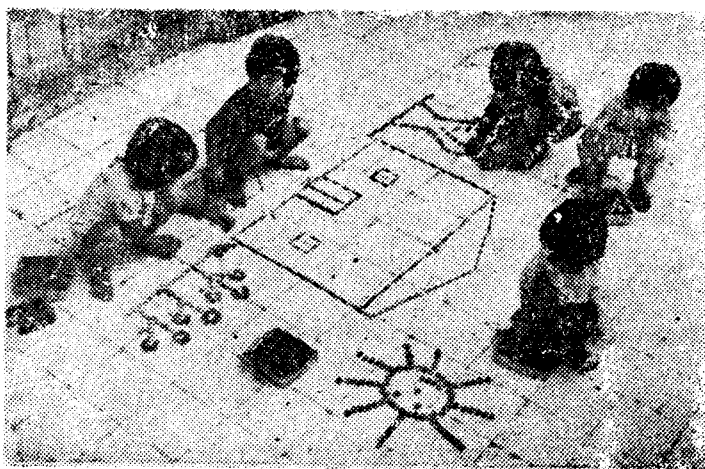
President Ho Chi Minh gave to the children the following five recommendations:

1. Love our Fatherland, love our compatriots
2. Study well and work well
3. Show unity and good discipline always
4. Be clean and hygienic
5. Be modest, honest and courageous

These recommendations inspire in children a sense of collectivity, of devotion to the country and the people. They lay emphasis on the virtues required in collective life and teach children what they should do to build the future society: be hygienic so as to improve their health, study to raise their knowledge, do manual work to familiarize themselves with labour; be united and disciplined for co-operation with others. The Pioneers' organizations are entrusted with the execution of this educational work.

Children's Organizations

The Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade and the Ho Chi Minh Children's Brigade are organizations set up by the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh. They were established on May 15, 1941 at Pac Bo, Cao Bang province. They have had their names changed several times but from January 30, 1970 onward, they took the name of the late President Ho Chi Minh.



In the Kim Lien
(Hanoi) Kindergarten
Photo: XUAN LIEU

The Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade admits members from the age of 9 to 15. At the grassroots, teams are set up according to classroom, street or hamlet. Above them are the inter-teams organized per school, town quarter or commune. The children elect the team and inter-team committees.

The Ho Chi Minh Children's Brigade admits members aged from 6 to 8. At its grassroots are "Knots" of five children each. All the Knots in a classroom form a children's team named after the classroom, (of the street or hamlet): Knot 1A, Knot 1B, (or X street Knot, Y hamlet Knot, etc.) Each Knot appoints a chief assisted by a responsible cadre who is a member of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade. The team has no chief but a responsible cadre who is member of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. The Children's Brigade is regarded as the "reserve organization" of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade. In each basic general education school (9-year school) the Children's teams of all classes are placed under the direct guidance of the inter-team of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade. The inter-team of a school will entrust to the children's teams of upper classes the charge of the teams in lower classes.

From having 8 members at the outset (40 years ago), there are now in the whole country 4,008,296 members of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade (grouped in 11,015 inter-teams) and 1,000,000 members of the Children's Brigade (grouped in 149, 173 teams).

The Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union takes charge of the Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade and the Ho Chi Minh Children's Brigade. The cadres responsible for these brigades can be either teachers who are members of the Youth Union or cadres sent by the higher level, working as advisors or guides.

Method of Education

To educate children according to the five principles laid down by Uncle Ho, a socialist emulation drive was launched in 1961 under the name of "emulation movement to win the title of Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces" or "Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces Movement" for short. The children's virtues are assessed once or twice a year according to these five criteria, applied by all basic general education schools.

Following the method of coordination between the school, the family and the children's organization, the responsible cadres and team and inter-team committees are constantly in touch with the teachers and pupils' parents to help the children in their study. They discuss the best methods to encourage children to follow the curriculum, to find adequate measures to complement the education at school such as the organization of recreation and camping. Through the teachers they try to grasp the situation in each class in order to help the children develop their good points and rectify their mistakes; for instance the children must do their exercises themselves; they must refrain from using any trick in exams and in their dealings with friends, avoid clashes with others,

make apologies, extend thanks for good service received, and be respectful to their elders. The cadres educate the children by setting good examples to them, loving them, holding them in high esteem, not hauling them over the coals in case they commit a mistake, correcting them instead of meting out punishment to them.

