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(Revised and supplemented)

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General VO NGUYEN GIAP

Publisher's note

This is a collection of the most important speeches and writings of General Vo Nguyen Giap in the period between 1969 and 1991, gathered under four headings:

1 — People's war against U.S. aero-naval war,
2 — National liberation war in Vietnam,
3 — To arm the revolutionary masses, to build the people's army.
4 — The two greatest figures in Vietnam's history : Nguyen Trai and Ho Chi Minh

They are a valuable aid for understanding the general line, strategy and tactics of the national liberation war in Viet Nam and particularly of people's war against U.S. aggression.

In the translation of the speeches, we have retained the style of the spoken language, and as a result there is some unavoidable repetition in some passages.

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PART ONE

PEOPLE'S WAR AGAINTS U.S. AERO-NAVAL WAR

CHAPTER I

OUR PEOPLE'S WAR HAS DEFEATED THE U.S. AERO-NAVAL WAR[1]

I — A VICTORY OF STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Together with the emulation congresses of our forces in the various war zones, in the various arms and services since early spring, this Emulation Congress of the anti-aircraft and air forces marks a tremendous victory of our people in their resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation. This is a *triumph of the people's war in North Vietnam over the U.S. imperialists' air and naval war of destruction.* Along with the resounding successes on the South Vietnam theatre it is a *victory of great consequence, of strategic significance.*

Four years ago, when their "special war" strategy in South Vietnam was facing complete bankruptcy, the U.S. imperialists, with the utter obduracy of an international gendarme and counting on their economic and military potential, made the most serious strategic and political mistake in the history of their aggressions. To make good their failures, they launched a large-scale "limited war", committed masses of expeditionary troops to an aggression against South Vietnam, and at the same time started a piratical

1. Speech delivered at the Emulation Congress of the Anti-Aircraft and Air Forces held in early June 1969.

air and naval war of destruction against North Vietnam - an independent and sovereign state, a member of the socialist camp.

On the South Vietnam theatre, they mounted one major counter-offensive after another during two successive dry seasons, which all came to grief. But the heavier their setbacks, the more frantically they stepped up the aggressive war, deploying ever-bigger ground, air and naval forces which soon far exceeded the strength originally intended for a "limited war".

In the North they carried out frenzied raids and continually escalated the war as their reverses increased, extending their attacks up to the 19th and 20th parallels, then to the Northwest, Northeast and Vietnam-China border, and finally to Hanoi, our capital, and Haiphong, the biggest port in North Vietnam.

They mustered a fairly big modern air force based in Thailand and on aircraft carriers, together with artillery of various types operated from on board the Seventh Fleet and from the infantry forces south of the demarcation line. They mounted nearly 100,000 strikes against our beloved North Vietnam, using more than one million tons of bombs and shells. They tried all kinds of hardware in their arsenal such as bombs and shells, rockets, steel-pellet bombs, napalm and magnetic bombs, and all the other most up-to-date and murderous weapons at their disposal short of nuclear ones.

The U.S. imperialists thought that with their modern air and naval forces and the huge amount of bombs and shells which they believed nothing would resist, they could easily achieve

their strategic objectives and finally subdue our people and bring to fruition their scheme of neocolonialist aggression.

But they were grossly mistaken.

They thought that our determination would be shaken within a few weeks and our people would give in. But, contrary to their expectation, the fiercer their strikes, the deeper our people's hatred for the U.S. aggressors and the firmer the resolve of our entire army and people to defeat them. True, the aggressors had made careful and comprehensive calculations, banking heavily on the effectiveness of their modern armoury. However, there was one hard reality they had failed to take into account, that is: *the Vietnamese people are a heroic people who have since time immemorial never bowed to any invader and who have in less than three decades defeated Japanese fascism and French imperialism one after the other, and are now staunchly fighting and keeping in check the U.S. imperialist aggressors.*

The U.S. imperialists believed that with the force of their weaponry they could within a short period of time destroy all our land and water communications, completely sever North from South Vietnam and realize their dark design of preventing the North Vietnamese from fulfilling their sacred duty to their Southern kith and kin. But reality has completely baffled their plans. The more their raids intensified, the warmer the militant solidarity between North and South, the closer the North Vietnamese stood by their beloved countrymen in the South, and the more zealously they fulfilled their duty as the great rear area toward the great fighting front. *Vietnam is one country, the Vietnamese are one nation; no force can drive them apart.*

In the "All for defeating the U.S. aggressors" and "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" spirit the North Vietnamese people have constantly turned their thoughts toward their Southern kindred, and have discharged with merit their sacred duty toward the liberation cause in the other half of their beloved country.

The U.S. imperialists expected that with the formidable destructive powar of their modern air and naval forces, they could promptly bring our people's economic and cultural life to a standstill and cause serious damage to our national defence potential and our socialist construction. But what happened upset their calculations. In the flame of the fighting and in the flush of its victory over the war of destruction, Noth Viet Nam grew ever steadier and stronger. Agricultural and industrial production has remained stable and even developed. Cultural, educational and medical activities have increased. The national defence forces have consolidated and grown considerably. Even in wartime, the people's life has continued unperturbed and the army's needs have been adequately met. The moral and political unity of our entire people has become stronger than ever before. With such marvellous achievements in fighting and in productionn the socialist regime has unmistakably proved its superiority and great vitality. The North has brought into full play its role as the base of the revolution for the whole country and as the great rear area for the great fighting front.

In combat, the North has grown steadier than ever before and has become our steel rampart. This we can rightly take pride in. Friends from foreign countries who visited North Vietnam were astonished by the strong vitality of our nation and the miraculous revolutionary optimism of our

people. *Such a nation, such a people, under a socialist regime, will surely defeat any enemy.*

The main goal of the U.S. imperialists' war of destruction against the North was to effectively co-ordinate actions with their expeditionary troops in the South Vietnam theatre of operations and realize their aggressive design there.

After years of U.S. intensified aggressive war in both parts of our country, big changes have occurred in the South Vietnam situation. The more the U.S. imperialists stepped up their aggressive war, the heavier their failures; the more our people persisted in their resistance, the greater their victories. Especially since early spring 1968, under the banner of the National Front for Liberation, the heroic people and Liberation Army in the South have been mounting wave after wave of widespread offensives and uprisings against the enemy, springing powerful, continual and many-sided attacks, military and political, in towns and country, in the plains and hill-forest areas; the liberated areas have been expanded and people's revolutionary power set up throughout South Vietnam. *The generalized offensives and uprisings have won tremendous and unprecedented successes* on every side, upsetting the strategic battle array of the enemy, rocking their rear area and shaking their aggresive will. They have forced the U.S. imperialists to put an end to the counter-offensive stage of their "limited war" on the South Vietnam theatre, switch on to the defensive and the "clear and hold" strategy and muster the major part of their forces for the defence of the towns and important bases.

In early spring this year, at the very moment when the Nixon Administration, which had just assumed office, was

at a loss to find a solution to the Vietnam problem, the armed forces and people in the South staged a new wave of attacks, powerful and well-timed, striking hard at the U.S. aggressors in many skilfully prepared and highly efficient action. *These repeated assaults prove that the longer they fight, the stronger the South Vietnam armed forces and people become, and spell out the great ability of South Vietnam - the bulwark of the motherland - to deliver powerful and continuous blows, and its determination to press its attacks till final victory.*

Turning our thoughts to the heroic South we warmly hail the great victories of our fourteen million beloved countrymen, of the heroic Liberation Armed Forces, the pride of our entire people.

Having bitterly failed in their war effort and confronted with innumerable difficulties not only on the Vietnam battlefield but also at home and in the world, the U.S. imperialists were forced to reconsider their unjust war condemned by all progressive mankind. They had to enter into talks with the delegates of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation. This was something they had not envisaged when they sent massive numbers of aggressor troops to our country. This was one more aspect of their political passiveness in the face of the radiant justice and great strength of our nation. Recently the N.F.L. put forward its ten-point overall solution to the Vietnam problem together with very sound and serious principles which further aggravated the U.S. imperialists' and their flunkeys' embarrassment.

The U.S. imperialists attacked the North in the hope of extricating themselves from their predicament in the South, but they met with bitter setbacks in both parts of our country. *On the South Vietnam theatre the heroic people and Liberation Armed Forces inflicted reverse after reverse upon 1,200,000 troops of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen. This marvellous exploit was a telling blow at the U.S. imperialists' scheme of aggression and a very important contribution to defeating their war of destruction in the North Vietnam.* The aggressors were driven to unconditionally cease their bombardments in the North. It was the failure not only of the war of destruction but also of an important part of the "limited war" strategy and of this strategy itself. It is safe to say that they have now tacitly admitted the bankruptcy of their "limited war" strategy and are forced to consider an "honourable" settlement and of "de-Americanizing" the war. Is "de-Americanization" a new manoeuvre? Surely the U.S. imperialists have not forgotten that they have once used non-American forces - the puppet army and administration - in the "special war", and having failed miserably, they had, out of passiveness, to make the decision to "Americanize" the war. Now that the "limited war" has gone bankrupt, they hope to turn the tide by resorting to the old trick of "de-Americanizing" or "Vietnamizing" the war. Both the U.S. and puppets have failed to gain a position of strength and have sustained more setbacks in the process. Yet they now want to put into effects a plan for a "phased withdrawal" of U.S. forces, with a view to replacing them by puppet troops and securing a position

of strenght. It is clear that they are plunging deeper into an impass, a quagmire and a losing position.

Our people are determined to continue foiling all their new schemes and keep up our resistance till final victory. And this war against U.S. aggression, for national salvation - the biggest in our nation's history against foreign aggression - will dash to the ground the myth of U.S. invincible military and economic strength. Our people's war is beating off and will surely defeat completely the neo-colonialist aggressive war of the U.S. imperialist.

II — SHINING EXAMPLES OF REVOLUTIONARY HEROISM

Under the leadership of our Party headed by our beloved and venerated President Ho Chi Minh, the people's armed forces in the North have upheld the tradition of resolute fighting until victory, of loyalty to the Party and devotion to the people, and have gloriously fulfilled their duty of crushing the American imperialist's war of destruction so as to make a worthy contribution to the great victory of our nation.

The anti-aircraft forces of our three kinds of armed forces in all localities, from the militia or self-defence member holding the plough or the hammer in one hand and the gun in the other, or fighting on a permanent basis in the battlefields, to the anti-aircraft and air force units, have achieved very brilliant exploits and, together with the entire army and people, shot down nearly 3,300[1] American planes,

1. Up to June 5, 1969 when the speech was delivered, 3,294 U.S. planes had been downed (*Pub.*)

got the better of the modern air force, and sunk or burnt hundreds of warships and commando boats of the topmost imperialist power. These are most glorious feats of arms. *At this congress, it is very gratifying for us to commend all cadres and fighters of our heroic people's armed forces, of the anti-aircraft, infantry, artillery, engineer, transport, signal, naval and other units* on the collective exploits achieved.

We all warmly congratulate our anti-aircraft artillery and missile units, air force, radar and other units of the anti-aircraft and air forces for their very important part in the victory over the U.S. air force. They have displayed revolutionary heroism, their resolve to fight and win, their splendid courage, great vigilance, intelligence and creative power; they have constantly improved their technique and tactics and devised skilful fighting methods to foil the perfidious technical tricks to the American aggressors and shot down nearly all types of their most up-to-date planes.

Promoting their spirit of "aiming right at the enemy", many *anti-aircraft gunners and units have recorded outstanding achievements.* They are the heroic Company No. 1, the Hong Linh unit credited with the highest record of 200 planes downed, the Xung Kich unit which fought with extraordinary perseverance and courage on the strategic communications front. Many comrades such as chief gunner Nguyen Huy Hong who, seriously wounded, continued to fight heroically, chief gunner Bui Xuan Chien who rushed into the flames to keep up the fighting. These comrades have set shining examples of revolutionary heroism.

Our young but heroic missile force has grown rapidly to maturity. Many units and operators recorded great feats such as the heroic Section No.61, the Section No. 64 which grounded the highest number of American aircraft (over 40), the Son Da unit with 137 planes downed to its credit, the Nam Trieu and Ha Long units with a score of over 100 aircraft each, army hero Nguyen Tuyen and others who have ceaselessly improved their scientific and technical levels thanks to their revolutionary ardour.

Our nascent but heroic air force, true to its tradition of winning every battle has scored valiant exploits : The heroic Company No. 1 downed over 60 aircraft, Company No. 2 over 50, Sao Do unit over 100. Besides heroes Tran Hanh, Nguyen Van Bay and Lam Van Lich, many other comrades fought most valiantly and skilfully, and performed brilliant feats such as Nguyen Van Coc who blasted 9 planes, Ha Van Chuc who broke into an enemy formation of 36 aircraft and grounded the leading one manned by a colonel, thus checking the attack.

Our radar operators, courageous and constantly vigilant, have never ceased to improve their technical level and proved capable of spotting the enemy "from afar, rapidly, accurately and thoroughly"; they have fought tirelessly by their oscilloscopes and recorded ever greater achievements; among others we can mention such distinguished units as Companies Nos. 11 and 19 and such able operators as Pham Si Yeng, Do Ngoan, Nguyen Van Giang and Tran Vinh Quang.

Signal, engineer, transport, armoury and other support units, offices and schools have displayed great combativeness and efficiently served the fighting, making an important contribution to the common victory.

Our heroic anti-aircraft and air forces have accomplished the task entrusted to them by the Party and the people with splendid success and earned the confidence and love of our armed forces and people.

We are very proud of our fellow-countrymen who have spared no effort and even sacrificed their lives in helping the armymen and, together with them, in taking part in the fighting. They have spent millions of work-days to build defence positions and roads to haul guns, carry ammunition, and tend the wounded. Without the wholehearted assistance and encouragement of the population, of Party organizations, government bodies and mass organizations of various localities, and of people of various nationalities, it would have been impossible for our army to perform such outstanding exploits.

The victories won by our armed forces are closely associated with the success of *precautions* against air raids taken by the *civilian air defence*. Our compatriots have dug millions of air raid shelters and tens of thousands of kilometres of communication trenches; by efficiently organizing an alert system and a thorough dispersal they reduced the losses caused by the enemy to the minimum. Thus, highly favourable conditions were created to fight the adversary and foil their objectives.

The successes of our armed forces and people are closely associated with our achievements in *production, transport and communications and in the cultural, medical and other branches*. In *production,* our people displayed courage and perseverance, unceasingly improved their technique and increased their labour productivity, overcame natural calamities and the havoc wrought by the enemy and satisfied

all the requirements of our resistance. More particularly, as of late the enemy concentrated their attacks on the *communication lines*, and as a result the fighting unfolded most fiercely. With the spirit "to mend the roads immediately after the enemy destroy them" and "when the vehicles cannot pass, even houses are dismantled to repair the road", the forces in charge of transport and communications and the population have fought very heroically and gloriously carried the day. Thanks to the valiant struggle and strenuous efforts of our people in all branches, organs and localities to repel enemy raids and overcome difficulties and hardships in order to win on all fronts, we have recently recorded great successes in every field.

Once again, *we warmly hail and praise the tremendous achievementsof our people in all localities and on all fronts. We express our profound gratitude and respect to them who, under the leadership of our Party, have given us added strength to defeat the enemy.*

III - OUR PARTY'S CORRECT LINE : FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF ALL OUR SUCCESSES

All the great successes of our people originate from the correct revolutionary line and the sound leadership of our Party headed by President Ho Chi Minh.

Our Party has laid down its revolutionary line by correctly and creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the revolution and of revolutionary war in our country.

That is the line of "promoting the socialist revolution in the North and at the same time the national people's

democratic revolution in the South, achieving the reunification of the country on the basis of independence and democracy, buiding a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam, thereby contributing effectively to the strengthening of the socialist camp and to the defence of peace in Southeast Asia and the world".

That is the line of revolutionary war in a country with no large territory and population, but carried out by a heroic people - who possess a time-honoured tradition of building and defending their country, who have stood up time and again to fight and defeat enemies much stronger than themselves economically and militarily - for their independence and freedom, for socialism.

This line, imbued with the radical revolutionary spirit of the working class; is the application of an offensive strategy to the concrete conditions of the present epoch ; it is imbued with a constant determination to attack the enemy, to repel them step by step and smash them part by part so as to crush them completely and secure final victory for the revolution. That line gives full play to the ardent patriotism of our people, and at the same time is permeated with genuine proletarian internationalism. Our Party has always upheld the spirit of self-help, of relying mainly on our own strength while highly valuing the devoted assistance of the fraternal countries and the sympathy and support of all progressive mankind. That line is a condensed expression of our Party's spirit of independence and sovereignty and stems from its sense of political responsibility for the revolutionary cause of our people and nation.

The fundamental point of our Party's line of revolutionary war is this : *the whole people, the whole country fights the aggressors with the people's armed forces as the hard core.* By mobilizing the entire people to resist aggression, by bringing people's war to a very high level, and by displaying unprecedented courage and creative power, our Party has firmly grasped the rule of revolutionary war in Vietnam, thus generating a mighty force to get the better of any aggressor.

Deeply confident of the people's invincible strength and indomitable will in face of U.S. imperialism — an enemy possessed of a tremendous potential and, in adition, utterly cruel and perfidious — our Party has always seen through the nature and scheme of the enemy, their general strategic intentions as well as their political manoeuvres and concrete tactics. It has accurately appraised their strong and weak points, their innumerable contraditions and insurmountable difficulties, and has made a scientific analysis of the rules of the U.S. neo-colonialist war of aggression. In this aggressive war, all strategic schemes of neo-colonialism have been foiled one after another by the powerful offensives of people's war. The failure of their "special war" compelled the U.S. imperialists to wage a "limited war". Their bitter defeats in the South drove them to launch a war of destruction in the North. Their reverses forced them to escalate and it is their losses which led them to de-escalate in their war of destruction. The more reckless they were, the heavier setbacks they suffered as a result of our people's strong offensives. Obdurate in escalation they met with defeats; obdurate and frenzied in de-escalation they met with still more humiliating ones. That is a blind alley which will inevitably lead them to complete failure. *That is the*

irrevocable development process of the U.S imperialists' aggressive war, and it has the character of a rule.

The military line in our people's war against the U.S. neo-colonialists' war of aggression has these marked characteristics.

The spirit of sustained, resolute and all-round offensive against the enemy. To strike the enemy with all our forces: basing ourselves on the valiant spirit and intelligence of the Vietnamese people who have reached a high level of political consciousness and are very closely united, to vigorously develop the efficiency of all kinds of weapons at our disposal, use all forms of struggle and combat methods and hit the enemy everywhere and at any time. To constantly attack and wipe out the enemy while seeing to the preservation and development of our own forces so that we become stronger and score more successes as we fight.

The capability to strike a big force with a small force, the courage to confront and defeat an opponent disposing of modern war means with weapons which are in most cases unsophisticated, to use seasoned troops and clever combat methods to fight an enemy superior in number and equipped with modern armaments. Imbued with such a spirit and *devising excellent fighting tactics, our people and armed forces always hold the initiative of operations against the enemy, hitting them devastatingly from a position of strength.*

In the South, under the sound leadership of the National Front for Liberation, our people, millions acting as one man, have taken up arms and launched a strategic offensive by making use of both political and revolutionary armed forces, of the regular army, regional troops and militia

and guerillas, of all weapons available,rudimentary, improved and modern ; they have co-ordinated armed struggle with political action, military operations with uprisings, military and political offensives with persuasion work among the enemy troops, used various combat methods - fielding small-, medium-size and big units in all the three strategic areas : hillforests, plains and urban centres. The South Vietnam people and armed forces have skilfully used the method of opposing a small force to a bigger one, concentrating an appropriate troop strength when need be, using a highly effective force, striking hard and telling blows at the enemy's manpower, war means and rear bases, in order to cause them ever heavier losses while we grow stronger in the fighting and win bigger successes.

In the North, to worst the U.S. war of destruction, our people have developed an enormous fighting potential. To defend the North and fulfil their duty as the great rear area to the great fighting front in the South, our people and armed forces have thwarted all the frenzied efforts of the American aggressors and scored brilliant successes.

Our Party has energetically aroused the patriotism and love for socialism of the entire people, and called on our armed forces and people to enhance their determination to fight, bring into full play their revolutionary heroism, surmount all difficulties and hardships, make sacrifices and endure losses, in order to mobilize and organize the people's forces in the fight against the invader.

Hence, the entire people have taken part in the struggle in a well-organized manner. Prompted by deep hatred for the enemy, our army has made good use of ever more

sophisticated weapons and equipment and devised highly efficient combat methods. In the course of the *fighting they have developed to the utmost their offensive spirit, searched the enemy to beat them, grasped the rule governing their activities and the characteristics and capabilities of our own forces, then acted with determination, secrecy and suddenness* to engage the enemy and wipe them out. All this has enabled us to *avail ourselves of the adversary's moves to hit them back,* depriving their attacks of all or part of their efficiency while constantly keeping our initiative of operations. We have thus made notable progress in our efforts to oppose a smaller force to a bigger one and to co-ordinate small engagements with medium-size and big ones. Where and when we grasp this fighting method, there and then we can obtain the greatest success, continually harass the enemy, destroy their manpower and foil all their tactical manoeuvres and schemes.

Everywhere in our country, *all our three kinds of armed forces have defeated the enemy.* Our militiamen and guerillas, young or old, men or women, have downed enemy jets and captured American pilots. Each rifle, machine-gun, heavy gun, missile launching-pad or modern plane at our brave and resourceful fighters' disposal has been brought into full play; even rifles can successfully cope with modern U.S. jet planes.

Being aware of the enemy's perfidious scheme to check our communications and transport and sever the relations between our rear area and our fighting front, we have set our army and people to fight on the communications and transport front considered as an emergency central task. With gallantry, perseverance and commendable

creativeness our people have remarkably fulfilled their task on this front, frustrating the above-mentioned scheme of the enemy.

The adversary plotted to cause us heavy losses in life and property and to wreck our economic potentialities and national defence. Parallel to the participation in the fighting, our people have made great efforts to effectively preserve their forces. The dispersal of civilians and precautions against air raids have proved their efficiency in the protection of lives and property of the population and their tremendous significance in our victorious resistance.

We have changed the orientation of economic construction in wartime, strengthen regional industry, ensure production while fighting and continue to build socialism, in order to satisfy the immediate needs of the war and to meet the long-range requirements of socialist construction in the North. In the thick of the fight, the socialist relations of production have not only been maintained but they have also developed their great efficiency in the enhancement of our people's material and moral strength to defeat U.S. aggression and to build socialism. Our people have fulfilled this glorious task with a high political consciousness tempered in the process of socialist construction in the North. Whereas our resistance war against the French colonialists was conducted with a people's democratic economy, today, for the first time in our long history we are waging a war of resistance for national salvation against the American imperialists under a socialist regime. *Through the trials of the war the socialist system has proved ist excellence and stability.*

Since the outset of the U.S. predatory war against the North our Party realized that the aim of the aggressors was to stave off the U.S. puppet predicament in the South Vietnam theatre and it has therefore called on the entire people to devote their heart and strength to the fight against the aggressors with a view to liberating the South and defending the North. Our fellow-countrymen in the South and their Liberation armed forces have put up a stubborn struggle against a blow dealt at the North, the enemy received ten at the hand of the South Vietnam people and armed forces who have thus won bigger and bigger successes.

It is in these conditions that our armed forces and people in the North have unceasingly heightened their combativeness, caused ever heavier losses to the enemy, foiled all their strategic schemes and political and tactical manoeuvres, compelling them to unconditionally halt the bombing of the North and resign themselves to total failure in their war of destruction.

Such are the new developments in our Party's line of revolutionary war and conduct of war. The mapping out and development of this line has been a great achievement in the application of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism concerning war and armed forces to the concrete conditions of our country. Our people have promoted to a higher level the traditional indomitability, the heroism and combat skill of a people who have defeated powerful aggressor armies in the course of their long history.

The soundness of the revolutionary and military lines of our Party has been demonstrated by the successes recorded

on the battlefield. *These lines are the very source of our indomitable strength and of all our victories.*

Vietnamese military science is an advanced one, which has been outwitting the strategies and tactics of the imperialist war of aggression and the outmoded military thought of an imperialist power which, though possessed of a tremendous economic and military potential, is on the wane and will continue to weaken in the inevitable development process of history at the present time.

In the revolutionary struggle of our people for independence, for the reunification of their country and for socialism, *Vietnamese military science has brought into play its far-reaching and proved its unquestionable superiority over the military thought of the imperialists, as well as its tremendous combativeness and invincible strength.*

IV — LET US VALIANTLY MARCH FORWARD TO BRING OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION, FOR NATIONAL SALVATION, TO TOTAL VICTORY

The ultimate defeat of the U.S. imperialists is a foregone conclusion. The longer they drag on the war, the heavier setbacks they will incur. But they are still very obdurate and do not want to give up their aggressive designs upon our country.

Though compelled to talk about an "honourable" settlement of the war, the U.S. imperialists are feverishly stepping up their aggression, exerting every effort to retrieve their situation by "de-Americanizing" the war step by step, and continuing their attempt to impose neocolonialism on South Vietnam and prolong the partition

of our country. In their passive, defensive posture and serious predicament, they are doing their best to reinforce their defences, frantically shore up the crumbling puppet army in all respects, rally the forces on their payroll and breathe life into them in an attempt to bolster up the puppet Thieu-Ky-Huong administration. At the same time, they are frenziedly using B.52s, bombs and shells and toxic chemicals to devastate the liberated zone, launching repeated military operations and stepping up the so-called "accelerated pacification" program to repress, persecute and massacre our fellow-countrymen. While drifting toward ultimate defeat the U.S. imperialists still nurture the illusion that they can check the advance of the South Vietnam armed forces and people who in the impetus of their victories, are dashing toward final victory.

Meanwhile, in the North, they stubbornly go on with their acts of war, carrying on reconnaissance flights and provocations, perpetrating other crimes, encroaching upon the sovereignty and threatening the security of the D.R.V.N., and continuing to dispatch spies and commandos to devastate socialist North Vietnam. For all their failures in four years of the war of destruction, they have not yet renounced their dark designs upon the North.

For the independence and reunification of the country, and for socialism, *we pledge ourselves to strictly implement the teaching of President Ho Chi Minh : "So long as a single aggressor remains on our soil, we must fight on to sweep him away"*. Our people throughout the country, united as one man, are resolved to rush forward to fight the U.S. aggressors till final victory.

It is the sacred duty of our people, of our nation, to completely defeat the U.S. aggressors. *All cadres and fighters of the people's armed forces show their determination to fight and to win, heighten their vigilance and resolutely fulfil all the tasks entrusted them by our Party and people.*

All cadres and fighters of the anti-aircraft and air forces must be will aware of the new situation and of their new tasks, fight stubbornly together with the other arms and services of the people's armed forces, resolutely smash all acts of war of the enemy, bring down all types of reconnaissance planes, be constantly prepared to fight, and with a strong resolve foil all the perfidious schemes of the American imperialists.

To accomplish these tasks, *we must ceaselessly strengthen our anti-aircraft and air forces and help them acquire great fighting capabilities and a great combat efficiency.*

We *must build excellent A.A. artillery*: all A.A. battalions should fight as well as, or better than, the Nguyen Viet Xuan Battalion; all A.A. units should fight as well as, or better than, the Hong Linh Unit.

We must build excellent missile units so that all its units can fight as well as, or better than, the heroic Sections No. 61 and No.64 the Song Da Unit.

We must build an excellent air force so that all its units can fight as well as, or better than, heroic Company No, 1 and Company No. 2 or the Sao Do Unit.

We must build excellent radar units so that they can detect the enemy in good time whenever they intrude into our air space.

We must consolidate all our services, paying adequate attention to technical and logistic bases.

The standpoint of our Party on the building of the armed forces is constantly to *attach the utmost importance to raising their fighting capabilities and combat efficiency.* Only by so doing can we successfully fight a big force with a small one, vanquish an aggressive and numerous force with modern equipment by a not-so-large force with not-so-modern equipment and get the better of an army of the topmost imperialist power which disposes of the greatest economic and military potentials in the capitalist world. Only by so doing can we promote the fighting tradition of our forefathers and grasp the spirit and content of Vietnamese military science.

The yardstick to measure the fighting capabilities of an army is the combat efficiency of its units. Should all our air force companies be able to destroy over 60 enemy aircraft as the heroic Company No. 1 did, should all our missile units be able to knock out of our skies over 40 planes as did one of them, should all our A.A. artillery battalions be able to destroy over 120 aircraft as the Nguyen Viet Xuan Battalion did, even with their present number, our anti-aircraft and air forces would have fighting capabilities five, ten or more times stronger. This means that the fighting capabilities of our army would be considerably multiplied. And this is what we are exerting ourselves to achieve a realistic goal that all cadres and fighters of our anti-air-craft and air forces must attain at any cost.

First and foremost, *we must grasp the military line and operational thought of the Party.* This is the line of

people's war developed to a high degree where the entire people fight and are valiant fighters ; this is the thought of resolutely attacking the enemy to wipe them out, of striking them without respite and on all planes, acting with initiative, secrecy, suddenness, determination, courage and resourcefulness and using a small force against a bigger one, so as to achieve ever higher combat efficiency and winning ever greater victories.

Organizationally, our troops must be well seasoned, very strong, built up and equipped in accordance with the requirements of our combat methods. They must be politically and ideologically steadfast, and thoroughly conversant with technique and tactics; they must perfect the organization of their command, be appropriately equipped, and enjoy good material and technical conditions, especially as far as arms and services with modern equipment like the anti-aircraft and air forces are concerned. The officers in particular must be highly qualified, evince revolutionary virtues, master technique and tactics, show a grim determination to fight, and prove equal to their task as commandeers, capable of leading their units to victory.

Your emulation congress has highlighted a great many examples set by army units and individual fighters in combat and in training. For the congress to develop its great impact, it is necessary to review more concretely and more penetratingly the experiences of the most representative units, and from these experiences draw guide-lines and principles in order to enrich our Party's military thought, improve our combat methods and achieve greater achievements and feats of arms. This is a very good basis to strengthen our anti-aircraft and air forces, and improve their fighting

capabilities *so that they can become an excellent arm, capable of defeating any enemy and effectively defending the beloved skies of our heroic Vietnam.*

*

A very great and heavy task faces our people throughout the country,that of *making all-out efforts to bring our resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, to complete victory.*

Our countrymen and the liberation armed forces in the heroic South are rushing ahead like tidal waves, pushing up their attacks, and winning great victories, thus landing the American imperialists in an ever graver losing position and passive posture. For the liberation of South Vietnam, for the reunification of our country, for socialism, and for the fulfilment of our lofty internationalist obligation, our armed forces and people in the North are exerting the greatest efforts to fight in order to defend the North, push ahead socialist construction and accomplish their sacred duty as the great rear area toward the great fighting front.

Never have the Vietnamese people been confronted with such a historic and glorious task as today.

Never have they deployed their combat strength with such an impetus.

Under the banner of the Party headed by our beloved and venerated President Ho Chi Minh, all our cadres and fighters in the people's armed forces in general and the anti-aircraft and air forces in particular *will courageously march forward*

together with our people all over the country in order to carry through our glorious mission and record the most shining exploits in the history of our resistance against aggression : to completely defeat the American aggressors, liberate the South, defend the North and advance toward the reunification of the country.

CHAPTER II

PEOPLE'S WAR AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL[1]

Today you are meeting to discuss the review of four years of people's war versus the war of destruction in the various regions ofthe North, I am very glad to address your meeting. Let me convey the cordial greetings of President Ho Chi Minh, the Party Central Committee and the Central Military Committee to all the participants in this congress and all cadres and fighters of the regional armed forces, to all our fellow-countrymen and all cadres and Party members in the various regions.

On many previous occasions I have talked about people's war versus the U.S. war of destruction in the North as a whole. Today I would like to deal with the *brilliant successes and immense strength of people's war in the various regions* of the North, i.e. in the various provinces, and take this opportunity to set forth some views about the progress, new potentialities, and important position of regional military work.

Over the past years, *under the direct leadership of the regional Party organizations, the gallant fight and creative labour of our people and armed forces accounted for a*

1. Speech delivered at the Conference for Summing Up the Four Years of Victorious Resistance to the U.S. War of Destruction, held by the 3rd Military Zone in July 1969.

worthy part in the common achievements of the North and of the country as a whole, and our people's war in various regions attained a rather high level.

The people's war versus the war of destruction was a nation-wide and all-sided resistance with new features. Hence the abundant and valuable experiences gathered by the various regions in all fields.

The first experience consists in having *the entire people fight the enemy* in having the entire people hit back at enemy aircraft to defend our airspace, and at enemy vessels to defend our territorial waters, *in conducting wartime mobilization in such a way as to expand our regular troops* and at the same time *to build and develop our regional armed forces,* and make comprehensive preparations to guard against the expansion by the enemy of the "limited war" of aggression to the whole country.

As the war goes on, the various regions have continued to maintain and boost production and to build socialism, the immediate aim being to help bring the resistance to victory and the long-term one being to push socialist revolution forward. That is why they have also gained experience in *changing the economic orientation, building socialism in wartime conditions,* and closely combining combat duties with the task of building socialism. We must stress that this is the first time in our history that people's war has been conducted on the basis of a socialist regime, unlike the former resistance against French aggression and the current resistance in the South against U.S. aggression, waged on the basis of a people's democratic regime in the liberated areas.

Another experience of great importance consists in *strengthening the leadership of regional party organizations in an all-sided way,* in combat and production, in ideology and organization, so as to bring the power of people's war into full play in all regions.

The American imperialists' perfidious design is to perpetuate the division of our country. But in their war of aggression they have looked upon Vietnam as one single battlefield, thus tacitly and unwittingly admitting that Vietnam is one. They have introduced a large expeditionary force into the South, considering this as the main battlefield at the same time attacking the socialist North with air and naval forces, considering it as a battlefield. That is why the resistance waged by the people and armed forces of the North against the American imperialists' war of destruction, forthe defence of the D.R.V.N. is at the same time part and parcel of the common resistance waged by the entire nation against the limited war of aggression, for the defence of the great rear base of South Vietnam, the great fighting front.Therefore, *the experiences gained by people's war in the North in opposing the enemy's war of destruction are also those gained by people's war against their "limited war" of aggression in the socialist rear base.* Meanwhile, in the South, our countrymen and the Liberation armed forces are getting the better of over 1,200,000 American and puppet troops, winning great successes, and gaining very precious experiences in the fight against American ground, air and naval forces.

And so the experiences drawn by our people and armed forces in both zones of the country are very rich; they complement each other and complete the experiences acquired

by our entire nation in the resistance against American aggression, for national salvation. In practice, people's war in the various regions in both the South and the North has proved to contain extremely great pontentialities. That is why *we must not only sum up the experiences obtained in the North but also strive to learn from those secured in the various regions of the South.* Only so can we substantially strengthen regional military work, develop the tremendous power of the regions and contribute bringing our resistance to complete victory, and at the same time make good preparations for the long-range building of our armed forces and the consolidation of our national defence.

I - THE PEOPLE AND ARMED FORCES IN ALL REGIONS HAVE MADE A WORTHY CONTRIBUTION TO DEFEATING THE AMERICAN AGGRESSORS' WAR OF DESTRUCTION

The summing-up report prepared by the command of the military zone is fairly complete and to a degree reflects the ideas of the leadership of the provinces concerned. This is very good., I would like to add my comments on the following subjects:

1. The entire people fight the enemy and oppose their war of destruction by air and naval forces.

2. Wartime mobilization; building and development of regional armed forces.

3. Change in economic orientation; building of socialism in the various regions in wartime.

4. The strengthening of the leadership of regional Party organizations.

1. The entire people fight back the air and naval war of destruction.

Against the U.S. imperialists' modern air and naval forces our armed forces and countrymen in the North waged an unusual people's war: *the entire people hit back at enemy planes and vessels, carried out defence and "dodging" work, and ensured the functioning of communications and transport.* Owing to the particular features and specific goals of the war of destruction, the above mentioned three fronts, of which combat was the primary one, were closely related to each other and all of them actively contributed to defeating the enemy, foiling their main design against the North of our country. On these fronts worked side by side the anti-aircraft units of the regular forces and the regional forces, the communication-transport-maintenance units at the centre and the provinces and villages. The forces at the centre played a part of utmost importance. The widespread regional forces had also a very important role.

a) As regards *combat tasks*, we successfully implemented this directive: *the entire people hit back at enemy planes, taking the anti-aircraft units of the three armed forces as the nucleus.* This is a new development in people's war in our country. We had acquired experiences in our resistance mainly against ground forces,but not against air force. With our Party's sound line, our people's determination,intelligence and creative power, we launched a plane-hunting mass movement and achieved splendid results.

Our young anti-aircraft defence and air force developed by leaps and bounds. Regional anti-aircraft units also grew more experienced. Militia and self-defence members, young

and old, men and women, no matter what their nationality, in the plains as well as in the hill regions, managed to down up-to-date U.S. jets. *Regional forces* of provinces and districts also grounded enemy planes. Our *people* valiantly fought and served the fighting, captured air pirates, built defence works and roads for anti-aircraft guns and missiles, helped the army in every respect. We used all available weapons from rifles, machine-guns and anti-aircraft guns of various calibres up to missiles and modern planes. With anti-aircraft units of both the regular forces and the widespread regional forces and all kinds of weapons, we wove an extensive network of fire with key points, many layers and many directions,to trap enemy planes at every altitude, place and moment. The strong fire-power in the socialist North inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy air force and struck fear into American pilots.

The impact of the regional armed forces in anti-aircraft defence could be felt in the number of enemy planes brought down by the militia, self-defence and regional forces. Keeping watch round the clock and using automatics of various kinds, while working in the fields or in the factories, and sometimes simply using rifles, militia and self-defence members managed to shoot down modern jets: those of Quang Binh province downed over 100 enemy planes and many militiawomen also participated in this. Provincial anti-aircraft units gave a good account of themselves, some of them blasting up to 70 or 80 enemy planes — a high record indeed.

The impact of the regional armed forces could be seen in their co-ordination in combat with the regular anti-aircraft units to knock down as many enemy planes as possible, forming an efficacious flak at different altitudes and in different places.

On the other hand, in the war of destruction, the enemy air force was in a position to strike at any target in our rear. To cope with the enemy's mobility, we had to build an extensive air defence system with focal points. Thanks to the close co-ordination between the air defence forces of the regular army and of the regional troops, and between the regional troops and the militia and self-defence forces, we satisfactorily met that complex combat requirement.

Another major role of the armed forces was their important assignment in air defence: fighting enemy planes flying at low altitude. The regional forces and militia and self-defence units kept watch, detected adverse aircraft and helped the people organize air defence, and therefore succeeded in protecting their lives and property and defending production, helping them to live a normal life under the conditions of a gruelling war.

The regional armed forces in the coastal areas successfully hit back at U.S. vessels and U.S. puppet commando-boats. In co-ordination with regular artillery units operating at key centres, regional gunners fired at enemy boats, provided cover for the people's activities within their guns range and opened up new possibilities for the regions to defend our rather long coast-line.

Together with the people, regional troops and people's security forces honourably discharged their responsibility by grounding adverse planes, wiping out commandos, keeping order and secutity, and foiling the enemy psywar moves.

Along with operations of the regular forces, courageous and effective actions of the regional armed forces stimulated the people's fighting spirit and production zeal, and strengthened

their determination to defeat American aggression, and their confidence in the final victory.

As regards *operational thinking*, the very fact that Vietnamese militia and self-defence units were able to knock down U.S. jets with infantry weapons bears a very important significance. It gives a concrete expression to the high level of our people's traditional military thinking: to fight a big force with a small one and to use all weapons available to worst an adversary possessing up-to-date ones usually superior to ours. One can say that the successes of our militia and self-defence forces supply part of the answer to the question why the Vietnamese people have got the better of the American aggressors.

b) Parallel to the directive"The entire people hit back at enemy planes and vessels" is this one : *"The entire people actively take part in civilian air defence"*."The past years' fighting has highlighted the extremly important significance of the civilian air defence which frustrated the enemy's objective and reduced to the minimum our losses in life and property.

"To wipe out the enemy so as to defend ourselves, to preserve our forces to wipe out the enemy," this fundamental principle of every war has to be thoroughly grasped when opposing a people's war to a war of destruction. Indeed, to fight the enemy air force is not like dealing with their infantry, especially when one does not yet possess a strong air force and long-range missiles to destroy their planes on the ground at their bases or on the wing to their targets. In these conditions, in order to bring our initiative into full play and reduce our losses, it is of utmost importance

to nullify or lessen the effectiveness of the adversary's air strikes, and on this basis to turn their attacks into opportunities for us to wipe them out. Therefore, targets of eventual enemy strikes must be kept secret, protected by defence works, camouflaged, scattered and moved from place to place. Civilian air defence as well as the change of orientation in economic activities have a strategic significance, in the sense that they aim at neutralizing or diminishing the destructive effect of the enemy's raids. The satisfactory functioning of civilian air defence makes it possible for the regions to carry out fighting, maintain production, keep communications and transport going for a long time. Moreover, in many areas, especially in the southern provinces of the Fourth Military Zone, where the adversary intensified their attacks during the "limited bombing" period, our losses were smaller than prevously due to better air defence measures.

In this domain the people's efforts were truly considerable. Throughout the North the population dug tens of millions of shelters, tens of thousands of communication trenches, adequately organized first aid, and made good the aftermaths of enemy attacks. We evacuated to the countryside millions of people living in the places worst hit by the enemy and in cities and other urban centres, dispersed many factories, offices, storages, schools and hospitals. Some provinces played hosts to hundreds of thousands of evacuees and helped them in their work and life. These were very great achievements and at the same time new experiences of the various regions in this war.

Civilian air defence work is directly related to the people's life, feelings, ways and customs, and to the production and

combat activities of various bases, government services and branches of activities. We must, therefore, adequately perform the job of educating the masses, cadres and Party members in their tasks and of conducting deep and broad political mobilization, and at the same time pay the utmost attention to organizational work, relying on the socialist relations of production, and, in rural areas, mainly on the co-operatives. Once the task of reinforcing civilian air defence is set forth, we must engage in organizational work, adopt concrete measures and correct policies with a view to fulfilling this task. We must have manpower to dig trenches and shelters (for instance the trench-digging teams of the co-ops), elaborate policies to ensure in every way good conditions for this activity, adopt a sound line in building shelters, for instance building priority shelters for families of war invalids and war martyrs, organize first-aid and tranport of the wounded, adopt concrete lines and policies concerning evacuation and dispersion, etc. In many regions, effective models of shelters have been worked out and popularized, as well as efficient material and technical means which have made it possible to build better shelters with less labour. In the recent period, our people have built many types of highly effective shelters against the American imperialists' savage bombing and shelling; individual shelters, collective shelters, shelters for cattle, shelters for movable property, mobile shelters in the fields, shelters in sandy beaches, and solid and complex shelter systems.