Keen attention is now paid by the children's organizations to the movement "keep your books clean, take care of your hand-writing" launched in the basic general education schools. As "the handwriting of a pupil betrays his behaviour," it is usually said, the "good handwriting" movement is aimed at imparting to the children good qualities, the sense of aesthetics and the habit of doing work carefully.

Together with the school, the children's organizations entertain good relations with the pupils' families, chiefly those who have no time to look after their little ones. Upon the recommendations of the school and these organizations, some families who had the habit of sending their children out at night as itinerant vendors or even of involving them in shady transactions, have now spared them such ordeals, and reserved for them enough time for study. The responsible cadres and teachers also urge them to set up a "study corner" which consists of installing in an airy spot a small desk—for Vietnamese houses usually lack space—at which they can quietly do their homework.

During the school year, the children's teams often organize camps and visits to factories, agricultural farms as well as historical monuments and beauty spots, so that the children can have a better knowledge of their country and people. Attention is also paid to initiating them into social work. In recent years, the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade launched a movement urging its members to take part in farming work. The children have enthusiastically responded as they understand that, torn by thirty years of warfare, our country is now in need of tremendous efforts to restore its economy. The production of an additional quantity of manure or foodstuffs can alleviate our material difficulties. Each according to his own efforts, the children take part in the campaigns to destroy insects, hunt butterflies, grow azolla pinata tend draught animals and the trees planted by the old people, or sweep the lanes of the hamlet. Members of "red banner" units look after road traffic; the children's "red star" teams see to the good implementation of the school regulations.

Suitable Work for Everyone

As children are young citizens, they are not required to fulfil the State plans and to engage in production work. But they are eager to do any job entrusted to them as a means of training and increasing social wealth.

The "mini plan of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade" is a movement launched among children in and out this organization with the aim of familiarizing them with production, saving and national construction. This plan started in 1958 at the time when

The violin section of the Hanoi
Children' Cultural House

Photo: VNA



after the victory over the French, the North was embarking on economic restoration and began to build socialism. Responding to the Party's call for industrialization of the country, the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade organizations in Hai Phong and Ha Tay (now Ha Son Binh province) had the initiative to send to the National Assembly a letter demanding that the children throughout the country be allowed to carry out their "mini plan" to build in Hai Phong a plastic factory bearing the name of the "Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade". The construction was energetically undertaken. On May 23, 1959, the first batch of toys came out of the mill. Keeping his promise, the factory's director handed to the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade delegation 32 kinds of toys totalling 18,000 articles to be sent to their friends in the South.

The "mini plan" is now working throughout the country. In the 1976-1980 plan, on the initiative of the children in Ho Chi Minh City, the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade carried out a programme to collect 4 million kilograms of waste paper and articles to raise money for the building of a train (locomotive and carriages) bearing its name. These movements have a great significance as they instil in the children a sense of thriftiness and offer them the opportunity to take part in post-war national construction.

As soon as the movement was launched, many problems were to be solved: How are materials to be found? Where is waste paper most available?

The Vanguard Pioneers' team of Phuoc Ninh street quarter, district 1, Da Nang city, has set a shining example: in a very short time, its members have collected 800 kilograms of waste paper of which 45 kilograms were gathered by Nguyen Trong Hung alone as the result of his initiative to put waste paper baskets in the government offices near his house. The children living in localities have waste paper and cast off materials are scarce such as the highlands, coastal areas and remote places, sent to the funds the proceeds derived from such work as growing sub-

sidary crops, rearing fish and poultry, gathering fruit, medicinal herbs, cardamom.

The plan to collect 4 million kilograms of waste paper by Vietnamese children has been fulfilled ahead of schedule: on January 1, 1979, the "Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade" train was inaugurated and handed to the Railway Department for use. This train has now made 230 trips between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City totalling 397,000 kilometres, or nearly ten times the distance round the earth, transporting 140,000 passengers including soldiers going to the front.

On the initiative of Thai Binh children, from early 1981, another "mini plan" has been carried out to raise money to build the "Red Scarf Hotel" in Hanoi. After eight months of intense work, the children have collected 60,000 *dong* for the fund. Worth noting is that this movement has drawn the attention of three members of the Jose Marti Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade at the Cuban embassy in Hanoi, who contributed 350 *dong* to the fund derived from the sale of waste paper collected in various Cuban offices in Hanoi.