Co-ordinating the resistance against the war of destruction with the preparations against the enemy's eventual expanding of the "limited war", many regions paid attention to coupling the building of shelters with the erection of combat villages.

Civilian air defence was very successful and has demonstrated our people's engineering capacities and the immense inventive power of people's war.

c) The *communication and transport front* was also an important part of the people's war against the war of destruction.

One of the enemy's major objectives was to strike at our communications and transport and check all assistance of the great rear to the great fighting front. To this effect, the adversary at times concentrated three-fourths of their air attacks. The military report of Grant Sharp, U.S. commander in the Pacific, revealed his vicous schemes and measures and strenuous efforts to bomb scattered targets as well as networks of targets, especially our most important communication lines. This report also admitted the bitter U.S. failure on this front, where our people's feats were remarkable.

Indeed, they unmistakably spelled out the grim determination to outwit the enemy, the courage, cleverness and organizational skill of the regional armed forces and people. *The entire people were mobilized to maintain communications and transport in good order under all circumstances, this being regarded as a central emergency task.* To repair what the enemy fiercely destroyed was a real combat job, especially in a country with an intricate terrain, so many rivers, bridges and roads difficult of access. To get the better of the enemy here, one must have a tight hold on all the forces of transport, of road-building and road-mending, and of self-defence to protect the communication lines. Leadership in this task became part of military art, which requires a good understanding of the enemy situation and ours, a close

co-ordination between the central and regional forces. Organizationally, the forces ensuring the smooth running of communications and transport were set up along the line of the three categories of armed forces: centrally-directed forces and forces of the regular army; the specialized units of the province; and widespread militia and self-defence forces at the grassroots. The centrally-directed forces and the regular forces were most important, especially in the uninhabited or sparsely populated areas and at key points subjected to heavy attacks. But the regional forces played also a part of great consequence, without which our tasks in communications and transport could not have been fulfilled in the past year.

Experience proves the potentialities of the various regions, provinces and villages to be very great. The point is to develop these potentialities in the most rational way: any job a region can tackle should be entrusted to it, on condition that this will not affect the unified leadership of the central level and the mobility and flexibility in the overall activities of the transport and communications branch. Over the past years, tranport and communications work was best ensured in those provinces which put adequate emphasis on it, which received adequate reinforcements, which knew how to use adequately both army engineers and young volunteers, which were adequately strenghened as regards their fighting forces, which benefited from resolute command and concentrated and unified leadership, and where the central forces were effectively combined with the militia, self-defence corps and people at the grassroots level.

2. To mobilize the manpower needed by the war, to set up and develop the regional armed forces.

In the tough fight against the war of destruction, every region *actively encouraged the youth to enlist in the army while steadily building and strengthening its armed forces, and militia and self-defence forces.*

a) To meet the requirements of the war, our regular forces, especially the modern arms like the anti-aircraft force and the air force, were considerably expanded in a short time, in both number and quality, and did well on the battlefield. This was made possible by the great contribution of the various regions to the strong reserve forces built there since the years of peace.

As production, combat and service to the front had to be carried out simultaneously, *successful mobilization of an adequate contingent of young people to serve in the army was in itself a tremendous achievement of the regions.* It was possible thanks to the patriotism and love for socialism of our people and youth, to the leadership and organizational ability of the regional Party organizations and government services, and to the superiority of our socialist system. It also threw light on the new progress of regional military work and military organs.

It was the first time that the regions had to draft so many young men. In peace time, we had made good preparations for wartime mobilization by working out relevant laws, statutes and regulations. When the war broke out, we further realized the necessity of combining the enforcement of State laws with a careful political education, of carrying out the ideological mobilization of the masses, of following the mass

line and of relying on the Party cells, cooperatives, State farms, enterprises, offices, schools, mass movements like the youth's "three readies,"[1] the women's "three responsililities"[2].

In those regions where the mass line was followed and which possessed a strong mass movement, in particular the youth movement, the work of selecting men for the armed forces was always fulfilled, even overfulfilled, both quantitatively and qualitatively. A point to be stressed is that the various regions should pay full attention to strengthening the movement wherever it is still weak, and at the same time to getting a good hold on it wherever it is advancing, so as to bring about overall progress. All regions should act in such a way as to perform their duties towards the resistance.

Organizationally, we have adequately solved the relation between production and combat, and in replenishing the regular forces and setting up on the spot combat forces, with an adequate mobilization rate for each region. The selection of men for the armed forces was well done wherever this task was combined with that of giving a strong impetus to other regional works: fostering and developing nuclei of regional forces; building militia and self defence corps; building reserve forces, ensuring strong on-the-spot combat forces with adequate mobilizable reserves; paying full attention to the carrying out of policies vis-à-vis members of the armed forces in the rear.

1. The three"readies": ready to figth (U.S. aggression) and to join up, ready to overcome all difficulties to drive ahead production and study in all circumstances; and ready to do any work, to go anywhere, when requested.
2. The three" responsibilities": responsibility in production, in family tasks and in the fighting.

Over the past years, *the overwhelming majority of the youth enlisted have proved to be courageous and staunch fighters, faithful to the Party, dedicated to the people, capable of rapidly mastering military knowledge. They are worthy of being the cream of the youth of the socialist regime, patiently educated and trained by the Party. This was another great achievement to out beautiful socialist system.*

The various regions should ceaselessly strive to heighten the quality of their selective services, so that every soldier and cadre setting out should be a fighter with high resolve, courage and military skill, eager to join the fighting and able to fulfil his duty after only a short training period. To this end, they should pay till greater attention to the political education of the youth, use and develop such good experience gained as that which consists in actively educating the youth ever since they join the militia and self-defence corps, raising the overall quality of regional complementary training, building at regional level whole units for a good quality to replenish the regular forces, organizing reservist sections at the grassroots level, etc.

b) In the high tide of the resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, *regional armed forces grew up by leaps and bounds, in terms of organization and equipment, and acquired new fighting abilities.*

The militia and self-defence units increased in number though many were incorporated in the regular forces, and their quality enhanced. Self-defence units rapidly developed in enterprises, offices and city-wards. The percentage of Party members, Labour Youth members and women in militia and self-defence units also went up. They got more and

better equipment. Many villages set up gunners' groups and special groups (like engineer, liaison, intelligence, first-aid groups) or even a mobile combat force. Militia and self-defence members learned to man many kinds of weapons and equipment—both rudimentary and sophisticated —brought down enemy planes, shot ablaze enemy vesssels, disposed of tens of thousands of modern bombs and mines.

The regional forces rapidly grew up, in terms of organization, equipment and fighting ability. Many provinces boast anti-aircraft units which have grounded enemy planes, artillery units which have sunk or set ablaze enemy vessels and commando boats, or engineering units which have made a great contribution to keep traffic flowing. Many regional infantry units also knocked down enemy planes and in some places performed most admirable feats of arms.

Regional military services at all levels made noticeable progress in helping Party committees, in leading the armed forces and in guiding the militia and self-defence movement.

The above facts show *our actual capacities to build very strong armed forces comprising strong and widespread militia and self-defence regional armed forces with high quality, required arms and appropriate organization, and regional military services consolidated at all levels.* Those regional armed forces, which have specific functions and tasks, adequate organization and equipment, appropriate training and especially a high fighting spirit, knowledge of the terrain, population and climate of their areas and suitable tactical methods, can fight successfully with a small force and few munitions and can fulfil their important function and tasks with the best results.

Strong armed forces constitute a solid nucleus for the nationwide and all-out people's war in the regions. Only with strong regional armed forces and a strong regional reserve force, can one have firm bases to vigorously and rapidly develop the regular forces when necessary.

3. To change the economic orientation, set up and develop the local economy, continue to push ahead with the socialist revolution, bring into full play the superiority of the socialist system, forge the power of the people's war in all regions.

In face of the U.S. imperialists' "limited war" in the South and war of destruction in the North,our Party Central Committee pointed out that the North had to *carry out production while fighting to defend itself, support the South with might and main and continue to push ahead with socialist construction in accordance with the new situation.*

The resistance to U.S. aggression, for national salvation, and the continuation of socialist construction constitute the revolutionary task of our people in the new situation. Only if we successfully carry out the resistance for national salvation can we safeguard the building of socialism in the North and, together with our compatriots in the whole country, bring to completion the national democratic revolution in the South.

On the other hand, only if we continue socialist construction in the North can we strengthen our economic and national defence potentials, serve the resistance against U.S. aggression in the most efficient way, and bring it to victory.

To fulfil this task, our Party advocated a *change in the economic orientation by setting up and developing the*

regional economy. Economic construction and development in the North must conform to the wartime situation in order to meet fighting requirements of the moment as well as the possibility of the U.S. expansion of the "limited war" to the whole country. At the same time it must be consistent with the long-range orientation of socialist construction after our victory has been won. This was a perfectly sound and creative policy of our Party.

Despite the enemy's fierce attacks, together with the fighting and supplying of the front, the regions strove hard to implement the new economic orientation of setting up and developing their own economy in line with their situation. They went on with the revolution in the relations of production, the technological revolution, and the cultural and ideological revolution to build and consolidate the socialist regime in wartime, and to promote the superiority of the socialist system and step up people's war in their regions. These are new and most valuable experiences of our Party as well as of the regional Party organizations in this war.

The struggle on the production front, the development of education, culture and public health, the improvement of the living standards, and the building of socialism constitute a real epic which exalts the Vietnamese people's courage, creative labour, cleverness and thirst for learning. *In all regions, our armed forces and poeple are heroic not only in combat but also in production and in the building of a new life under enemy bombing and strafing*. This also is a characteristic of our people's revolutionary heroism. It spells out the greatness of our resistance and justifies the fact that the socialist Vietnamese can take a pride in themselves. Civilization has triumphed over violence. This is why the U.S.

war of destruction has lamentably failed. For all our weaknesses and shortcomings, our achievements are, indeed, considerable. A Western journalist has referred to the economic achievements in the North as a "Vietnamese miracle". The U.S. imperialists who have caused difficulties to and inflicted losses upon us have nevertheless failed in their scheme of shattering our economic potential to weaken our fighting capacity and disrupt the people's life in North Vietnam. *In wartime, our regional socialist economy was preserved and continued to expand, efficiently serving our war effort.*

In *agriculture,* the socialist relations of production have been consolidated and developed. The number of households which are members of the co-ops and advanced co-ops has increased during the war years. Far from being weakened, the co-ops have evinced great vitality. They mobilized manpower, organized combat forces, ensured supplies, solved the problem of remuneration and other policies concerning production, combat, serving the fighting, and civilian air defence tasks. They ensured regional transport and communications and stabilized the life of their members. Were it not for the existence of co-operatives and the socialist system, it would be very difficult for the various regions to fulfil their heavy and complex wartime duties as they have done in the past years.

Agricultural production has been maintained even developed in some regions: in spite of fierce enemy attacks, part of the work force has been taken out of the agricultural sector. The various regions have striven to be self-sufficient in food, considering it to be a strategic problem.

The technological revolution in agriculture continues to receive a great impulse. The number of mechanical workshops is on the increase. In many provinces, the areas mechanically ploughed have expanded. A movement for "attaining three targets in agriculture" has appeared in wartime. Under bombs and shells, in many regions the co-operative peasants obesrve the "straight rows" method in rice-transplanting. This shows the indomitable spirit and the determination to improve technique of the new peasantry, the collective peasantry in the socialist North.

The development of *regional industry* is an important feature of regional economy during the past few years. Many enterprises have been built and commissioned. In wartime, a network of regional industry with thousands of medium and small-sized interprises has taken shape in the North. The various regions have succeeded in turning out goods which they had prevously been unable to produce even in peace time. Regional industry has contributed to serving agriculture, transport .and communication, the life of the people and the armed forces, and at the same time national defence at regional levels. Part of the technical services for the army and the repair of ordinary weapons are ensured by regional mechanical workshops.

In wartime conditions, *educational, cultural, and health work* in all regions has also developed. School enrolment at all levels has increased several times; classes are held in underground shelters or at night. Our educational work in wartime has made great efforts in keeping with the requirement of production and combat. Almost all villages have a health station, with an assistant doctor. Village health stations and district and provincial hospitals have turned

to serving the fighting, contributing their share in first-aid care and giving medical treatment to armymen and civilians.

With the development of regional agriculture, industry and medical work, the on-the-spot logistical base of people's war was substantially strengthened.

War is one of the hardest trials for a social system. Thanks to the new economic orientation to suit wartime requirements and to the stepping up of the three revolutions in various regions, *the socialist regime in the North continued to be built, consolidated and developed during the war, and turned to account its superiority to push ahead the resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation.*

The reality in the various regions over the past years of war has made it plain that the elimination of the exploitation of man has brought about among the labouring people *increasing political and ideological oneness of mind.* Hence people's war could rely on the immense capabilities of the broad masses of workers, collective peasants and socialist intellectuals. Our armed forces and people displayed a high sense of collective mastery, courage in combat and production, and solidarity in face of fierce enemy attacks. One cannot list all the examples given by ordinary working people of heroism and selflessness in combat, of industriousness in production, or of the sense of responsibility as regards the affairs of the co-operative, the village or the country, caring for these even more than for their own.

Socialist ownership under the two forms of ownership by the entire people and collective ownership has been consolidated and perfected step by step in various areas. This constituted an objective factor favourable to the scientific

organization of people's war. Between the labouring people there were not only sympathy and revolutionary consciousness but also new organizational relationships. Many combat and production units emerged and operated with efficiency thanks to the socialist relations of production and to the existence of co-operatives. Militia and self-defence groups to keep watch and to defuse bombs, co-op teams devoted to building shelters, co-op gangs devoted to carrying out production and fighting at the same time, etc. revealed the great capabilities of the socialist regime in many fields and especially in organization.

Before the war broke out, the regions has laid some *material and technical bases for socialism.*These were strengthened and gradually modernized in wartime. They provided new facilities for people's war to meet its logistical needs on the spot, raised labour productivity and liberated manpower for the fighting, thereby contributing to the increase of combat potential and services to the front of the regional armed forces and people. In plane-hunting, civilian air defence, maintenance of communications and transport, the various regions required substantial material and technical contributions from co-operatives, enterprises, State offices and people.

The superiority of the socialist system in the North is embodied in *the new man, the socialist Vietnamese* with ardent patriotism, genuine proletarian internationalims, a spirit of collective mastery, a high fighting spirit, a continuously improving cultural level, good health, a loyal, simple and sound way of life. Regional young people, labour youth members and Party members who joined regular units set bright examples in the life-and-death

struggle against the enemy, which are a source of pride for the socialist regime. Our militia and self-defence members are not only courageous but also clever in the handling of many kinds of modern weapons and equipment. Our workers and co-op members are industrious, good organizers and show great ability and ingenuity in improving technique, increasing labour productivity, in production and in the service to the front.

Clearly enough, *the socialist regime has made the most of its superiority to step up people's war in politics, in organization, in the material and in technical bases, and in ideology, intelligence and human qualities.*These are new capabilities, a great source of strength of people's war in the regions. Any region able to develop and use all potentialities to the full and to perform a skilful division of labour and a rational combination of all forces can fulfil brilliantly at regional level all the complex tasks of the war waged in every sphere and involving the entire people, with the highest quality and effectiveness.

4. To strengthen the leadership of local Party organizations

If people's war in the various regions developed a great force and scored brilliant successes, it was due primarily to the leadership of the regional Party organizations which strictly followed the correct policy of the Party Central Committee. Those Party organizations upheld the radical revolutionary spirit of the working class, brought into full play the cleverness of Party members and of the masses, did their best to grasp the Party's line and policies, and successfully fulfilled all the tasks assigned to their areas in our great national resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation. They took care

to give overall leadership while seeing with particular attention to the accomplishment of the military tasks entrusted to their areas and attaching special importance to political education, ideological guidance and organizational work, thereby making the most of the great strength of the socialist system so as to push forward the people's war.

Leadership in the war does not imply only military leadership but also overall leadership, co-ordinating military affairs with economic affairs, the fighting with production, the front with the rear. *The achievements of the regional Party organizations lie in the fact that they intimately coupled production with combat, discharging their task of mobilizing manpower and resources to meet the resistance needs, while fulfilling their production and combat duties on the spot, in accordance with the specific situation of their areas under different circumstances.* That is why, under all circumstances, in general the regions were able to keep up production, fight effectively and perform satisfactorily all the military and other tasks set by the central authorities. These accomplishments show the high sense of political responsibility and the practical organizational ability of the regional Party organizations and their progress achieved in many fields.

The Party organizations credited with the fulfilment of their tasks in wartime were those which *paid due attention to military leadership, providing guidance to both combat and production, and displayed great ability in leading production amidst fierce fighting.* This has become a new requirement from the leadership of all Party organizations.

Many regional Party organizations, especially those in the areas worst hit by the enemy, met this requirement with distinction and drew many experiences, mainly the following:

— Provincial Party committees must strengthen their leadership over the regional military services and promote the latter's role;

— In order to give the best help to the Party committees, the regional military services must be not only expert in military affairs but also conversant in economic affairs, grasp the main problems of socialist construction in the area and ably co-ordinate military with other affairs;

— All regional services and branches of activites must grasp the military requirements, and closely co-ordinate the fighting with production, and economic affairs with national defence affairs;

— One must raise the military knowledge of Party members and cadres; the work and way of life of all branches and services must be adapted to war conditions;

— One must closely co-ordinate the activities of all branches and services under the overall leadership of the regional Party committees.

In order to fulfil the task of leading and guiding people's war in the regions the Party committees attached the greatest importance to *consolidating themselves* in every aspect, political, ideological and organizational. In the provinces, the number of Party members has increased and their quality has been enhanced. In wartime, in many provinces, particularly in the Fourth Military Zone, there emerged many outstanding Party members and many Party cells that staunchly and ably led the people in combat and production,

worthy of being the standard-bearers, the steel fortresses, the efficient general staffs of people's war. They are the pride of the regional Party organizations of our entire Party. In sum, *regional Party organizations have been tempered, have grown up in the gruelling fight and made a worthy contribution to the great achievements of our entire Party.*

II. RESOLUTELY MARCH FORWARD, GIVE PRACTICAL REINFORCEMENT TO REGIONAL MILITARY WORK AND STRIVE TO FULFIL ALL TASKS SUCCESSFULLY

The successes won by people's war in all regions are very brilliant ones. The strength of people's war in the various regions of the socialist North is truly immense. Those successes have brought a worthy contribution to the common victories of the population and armed forces of the North and to the common victories of our people throughout the country.

At present, the American imperialists have been forced to put an unconditional end to their bombing of the North. This bespeaks not only the complete failure of their war of destruction but also the bankruptcy of their "limited war" strategy in the southern part of our country.

An American politican has written that when President Johnson spoke on March 31, 1968, of the Vietnam issue before the American people, he did not only declare the end of the military escalation, the stepping up of the search for negotiations and renunciation of his candidature in the presidential elections but also spelled out the fiasco of a policy and, may be, even the termination of a period.[1] He thereby means the end of period in which the American

1.Arthur Schelesinger Jr., a former adviser to President John F.Kennedy, in an article in *Harper's* magazine, N°3, 1969.

imperialists considered themselves to be a super-power, and the collapse of their role in the world.

Our people's resistance to American aggression, for national salvation, has not yet come to a close; we have not yet achieved complete victory, but *it is clear that we have won and that the American imperialists have lost. The Vietnamese people's victory is an extremely important one, on account of its significance both as regards our nation and vis-à-vis the world revolutionary movement.* The failure suffered by the Americain imperialists on the Vietnamese battlefield is one of their heaviest failures in the history of their wars of aggression.

In the recent years, Vietnam has become for the American imperialists their number one problem. Johnson has declared that the Vietnam war is a crucial trial and has an importance equal to any war waged so far by the U.S. That is why the American imperialists have sent more than half a million troops to invade Vietnam. Counting puppet and satellite troops, they have mustered over one million troops. With such a great military force, the American imperialists' aim is to commit aggression against the southern part of our country, but they also nurture other perfidious designs.

Vietnam is now standing in the van of the national-liberation movement. The American imperialists' hope is that, if they win in Vietnam, they will be able to defeat the national-liberation movement of the world's peoples. Vietnam is also standing in the frontline of the socialist camp against the imperialist chieftain. It is the American imperialists' hope that, if they win in Vietnam they will have struck a great blow at the socialist camp. That is why they

have shown the greatest frenzy and ferocity in rushing headlong into a military venture with a colossal force, in spite of the extremely heavy price in wealth and manpower, the military and political costs, and also the costs to the honour and future of the United States. They never anticipated that in this "crucial trial" the Vietnamese people would be the victor and they – the vanquished.

The victory of the resistance to American aggression, for national salvation, will bring our people independence, freedom and the reunification of their country, and will play an ever greater role in mobilizing, encouraging and uniting the world revolutionary movement. The victory of the Vietnamese people means the victory of the world people's national liberation movement and that of the socialist camp. Our victorious resistance is a great historic event in the latter half of the 20th century, an important milestone in the collapse of imperialism in its role of world gendarme, marking the upsurge of, and opening up bright prospects for, the common struggle waged by the world's peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. That is precisely why the Vietnamese people's valiant struggle has been looked upon as the hope, the conscience and honour of all progressive mankind.

Ever since the American imperialists put an end to their war of destruction against the North, our fellow-countrymen and the liberation troops in the heroic South have repeatedly attacked them in the military, political and diplomatic fields. On the battlefield, the recent powerful onslaughts prove the great strength and stamina of the South Vietnam liberation troops, who, fighting with great skill, have inflicted extremely heavy losses on the enemy and foiled the American scheme

of increasing military pressure while cutting casualties. At the conference table, the ten-point solution put forward by the N.F.L. has driven the enemy into a state of passivity and confusion. The subsequent formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam has won extremely great sympathy and support in the international arena.

Clearly, the American imperialists cannot continue their war of aggression with the present scope and intensity for a long time. Nixon himself has said that the Vietnam war is the most difficult ever for the Americans.

However, they remain very obdurate. Although they are seeking to extricate themselves from the war, they want to do it from a position of strength and to keep the southern part of our country within their neo-colonialist orbit. They are actively carrying out a scheme of "de-Americanization" and "Vietnamization" of the war, nurturing the illusion that, the puppet army and administration would grow stronger as the American troops withdraw. The American imperialists were insane when they rushed into a war of aggression now considered their greatest strategic mistake by the American rulers. At present they are proving themselves to be even more insane by seeking, following their heavy failures, to "Vietnamize" the war in the hope of getting out of it, American style. Surely they will sustain even more pitiful failures.

The present resistance against American aggression, for national salvation, is the greatest war against foreign aggression in our national history. *To be resolved to carry on the resistance until final victory, for the independence and reunification of our country, for the fulfilment of our lofty*

internationalist duty, such is the most sacred task of every Vietnamese citizen. President Ho Chi Minh has said: "So long as a single aggressor remains on our soil, we must fight on to sweep him away". The complete victory of the North over the enemy's war of destruction has created favourable conditions for its building and consolidation and for the strengthening of its forces in all fields. The armed forces and people of the North are well aware that so long as the more than one million American and puppet troops are trampling on the South, all activities by our people should follow the watchword: *"Everything to defeat the American aggressors!"*

The military task of the people in the North remains very heary. In all regions they should continue to show vigilance and stand ready to fight in order to defend the North and fulfil the duty of the great rear area towards the great fighting front. We must continue to raise the fighting standard of the armed forces, shoot down all enemy reconnaissance aircraft, smash all enemy sabotage activities, destroy all enemy commando units, maintain security and order, and watch out for any enemy comeback.

In order to accomplish successfully the military tasks of the various regions in the present situation, *we must give real reinforcement to regional military work and keep it abreast of the Party's policy of regional economic construction with a view to building our provinces militarily and economically into ever stronger basic units of people's war.*

Regional military work is an important part of our Party's military work. Its strategic position, hitherto already important, will grow ever more so in both the general revolutionary struggle and the armed struggle of the Party.

First, regional military work embodies our Party's views on people's war. It is closely connected with the just character of the wars for the defence of the fatherland and for national liberation waged by our people on their soil.

To defend the fatherland and liberate the nation, our Party holds that the entire people should engage in fighting the enemy, using the people's armed forces as a nucleus. The setting up of the three categories of armed forces is the most adequate form of organization for the people's armed forces, aimed at mobilizing and organizing the entire people in the fight against the enemy, for national salvation. That is why the regular troops assume a very important role, while that played by the regional troops, the militia and self-defence corps is also very important. The task of regional military work is to rely directly on the regional people's political and economic bases, directly develop all the various people's forces, organize regional armed forces to fight on the spot, destroy the enemy, safeguard the people's lives and property, protect the people's regional power, firmly preserve the rights of the local people as the masters in their own areas.

Second, in the present resistance to American aggression, for national salvation, regional military work assumes an even more important role. This is because our enemy is a ferocious imperialism, with a numerous army, up-to-date weapons and a high degree of mobility; more-over, in modern warfare it is hard to make a clear distinction between front and rear.

In those conditions, the requirement that we should hit at the enemy in time, effectively and wherever he comes, so as to destroy hom, defend our rear, and safeguard the people's lives and property, becomes all the more urgent and enduring.

That is why regional military work should be reinforced, strong regional troops and militia and self-defence corps should be organized everywhere, the people should be mobilized and stand ready to hit back at the enemy. If the entire people and the entire army are valiant fighters, we can defeat any enemy however ferocious. Local forces in all regions always in a state of readiness constitute an advantageous feature of people's war against a highly mobile enemy, for the man on the spot is the most mobile of all, as is admitted even by the bourgeois military writers.

Third, on account of the new potentialities of the regional armed forces regarding technique and equipment and on account of the new development of military art in revolutionary warfare, regional military work becomes all the more important.

In the North the regional troops, militia and self-defence corps are now equipped with weapons and means to bring down enemy jets, sink or set afire enemy vessels, defuse and blow up enemy bombs and mines of the most modern types. In the South, the guerillas cannot only annihilate enemy infantry but also cope with armoured vehicles, tanks and helicopters. The regional troops have been able to fight relatively important annihilation battles.

Our way of fighting has undergone new developments: using few troops to fight many, fighting big battles with few troops, hitting hard and telling blows, striking at nerve centres and logistic bases with a view to destroying the most precious live forces and up-to-date war equipment. With this creative fighting style, the regional troops and guerillas have acquired new fighting power and progressed by leaps and bounds.

In face of the new situation, we must further strengthen regional military work and bring the potentialities of the regional armed forces into full play. In the conditions of modern warfare, guerilla warfare should be brought to an even higher level, thus creating favourable factors for regular warfare to defeat the enemy. The regional armed forces should be all the more broadly and powerfully expanded. In this way the regular forces will see their mobility and striking power increased. The harmonious co-ordination at a high level between the three categories of armed forces, between the armed and political forces, creates new offensive power for people's war, which attacks the enemy without respite, by all means and ways, with forces of various sizes, everywhere and at all times, depriving them of effective striking power in spite of their numbers and driving them into dispersion, passivity and defeat.

Fourth, the ever growing importance of regional military work also springs from the development of all regions, especially the provinces, in wealth and manpower, economic potential and logistic capabilities as regards people's war.

In the North, ever since the Party Central Committee set forth the policy of regional economic development and building the provinces into ever stronger economic units, new, favourable conditions and new potentialities have been created for regional military work. Generally speaking, the provinces of the North have fairly wide areas and populations of varying numbers, from one to two millions. In keeping with the rate of socialist building, agriculture has been expanding, regional industry growing, transport and communications widening, the material and technical bases of socialism in the various regions ceaselessly strengthened.

Hence, the point is to give real impetus to regional military work in order to use all latent forces in each region, combine economics and national defence within the regional framework, build each province in both the economic and military fields and turn the province into an ever stronger basic unit of people's war at regional level.

Fifth, regional military work is closely connected with the important role played by the reserve forces in people's war and national defence for the entire people.

Only by reinforcing regional military work can we build strong reserve forces, qualitatively and quantitatively, stand ready to fight in peace time, and rapidly expand and strengthen the armed forces in wartime.

Over the past war years, regional military bodies have actively organized, managed and trained reserve forces and effectively carried out wartime mobilization with a view to replenishing the permanent forces. Thanks to this, our standing forces have developed by leaps and bounds within a short time. We constantly have at our disposal reserve forces in order to ceaselessly, expand our armed forces and meet the new requirements of the resistance.

In future, following the complete victory of our resistance and the restoration of peace, we shall, at the same time as maintaining a moderately-sized standing force, have to activate regional military work more, so as to organize, manage and train reserve forces properly. Only so, while concentrating on peace time economic construction, shall we be in a position of combat readiness and be fully prepared to carry out mobilization and expand our forces should war break out.

And so, *we may aver that, under all circumstances, whether in peace or war, we must lay great stress on regional military work.* To raise our awareness of the important position and role of regional military work is a foremost problem, if an even stronger change is to happen in the thinking of leading cadres at all levels of the Party, the armed forces and the administration. To make light of regional military work is to stray from the viewpoint of people's war and to commit a serious mistake.

Having acquired a correct viewpoint on regional military work we must, when tackling practical work, continue to build, consolidate and heighten the quality in all fields of the militia, self-defence corps and regional troops; we must also raise the quality of the reserve forces and build and manage them adequately, and carry on with the building of combat villages according to given priorities. On the basis of a good combination of the regional economy with the requirements of national defence, we must strive to build material and technical bases and logistic bases of people's war at regional level, parallel to the building of common rear bases for the armed forces. An important point, which should be fully carried out by autorities at all levels, is the application of policies in the rear regarding the armed forces, for instance concerning wounded servicemen, soldiers' families, war martyrs' families, etc.

To carry out the above-mentioned tasks, we must really *strengthen the leadership of regional Party organizations, consolidate regional military bodies* at all levels, especially at provincial and grassroots levels, which does not mean that the district level should be made light of ; we must *foster and train regional military cadres* who are not only proficient

in political and military matters but also familiar with the local political and economic situation, and who know how to closely combine military work with other regional works.

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The greatest resistance war in our national history has reaped extremely important victories. We are facing a heavy but extremely glorious task: *our entire people are of one mind and are resolved to carry on the resistance and bring the struggle against American aggression, for national salvation, to final victory.*

The American imperrialists have suffered crushing defeats. However great their bellicosity, perfidy and stubbornness, they will not be able to retrieve the situation and escape total failure. Our people are firmly determined to resist until victory, for the sake of the independence, freedom and unity of the fatherland, and for the sake of socialism. This fighting resolve is the most precious spiritual characteristic of Vietnamese people. It has sprung, and has been tempered from one generation to another, in the course of the history of national resistance to foreign aggression. This will to fight and win, this "nothing - is - more - precious - than - independence - and - freedom" spirit, is creating the invincible strength of people's war.

In this hard struggle against a cruel enemy, whose economic and military potential is many times greater than ours, our people, under the correct leadership of our Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, have shown both determination to resist the aggressors and defend the country, and high fighting skill. Not only have they set brilliant

examples of revolutionary heroism, they have also evinced great military talents and creative originality. The fight in the various regisons of the socialist North against the enemy's modern air and naval forces engaged in a war of destruction is one instance of that creative originality.

The experiences gained in people's war in general, in military work in particular, in both parts of our country, are extremely valuable ones. Their timely review will help Viet Nam's military science make another step forward and enrich our Party's military line. They also contribute to strengthening the fighting capacity of our armed forces and people so as to bring the resistance against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, to its final victory and also to make good preparations for the building of our armed forces and for the consolidation of our national defence in the future.

We are resolved to preserve our beloved Viet Nam, now and for ever, for all generations to come, as the possession of the heroic Vietnamese nation.

CHAPTER III

IN THE TOWNS AND INDUSTRIAL CENTRES[1]

Today, availing myself of the visit I am paying to you, and before talking to you at this conference, I am very happy to convey to you, to our fellow-countrymen, cadres, Party members, and armymen in this port city, the fraternal salutations and commendation of the Parrty Central Committee, the Government, and President Ton Duc Thang.

Our people in the North, with their armed forces as the core, have completely defeated the extremely barbarous war of destruction of the American imperialists. Today we are making full use of the new advantages and strengths of the socialist system to fulfil our task, the task of the great rear base toward the great front line. We are ready to smash all the warlike acts of the Americans against the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. In the South our fellow-countrymen and the Liberation armed forces are beating the U.S. war of aggression. In the flush of great victory won in spring 1968, we are making rapid preparations in all fields — material and moral–in position and strength, to bring our greatest war of resistance to foreign aggression to complete victory. That is why in these glorious days when we are celebrating the 40th

1. Talk given on February 17, 1970, at the Conference of Cadres of Haiphong City, reviewing four years of victorious resistance to the U.S. war of destruction (1965-1968).

founding anniversary of our beloved Party, we have the right to be proud of the great successes we have achieved, the successes of our Marxist-Leninist line, of the correct and creative leadership of our Party.

Today, reviewing the great victories won by our nationwide war of resistance to U.S. aggression for national salvation, we cannot refrain from mourning over the death of our beloved President Ho Chi Minh, the great leader of our Party and our people. All of us, every Party member, every fighter, every inhabitant of this port city, every Vietnamese, whether living in the North or in the South agree with Comrade Le Duan when he said: "President Ho Chi Minh is no more, but he is always there to guide us. We feel his constant presence in our midst. For we continue to follow the path charted by him, we continue his great work. He will live for ever with our rivers and mountains, his name and image is ever more deeply engraved in the heart and mind of each of us".

With regard to the people's war waged in the North against the U.S. war of destruction, little by little we have drawn valuable experiences in the recapitulation conferences recently organized in various localities and in various arms and services. But there is another aspect — a most important one — of this problem which needs to be reviewed, and it is the experience gained in our resistance in towns and industrial centres.

This conference organized by the Haiphong municipality has a very rich content and stresses the strong points of the leadership of the Haiphong Party branch and committee. The city Party Committee has constantly followed and correctly

implemented the line and policies of the Central Committee, keeping abreast of the situation in the city with a high determination to fulfil the tasks entrusted by the Party Central Committee and strengthening unity within the Party branch and among the population. It has attached great importance to providing overall leadership while grasping and closely co-ordinating the two main tasks, production and combat. It has worked out the general and concrete tasks, defined its policy and responsibility, speeded up the organization and the measures to carry out these tasks and has known how to concentrate on and complete a task in a given period of time.

I. THE BIG TOWNS AND CITIES — A STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT BATTLEFIELD IN THE PEOPLE'S WAR

In the history of our struggle against foreign aggression, our towns, especially our big towns and cities, have been the site of fierce battles between us and the enemy. In this regard our capital, Hanoi, has achieved many glorious exploits: the battles of Dong Bo Dau, Chuong Duong, and Thang Long against the Yuan army, the victorious battle of Dong Quan in which 90,000 Ming troops surrendered, the resounding victory at Dong Da won by Nguyen Hue over 200,000 Ching aggressors. Haiphong twice routed the aggressors on the Bach Dang river. Nam Dinh and Vinh too have a long-standing tradition of fighting aggressions.

During their eighty years-odd of domination in our country, the French colonialists tried to turn these localities into reactionary political, economic and cultural centres under their control. Our people, with their indomitable spirit have continually risen up to cast off the imperialists' yoke. Since

the foundation of our Party the struggle against the French colonialists, Japanese fascists and their henchmen developed more and more powerfully under its glorious banner among various sections of the towns-people, especially among the workers, the poor labourers, the youth and students, the revolutionary intellectuals and the peasants in the peripheries of towns.

After the complete liberation of the North the patriotism and tradition of revolutionary struggle of the workers and toiling people in urban centres developed more vigorously than at any former time. The successes we have achieved in socialist transformation and socialist economic construction and development have enabled us to turn the luxury-and consumption-oriented towns and cities into political, economic and cultural centres.

First the towns are the political and cultural centres: Hanoi, the capital city, is the seat of the Party Central Committee, the Government and leading political and cultural ograns, and the diplomatic corps; Haiphong, the biggest port of the North, links our country with the socialist camp and other countries in the world. Our present-day towns, like others to be built in the future, are political and cultural centres which will attract a great number of workers — a class which, possessed of profound revolutionary spirit and the most advanced mode of production, is capable of uniting with the peasantry and other classes to transform the old society and build a new one. In the past four years of war, the self-defence units of the working class in the towns and industrial centres, together with the rest of the population, have achieved many brilliant exploits. They have proved their capabilities in combat, combat support, A.A. defence,

maintenance of transport and communications and security and order; they have brought into play their vanguard role in production and shown that they are the true nuclei of the urban population's struggle against the enemy. The energetic actions of the townspeople to counter the predatory raids of American aricraft are symptomatic of the determination of the people in the North and throughout the country to defeat the American aggressors completely and achieve independence and freedom for the Fatherland.

The towns are also economic centres. At present our towns have truly become production centres provided with a modern industry as well as small industries and handicrafts and the areas surrounding them have quite a developed agriculture. In peace time, industrial production in the urban centres plays a role of paramount importance in the whole national economy. In the war, its task has been all the heavier. At the central level, industry serves the fighting, national defence and economic development; in the localities, it serves the people's life and the gradual development of the material and technical basis of agriculture and other productive branches. That is why the protection of production in the urban centres is of great importance.

At present all our industrial enterprises are concentrated in the towns and industrial centres, which have a network of communication lines to transport goods and materials in and out. These lines fan out to every corner of the land and link our country to other countries, especially the socialist camp. For this reason, in the war of destruction against the North, the Americans have striven to destroy the communication lines of many towns and cities.

The towns have also a strategic importance and have thus been the site of fierce battles between us and the enemy.

We do not have such big cities as many other countries in the world; our future cities will have populations of only about one million. Though our urban population is not very great, it shows great density, amounting in the big towns and industrial centres to twenty or thirthy thousand inhabitants per square kilometre, and even thirty to forty thousand in some town quarters. The townspeople belong to various sections and occupations: they are mostly workers, civil servants, cultural, scientific and technical workers or students. They are valuable assets of the country, its huge productive and fighting forces.

These features show the difference between the town and the countryside and also the strategic importance of the towns. They explain to some extent why the large towns, cities and industrial centres were the particular targets of fierce American raids, why they were singled out for the greatest war escalation. If, in the recent war of destruction against the socialist North, the Americans did not attack the big towns from the very beginning, it is not because they were "stupid" but because they had to abide by the rule of "escalation". They were waging a war of aggression in the sixties of the 20th century, when the balance of forces was most unfavourable for the imperialists. This deterred the Americans from mobilizing their forces for massive attacks from the very beginning. They had to use these forces cautiously and pursue limited goals of aggression in order to avoid heavy losses. While fighting they had to prepare public opinion and proceed with care, probing and listening. In this way, they hoped to be able to ward off

heavy military and political failure, avoid being isolated in face of public opinion, and alleviate somewhat the contradictions within their own ruling class as well as those between the American people and the American rulers.

But our people in both zones, North and South, are resolved not to let the American aggressors realize their wild dream. The air operation "Flaming Dart" launched at the beginning of 1965 as a curtain-raiser for their "retaliatory offensive" was repelled with heavy losses. Operation "Rolling Thunder", another escalation, was duly punished. Then the aggressors attacked Vinh, Thanh Hoa, Ninh Binh, Lao Cai, Yen Bai and began their air raids on the peripheries of Hanoi and Haiphong, which resulted in the loss of many planes and a new failure for their strategic scheme. The determination of our people to liberate the South and defend the North, far from faltering was more and more strengthened.

In face of that stalemate in both zones of our country, the Americans were compelled to take a new, rash step: to strike at the big towns of the socialist North, threatening to send the North "back to the stone age" in order to attain the strategic objectives of their war of destruction. The reports made to Congress by the U.S. Pacific Command and the Commander of the U.S. expeditionary forces in South Viet Nam acknowledged that a plan had been worked out to attacks Hanoi and Haiphong as early as November 1965, but the date had been postponed until June 29, 1966, by President Johnson after weighing the pros and cons: he has been asking himself whether that escalation would entail even heavier losses, whether it would soften the blows delivered by the patriots in the South, whether it would shake the determination of our people, and whether it would be severely

condemned by world opinion. By raiding Hanoi and Haiphong, the Americans hoped to attain their strategic goals and to prevent the brother socialst countries from helping our war of resistance. In his report Grant Sharp wrote that the aim of the bombing throughout 1967 was "to isolate Haiphong from Hanoi and Hanoi and Haiphong from the rest of North Viet Nam". In their attacks on Hanoi and Haiphong the American aircraft did their best to destroy all the sources of energy of our nascent industry, all the means of transport and the fuel depots with the definite intent of wrecking our economic potentialities and national defence. The Americans stupidly reckoned that the North would then give up its resolve to fight by the side of its Southern brothers.

This is obviously an impudent challenge not only to our people but also to the peoples of the socialist countries and of the whole world. By this rash action President Johnson committed a mistake of strategic importance.

In practice, it was when the escalation was at its highest that the American aggressors received the hardest blows, the greatest number of U.S. planes was downed and the greatest number of airmen killed or captured, including the "aces" of the U.S. Air Force; the most sophisticated types of planes and the latest news tactics failed before the determination and creative initiative of our people. This shows that, because they wage an unjust war of aggression against our people's just war of self-defence, the Americans are doomed to failure despite the use of a huge quantity of war materials and modern technique. This also exposes the truth that the "unimaginable strength of the U.S. Air Force" in fact has its limits and is not so terrible as they boast. At the same time a fundamental military thesis of the U.S. imperialists that

"the air force decides the outcome of the battle" has been knocked down by the iron-like determination of our people.

On the other hand, the heinous crimes committed by the American aggressors against our people brought severe criticism from the world; the American people castigated the American rulers who saw their ranks more and more divided and their inner contradictions, already acute, deepen. The heavier their military setbacks, the more isolated they grew in the political field, and the greater their difficulties and losses in the two parts of our country. That is the reason why the American imperialists scaled down the war and finally admitted defeat. They were compelled to unconditionally stop the bombing and shelling of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and to sit down and talk with the representatives of the D.R.V.N. and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, now the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nâm, the genuine representative of the 14 million South Vietnamese.

We study the law governing the actions of the American imperialists in the past so as to draw the necessary conclusions on the conduct of the war and thwart all their strategic schemes at present and in the future. While they have been forced to end their war of destruction, they are still engaging in armed reconnaissance missions and local raids combined with commando activities, infringing the security of North Viet Nam. In future when the U.S. imperialists suffer even heavier defeats in South Viet Nam, it is possible that they may step up their activities to retrieve their situation in the battlefield, and again attack the urban and industrial centres in the North. We must be highly vigilant and beware of their new perfidious

manoeuvres. Of course, the war to be waged in future will not be the same as it has been. Since the U.S. imperialists are a most warlike world policeman who recoils from no treacherous means, it is possible that, under definite circumstances, they will not necessarily follow the path of gradual escalation before attacking our big towns and important industrial centres. This analysis of the features and laws governing the activities of the enemy and our experiences from our recent victorious resistance will enable us to raise the level of our conduct of the war in future and to take it to even greater successes.