Parallel to the "Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade mini plan", the "Tran Quoc Toan movement" was launched to help war invalids and war martyrs' families and to show the gratitude of the young ones towards those who sacrificed themselves for the country. This movement (3) grew out of a suggestion made in Uncle Ho's February 1948 letter. The children at Hop Duc commune, Tan Yen district, Ha Bac province, have divided their assistance work into three categories: regular work (sweeping the courtyard, carrying water, cooking meals, husking rice, splitting bamboo to make toothpicks); seasonal work (uprooting, transplanting rice seedlings, weeding, harvesting, watering vegetables); occasional work (carrying bricks and sand for house building, tending the sick). The children also serve as foster-children in short-handed martyrs' families. In the South the Tran Quoc Toan movement took different forms. In Ho Chi Minh City, the children launched a campaign

to get one million bricks for the building of war martyrs' tombs. In Nghia Binh and Phu Khanh provinces, they set up groups of pioneers to go in search of war martyrs' graves and look after them after their transfer to cemeteries.

According to the report read at the first meeting held on July 27, 1978 in Hanoi by the organizers of the Tran Quoc Toan movement, during the war against the French (1946-1954) Vietnamese children helped the war invalids and war martyrs' families with 127,192 work-days, and offered gifts to the soldiers to the value of 11,106,781 dong. During the war against the Americans (1965-1975) they helped 27,737 war martyrs' families with 11,486,280 work-days.

Vietnamese children also lend a helping hand to their Lao and Kampuchean friends. In the southern provinces and Ho Chi Minh City, they launched a movement to send to their Kampuchean friends "one million school things" on the opening of the first school year after the overthrow of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan clique. The children in the North also helped their Kampuchean friends with gifts of articles used at school and in children's organizations. They did this in observance of Uncle Ho's recommendations "Do what you can, according to your age."

"Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces"

Like the bamboo shoot used as an emblem by the "Ho Chi Minh Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade", Vietnamese children are brought up in the affectionate care of the school, family and society. On August 23, 1981, 305 young delegates and 100 children's organization cadres, representing three million "Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces" throughout the country, attended the first National Congress of "Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces" convened in Hanoi by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union. Like a blossoming garden, the meeting was a rendezvous of children who have distinguished themselves by various good deeds.

Ta Bich Loan, a 13 years old attending Nhi Ha school in Hanoi, has six times won the title "Uncle Ho's Good Niece", as well as third prize in the national literary competition, second prize in the municipal literary competition, prize A (for short stories) in a competition entitled "Write about the heroic young generation in Vietnam" sponsored by the Children's Brigade paper. She has just won a gold medal at the 1981 Russian language competition in Moscow.

Nguyen Thi Quynh Giao, 15, is a 9th former and Vanguard Pioneers' team leader of Ngo Si Lien school, Tan Binh district, Ho Chi Minh City. She is "Uncle Ho's Good Niece" for six years running, has three times won the "valiant mini-plan fighter" title, twice the "Tran Quoc Toan worker" title; she is an excellent team cadre and has collected 100 kilograms of scrap iron, 180 kilograms of waste paper, 10 kilograms of waste plastic to swell the fund for the construction of the "Red Scarf Hotel."

Representing children in the provinces along the northern frontier are Sung Quan Vu and Luc Xuan Vinh. Sung Quan Vu, 15, of the Muong minority, is a 5th former and head of Nguyen Ba Ngoc (4) team of Bac Ha school, Simakai townlet, Hoang Lien Son province. All his team members are "Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces"; they have produced 45 kilograms of vegetable, planted 18 plum-trees by

hybridization, tended a medicinal plant garden, dug 60 metres of anti-shell ditches, kept five shelters in good order and stood ready for the fight. Luc Xuan Vinh, 13, of the Nung nationality, is a children's team leader and pupil of the 3rd form of Bach Dich school, Ha Tuyen province. In March 1981, together with other buffalo boys, he captured a Chinese spy operating on Vietnamese soil.

Attending the Congress were other delegates who had distinguished themselves by such virtues as honesty (restitution of lost property to the owners), humanity (carrying pickaback an invalid mate to school), the courage of surmounting difficulties and hardships (case of a maimed child who has eagerly attended an anti-illiteracy course). Present at the congress were also Ngo Thi Bich Hien, who won the first prize at a children's poetry competition held in India, and Phan Thi Vang Anh, who was awarded the first prize at the 1980 "Children helping Children" poetry competition sponsored by UNESCO. These outstanding representatives of three million "Uncle Ho's Good Nephews and Nieces" and 53,000 children's teams are the epitome of Vietnamese children educated at the socialist school.