II. BRILLIANT VICTORIES OF PEOPLE'S WAR IN THE URBAN CENTRES OF THE SOCIALIST NORTH

Assessing the great successes of four years of people's war against the American imperialists' war of destruction, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out that "This is a victory of paramount importance for our people's war against U.S. aggression, for national salvation".

We have partially beaten off the war of aggression waged by the American imperialists, we have foiled one of their strategic schemes, and a new form of war, a part of their war against our country.

While 1.2 million GIs, puppet mercenaries and satellite troops suffered heavy defeats in South Viet Nam, the "supremacy of the U.S. Air Force" was buried in the North. This testifies to the invincible nature of people's war, the hopeless bankruptcy of the obsolete military science of imperialism and our ample capability to defeat any kind of aggressive war by any imperialist who dares to invade our country.

As you have mentioned in your report, the victory won by the inhabitants and armed forces of the towns and industrial centres are most brillian and significant in many ways. I will develop some ideas.

1. First, this is a triumph for the determination of our people to sacrifice themselves for independence and freedom and for the political and military line of our Party and its most correct and skilful conduct of the war.

What our people have experienced in our recent war of resistance against U.S. aggression in both parts or our country has enabled us to see our foe more clearly. The American aggressors are the leading imperialists, cruel, perfidious, wealthy with a huge military and economic potential.

In order to defeat them, we must first have a very firm resolve, for it is the decisive factor of our victories. It is also the manifestation of a profound revolutionary spirit, a firm stand and a solid basis from which to carry out a correct and creative political and military task. Our resolve is to defeat the American aggressors. This is the resolve of our Party Central Committee headed by President Ho Chi Minh, of the 17 million people in the North who are determined to fulfil their lofty duty towards the Fatherland and of their 14 million brothers and sisters in the South. This is also the resolve of the South — the Brass Wall of the Fatherland — whose people are determined that "should the American aggressors strike the North once, the South would strike them ten, twenty times harder". With such an iron will, our people duly punished the aggressors immediately after they had fabricated the "Tonkin Gulf incident" and brazenly unleashed

on August 5, 1964, their war planes against many localities in the North, including the towns of Vinh and Hong Gai. With this firm determination, the people in the North thwarted all U.S. escalations of the war. Meanwhile, the American aggressors who landed en masse in South Viet nam to save the Saigon puppet regime were soundly beaten by the South Vietnamese people. To escape from their difficulties in both zones of our country, on June 29, 1966, the American air pirates attacked Hanoi and HaiPhong, the two biggest cities in the North, inaugurating a most serious stage in their war escalation. Determined to fight selflessly for independence and freedom our people repulsed them. This resolve was expressed in President Ho Chi Minh's appeal of July 17, 1966, an unforgettable sacred call to the nation. He said: "Johnson and his clique should realize that they may bring in 500,000, one milion or even more troops to step up the war of aggression in South Vietnam. They may use thousands of aircraft for intensified attacks against North Vietnam. But never will they be able to break the iron will of the heroic Vietnamese people to fight against U.S. aggression, for national salvation. The more obstinate they are, the graver their crime. The war may last another five, ten, twenty years or longer. Hanoi, HaiPhong and other cities and enterprises may be destroyed but the Vietnamese people will not be intimidated! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. Once victory is won, our people will rebuild our country and make it even more beautiful".

Responding to that appeal, we resolutely defeated the two wars of destruction of the American aggressors, who reached a very high rung in their escalation. Because we were convinced that "Nothing is more precious than independence and

freedom" and were not afraid of seeing Hanoi and Haiphong destroyed, these two cities stood firm and became two heroic cities. This has been confirmed by Western writers and journalists who have visited our country. The British journalist Felix Greene wrote that he had seen every citizen in those cities ready to sacrifice his life, and when an entire people are ready for such a sacrifice, nothing can frighten them.

Our determination is a concrete manifestation of the profound revolutionary spirit of the working class and the superiority of our socialist system. It is also a well-founded, objetively and scientifically-based resolve. As soon as the U.S. "special war" strategy proved a hopeless failure in South Viet Nam, our Party foresaw that the Americans might engage in sustained efforts to wreck the North. Our assessment was that the war of destruction was an integral part of the U.S. war of aggression in South Viet Nam. Its task was to hit at the great base of the great frontline, to attack the revolutionary base of the whole nation, in order to save the U.S. and its puppets from severe defeat. That is why this war of destruction is related to the development of the U.S. war of aggression in South Viet Nam, and, in the main, it will end only when the U.S. aggressors are completely defeated there.Besides waging their war of destruction, the Americans are attempting to deliver a blow at the socialist camp and the nations who have gained independence and sovereignty, thus challenging the revolutionary people in the world.

Politically, this is the fundamental weak point of the U.S. war of destruction, because, originating as the byproduct of the Americans' strategic failure in the South Viet Nam battlefront it has from the very outset, borne a strategically passive character. At the same time, as part of the U.S. "limited war" of aggression

in the South, it cannot escape the law of this war which works as follows: "As he fails, the U.S. aggressor is obliged to escalate the war; when this escalation comes to grief, he is compelled to scale up the war, only to suffer a bigger setback which eventually forces him to climb to the highest rung. Then, when he meets with even greater failure, he is compelled to scale down the war before he meets total fiasco".

If the U.S. war of destruction is governed by this law, this is also due to the fact that it bears the character of an unjust and brazen aggression against the D.R.V.N., an independent sovereign country, a member of the socialist camp. This impudent provocation against our people and progressive forces in the world leads to the fact that the bigger the size of the U.S. imperialists' military operations, the heavier their defeat and the greater their isolation in the political field. That is why notwithstanding its huge air force, ample modern technical means and air bases close to North Viet Nam,the U.S. is still ruled by the law of gradual escalation. In fact, over the last few years in the big towns we have seen that the Americans have sometimes scaled up the air war, and sometimes scaled it down to escalate it later. They closely combined their barbarous methods with political and diplomatic manoeuvres and their acts of destruction with psychological war. At times, they made use of concentrated forces to launch massive attacks on big towns so as to shake our resolve to fight them. But the bigger the battles, the heavier their defeat, and they were compelled to resort to sneak attack by small groups before finally resigning themselves to failure.

To lead our people in their victorious struggle against the U.S. war of destruction, our Party has charted a correct and skilful political and military line. It has come to the conclusion

that the war of destruction waged by the U.S. in the North is not yet an outright aggression but a part of its war of aggression aimed at imposing its domination on South Viet Nam. Our Party has laid down for both parts of our country the line and revolutionary task to beat the U.S. war of destruction and build up socialism in the North; it has correctly handled the relation between production and combat and clearly set concrete tasks to our people in the new situation, together with the policy of the transformation of peace time to wartime activities simultaneously with the swift development of the armed forces.

Our review of people's war in big towns must bring into relief the skilful application of the Party's general line and policy at the same time as it studies and analyses the military line, the people's war. It needs to make clear that the people's war waged against the U.S. war of destruction in the North is part of the people's war waged by our people throughout the country against U.S. aggression. It has been conducted in the large rear area of the resistance war — the revolutionary base of the whole country — and therefore is a war of liberation. On the other hand, this people's war is also a war to defend the socialist North, an independent and sovereign country, member of the socialist camp. That is why it has the task and the character of a war for national defence, one which, this time, is waged when the North has a great political and moral strength, a great material force and the superiority of the socialist system. With its own forces and the staunch support of the brother socialist countries, the North can meet the primary needs of combat, construction and the people's life in a long war and at the same time establish the basis for national construction when the war comes to a victorious end.

Formerly Lenin differentiated between two kinds of just war, the liberation war and the self-defence war or war for national defence. The liberation war is waged by a subjugated people rising up with bare hands and eventually winning victory, as Uncle Ho said in a poem composed at Pac Bo[1]. The self-defence war is waged by a nation which has gained independence, has a political, economic and military base, and uses its power to mobilize its human and material forces to fight foreign aggression. In the history of our struggle against agression our people have waged these two kinds of war. Today the advanced ralations of production in the socialist North have enabled us to make a genuine people's war with a new quality and a new strength extending over a wide area, from the vast rural areas to the cities and industrial centres.

The socialist system has created favourable conditions for all regions to develop vigorously, objectively and subjectively, so as to become vanguard regions. Nevertheless, the urban centres, especially the big towns with the features mentioned above possess better conditions for an extensive people's war with the elements of a modern war, waged on every front.

If our struggle against U.S. aggression for national salvation is first of all a decisive test of our will and determination, here, especially in Hanoi and Haiphong, this will and determination is most typical of our people and their armed forces. It is typical of our conviction that nothing is more precious than independence and freedom, of our resolve to smash the greatest war escalation of the American aggressors. Here the socialist relations of production have gained predominance and appeared in the form of public ownership and collective

1. The author is referring to the poem *Majestic Pac Bo* which Uncle Ho wrote in February 1941.

ownership, serving as a firm basis for the close unity and unanimity of the entire people and for the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the Party. Here the profound revolutionary spirit of the working-class is closely linked to the new potentialities of our nascent but developing industry.

That we have defeated the U.S. Air Force and defended our economic and defence potential, especially in the big towns and cities marks a step forward for the people's war and is a great success of our Party in the guidance of people's war. We can be proud that we have accumulated valuable first hand experience on the role played by A.A. units, rocket-launching units, air force and modern war means and weapons used in the anti-aircraft defence in urban centres. These are advanced experiences because in this strategic battlefield we have concentrated a fairly big force against the American aggressors. That is why it is precisely in the towns and urban centres that our people have gained the most important experiences in anti-aircraft defence technique, especially in such fields as the organization of operations, guidance of combat co-ordination and in devising the best fighting methods for each category of anti-aircraft defence and air forces.

In the guidance of anti-aircraft defence in urban centres, especially in big towns and cities, offensive should go together with defensive and people's air defence should be stepped up. We must lay great emphasis on these two tasks, because they complement each other in the protection of the people's lives and the property as well as that of the State, they reduce our losses to the minimum and create conditions for our people to replenish their forces for a long war. People's anti-aircraft defence in big towns and cities also contributes to the

stabilization, consolidation and improvement of our living standard and so enhances our determination to struggle.

The people's defence work has been satisfactorily carried out in every locality in the North, but it was the big town which gained the most valuable experiences. It is there that the people's air defence has shown to the greatest extend its initiative, eagerness to fight the enemy, popular character and sense of discipline. It is there that many complicated problems of people's air defence have been solved. It can be said that it is there that the development of people's war has manifested itself most clearly in order to beat a war waged mainly by the U.S. air force.

In transport and communications we have gained valuable experiences the most important of which is in long-distance transport south of the 4th Military Zone, which was constantly subjected to fierce American bombardments, Nevertheless the big towns and cities and some big industrial centres have transport problems of their own: the major one is the leadership, organization and mobilization of the huge potentialities of the working class with its well-knit force, a force which has rapidly adapted itself to war conditions, reached a high technical level and possessed modern equipment and means. Another major problem is the simultaneous protection of many communication lines to ensure regular traffic in a small area constantly exposed to enemy raids.

Furthermore, the big towns and industrial centres possess rich experience (different from that gained in the countryside) in such problems as organization of the people's life, keeping

security and order, mobilization of human force for the front, building of the militia and self-defence units.

Another important task of the people's war policy successfully applied to big towns is shifting the economy from a peace-time to wartime economy and building and developing the local economies. With the manpower found locally, and the assistance afforded by other localities, the central government and the brother countries, we have met the needs of the struggle and sent supplies to the great front, meanwhile helping to satisfy the people's requirements in primary goods. We have been able not only to protect our material and technical bases but also to establish new ones, to maintain the centrally-run economy while developing the local economies, increasing our economic potential and strenthening our national defence. In the four years of war against U.S. aggression, the economic tasks successfully carried out in the big towns and cities have contributed to the great victory of our people in the North, a victory of strategic significance in all fields.

How has the Party's economic line been applied to the war conditions in urban centres? Besides those problems related to the policy and trend of production, it is clear that the organization and distribution of production in close coordination with the combat forces and the protection of production, as well as the continuity of industrial production while the enterprises were partially or wholly scattered, are experiences susceptible of further application. These experiences are not only to be applied if war breaks out again but are immediately applicable so as to coordinate the national economy with national defence. The most correct attitude of

those who are masters of their country is to see to its economic development as well as the strengthening of its defence.

2. Skilful application of the military art of people's war to A.A. defence in towns and industrial centres.

In their air strikes at our towns and industrial centres, the American aggressors made use of a huge air force comprising the most up-to-date planes (except for B.52s which were used only in Vinh Linh and Quang Binh), which manned by experienced air pirates, struck in repeated waves of attack and resorted to the most perfidious tricks. The US Air Force used demolition bombs of from 1,000 to 3,000lbs to destroy buildings in urban centres; time-bombs and delayed-action bombs to seal off access to them; CBUs, gas bombs and fragmentation rockets to strike at populous town quarters, rockets and guided bombs to hit at industrial bases and other important targets. They continually changed their striking methods, using now big forces for massive operations and launching successive waves of attacks; now small forces for sudden attacks, and shifting from day operations to day and night operations.

Though perfidious and cruel the American aggressors could not attain their strategic objectives, because our townspeople had a great resolve and skilfully applied the military art of people's war to A.A. defence.

This military art stems from the Party's people's war line. The primary purpose of this line is to unite the whole nation and entire people for the fight and to use the people's armed forces as a fighting nucleus under the leadership of the working class to bring into play the combative force of the

whole nation in order to defeat the powerful aggressive forces of imperialism. The military art of people's war applied to A.A. defence derives from the line of people's war against the U.S. war of destruction waged chiefly by aircraft. The main content of that line is to unite the entire people against enemy air strikes, for A.A. defence and for the maintenance of traffic communications; to coordinate closely production and combat, attack and defence; to change the trend of economic production in order to serve national defence, the people's life and the building of socialism. This military art applied to A.A. defence is also based on the general principles of the war of resistance against U.S. aggression: popular, all-sided and prolonged resistance relying mainly on our own powers while drawing international support.

Basing itself on the above-mentioned points and on our characteristic features and those of the enemy, our Party has at once realized that in order to counter the piratic attacks of American aircraft and to defend our towns and cities and industrial centres — chiefly the big ones — and other important points, it is necessary to mobilize the entire people for the fight, to take the three categories of our armed forces as nuclei, to make the most use ot the weapons and war means in hand, from small guns (rifles and tommy-guns) to A.A. batteries of various calibers, rockets and jet planes. From experience in fighting we can now draw the conclusion that his way of posing the question is correct and imaginative and expresses the view-point of people's war as applied to operations of defence againt US modern aviation. The point has been confirmed that in a modern war, the factor deciding victory is man and not weaponry. The new man in the socialist system is one with profound patriotism and deep hatred for

the enemy, capable of handling any weapon in hand and using flexible tactics to defeat the enemy.

In the defence of urban centres and other important targets, each A.A. weapon has its own usefulness. Whereas our rockets and aircraft strike the enemy at long distance and high altitude, rifles and 12.7 and 14.5-mm machine guns are needed in battles against low-flying planes. That is why, despite the fact that the big towns and cities have a wide range of sophisticated weapons and war means such as aircraft, rockets and A.A. batteries of various sizes, since the very beginning we have paid attention to the launching of a widespread aircraft-hunting movement among the population.

The correct solution of that problem has not only resulted in a great number of enemy planes brought down but, more important still, it has gradually shaped the fundamental lines of military art in A.A. defence. Today practice has confirmed that an efficient A.A. defence system operating in urban centres must possess a ubiquitous multi-level fire network operating in close co-ordination with the gun emplacements built in the suburbs and in adjacent areas adding their actions to those of the batteries installed in the town itself. In order to bring into full play the fire network defending the town, the key problem in A.A. defence operations is to organize a good combat co-ordination between various arms and various units in which weapons of different kinds must closely co-ordinate their action and develop their full efficiency.

But how is that combat coordination organized in urban centres? Many problems crop up which require a judicious guiding principle. That principle is "to closely combine the operations of the army A.A. defence forces (A.A. batteries,

rocket, air force, radar) with those of the widespread aircraft-hunting movement in infantry units, especially in self-defence units and militia". This principle is most appropriate and has a pratical meaning as it contributes to the unity of thought, organization, command and fighting style, enabling the army units to closely co-ordinate their action, thereby intensifying the efficiency of A.A. fire. Whenever enemy aircraft make their appearance, the harmonious coordination of our A.A. defence is a nice sight to watch. It can be said that all the units recently taking part in the defence of our cities — A.A. batteries, rockets, air force, self-defence, militia and in some localities, the navy and people's armed police — have achieved brilliant exploits.

Because they have grasped the guiding principles of people's war and skilfully adapted them to the condition of A.A. defence in the cities, our armed forces have devised many resourceful and flexible fighting methods. The A.A. gunners fight the enemy unremittingly and with mobility, using the surprise factor and sometimes concentrating their fire to the maximum. The rocket launching units focused their attention on a prepared battlefield while sometimes using mobile combat tactics. With its own specialized combat methods our air force has downed many enemy aircraft, including the most up-to-date ones. Our self-defence force and militia have two main forms of fighting : firstly, organization into teams of sections fighting in rotation so that combat duty is permanently assured; and secondly fighting and production work carried out in place, gun in one hand and hammer or plough in the other "Thanks to their tight organization and good command our self-defence units were able to save manpower for production while displaying high combat efficiency, particularly the 12.7

and 14.5-mm gun teams. We have devised fighting methods appropriate to Vietnamese conditions and over the towns. These are most valuable experiences which enable us to fight victoriously against superior numbers. With weapons and war means in the main inferior to those of the enemy in quantity and modernity,we were able to defeat him. We have fought with the spirit of "attacking the enemy to wipe him out, defending our targets, maintaining and replenishing our forces, and developing our strength in the course of fighting." This has prevented the US air force from bringing its strong points into full play while it exposes its weaknesses more clearly for us to exploit.

The struggle of our urban centres against the US air force has enabled us to correctly assess the possibilities, roles and positions of the various components of the armed forces in our A.A. defence network.

Our A.A. artillery units, a most important force, fight perseveringly and unremittingly, showing their great potential in the defence of the town and cities, industrial centres and other targets. They are easy to move and easy to replenish; in addition they have a wide range of fire and consequenlty in case of need can independently defend a point inside or outside the city. Our rocket launching units and young air force, even in their baptism of fire, have proved to be a match for the modern US air force. Equipped with sophisticate weapons, they are one of the main elements in the anti-aircraft defence system of the cities as they are able to foil the enemy attacks from afar, wipe out the enemy at high altitude, co-ordinate their action and create favourable condition for A.A. batteries or the militia and other combat units to wipe out the enemy. The building and development

of these modern arms is the result of great efforts made by our people's army towards meeting the requirements of combat, and marks the maturity of our people's armed forces. Meanwhile, we have paid great attention to spread the aircraft-hunting movement far and wide, taking as core the selfdefence forces in the city and the militia in the suburbs.

In fact, the self-defence units and militia in various towns, cities, and industrial centres have played a role of paramount importance. Fighting independently, these seld-defence and militia units have shot down many American jets by small arms.

The battle recently given to the sophisticated American aircarft over the towns and cities has made us realize the necessity of fighting low-flying planes in a modern war. It can be entirely undertaken by self-defence and militia units in the towns and cities. In Hanoi, Hai Phong, Nam Dinh, Hon Gai, Cam Pha and other urban centres besides self-defence units equipped with small arms, there appeared self-defence units handling small caliber A.A.artillery pieces fighting most courageously and resourcefully, an efficient help in air defence. From this fact we can infer that the self-defence forces in urban centres have ample possibilities for using sophisticated weapons to strengthen air defence. The self-defence units in urban centres are composed mainly of workers who live and work together in close-knit organizations belonging to various branches of production, chiefly industrial production, and can therefore quickly adapt themselves to the fighting conditions of the armed forces. These units are also made up of office workers and town people who also have a high revolutionary spirit, a good cultural standard and particularly a fair scientific and

technical knowledge enabling them to assimilate modern military tactics and technique. They are organized according to production units and government, technical departments, and have many possibilities to serve in combat and combat support. If over the recent period there had been better organization, equipment and training for self-defence units in urban centres, they would probably have developed their combat efficiency even more vigorously.

Self-defence of late was also the main combat support force in urban and industrial centres. In the past four years Hanoi and Haiphong alone used tens of millions of work days for combat support; other towns, townships and industrial centres used hundreds of thousands of workdays each. In these localities this work showed à high degree of technical proficiency. There, members of self-defence units of industrial enterprises worked hundreds of thousands of days for national defence to turn out or repair means of communications and transport, and parts for A.A. batteries, rockets, telecommunications, army engineers and the navy. The self-defence units also train tens of thousands of gunners, transport workers and other technicians to replenish the regular armed forces. Here, the workers' skilful hands and the material and technical basis of our young industry have created huge potentialities for combat support as is proved by facts: it was the worker members of self-defence units who made bridges, ferries, prefabricated fortifications or used modern technical means to repair or expand airfields and build "urgent military roads" for the pressing needs of the war. All this shows that the local logistic forces of our socialist towns and cities have a huge potential for serving a long war if they are well organized, protected and made use of.

We are aware that in military operations, particularly in A.A. operations, protection plays a role of paramount importance. Attacking the enemy should go hand in hand with A.A. defence and the protection of the popoulation. This is a most correct policy, a guiding principle of A.A. operations and has yielded tremendous results in the defence of urban centres. These are two tasks closely connected with each other. Whatever the circumstances they cannot be separated. Because we carried out such work as A.A. defence, camouflage, protection of the population, and decoys, suitable to the topography and the conditions of our urban centres, we were able to reduce our losses to a minimum and strengthen our forces in the course of a long struggle.

Our urban and industrial centres have also satisfactorily carried out such work as protection of the lives and property of the population, the property of the State and the stabilization of the people's life and production work in wartime. Civilian A.A. defence helped to raise the fighting spirit of our people. It is particularly important in urban centres, chiefly in big towns and cities, as conditions there are more pressing and complicated than in the countryside. In the countryside, to protect ourselves against enemy bombs and shelles, even in the hardest-hit areas, like the 4th zone, we have concentrated our efforts on protecting the people's lives and property by building a system of underground shelters without considering it necessary to make a large scale transfer of the population, as its density here is not so heavy as in urban centres and the material and the technical basis not so important. In urban and industrial centres, civilian A.A defence work is more complicated as it is necessary to solve the problem of evacuation, the scattering of the population, machines,

equipment, and goods within a short time. Not just tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated from urban centres to rural areas and not just some parts of a factory but whole factories indeed a large number of modern factories, were transferred. This was a very hard job. However, thanks to the great sense of responsibility of our cadres at all levels who were concerned with the people's lives and the property of the people and the State, and thanks to the people's high vigilance, the application of the principle of joint efforts by the State and the population and, to the activity, initiative, scienfific organization, and mass character of civilian A.A. defence, we were able to overcome difficulties, which at first sight had seemed to be insuperable. Realizing that this was a most difficult task, we required that evacuation should be promplty done but safely ensured, that production and other work should be normalized and the people's life should not be greatly affected while their living standard should be adapted to the war conditions in order to bring success in both production and fighting.

After organizing evacuation, we can now draw some experiences to be applied to towns and cities and industrial centres. The main points are :

Compulsory evacuation of aged people, children, production units whose presence in the towns is not required, schools, administrative offices, and non-combatants.

Evacuation in case of need of those duty-called to stay.

Partial evacuation or scattering to various places in the town itself of offices and factories whose presence in the towns is necessary, of heavily populated town-quarters, areas

where offices and enterprises are concentrated, or those near likely targets of the enemy.

It is clear that for the leadership and guidance of production and combat, and a good organization of the people's life, it is necessary to classify the objects of evacuation : evacuation of production units, of government offices and of the population.

Haiphong has based itself on that classification to determine the zones of evacuation most convenient for each category such as the zone reserved for heavy industry, the zone for light industry, the zone for government offices and education, etc. Nam Dinh relies on the particular features of each category to provide in with proper leadership in order to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance, establish close relation between industry and argiculture, between town and country. This is an indispensable work, a good experience.

Besides the organization of evacuation, we have also seen to the building of shelters in urban centres. We understand that a shelter is not only destined to afford refuge but also to guarantee the continuation of production and fighting and create conditions for the population to keep up production, fight, and give combat support. One noteworthy success achieved by various localities was the widespread shelter buiding movement in which the population displayed many initiatives such as the building of 20-mm shell-proof, CBU-proof, demolition bomb-proof shelters, the building of underground trenches for refuge during air raids; the building of revetments and communication trenches to counter enemy surprise raid, etc.

A.A. defence in urban centres includes other important works such as the organization of an air-alarm system and of means to overcome the aftermath of air raids (chiefly the

rescue of people in collapsed shelters). These problems, which were more complicated in the towns than in the countryside, were satisfactorily settled. Many localities had their own plan to hunt enemy aircraft as well as to combat flood and to check the sabotage activities of the few bad elements which might still remain in urban centres.

These are but some problems related to the guidance of the struggle against American air raids in the towns. Reviewing the whole A.A. defence work in urban centres, we see all the more clearly that this is a clear manifestation of the development of the people's war against the U.S. war of destruction. Its tremendous effects have greatly reduced the damage done to the townsfolk in lives and property.

3. Changing the trend of the economy, meeting the requirements of combat, the people's life and socialist construction

In the four years of resisance to the US war of destruction, our people, who have fought courageously and with great revolutionary heroism and worked painstakingly, have won victories of strategic significance; these victories were made possible thanks chiefly to the completion of the economic tasks of the various regions in the socialist North, including the urban and industrial centres.

The success of the urban population in production lies first in the shifting of economic activities from peace time to war time, and the building and development of the regional economies. Our townspeople have skilfully applied the Party Central Committee's resolution on the trend and task of production in the new situation: continuing the construction of

the North, closely coordinating production with combat and economic construction with strengthening of national defence resolutely defending the North and defeating the air and naval war of the enemy. In the light of a correct analysis of the American imperialists' scheme against the socialist North, the great rear base of the resistance to US aggression and revolutionary base of the whole country, we have rapidly adjusted the direction of our economic building and development in urban centres which includes many lines of production, mainly industrial production. To maintain industrial production in big towns and cities, where is concentrated an important part of industrial enterprises in the North, our urgent task is to efficiently protect these productive forces : men and machinery, first of all the men.

At the end of 1964, when the US air force was intensifying its spying activities and carrying out provocations south of the 4th zone, we took an initial measure to protect our industrial installations, especially in the regions likely to be attacked by the enemy. We also urgently carried out the necessary preparations with regard to the stocking of goods and material, while taking measures to maintain traffic in the best conditions, aware that "transport and communications is the urgent central task of the Party and the people". Early in 1965, while coping with the raids of the US air force which was committing crimes against our population south of the 4th zone, we foresaw that the enemy might intensify his war of destruction by unleashing his aircraft against our big towns and cities and attacking relentlessly these centres and their suburbs. We advocated that in order to cope with the US air war, the best way in the urban centres is to organize combat as well as defence and protection,

to normalize the people's life and production quickly after each battle and to keep communications and transport in good order under all circumstances. That is why, before the enemy's attacks on big towns and centres, we had had a concrete policy with regard to the activities of industrial enterprises by deciding which of them would be evacuated, which of them would remain, that the evacuated ones should have a definite plan for that purpose, and the remaining ones should dig shelters, build revetments and arrange things in a suitable manner.

The purpose of the evacuation of workshops and factories is to protect the productive forces so as to maintain the continuity of production and wage an all-sided and prolonged war so as to win repeated victories. Stemming from this, the evacuation of industrial enterprises was zealously carried out in order of priority and classification : which would be evacuated first , which would follow suit, which would go for good, which would be transferred only partly and which wholly.

The guidance in the evacuation of production units in big towns and cities calls for a long process of political education with the creation of various forms and methods for its execution. It is for us a new task which requires a concrete and scientific plan to carry out. Under the energetic leadership of the Party at various levels, learning from the example set by the cadres and Party members and bringing into play the role of the T.U. organization with the militia and youth union members as core, we have satisfactorily resolved that problem. Over the past four years, hundreds of enterprises and store houses at central and regional level have been carefully protected together with

hundreds of thousands of tons of machines and equipment and millions of tons of goods.

This protection requires great efforts on the part of our people and armed forces, It is of paramount significance as it allows the continuation of production under any war conditions. The maintenance and acceleration of socialist construction in big towns and cities has an important effect as it enables us to meet the requirements of combat and supply to the front and contributes to the stabilization of the people's life and of other aspects of life.

In order to successfully shift the economy from a state of peace to a state of war and to build and expand the regional economies, it is necessary to inculcate a sense of vigilance on the masses, combat all complacency, raise their sense of responsibility in the struggle and do away with all manifestations of shirking duty. In government offices, enterprises and workshops, this ideological education must be translated into action in combat, protection of production and development of the role of the working class.

One of the many experiences we have gained in the organization of evacuation is the need to make a careful study of the characteristics of each enterprise, of its chain of production, its system of management...in order to find an appropriate site, decide the extent of evacuation, and calculate the size of the new constructions. Due to difficulties in the evacuation of a huge volume of machinery and equipment, many enterprises have had to alter their production processes to adapt themselves to the war conditions. In the end, they were well protected and able to rapidly normalize and maintain the tempo of production. On the other hand, through lack of preparation and delay in evacuation many workshops took a

long time to stabilize their production and even suffered human and material losses.

Another important experience in the evacuation of enterprise from big towns and cities is the co-ordination between the ugrent need of evacuation and the drawing up of plans for the building of permanent local economic enterprises which should lead to the gradual stabilization and development of production, whatever the circumstances, to meet immediate as well as long-tem requirements.

In big towns, cities and industrial centres, skilled workers go to the front in greater and greater numbers; nevertheless production is not disturbed because the Party's combat slogan "the more stubbornly we fight, the greater victories we win, and the stronger we become" has been made to govern wartime production: "produce while seeking to raise productivity and expand prodution". In urban centres, tens of thousands of cadres and skilled workers have been recently trained in long term courses and correspondence courses, the major part being trained on the job. Many women workers can now replace men in work requiring advanced technique so that they can go to the front. Resolved to "produce well and fight well", the working class and other toilers in the towns, and collective farmers in the peripheries or towns have energetically defended their production work and courageously clung to their working sites to keep production going. As it is an important front in the struggle against US aggression, all the fighters on that front have shown clearly that they stand firm on it. "Fight when the enemy comes, continue production and normal life when he has been driven away". In this struggle, the working class and peasantry have set a bright example in worker-peasant alliance. Despite fierce enemy raids the workers have toiled day and night to meet the requirements of the fighting and the

people's life, and especially to serve the technical revolution in agriculture. In the new relations of production, the collective peasants have given up lands and houses to the workers to set up industrial enterprises, and fought with them to defend the workshops as well as their villages. It is clear that, thanks to the superiority of the socialist system and the material and technical basis of socialism, our urban and industrial centres have enjoyed more favourable conditions to strengthen the worker – peasant alliance and to use it as a firm basis to unite the people and step up people's war in the political, military and economic fields. This is the new force and potential of people's war in urban centres at present.

Another problem to be solved by urban centres is "how to combine the triple revolution : the revolution in relations of production, the technical revolution, and the cultural and ideological revolution, while maintaining and developing production in wartime conditions".

We know that a good organization of wartime production is dependent on the socialist relations of production. The urban centres are the points of industrial concentration and if they are determined to develop industrial production to an appropriate size they can serve the people's life and the fighting while helping to improve the new relations of production. To accelerate industrial production we must overcome such shortcomings as perfunctoriness, slackness, the relaxation of labour regulations, and the tendency to think that "in time of war, the mere fact of producing commodities is already a good thing" and belittle their economic value. There is also a tendency to relax management and flout cost accounting practice. The movement in which the workers take part in the management of their workshops and take their production team as a basis, launched in many localities, has raised the sense of responsibility of the

workers, their love of labour and their courage in combat and has taught them to live an organized and disciplined life. Experience has confirmed that, when production is scattered, the production team is the best -managed unit. Nevertheless, it is necessary to maintain in good working order the leadership of the local Party branch, and the activities of the trade-union, youth organization and self-defence unit, to lay emphasis on better management, gradually solve the problems of labour management, ensure the efficiency of workdays, rationally divide manpower between production and fighting, carefully manage receipts and expenses, encourage the workers and production teams to raise productivity.

There is no hiding the fact that, as a consequence of the revolution in the relation of production achieved in the four years of war, the technical revolution in urban centres has continued to make its effects felt in industry, agriculture, communications and transport.

Industry: On the whole, industrial production was maintained in the fierce war years, The enemy strove to deny us electric power by hitting at our depots of fuel, materials, equipment and machines causing us great difficulties, but our various industrial branches were able to maintain their activities. Regional industry has increased its production year by year and built new production units. The economic structure has undergone an initial change and many valuable branches of production have taken shape, meeting the war requirement. Engineering developed fairly harmoniously supplying greater and greater quantities of implements to agriculture and gradually equipping it with small machines for the technological revolution.

The industrial branch harnessed to communications and transport also developed at a quick tempo, fulfilling its targets

every year and satisfying the requirements of central and local transport and communications. The consumer goods industry also made progress. We may come to the conclusion that in the stubborn struggle against the US air force, our townspeople have not only successfully defended their material and technical bases, but also maintained production. Though still with shortcomings, these are very big successes and valuable experiences of our people.

Agriculture : The farmers in the periphery of the towns and cities have gradually overcome the impediments caused by natural calamities and war and surmounted the difficulties created by the enemy, including the shortage of manpower caused by recruitment for the army or other activities. Over the past years, the agriculture around urban centres has always met the food requirements of the farmers and provided a major part of the foodstuffs to the townspeople, the raw materials for the processing industries and agricultural produce for exports.

With the assistance of industry, the technical revolution in agriculture has been accelerated. The supply of implements, ordinary and improved, mostly equipment produced by small shops for agriculture, has been a practical help for the development of agriculture. Today the farmers around urban centres have favourable conditions for intensive cultivation and increased crops, to push forward the "three targets in agriculture" movement for the attainment of 5 tons of paddy per hectare per year. The socialist relations of production have improved day by day and testified to a powerful vitality in war time. Thanks to these new relations of production, the cooperatives have fulfilled their food quota to the State. They manage labour, organize the fighting forces, give work-points for missions carried out for the benefit of production, combat and combat support, civilian A.A. defence and transport and

communications, Generally speaking, the life of co-op members has remained stable; solidarity is closer and identity of mind greater in the cooperatives.

Besides industry and agriculture, the building sector has also devoted greater efforts to serve the other economic branches. The commercial and financial branches, whose function is circulation and distribution of goods, have helped production develop in its initial stages and served as a bridge linking industry to agriculture, production to consumption, home trade to foreign trade, the State trade sector to the cooperative trade sector.

The cultural and ideological revolution has been carried out in the political, economic and military framework of the war resistance against US aggression in general and as the task of the urban centres in particular. Here the Vietnamese national and working-class tradition of unyielding struggle has been applied to the education of the masses to raise their patriotism, love of socialism and revolutionry heroism, to build a revolutionary mode of life, to resolutely foil U.S. aggression in order to liberate the South, defend the North, reunify the country and fulfil our task toward our country and our internationalist duty. Here, in the fierce struggle against the US air war, the building of the political forces has been carried out among the masses simultaneously with ideological work. If there were no strong Party organization and no broad mass organization such as the Trade-Unions. Youth Union, Women's Union, Young Pioneers, and the militia in enterprises and town quarters, it would not be possible to achieve any task. If no patriotic emulation movement had been launched, it could not be possible to stimulate the masses to carry out revolutionary activities ceaselessly and vigorously.

It is clear that the socialist system has given our people a huge force and our army a very solid rear base, it has been a decisive factor in beating the US war of destruction.

The victory won by big towns and cities has the same cause as the success obtained by the socialist North in the economic field It is the outcome of the very correct Party line, the great heroism and creative and painstaking labour of our people, the superiority of the socialist system of the North and also the precious assistance of the brother socialist countries.

4. Successes in communications and transport, mobilization of manpower in war time, building and expanding regional armed units, ensuring security and order

The successes scored by the inhabitants of the big towns and cities and industrial centres in transport and communications, in the mobilization of manpower in wartime, in the building and expanding of regional armed units, in the organization of the people's life and in ensuring security and order stand also as great and all-sided successes and testify to a new turning-point in the development of people's war against the US war of destruction.

In transport and communications

We have frustrated one of the fundamental strategic objectives of the US in its scheme to destroy our big towns and cities and industrial centres. The "isolation of Hanoi from Haiphong and that of these two cities from the rest of North Viet Nam" as threatened by Grant Sharp and Westmoreland was not realized by the aggressors according to their subjective calculations. The roads radiating from the capital, Hanoi, the heart of the whole country, are like arteries sending, healthy blood to various parts of the Fatherland. In the war years, the port city of Hai Phong remained bustling. In other

towns, our communication lines were, generally speaking, opened to traffic. The struggle waged by the inhabitants in big towns and cities to protect our roads was vigorous and stubborn. All the most barbarous means of war used by the enemy — concentrated attacks and indiscriminate strikes by big waves, or sporadic incursions by small forces day and night — were foiled by our armed forces and people. All the kinds of sophisticated weapons and modern war means used by the US to destroy our communication lines such as demolition bombs, time-bombs, magnetic bombs, have of course created difficulties for us but proved powerless in face of our high fighting spirit and the skilful and creative labour of our inhabitants and armymen to protect our communication lines.

Skilfully applying the Party line and principle, we have affirmed since the very beginning that "to maintain communications and transport in good order is the central task of the Party, armymen and inhabitants in urban centres in order to meet in any circumstances the requirements of the national economy and national defence, to serve production and fighting in the rear and at the front". With this determination, a movement was launched in urban centres, urging our people to ensure communications and transport. This was carried out according to the principle that one should regard the communications and transport forces as core, and the vanguard youth brigades as shock troops, to bring into play the potentialities of the region and solve urgent problems on the spot. In our guidance of this work, we have rapidly found the main links in the chain which is the efficient organization of river crossings and keeping the roads and rivers open. We have devoted all our efforts to beating the enemy on this front. This is successful experience we have gained in transport and communications in big towns and cities.

We had estimated that this would be the fiercest trial of strenght between the enemy and us, one which would be concentrated on a number of "vital" points inside and outside the urban centres and so we guided, developed and organized our forces and strongly increased our road and river transport means compared with pre-war days. In the same spirit we correctly advocated that traffic could be guaranteed only when we hit hard at the enemy, regarding this as a very important task of the armed forces. While doing such a heavy and urgent work, we had also to carry out the "militarization" of the communication and transport service so as to raise the quality of that branch ; we had to intensify the repair and overhaul services, build new roads and bridges, increase the means of transport, resolutely ensure traffic at "vital points" while finding other roads and making the most use of all means available.

With their determination to shed their blood if need be in order to keep traffic going, the A.A. gunners of the regular forces and regional army units, together with the self-defence groups and militia men using rifles and machines guns, resolutely defended the communication lines. It can be said that wherever there was traffic, there were forces to protect it. This explains why, despite the fact that the number of enemy air strikes on communication lines in big towns and cities was very high, and big quantities of bombs and shells were used by the enemy, we could reduce the damage we suffered to the minimum.

Especially in a number of "key points," our bridges and traffic were in good order, whereas hundreds of enemy planes were downed by our A.A. batteries.

With the intelligence and creative initiative inherent in the working class, the defenders of communications and transport have solved many problems which at first sight had seemed to be insoluble. Such bridges as Long Bien, Duong (Hanoi), Quay, Niem (Haiphong), Ham Rong (Thanh Hoa) attacked tens and even hundreds of times, were immediately reopened to traffic. The ratio was two or three bridges newly built for one bridge hit. After each combat, we accumulated many more experiences, devising new methods to protect communication lines with more advanced techniques. The workers of the transport and communications branch in urban centres were capable of repairing the transport means of the army and other branches, maintaining a high technical standard. With their own strength and local possibilities they were able to repair the existing air fields and build new ones in a fairly short time. In the de-activization of time-bombs and delayed-action bombs the local engineers have introduced many valuable innovations, combining rudimentary methods with modern technique and splendid courage with great resourcefulness and initiative.

We have successfully carried out the work of guiding transport, kept the transportation means and goods secure and fulfilled the transport plans. The main experiences which deserve our attention were the following : to make the most use of all possibilities and means, take advantage of all favourable conditions to do transportation work, combine rudimentary means with modern means, handicrafts with engineering, use roads or waterways according to circumstances, all this with the determination to be able to use both. The establishment of a transport coordination committee from the centre to the base, the maintenance of this committee's normal

functioning in urban centres under fierce bombings and the continuation of the normal activities of the port were the result of lessons learnt from past achievements.

Today, we have all the facts for an assessment of the huge potentialities of the localities in transport and communications. Besides reviewing the guidance of people's war, the transport and communications department must make a more profound analysic in this respect. The local Party committee and organs concerned must enhance their guidance in the work and do it well. Whatever the war conditions, communications and transport is a most important strategic task for our Party and people. At present, though the local requirement in this respect is not so urgent as in time of war, the urban centres and other localities in the North are duty bound to meet the needs of the whole country and the front line in this field. The experience we have recently gained shows that preparation work in peace time, such as additional roads and bridges, repair facilities, manpower available, guidance and direction, is of paramount significance for the shift from peacetime to wartime work. Therefore, we must be constantly prepared to cope with the eventuality of a new attack by the enemy as well as to satisfy the permanent requirements of national defence.

Mobilization of manpower in war time and building and expanding of local armed forces.

We are aware that any victory won at the front stems from our strength in the rear area. The greater our victories at the front, the better they contribute to the defence and consolidation of the rear. That is why replenishing our forces for the front and strengthening the rear area are indispensable

tasks for all localities if we are to ensure the success of the struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation.

The resistance to the recent U.S. war of destruction has shown that the towns, cities and industrial centres in the socialist North have huge potentialities and favourable conditions to carry through this task. Nevertheless, we met a number of difficulties as it was the first time that we had carried out large-scale recruitment for military service. Moreover that mobilization was undertaken in conditions of urgent production and fierce fighting in order to foil the new U.S. air escalation. These difficulties have now been surmounted and these possibilities and advantages developed. The Party cadres at all levels and the inhabitants in these urban and industrial centres have realized more and more clearly the role, requirements and relations between these two tasks, and consequently have done their best to fulfil their tasks. The urban and industrial centres have met the requirements of the tasks of strengthening forces for the front, building local armed forces and consolidating the rear area in every respect.

They have, on the whole, carried out the mobilization of troops well and, by this, have shown their determination to foil US aggression. The industrial enterprises have trained workers for replacement and made careful arrangements in the chain of production. Preparations for this mobilization have been made in peace time, ready for wartime, and have been accompanied by education and the drawing up of regulations. In time of war, political education and ideological remoulding among the people is increased particularly among the youth and mass organizations. Thanks to this, we have been able to launch a widespread, seething, movement in which the

slogan: "We have the potential to deliver the quantily of grain required by the State and to recruit soldiers in the number required by the army," is changed into "We have the potential to deliver a quantity of grain above that required and to recruit even more soldiers". In the four years of fighting against the U.S. war of destruction, tens of thousands of cadres, Party members and workers have been mobilized for the front. Battalions and regiment-sized units numbering tens of thousands of officers and soldiers made up of young men coming from urban and industrial centres have achieved brilliant exploits. We are highly elated and proud to know that these young people have greatly contributed to the common victory.