The progress made today by the Vietnamese younger generation cannot be taken apart from the education dispensed by the Party, the State, President Ho Chi Minh and the people, and the assistance of the governments and peoples of other socialist countries and international organizations, who, in the past few years, have sent to the Vietnamese children many shipments of goods and equipment to establish the material and technical basis for the protection of mothers and children and to help them improve their living conditions. Vietnamese children remember especially the aid granted by the International Union for the Protection of the Child, UNICEF, the Swedish International Co-operation organization, the Swedish Child's Relief Association RADD BARNEN, the Japanese Radio League, the British Association for the Protection of the Child, the Canadian Service Union Committee, and various organizations of the socialist countries.

Thirty years have caused great damage to Vietnam which is now being threatened by the aggression of the Chinese expansionists and facing tremendous difficulties and hardships; the assistance afforded by the world's people is thus most helpful.

NGUYEN ANH TRAM

1. "Appeals of President Ho Chi Minh" Su That Publishing House Hanoi 1956, Vol. I, p.p. 16-20 (in Vietnamese).

2. Nhan Dan newspaper, No. 5526, June 1, 1969.

3. Tran Quoc Toan was a young hero of the Tran dynasty (in the 13th century). In 1285, when he was 15 years old, he recruited an army from his family guards and followed his elders to the front to fight the Yuan aggressors.

4. Nguyen Ba Ngoc, 15, was a native of Thanh Hoa province, and member of the Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade. In 1966, he saved three children in an air raid (when their parents were away) by taking them to a safe shelter, but he was killed by a bomb. To remember his exploit, many Vanguard Pioneers' Brigade organizations bear his name.

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC CO-OPERATION BETWEEN VIETNAM AND WESTERN EUROPE

In recent years Vietnam has considerably increased its cultural, scientific and technical co-operation with Western Europe.

With regard to France, from July 1977 to the end of 1980 more than 200 Vietnamese have gone to France. In return, French specialists made a dozen teaching tours of Vietnam.

In early 1981, at the meeting of the Joint France - Vietnamese Commission for Cultural, Scientific and Technical Co-operation held in Hanoi, it was decided that the 1981 program would include more than 100 visits of French specialists to Vietnam and the sending of about 100 Vietnamese students to France, in addition to the exchange of survey teams in communications and transport, electricity, economic management, etc.

In the medical field, France will accept 20 Vietnamese practitioners and send 25 specialists to Vietnam to help in such departments as sanitation, epidemiology, cancer, surgery, cardiology, haematology and ophthalmology. Many French organisations have made important contributions to the aid program: the France - Vietnam Friendship Association, the Popular Relief organisation, the Christian Committee against Famine and for Development (CCFD) etc; they have been helping in some major

projects such as the Research Centre for Infant Nutrition and the production of glass for medical use.

The French government has also helped Vietnam to establish a French-language department at the Hanoi Foreign Languages Teachers College.

Aside from inter-governmental co-operation, there has been co-operation between various French universities and the Hanoi University and the Medical College in Ho Chi Minh City. At present the co-operation agreements between the Grenoble Polytechnical Institute (INPG) and the Vietnam Polytechnical College and between the Paris University of Southern Orsay and a Vietnamese university are well under way, and there are good prospects for co-operation between the French Scientific Research Centre and the Vietnam Institute of Sciences.

With regard to Holland, the two countries have agreed on a program for co-operation between the Amsterdam, Leyden, Groningen and Delft universities and the Hanoi University, Hanoi Agricultural College, Agricultural College No. 3 and Can Tho University, involving more than ten projects (agronomy, biology, technology, physics and chemistry). The Dutch government has agreed to allocate

more than 4.5 million guilders for the program in the period 1978-1981.

Since 1978 more than 50 Dutch specialists have come to Vietnam and about as many Vietnamese specialists have gone to Holland for study tours. Talks are under way for bilateral scientific and technical co-operation for the period 1982-1986. The NUFFIC International Co-operation Office in Holland has proposed to the Dutch government a budget of 12 million guilders for this program.

Six Dutch universities took part in a program of co-operation with the Vietnamese medical and pharmaceutical services in 1977 with an allocation of more than 2.5 million guilders by the Dutch government. Since 1978 more than 50 Vietnamese doctors and pharmacists have made study tours of Holland and ten Dutch professors have come to Vietnam to teach.

In Belgium, about 40 Vietnamese students are studying at various universities and colleges with scholarships granted by the Belgian government.

In addition, through non-governmental agencies such as the Co-operation Development Fund and OXFAM, the Belgian government has funded a number of scientific and technical projects in Vietnam including two research centres in the Mekong River delta, a school for creche attendants in Nha Trang, and the expansion of the vegetables research in Hanoi.

The Belgium - Vietnam Association is actively working for the founding of the Commission for Scientific and Technical Co-operation with Vietnam in order to further the co-operation between the two countries.

LOTH SUONG lives with his wife on the first floor of a building reserved specially for cultural workers, located behind the Phnom Penh theatre, not yet restored after the destruction and genocide of the Khmer Rouge regime. It is a corner of pastoral tranquillity with plenty of green vegetation, close to the banks of the Mekong river and a short distance from the former Royal Palace, whose gold-spangled pointed roofs rise proudly skyward. There, at the Court of Monivong, then of Sihanouk, the Suongs had served,



Loth Suong

he in the Protocol department, she, the famous Chea Samy, in the Royal Ballet Corps.

Since the downfall of the Khmer Rouge regime they have been working at the Phnom Penh Fine Arts School. Mr Suong as stores chief and his wife as professor of classical Khmer ballet. The school management helped me get an appointment with them at their home, and I called on them in the company of a Kampuchean friend, Thach Son, who also interpreted for me.

At 70, Loth Suong is the picture of health and his resemblance to Pol Pot is quite striking, except that the Khmer Rouge torturer, as he was presented in propaganda

A BROTHER OF POLPOT'S SAVED FROM GENOCIDE

in the days of "Democratic Kampuchea", has a rather puffed-up face and a cold, imperious and self-satisfied air visibly imitated from the demigod Mao Zedong. Tall and well built, our host does not evoke the physical type of the classic Khmer. His complexion is more representative of "Yellow Asia" than "Brown Asia". His hair is still black and not at all wavy and some of his features are quite sinicized, which is not unusual in a country where a sizable proportion of the population is descended from Chinese stock. However, the constant smile on his lips is truly Khmer: expectant, both warm and distant, much of the time vague.

"In Pol Pot," he said, "I recognized my younger brother Saloth Sar only in late 1978 when I saw his picture in a leaflet. My wife and I had been driven out of Phnom Penh and were living in a remote corner of Kompong Thom. I suppose he had adopted that pseudonym after his return from France in the late 1950's when he was teaching in a private school in the capital city, while at the same time engaging in clandestine political activities."

Pol Pot had been identified as Saloth Sar years before by French journalists and he was tried in absentia by the Phnom Penh People's Revolutionary Court in 1979 under both names. So Loth

Suong only confirmed a known fact. But as he revealed his blood ties with the most hated tyrant of Kampuchean history, the composition of the latter's name did not seem quite normal to me. In fact, a Khmer used no family name and his personal name is usually preceded by that of his father. Saloth Sar, for instance, means Sar, son of Saloth.

"Your brother's patronym," I said, "is not the same as yours. Perhaps you could clarify this point?"

"Both of us," Loth Suong said, "had the same father, Phem Loth, of Preak Chau village, Kompong Svai district, Kompong Thom province. The village headman made a mistake while writing out our birth certificates: the patronym Loth was used in the case of the first six children and that of Saloth after the birth of the last two."



Chea Samy

Such negligence in birth registration might give rise to endless trouble in other countries but is of no consequence in Kampuchea, according to Loth Suong, for the formation of Khmer names has never followed any fixed rules.

"Take for instance the case of my son Pan Thuol," he added. "His name bears no patronymic which is not, as one might think, compulsory."

"You must have belonged to an important family," I said after some hesitation. "You yourself served in the Royal Protocol while your brother Saloth Sar was able to study in France. I have also been told that your eldest sister married the king."

It was a rather delicate question and only the atmosphere of confidence encouraged me to ask it. For the Khmer Rouge Maoists had introduced from China a policy which horrified the people of Phnom Penh: it consisted in judging people by their social background, the poor peasant being the ideal "revolutionary citizen" while a rich man was only a counter-revolutionary biding his time, and an intellectual a security risk at best. Given this context, such an inquiry into people's ancestry might displease if not offend.