These successes have illustrated the patriotism and love of socialism of the townspeople and their deep hatred for the enemy. They have been obtained thanks to our ability to rely on the local Party branches, the local military organs, the coordination between various branches, and the sense of responsibility and contribution of the cadres at all levels. They are also the outcome of the "three readies" movement launched among the youth and "three responsibilities" drive among women. Experiences have taught us that in urban centres as well as in other localities, political education, ideological remoulding, good implementation of policy coupled with a tight guidance in organization are fundamental factors leading to a successful mobilization of troops.

Parallel to the task of serving the front, the townspeople are also anxious to strengthen the rear base ; one of these tasks is to build and expand the local armed forces as this meets the immediate requirement and also the long-range need to defeat US aggression under any circumstances.

In the four years of war, our self-defence groups in the towns and cities and militia in the periphery of cities have fought the enemy while doing construction work and serving as shock troops in other activities in the localities. They have now matured in all fields — political, ideological, military, organizational, and in equipment; they have swollen in numbers and improved in quality. Within a short time, through our experiences gained in the war years, we have been able gradually to classify the self-defence units according to their characteristics and efficiency to lay the basis for the building and utilization of each of them. This is an excellent task which can raise the strength and combat efficiency of the self-defence forces; we must continue to study them and draw experiences for better work.

In the last war, our self-defence units have proved their ample combat possibilities. They can fight independently or in coordination with army A.A. units against enemy war planes. Usually their weapons are rifles and machine-guns. Many of them have been organized into companies or battalions armed with small A.A. artillery pieces or into groups to defend production bases, or they have fought in close co-ordination with A.A. units of the regular armed forces. The technical teams or brigades of the self-defence forces such as engineers', scouts', tele-communications, chemical teams, and the sections handling mortars or other sophisticated weapons, have fought efficiently and given an effective support to combat in urban centres. The self-defence forces in the towns have trained tens of thousands of reserve gunners to replace if need be those manning batteries of the regular armed forces fighting in their localities. The combat support force in town is composed mostly of self-defence

fighters who have undergone military training or taken part directly in the fights. Against the fierce raids of American aircraft, the self-defence units are the shock forces of the workshops and factories which have been entrusted with difficult assignments at vital points.

We can come to the conclusion that, if we build a powerful self-defence force and militia, we will not only be ready to fight and fight well, but we will be able to maintain and intensify production in all circumstances. The growth of self-defence forces with their new possibilities are obviously a novelty in urban and industrial centres, going hand in hand with the growth of the working class in factories, construction sites and agricultural farms. These forces occupy one quarter of the total selfdefence forces in the North. If expericences can be drawn from past lessons to give them a better leadership, a more efficient command and training and appropriate equipment, surely they will become very powerful forces capable of meeting the local requirements in wartime as well as in peace time, in the strengthening of the rear area as well as the replenishment of forces for the frontline.

In the building of the self-defence forces at present, it is necessary to pay attention to raising the quality of the fighting forces. Stress must be laid on the main task which is the training of the commanding officers. The military organs in urban and industrial centres also need to be strengthened so as to discharge their task as staff of Party local committee in the guidance of the self-defence and militia movement in particular and in the direction of the armed forces in general.

Apart from countering air raids, the task of the people's war in urban centres is to foil in time all the sabotage acts of the enemy, all his psywar activities and all his slanderous propaganda and to check all troublemaking by bad elements. It is even more important to keep order and fight against enemy psychological warfare in urban and industrial centres than in other localities, because they are the political, economic and cultural centres and form the material and technical bases of our country.

In the war years, security and social order was maintained and the people's life was not disturbed. The leading organs at central level and in various regions, foreign embassies and foreign visitors and the ships calling at our pórts were kept safe. Evacuated or dispersed workshops and factories, storehouses, and machines and equipment were well protected by our people.

These great achievements were obtained thanks to the concern of the Party committees in the towns, the great efforts of the authorities and the determination of the security forces, chiefly the people's police and the self-defence units in various factories, government offices town quarters, construction sites... with the movement to keep security and order spreading all over the urban centres and countryside, the people's police and self-defence forces have played a most important role. Usually they co-ordinated with each other very closely and together worked out a common plan of action. The forces in charge of security and order also knew how to divide the sectors of protection, to rely on the masses and make use of educational methods, and most important, to mobilize the masses so as to ensure security not only inside the urban centres but also

outside them, particularly in the localities to which the state organs and townspeople were evacuated.

This work has been well executed by the capital, Hanoi, and the port of Haiphong, the two biggest cities in North Viet Nam. During the war, our people's material and spiritual life has met with difficulties, but has remained stable in the main and even improved in some aspects. The Party Committees have solved many problems regarding, for example the distribution of foodstuffs and commodities, and the expansion of services to evacuated people and those required by duty to remain in the towns. We have made housing arrangements and solved housing difficulties for the air raid victims, and combined the action of the State and that of the population in the organization of relief to these victims.

During the war, the medical network has developed very raipidly. Disease prevention and treatment and health protection have increased together with the number of hospitals and physicians. All this has greatly contributed to the preservation of the people's health and the strengthening of their productive and fighting forces. The educational movement and cultural activities have reached down to the lowest level.

We can take pride in the success of people's war as shown in the keeping of order and security and organization of the people's life in big towns and industrial centres. This success which testifies to the growth of people's war in urban centres is the result of the political, military and economic forces as well as the outcome of the good management and organization of the people's life in war time. It also reflects the superiority of the socialist system, manifested in the

political awareness of our people and their spirit of being collective masters. It also demonstrates that only socialist relations of production can offer great advantages to overcome the difficulties created by the war. Though shortcomings still exist, the achievements recorded by our big towns, cities and industrial centres in order and security and in organization of the people'e life are great indeed !

III, TURNING URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL CENTRES INTO PROSPEROUS ECONOMIC UNITS WHICH WILL ALSO PROVE POWERFUL IN NATIONAL DEFENCE : A CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY

The people's war in urban and industrial centres in the socialist North was waged in the form of valiant surface to-air battles fought at a fairly high technical level. It brilliantly defeated the U.S. air force even when the air escalation in the North was brought to a height. This victory played a great part in the defeat of the U.S. air and naval war waged on an unprecedented scale against North Vietnam.

Together with the victory won in the South this victory dealt a hard blow not only at the aggressiveness of the Americans in Vietnam but also at the neo-colonialist policy pursued by the U.S. imperialists in many countries. Many American politicians admit that the U.S. defeat in Vietnam is the failure of a major part of US global strategy, its aim as well as its policies and means of execution. Institutes for strategic studies in the U.S. and other countries in the world have also advanced many data showing that the huge expenditure defrayed by the U.S. for the Vietnam war has landed it in an economic plight which seems to be beyond

remedy. And worse still, this predicament has gone beyond the economic field and led to serious difficulties in the political field. Most typical of this is the confusion within American society. Johnson called it an "event" while Nixon more vividly called this a "moral crisis" of the American people. For their part, the Western press made no bones about it. An American paper (the *Los Angeles Times)* wrote that this crisis was rampant in the U.S. and that the American people had lost all confidence in the government. The Vietnam war, it said, had ruined U.S. reputation abroad, kindled riots in the country and driven young people abroad. The English paper, the *Times*, pointed out that the U.S. was sinking into a deep social crisis.

In the military field, the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam has worn out and emasculated its military potential and sapped the fighting spirit of its army. The American militarymen have complained that the U.S. strategic reserve forces were "thinned out" by the Vietnam war, being reduced form eight divisions to four. With this reserve, they were afraid that it would be very difficult for the U.S. to have a "quick response" in threatened areas. Part of the five divisions defending the strategic bases of the U.S. in West Europe was sent to Vietnam, while within Vietnam the U.S. had a force corresponding to ten infantry divisions, and an important naval and air force. Yet it could not stave off defeat.

It was with this gloomy background that the "Nixon doctrine" and the "Vietnamization" of the war saw the light of day. This new strategy is an official acknowledgement to the American and world's people that the U.S. was economically, politically and militarily weak. It shows that the U.S. is no longer in a position to squander its money and

scatter its armed forces all over the world to meet the requirement of massive response as it did before. Though still clinging to their role of world policemen, the U.S. imperialists are compelled to reconsider the key points of intervention and to revise the extent and method of intervention in their counter-revolutionary global strategy. They must tailor this strategy to a situation in which the balance of forces in Viet Nam and in the world is more and more unfavourable to them.

But they are very obstinate. Behind the camouflage of the Nixon doctrine and the "Vietnamization" of the war the aggressive and warlike nature of the U.S. imperialists is always apparent. They continue to pursue their neocolonialist and warlike policy in order to consolidate their position, dominate the capitalist world and carry out their global strategy.

The American imperialists are doing their best to achieve their "Vietnamization" plan in order to get out of their quagmire in South Viet Nam. This is an aggressive plan in all fields – military, political, economic – a most perfidious strategic scheme, aimed at consolidating their defence line, pushing forward the pacification program and destroying our liberated zone, in order to prolong the war, strengthen the Saigon army and administration and grandually repatriate the GIs while maintaining their position of strength. "Vietnamization" is for the U.S. a way to get out of the war but also an effort to win a position of strength while being in fact in a losing position. It is an aggressive plan full of contradictions and considered crazy dream by public opinion in the world as well as in the U.S. With an expeditionary force over half a million strong, the U.S. has bitten the dust. How can it expect to carry the day when the GIs are superseded by a disintegrating puppet army and our people and

armed forces are growing in strength and posture in the military and political fields ?

President Ho Chi Minh said in his testament: "The resistance war against U.S. aggression may drag on. Our compatriots may have to face new sacrifices of property and life. Whatever may happen, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the U.S. aggressors till total victory".

We are resolved to follow his teaching and to fight the American aggressors until they give up their aggressive design, withdraw their troops and respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. We defeated them when their "limited war" was at its height; we can surely beat them completely as they are losing the war and gradually scaling it down. In the frontline of the world people's struggle against U.S. imperialism our people are quite aware of their heavy but glorious responsibility. Despite all our difficulties and hardships, we are determined to defeat the U.S. imperialists ; this is our duty to the Fatherland, to the revolutionary people in the world and also an honour and a historic mission of our people.

1. Today our urgent task is to perseveringly wage the war against the U.S., liberate the South, defend the North and progress towards the peaceful reunification of the country. Therefore the primary task of our people in the North, and of the inhabitants in urban and industrial areas, is to supply and reinforce the front line in every respect.

As the revolutionary base of the whole country, the North must, after the U.S. war of destruction, fully play its role as the great rear area of the great front line. While our fellow-countrymen in the South are making great sacrifices

to wrest back national independence and freedom we, in the North, must overcome all difficulties and hardships to build and develop the national economy, strengthen national defence, step up socialist construction and do our best to fulfil our duty towards the South. Only by satisfactorily building socialism and turning the North into a solid rear base, can we replenish the fighting forces at the front and step up our resistance to U.S. aggression till complete victory. Commemorating the 40th anniversary of our Party, Comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of its Central Committee, analysed the main content and the great experiences in socialist construction in the North. We must carefully study that document for future application in the concrete situation of our respective regions.

We have come out victorious of the fierce wars against truculent imperialist countries, Japan, France and the US, and are held in high esteem by the people of the world. This is because our Party has adopted a sound strategic line and creative, judicious revolutionary methods. In the conduct of the war, we have grasped the law governing the activities of the enemy and fully understood the law of revolutionary war in our country. Likewise in economic construction, we must grasp the economic principles and apply them creatively to economic organization and management. Economic construction has its own special features and laws. We have revolutionary zeal and ardour, we have a large amount of experience in leadership and organization in revolutionary warfare. With the progress made in our study and work, we will surely grasp the law of socialist economic development and do ever better in socialist construction in the North. We

will resolutely turn our urban and industrial centres into economically prosperous and strongly defended areas.

2. As said above, being builders and guardians of socialism, in all circumstances we must see to the development and protection of production. Furthermore, as at present the American aggressors are still waging a ferocious war in the South, certainly they are working out perfidious plans to sabotage our socialist North.

Our people's armed forces must constantly heighten their vigilance, be ready for the fight, and do their utmost in training to raise their technical, tactical and organizational standard and perfect their command in order to down American aircraft of all types if they dare to violate our skies. In big urban and industrial centres, our plan of combat must cope efficiently with all war conditions and closely coordinate with the plan for the protection of men and material and technical bases. We must organize the fighting force, the defence of the people and the camouflage and decentralization of goods and warchouses all at the same time. While they are fighting American aircraft, the self-defence units, militia and regional troops must closely co-ordinate their actions with the people's armed police to counter the enemy land attacks (raids, commando operations) and help in the maintenance of order and security in their localities, especially in city streets, district and provincial towns and other important areas.

The military line of our Party has been more and more perfected during the war of resistance against U.S. aggression. We have gained richer experiences in operations as well as in the building of our armed forces and consolidation of our

national defence. In the new conditions, we must apply these experiences well. As required by the region, we will study, readjust and amend our plans of local defence and building of armed forces in urban and industrial centres. These are urgent basic tasks to strengthen our potential for national defence which needs to be carefully planned and not scamped in such a way as to cause a waste of labour and money and delay.

3. In the development of the local economies, we must closely coordinate economic construction with the consolidation of national defence in urban and industrial centres as they are the seats of our political, economic and cultural activities. This co-ordination must be carried out in all fields, especially in the following :

In the industrial sector (particularly local industrial enterprises in urban centres) attention should be paid to mechanical engineering, chemistry and some light industries so that when the war breaks out we will be in a position to manufacture or repair some kinds of weapons and equipment, and meet the requirements of production, the people's life and the armed forces. The industrial enterprises must be built in such way as to facilitate their protection, guarantee production in war time, be consistent with the policy of economic reorientation in wartime, and suit the trend and plan of long-term national construction.

In the agricultural sector in the suburbs and the surrounding areas, it is necessary to meet a part of the needs of the locality in foodstuffs and to satisfy other wartime requirements. The development of hydraulics and afforestation must be closely linked to the defence of the locality, the transformation of the terrain and construction of fighting

villages, and facilitate the operations to wipe out the enemy and the protection of the people.

In local transport and communications, attention should be paid to motor roads, railways and waterways. We must build a solid and extensive communications network to facilitate the movement of troops and meet transport requirements in war time.

In the health service we must train technicians, build a solid broad medical network to enable the medical branch to treat soldiers and civilians wounded during the war, develop our potentialities to counter chemical warfare and heal the wounds caused by the enemy's weapons and other war means.

In postal communications, we must pay attention to both telegraph and radio in order to maintain steady communication in wartime, serve the Party and State leadership and the operational commands of the armed forces, and guarantee normal exchange of correspondence among the population.

The people's war waged in the North and the South of our country has supplied us with a wealth of experiences including those regarding the building and development of our armed forces and the establishment of local bases. We must sum up these most important experiences to raise our level of leadership and the quality of our future work.

In the co-ordination between the national economy and national defence in urban and industrial centres, we must speed up the people's preparation to switch from peacetime to wartime activities. In peacetime we must have a plan to evacuate and scatter the population, enterprises and storehouses, and a plan of on-the-spot defence when the war

breaks out. In heavily-populated areas, there must be an adequate plan of reorganization in line with the development of local production and co-ordination between the construction of important works and the building of shelters together with the maintenance of the existing shelters, chiefly in urban and industrial centres.

Our experience is to concentrate big enterprises in one locality. In the construction of major industrial enterprises, consideration should be taken either to maintain their production in place or move them to safety in the event of war.

In a word, the shifting of the townspeople from a state of peace to a state of war should be considered in State plans and prepared for in peace-time. Only in this way can we replenish our human and material forces, keep production going, rapidly normalize the people's life and ensure peace and order in time of war.

4. We must build our national economy and strengthen our national defence in the new conditions. Local economies are more and more developed. The provinces and big towns are becoming important economic and military bases. That is why, at present and in the future, local military work has a strategic role of greater and greater importance and is an essential part of the Party's military line ; it is one of the main requirements for the Party to carry out its policy of people's war and national defence. This calls for a radical change of views in the Party and army to lead and step up local military work.

The strengthening of military work in urban centres as in other localities includes many tasks which have been laid down in various resolutions. In 1970 we had to do such work

as strengthening the Party's leadership over local military work, perfecting the system of leadership and the local military organs, particularly strengthening the organization and raising the quality of self-defence units and militia and the guidance for the implementation of policies in the rear area towards the army.

At present, the self-defence forces and militia in urban and industrial centres are developing quite vigorously. Therefore, in time to come, our main task is to strengthen them. We must go further in assessing the concrete task of the regional armed forces in each sector (countering air strikes, commando attacks, maintenance of order and security, doing production work, etc), and on this basis streamline and consolidate our organization, personnel, rationalization of equipment, and regulating the training to suit the immediate task. First we must pay attention to priority sectors and areas where our bases are still weak, strengthen our nuclei (guerilla and self-defence combat forces) mobile forces, gun emplacements and technical teams. We must lay stress on the building of the self-defence forces inside the towns while building the guerilla and militia in the peripheries. The self-defence units are the armed forces of the working class and toiling people in the towns ; they are not divorced from production. In the process of socialist construction, as the working class is growing, the self-defence forces have greater fighting possibilities and are a very important source of technical reinforcement for the various arms of the standing army.

In organization we must base ourselves on the requirements of combat and on the characteristics of production of each branch to ascertain the use of the self-defence forces in

peacetime and wartime and to classify these forces in order to give them appropriate training. We must build the self-defence forces in workshops, factories, mines, transport and communications, posts and telegraphs, construction sites, geological survey teams, agricultural farms, etc. In government offices we must consider the necessity of setting up self-defence groups in certain organs and not necessarily in all of them.

The building of the reserve force and its mobilization in wartime is one of the major military tasks in urban and industrial centres. The reserve forces should be built with an eye to both quality and number ; infantry is to be completed by various categories of other forces. They must be able to reinforce the standing army in peacetime, and be in a position to readily replenish and increase the strength of the armed forces in wartime. The urban centres are localities in which to build reserves, and to recruit and train forces in order to strengthen the standing army. At the same time as recruitment, we must improve our work of building and managing the reserve army, especially the registration and administration of exservicemen capable of serving in the reserve force ; we must rehearse military mobilization so that in case of need, we can rapidly strengthen our armed forces and the regional units as well as the regular army.

In urban centres we must build our reserve force in all branches and departments of the State, but more particularly in factories and workshops (chiefly engineering) transport and communications, health service, post and telegraph, in a word where members of the reserve force are proficient in

techniques badly needed by national defence, particularly in the event of war.

To guarantee that the ex-servicemen when recalled to service may develop their abilities and make rational use of them, the cadres in various localities must be fully aware of the political, military and technical level of each man. They must also grasp the quality and number of the reserve force in their localities, branches or State organs.

If this work is well done, if close co-ordination is established between the building, management and training of the reserve force and of the self-defence units and militia, the localities can always fulfil and even overfulfil the targets for recruitment, in both quality and number. The regions which have recently gained rich experience and distinguished themselves in local military work are those which have thoroughly implemented the Party's resolutions on this work. This year and in years to come, this work will be ever heavier and more urgent. That is why we must strengthen our leadership and guidance in order to carry out these resolutions, grasp the central points, strengthen superivision, and study and propose concrete and efficient methods so as to win greater and greater successes in every respect.

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Our resistance war against U.S. aggression is now entering a most important period. The situation is very propitious for our entire people. We will win bigger and more glorious successes for our revolutionary cause.

For the sake of the liberation of the South, the defence of the North and the reunification of our country, let us valiantly march forward. For the sake of our lofty internationalist duty, our working class must heighten its splendid revolutionary heroism, our people's army its high revolutionary spirit and determination to fight and to win, and the entire heroic Vietnamese people their indomitable spirit. In the flush of our victories, let us close ranks with our 14 million fellow-countrymen in the South and bring our greatest war of resistance of complete victory. Let us be resolved to fulfil the oath made before the soul of President Ho Chi Minh.

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL ARMED FORCES[1]

I. LOCAL PEOPLE'S WAR AND LOCAL ARMED FORCES: MOST IMPORTANT BASES OF RESISTANCE WAR AND NATIONAL DEFENCE

Our country has a long tradition of people's war against foreign aggression, which was waged by the Trung sisters, Tran Quoc Tuan, Nguyen Trai, and Nguyen Hue who developed a peasants' revolution into a war against foreign aggressors.

Since the founding of our Party its *military line has been that of a people's war waged under the leadership of the working class*. In comparison with other periods in our history our people's war today has a new quality, a rich content and a great strength.

The people's war is waged by the entire people.

In the armed forces, we have operations launched by concentrated units of the regular army in all parts of the country and operations of regional units and self-defence militia who wage guerilla warfare, or local people's war.

1. Speech delivered at the All-North Viet Nam Conference on Local Military Work in July 1970.

Guerilla war, local people's war, has been a basic content of our Party's military line all through the various revolutionary stages. Local people's war, self-defence militia and reginonal forces are the firmest and broadest basis of the whole armed struggle and all the people's armed forces. Leading the local people's war and building the local armed forces have always been the bases of our Party's military work, and of the anti-US struggle and the long-term consolidation of national defence.