"Our family was one of middle peasants," said Loth Suong with an indulgent smile. "We tilled the land, had enough to eat, and did not run into debt. My eldest sister Loth Saroeun entered the harem of King Monivong and after his death retired to her native village.

Later she married a local peasant. In fact, our advancement in life, Sar's and my own, was due, not to her, but to a dear cousin Khuon Meak, a star in the Royal Ballet Corps and another concubine of Monivong's, who wielded some influence among his entourage. She brought me to the Palace. Later she took care of young Sar, who was then only six, before I was able to look after him myself. It was not our family, however, who sent Sar to France to study. He got a scholarship."

"Was your son Pan Thuol living with you? Did you have many children, as is the tradition?"

"No, Pan Thuol was our only child. He died of hunger and ill treatment at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, in Battambang."

Thus, abruptly, we came to talk of the dark years, that's the turn conversations always take in Kampuchea at present. Whatever subject people talk about, they eventually come back to the atrocities perpetrated by "that man Pot".

"So your family was also split up," I said. "What happened to you?"

"My wife and I went through untold sufferings during the compulsory exodus which took us first to Kandal, then to Kompong Cham and finally to a remote corner of Kompong Thom, where the Kuoy minority live. Those people of the forest, as they are called, are quite primitive. But they were kind to us, while the

Khmer Rouge in that out of the way part of the country were not particularly ferocious, although they did massacre quite a few people on orders from above. Indeed, by directing us to that region Buddha saved our lives. We did not suffer the fate of those inhabitants in Phnom Penh who were settled in villages with easy access along main roads: there the Khmer Rouge were merciless and had countless unpaid informers at their beck and call, so those unfortunate people paid dearly for the little advantage they had in the early days."

The regime of hard labour imposed upon the couple, as they described it to me, did not differ from that suffered by others. Endless working day, no Sunday, diet of thin gruel, no change of clothes, no medicine and no care in case of illness... The former protocol official felled trees, did basket-work, acted as a scarecrow in the fields at harvest time... As for the ballerina, she carried baskets full of manure for the fields on her head and also worked in the kitchen, where the cooking was done for 600 persons and where she had to wash all the dishes and utensils.

"On two occasions," said Loth Suong, "I thought I was going to die of hunger and exhaustion. I was saved from certain death by the Vietnamese troops, who gave me reason for hope at a time when it had become all the same to me whether or not. I died. Indeed at times I had come to regard death as preferable to that hell on earth."

"Why didn't you call on Pol Pot for help? You are brothers, after all."

"Well, if he had felt in the least concerned about the fate of his family he would have sent out agents to look for us. Saloth Chhay, his younger brother, died of hunger soon after the exodus from Phnom Penh began. So did Khuon Meak, the cousin who had done so much for him and me. I would never have thought that Sar could have forgotten her acts of kindness so soon. My wife and I had ourselves rendered him many services, and yet look at what happened to us."

A pause, then he added, "As I told you, however, it was only a short time before our liberation that I learnt the bitter truth about my younger brother Saloth Sar. Who would have believed it? He had been such a kind-hearted boy as a child?"

One might note here that the law of retaliation still prevails in Kampuchean society and that if different political regime had been installed in Phnom Penh after the fall of Pol Pot, it might have encouraged the masses to take their revenge and the couple would have been in for serious trouble.

This, fortunately, has not been the case.

"Although you cannot be held responsible for your brother's actions," I "said, you must still feel rather uncomfortable about your blood ties with such a criminal. Don't you expect others to look askance at you? What is the attitude taken by the State and society toward you?"

"In spite of all my sufferings under Pol Pot," Mr Loth Suong answered, "I cannot help feeling ashamed whenever I think of my blood ties with him. But most of the time I don't think of them. I live a normal life in the new society. The authorities don't discriminate against me, and I suffer no prejudice from my colleagues and neighbours. Nobody looks askance at my wife and me."

I asked Loth Suong about his living conditions.

"We still lack a lot of things of course," he said, "but we manage all right. To alleviate our loneliness, my wife has adopted six young orphans, five girls and one boy, and has been teaching them classical Khmer ballet dancing. They are all children of our nephews who died under Pol Pot"

We remained silent for a long while, then I asked one last question:

"Perhaps you would like to send your brother a message, a piece of advice even?"

"Saloth Sar, the younger brother who loved me and whom I dearly loved, is no more. There is now only Pol Pot, and you don't give a moral recommendation to Pol Pot! However, if I were to say something to him, I would tell him: 'Your crimes have earned you sufficient ill fame. It's high time you put an end to them.'"

We were accompanied to the door by the whole family. We said good bye in the Kampuchean way, joining our hands on our chests. Our hosts did the same and smiled at me but I could not free my mind of the tragedy which had struck them, those near relatives of a horrible criminal.

Public opinion, to which Pol Pot's wickedness has caused so much revulsion, has yet to realize that the genocide he perpetrated was accompanied by fratricide as well.

Phnom Penh, October 1981

VU CAN

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VIETNAMESE STUDIES No. 61

THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE

In the history of Vietnam, the village, formed during the peasants' struggle against natural disasters and foreign invaders, is the basic unit of the nation's rural society. To understand the village is to understand the structure of Vietnamese society and civilisation.

VIETNAMESE STUDIES No. 62

HANDICRAFTS

In an essentially agricultural Vietnam ravaged by 3 successive wars in only 35 years (1945-80) and affected by annual natural disasters, handicrafts play an important rôle in the restoration and development of the economy. This book looks at handicrafts past and present.

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CHRONOLOGY

(16 October — 15 November)

October

16. The Vietnamese pavilion at the 18th Baghdad International fair is awarded a gold medal. On the decision of the Vietnamese State Council all the exhibits at the pavilion have been donated to the Government of the Republic of Iraq.

20. Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, gives a directive on controlling the retail sale system and service tax.

24. The Ministry of Culture holds a competition in Thai Binh to choose good classical theatre singers.

25. The Council of the Inter-Sputnik Organization adopts a decision to accept Vietnam's Lotus Ground Station into its ranks.

26. On the occasion of the U.N. Week for Solidarity with the People of Namibia, Chairman Pham Van Dong sends a message of greetings to the U.N. Secretary-General Waldheim and Chairman of the U.N. Council for Namibia, Paul Loussaca, saying that "the Vietnamese consistent stand is to resolutely support the just struggle of the Namibia people for independence and freedom, under the leadership of SWAPO, its only true representative."

27. Talking at the U.N. General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, Vietnamese ambassador to the U.N. Vo Anh Tuan stresses:

+ The Vietnamese Government fully supports all measures aimed at preventing a renewal of the arms race;

+ We welcome the Soviet Union's peace initiatives for the 80's which were published at the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party;

+ It is necessary for the U.N. Committee for Disarmament to continue negotiations to sign a treaty banning the production and preservation of all kinds of chemical weapons.

— The Vietnamese Foreign Ministry issues a statement strongly denouncing the US' hostile acts against the progressive Arab countries and reaffirming its solidarity and strong support for Libya and other Arabs in their struggle for independence, sovereignty and security from US pressures and brutal intervention.

— The 1981 National Athletics Championships are held in Hanoi. Participating were 116 athletes in

sprinting, high jump, long jump, discus, shot put, and javelin.

29. Vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers Huynh Tan Phat leaves Hanoi for Algeria at the invitation of the Algerian People's Democratic Republic.

— 10 crèches were built in Haiphong with aid (worth 540,000 dong) from the Danish Rad Barnen. These crèches are already looking after children.

30. At the invitation of the Japan-Vietnam Friendship Association, a Vietnamese delegation from the National Assembly led by Mai Chi Tho, a National Assembly delegate and chairman of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, leaves Hanoi for a visit to Japan.

November

2. Speaking at the debate of the 36th plenary session of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Ha Van Lau, representative of the SRV, stresses that a dialogue between the two groups of countries—Indochina and ASEAN—is appropriate to present common development.

3. The 10th plenary conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam has discussed and adopted a draft political report and a draft report on strengthening the Party—both to be submitted to the fifth Party Congress.

4. The first conference of the Vietnam—Soviet Union joint enterprises on locating deposits and exploiting oil and gas on the continental shelf in South Vietnam is held.

5. Signing in Vientiane of an agreement on exchange of goods between Vietnam and Laos for the years 1981—1985.

6. A protocol on exchange of goods and trade between Vietnam and the German Democratic Republic is signed in Berlin.

— Vietnam joins the Organization of the Asian and Pacific News Agencies' (OANA).

7. A national conference to unite Vietnamese Buddhist organizations is held in Hanoi from 4 to 7 November.

10. An agreement is signed in Kuala Lumpur to exchange professional experience between the Vietnam News Agency and the Malaysian News Agency, Bernama.

13. A protocol on exchange of goods between Vietnam and Czechoslovakia for 1982 is signed in Prague.

14. The Central Committee of the Vietnam Buddhist Association holds a ceremony in Hanoi to inaugurate a Buddhist high school.

VIETNAM COURIER

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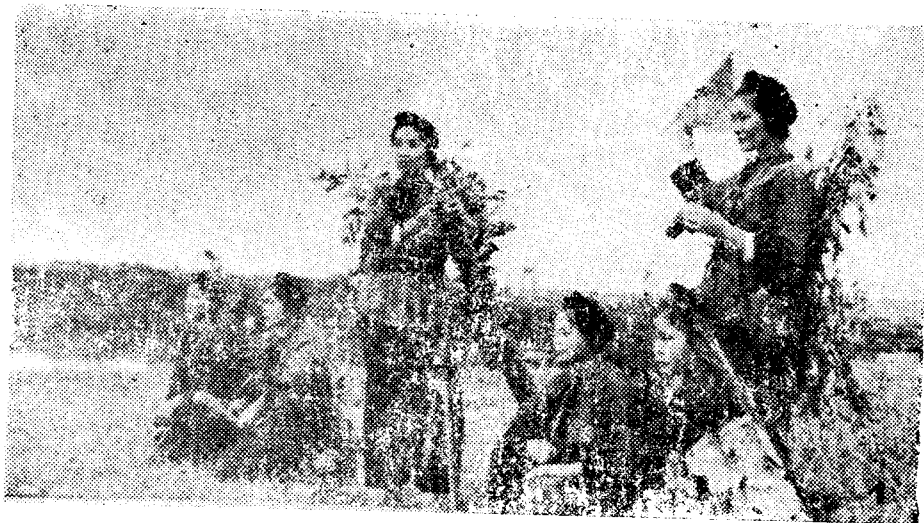
Monthly Comment

The monthly Comment appears in every issue

Chronology

Chronology appears in every issue on the last pages.

THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES



1. Militiamen in Cao Bang
on training

Photo: VNA



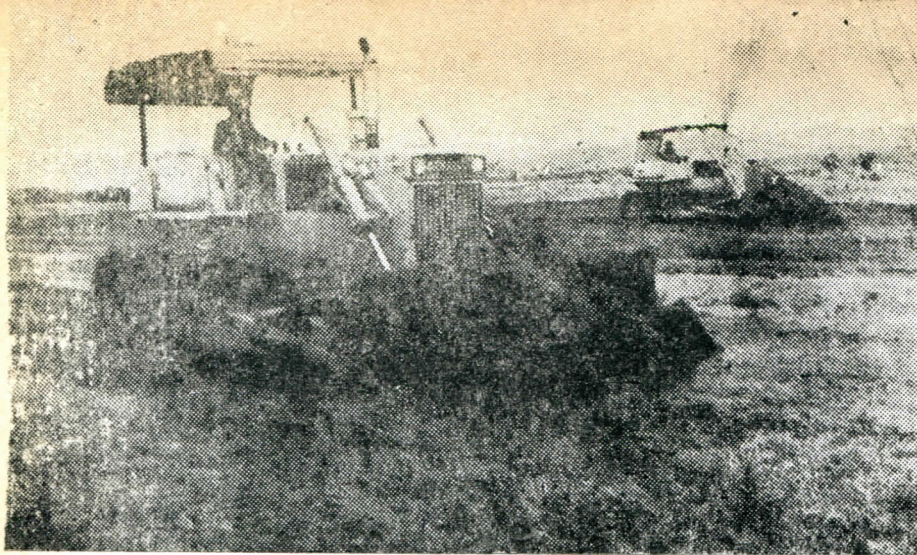
2. Militiamen in Lai Chau

Photo: NGOC BAO

3. The militia of the Hanoi
cinema-engineering work-
shop exchange results of
shooting practice

Photo: THU HA





THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S ARMED FORCES

1. Clearing new land in the
central highlands

Photo : VNA



2. Helping peasants to build irrigation works

Photo : THU HA

3. Collecting rubber latex in the eastern part
of South Vietnam

Photo VNA



Vietnam
courier

HOBOCTBO
BEETHANA

Le Courrier
du Vietnam

El Correo
de Vietnam

Báo đối ngoại

TIN VIỆT NAM

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