Marxism-Leninism and the Problem of Arming the Masses

In the waging of a people's war, making full use of the fighting force of the masses in the revolution and armed struggle, one of our Party's fundamental and outstanding expreiences has been the creative and successful application to the Vietnamese situation of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the problem of *arming the entire people and building the people's army.*

More than one century ago, Marx and Engels advocated the problem of arming the masses in insurrection and revolutionary struggle in opposition to the then rulers' emphasis on the building of a professional army. According to Marx and Engels, when the working class, the peasantry and the conscious toiling people rise up, they must certainly wage armed struggle to seize power. But Marx and Engels believed that socialism would succeed simultaneously in many countries and would be unlikely to succeed in a single country. Therefore, the countries which have just carried through the socialist revolution would have little fear of being besieged by the imperialists. So when the armed

masses rose up and seized power, it would be only necessary, in order to protect the fruits of the revolution, for them to organize such armed forces as people's troops, people's military police or armed units which would be concentrated mainly in the localities, but most of all *to arm the masses.* Thus, it would not be really necessary to maintain a strong standing army.

In the historical conditions of that time, according to Marxist military theory, the *organization of the armed forces was the problem of arming the masses* and not yet the problem of organizing the army. In the present historical conditions, we can see that this problem is *clearly a basic one.*

After the triumph of the October Revolution, the armies of 14 countries invaded the Soviet Union. A new problem arose: after arming the masses for the uprising, was it necessary to organize them into an army? At the Central Committee meetings and at the Congress of the CPSU (Bolshevik) there were heated discussions on this problem. Some people thought that it was simply necessary to arm the masses and rejected the idea of building the army. Then Lenin advocated the *arming of the masses at the same time as the organization of a standing, regular army.* He advanced the well-known thesis: to bild the worker-peasant Red Army on the basis of arming the masses. At the Third Congress of the All-Russia Worker-Peasant Soviets held from January 10 to 18, 1918, Lenin said that the socialist Red Army is an army set up by all socialist people on the basis of arming the entire people.[1] In his declaration made in January 1918 on the rights of the toiling and exploited

1. V.I. Lenin *Military Strategy and Tactics during the October Revolution,* Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1959, p.361.

people, he wrote:"To ensure the sovereign power of the working people and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants... are hereby decreed."[1] and the worker-peasant Red Army was born.

Since then, many uprisings, many revolutionary wars, have taken place in various countries. Thus a new problem arose: after the building of the revolutionary army, the regular army, how would the problem of arming the masses be handled? Generally speaking, after the triumph of the revolution, after the formation of a modern regular army, the problem of arming the masses, arming the entire people, was not, in many countries, given its true importance.

Why was it necessary to pose the problem of arming the masses at the same time as building the people's army? When this question came up, Engels saw clearly the might of the armed masses. At that time the working class had nowhere seized power; but Engels had realized that, when that seizure of power took place, all able-boded men among the workers, peasants and labouring people would be mobilized and armed, creating a huge military force. Commenting on the war between France and Germany at that time, when Metz and Paris were invested by the German army, he remarked that the French had done their best to keep these two strongholds, while the Germans, with their many dozen divisions, had besieged them. With such a huge standing army, what were the Germans able to do? They only occupied one-sixth of the French territory while

1. V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works, Progress, Moscow, Vol 26,1964,* p.424.

the remainder was out of their control. Engels thought that, if the revolutionary fervour of the France population living on the remaining five-sixths of France at that time was equal to that of the Spaniards who fought Napoleon in 1808, it would have been possible to arm the French people, destroy communication and supply lines of the German aggressors and relieve Paris. According to Engels, had each town, each city, each village in France become a stronghold and each Frenchman a combatant, the situation would have changed. The Germans would have been finished, because they had no more reserves. The working class and labouring people rose up in Paris and fought with matchless heroism in the Paris Commune. But without the backing of the toiling masses throughout France, they failed. Thus, as early as 1870, Engels had seen the might of the armed masses. He spoke highly of the combats of the Spaniards though their arming of the masses was then very limited[1]

Later, and especially after the October Revolution in Russia, the masses were armed in many uprisings and revolutionary wars.

In the great patriotic war waged by the Soviet people against the German fascists, Stalin always appealed to the men of the Red Army and guerilla fighters of both sexes. In many fierce battles the armed forces of the population living in the enemy-held areas played a very effective role, coordinating their action with that of the Soviet army. The reports made by German generals recognized that guerilla warfare, widespread in the territories under their control, upset all the principles of German military science

1.F. Engels,V.I. Lenin, J. Stalin: *On People's War*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, pp. 151,156.

and caused great difficulties and heavy losses to their armies. So we can see the importance of the strength of the armed masses, of guerilla warfare!

In the long revolutionary war in China, people's war was waged over immense rural areas and won great victories. In the resistance war against the Japanese, the Red Army fought shoulder to shoulder with guerilla units which had sprung up behind the enemy's lines. Developing its tremendous strength in the civil war, the people's war annihilated millions of Chiang Kai-shek's troops, and liberated the Chinese mainland.

Our Party's Line and the Problem of Arming the Masses

In Vietnam, from the very beginning, we correctly advocated *the arming of the masses while setting up the revolutionary army*. This clearsighted line was set forth right at the founding of our Party. In its very first documents, our Party discussed such problems as the organization of self-defence units, military training of the labouring masses, preparation of conditions for the building of guerilla warfare and armed uprisings, building of the Red Army of the worker-peasant Soviet State. Thus our Party has correctly applied Marxism-Leninism to the realities of our country. It can be said that, compared with any other period in the history of our nation, our Party has had the most success in its implementation of the policy of arming the masses and building the people's army.

To guide the preparation of armed uprisings in the period of the Second World War, our Party passed a resolution in which it expounded very clearly the necessity to develop

the political bases of the masses, expand self-defence and guerilla units and, on this foundation, to organize concentrated armed force and the revolutionary army. In practice, our people's army was born and grew up from the widespread armed forces forged by the masses in the crucible of the revolutionary war against Japan, for national salvation. In this crucial moment the August Revolution was a great leap forward, a time when the armed forces of the masses developed vigorously. The Liberation Army and our revolutionary armed forces saw a powerful growth.

From the very beginning of our resistance war against the French the appeals made by President Ho Chi Minh and the Party Central Committee's instructions on the prosecution of the resistance war and national construction pointed out that *each hamlet, each street was to be a stronghold; each citizen a combatant; each Party cell a staff.* This policy yielded great results in the defeat of the French imperialist aggressors.

Our country is an agrarian country having large rural areas and many towns and cities. The regular troops of the revolution are the workers and peasants; the workers play the leading role and the peasants make up the bulk. The law of the development of the revolutionary forces in our country is first of all to develop the revolutionary forces among the grassroots masses, among the toiling peasants and also among the workers, in the countryside as well as in the town. In the war against the U.S, this law is fully expounded in the theory of the three strategic areas: the rural areas in the highlands, the rural areas in the plain, and the urban centres. Il is for this reason that, whether in political struggle or in armed struggle, not only the peasants but the revolutionary people in the towns, with the workers

at their head, must be armed. In the arming of the masses, our Party advocates the organization of not only the militia and guerilla forces in the countryside but also self-defence and combat self-defence forces in the towns. Not only each peasant but each worker, each toiler in an urban centre, must become a combatant.

Since liberation, the North has embarked on the road of socialist construction; as a result the industrial centres have become more crowded and the working class more numerous. Hence, in arming the masses, we must not only turn each hamlet or village into a stronghold but each enterprise, each town-street, into a fortress. In the armed forces of the masses in the socialist North, the militia and guerilla forces are becoming more widespread and powerful and the self-defence and combat self-defence forces have become more developed and are playing a more important role. We have laid emphasis on the strengthening and development of the militia and guerillas–the grass-roots armed forces of the collective peasants. We must pay greater attention to the consolidation and expansion of the self-defence and combat self-defence forces–the grass-roots armed forces of the working class. To belittle the role of the self-defence and combat self-defence forces is a mistake that should be corrected.

The people's war is a revolutionary war, waged by the people and for the people. In the present juncture a genuine people's war must be led by the working class. To speak of people's war is to speak of rousing the people, of organizing them for the fight. When the people are organized, armed and correctly led, they are invincible. The revolutionary war waged in our country has shown that the *strength of*

all the armed people will beat any aggressor, however powerful he may be.

The strength of the people's war stems first from the huge force of the conscious and organized people. The people are the solid mainstay of the whole revolutinary tasks. *The politicial force of the people is the basis of all revolutionary struggle in general and all armed struggle in particular.* Political struggle is precisely the basis from which to develop and intensify armed struggle.This is the closely-linked relation between the revolutionary armed forces and the people's revolutionary forces, between armed struggle and the people's revolutionary struggle.

If we deeply consider the essence of the problem, armed struggle is a high form of revolutionary struggle, the armed forces, a special form of the political force of the masses, a political force including workers, peasants and labouring people roused, closely organized and fighting the enemy with a gun.

Insofar as armed forces and armed struggle are concerned, *the armed forces of the masses are precisely the solid mainstay of all our armed forces.* The masses' guerilla warfare is precisely the foundation of all the revolutionary armed struggle.

We can affirm that, to wage a true people's war, to bring into full play the huge strength of people's war, it is absolutely necessary to mobilize the entire people for the fight, to organize the armed forces of the masses and the revolutionary army; to co-ordinate the political forces with the armed forces, the armed forces of the masses with the revolutionary army. Only by so doing can we fully

apply the principle of arming the entire people, of spreading the people's war far and wide. This is the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, the truth of revolutionary war in our country as well as in any other country and nation resolved to rise up and prosecute a just war.

David versus Goliath or the Problem of Arming the Masses

Here it is important to mention that the revolutionary war in Vietnam does not only reflect this universal truth but has its own features. In our country, revolutionary war and all wars against foreign aggression have been just wars of a small country against much bigger feudalist and imperialist aggressors.

Our country is not large in area and population; our army is less numerous and less well equipped than that of the enemy. We have to fight an enemy who has greater manpower, better equipment and a more powerful economic and military potential. This is a problem of the utmost importance for our strategists; it is not a new one but has existed for millennia. Whenever our country has been invaded by a foreign army our people and national heroes have had to solve this problem.

What is thus the most important factor which has enabled us to find a solution? It is this: *all our people must pool their efforts to fight the enemy, and to organize a nation-wide resistance.* The enemy must be repelled not only by the army but also by the civilian population. That is why, formerly, all the people were soldiers. Apart from the regular army, there were the provincial armed units, the *dan binh, huong binh, tho binh* operating in hamlets and villages and in grottos and caves in the highlands. Today also the entire people fight the

enemy; we have a people's army which, compared with the enemy's, is smaller in number but has a very high fighting spirit; we must have a big armed force organized by the masses, the regional troops, militia and self-defence units. In his appeal for resistance to the French aggressors, President Ho Chi Minh said: "Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed, political affiliation and nationality, all Vietnamese must stand up to fight the French colonialists and save the Fatherland. Those who have rifles will use their rifles; those who have swords will use their swords; those who have no swords will use spades, hoes or sticks. Everyone must endeavour to oppose the colonialists and save his country". In the resistance war against American aggression he said: "The thirty-one million of our compatriots in both zones, regardless of sex and age, must be thirty-one million valiant people fighting the Americans to save the country".

As we fought the enemy in the specific conditions mentioned above, our military thinking has also a special content. In the West, from an early date military thought laid stress on the principle of concentrating a numerically superior army so as to wipe out the enemy rapidly, as for example, in the wars of Napoleon. In the East, before the birth of Christ, Ton Tu wrote in his military book: "We besiege the enemy when we are ten times more numerous, we assault him when we have a number five times superior, we can still attack him when we are twice as many, we withdraw when we have an equal number or are less numerous". But Vietnamese military thinking is different. Our thinking is to oppose a smaller force to a bigger one, to oppose weaker unit to a stronger one, to oppose humanity to brutality according

to the practice of Tran Quoc Tuan and Nguyen Trai. Today, continuing that tradition and applying it to people's war, Vietnamese military science must satisfactorily solve the problem of opposing a smaller force to a bigger one, and rudimentary weapons to the sophisticated arms of the imperialists including the American imperialists. To apply this military art successfully, we must mobilize and arm the entire people. Moreover, we must train crack troops with a high fighting spirit, and arm the masses whose morale must also be very high. Apart from our great determination to fight, we must adopt skilful methods of combat. This is what makes for the high combative quality of our revolutionary armed forces.

Speaking of the organization and method of combat of the army, of the quality and number of the population and of technique, Engels recalled the mercenary troops of feudal Prussia and the revolutionary army of bourgeois France. The Prussian army fought in three-row-four-side formations, which prevented the hirelings from running away; well aware of that necessity, the Prussian commander at that time said: "Should my soldier know the reason why he has to fight, he would take to flight; he must be made to fear the whip of the corporal more than he does the bullet of the enemy; only on this condition can he fight". In the revolutionary army of bourgeois France the situation was quite different. The troops had a high morale for the entire people were rising up, the army had an appropriate fighting formation and was organized in columns, enabling it to rout the reactionary European armed forces of that time. Engels also recalled the Spanish guerillas and the American insurrectionists in the war for independence who fought heroically because they defended the interests of their countries, and were victoirous as they

used the methods of both group fighting and individual fighting. Through this we can see the importance both of morale and of fighting technique. In order to use successfully the method of opposing a smaller unit to a more numerous one, a weaker force to a stronger one, of fighting with rudimentary weapons against sophisticated weapons, our armed forces must have a rational organization, a good fighting method and an iron-like determination to wipe out the enemy. We must know how to organize the armed forces of the masses, and the people's army. We must be good at fighting in concentrated units and waging guerilla warfare; we must know to fight big, medium-sized and small battles. Our armed forces must have the resolve, formerly to kill all the aggressors, today to defeat completely the American invaders. "So long as there remains an aggressor in our country, we must continue to fight to annihilate him".

We have taken into account the just and revolutionary character of our people's war and the reality that "a small country can defeat a big imperialist power" so as to analyse the paramount significance of the problem of arming the masses, of the people's war at the local level, and the great significance of the revolutionary army and the operations of the main-force army. That is why to speak of people's war without paying adequate attention to arming the entire people, to fail to build the army on the basis of arming the masses, is also a failure to understand the meaning of the application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country, a failure to fully grasp the revolutionary character and specific features of our people's war in the conduct of the war. Then, naturally, the enemy cannot be defeated.

Arming the Masses and the People's Army; the Three Categories of Forces.

To bring the resistance war of the entire people to a victorious end, to strengthen the national defence of the entire people, it is necessary to build solid armed forces of the masses. I avail myself of this occasion to make it clear that the content of the concept of armed forces of the masses is not quite the same as the content of the concept of people's army, because the militia and self-defence units do not belong to the army. The army has a tighter organization and discipline; it has a broader military knowledge and a more centralized command. That is the distinction between the armed forces of the masses and the people's army. The regular armymen and regional troops belong to the army. The militiamen and self-defence fighters do not belong to it. But they are all members of the armed forces of the masses.

The regional armed forces include: the regional army which is that part of the army stationed in the region, and the militia and self-defence forces.When the armed struggle develops, a part of the militia and self-defence forces may become regional army units. The regiional armed forces play a very great role: they are closely linked to the revolutionary masses in each locality. They are a military force closely combined with the political force in each locality.Their activity is closely linked to the economic tasks of the people for they directly protect the lives and property of the people. That is why in order to wage a people's war, to have a core force for the people to rise up and prosecute the war, to provide direct protection to the local inhabitants, it is most

important first of all to build the local armed forces. For this reason local armed forces, local troops and the militia and self-defence force play a strategic role not only in armed struggle and guerilla warfare, but in revolutionary struggle as a whole. According to Lenin, it is incorrect to dissociate guerilla warfare from an isurrectional situation; this shows a lack of historical understanding and is unscientific.[1]

It is incorrect beause "guerilla war is a natural form of struggle unavoidable in the period when the mass movement has effectively taken the path of uprising.[2] It is the form used by the masses rising up to win and maintain power. *The regional armed forces are the nucleus of armed struggle, of guerilla warfare and of people's war in the regions. They are the bases of all armed forces of the Party. Without strong, widespread local armed forces, there would be neither widespread local people's war nor any powerful movement to arm the population.*

The more widespread the war, the more modern equipment the enemy has, and the greater his number, the more strengthened and steady should be the local armed forces. The role played by the regular army is most important, but the regular army develops favourably and brings its huge strength into full play only when the local armed forces and local military work are very solid and powerfull.

The Militia and Self-defence Forces and Regional Army Are the Two Basic Armed Forces in the Region.

The militia and self-defence units have a fighting force of paramount importance, though their organization level is

1. F.Engels, V.I.Lenin, J.Stalin,*On People's War* op. Cit.
2. Ibid.

not so high and their command not so effective as those of the regional army and regular army. Militia and self-defence forces are closely bound to the masses. They maintain and bring into play the strength of the masses at the grassroots level. During the war, it is difficult without these forces to protect the people, to keep them and struggle with the enemy for them, and impossible to develop our military, political and economic strength. President Ho Chi Minh said:"The militia, self-defence units, and guerillas are the force of the whole nation, an invincible force, an iron wall of the Fatherland. However brutal the enemy may be, should he bump his head against that wall, he would be force to withdraw".[1]

In order to enable them to play their strategic role and fulfil their strategic task in an effective manner, it is indispensable to take into consideration the number as well as the quality of the militia and self-defence force. We must build them everywhere, in hamlets, cooperatives, state farms, factories, streets, town quarters. Meanwhile we must pay great atention to consolidating the guerillas and self-defence combat units, deploying them with flexibility, combining combat with production work and using them as a core for the grassroots movement, impelling the entire people to fight the enemy.

The regional army, which is one of the three categories of armed forces and the regular force in the region, *plays a role of great importance*. Together with the militia and self-defence force, it serves as a core for the "Let the entire people fight the enemy" movement in the locality.

1. Ho Chi Minh, *On Armed Struggle and People's Armed Forces* People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970,p 174.

It is the link between the forces prosecuting the people's war and guerilla war at the base and the regular army fighting in concentrated units. It should be strong enough to coordinate its action effectively with the "Let the entire people fight the enemy" movement in the locality, and with the movement for mass uprisings so as to foil all enemy manoeuvres aimed at attacking, pacifying and penning up the local inhabitants, create favourable conditions for action by the regular army, and to coordinate its action with the latter's in all battlefields. Together with the huge militia and self-defence forces, *the regional army is a force operating locally; it stands ready for action* in every field of operations. Omnipresent, it can rapidly counter any action of the enemy even when he uses modern weapons and techniques. It is the basis on which to build and develop our posture of strategic offensive, and the direct and most effective force to defend our rear and our war potential. Therefore, at present and in the future, we must lay great emphasis on the building of regional armed forces, especially the militia and self-defence force at grassroots level.

Of course, when stressing the importance of regional armed forces, we must *clearly realize the great role played by the regular army operating in concentrated units*, the great mainstay of all our people's armed forces. It is made up of regular units drawn from many arms. Well-equipped and well-trained, they operate under a good command and leadership, fulfilling a mobile operational and strategic task in close coordination with the regional armed forces and dealing decisive blows at the enemy to wipe out his regular forces operating in concentrated formations. It is precisely because we have clearly seen the great role of the regular army that our Party is constantly anxious to build it up, raising its fighting efficiency and strengthening it so

that it may develop even more rapidly and steadily and win even more brilliant victories.

Revolutionary Wars through Various Periods in Our Country and the Importance of Arming the Masses

During the years preceding the armed insurrection and in the August Revolution, though the political forces of the masses played the leading role, the armed forces of the masses were also very important. At that time, the liberation forces were still small amounting to a few platoons and companies, totalling about 5,000 men. But, under the leadership of the Party, the self-defence forces and guerillas developed rapidly all over the country; they were the armed forces of the masses in various localities. The form of armed struggle adopted at that time was guerilla warfare. In close co-ordination with these armed forces, the political forces of the masses waged the general insurrection, brought the August Revolution to success, founded the Democractic Republic of Viet Nam and set up the first people's democracy in Southeast Asia.

The Liberation Army played a most important role in the general insurrection, but it is erroneous to belittle the great role of the guerillas and self-defence units of the armed forces of the masses in the August Revolution. When Hanoi rose up, it had the resistance bases as its mainstay, but at that time the Liberation Army was still at Thai Nguyen. Therefore, the forces which played a directly decisive role were the political and self-defence forces of the masses. *That is why, in armed insurrection the armed forces of the masses and the regional armed forces play a role of paramount importance.*

The people's war and the armed forces in each locality had a fundamental strategic position *all through the war of*

resistance against the French colonialists. Our policy was very correct: we stepped up guerilla warfare and strengthened the militia, guerilla and regional army at the same time as we did our best to build the regular army. There was a time when we resolutely sent a regiment to each of a number of provinces, a battalion to each of a number of districts, and set up independent companies and concentrated battalions in order to establish a political base, organize the guerillas, and serve as a core for guerilla warfare in the region.

During the Hoa Binh campaign, while we attacked the enemy on the main front and in his rear, the regional forces, militia and guerillas were very active in the delta, creating favourable conditions for the regular army units to operate and millions of inhabitants to rise up. This is also a form of armed insurrection.

When the Dien Bien Phu campaign started, local people's war developed vigorously in all fields of operation behind the enemy's lines in North, Central and South Viet Nam. Militia, guerilla and regional forces in combination with the inhabitants decimated a large part of the enemy's forces, overran hundreds of military posts and extended the liberated areas.

But our resistance to the US is the biggest war waged by our people against foreign aggression and for national independence and freedom. Compared with the French, the Americans have more troops, more modern equipment and a greater economic and military potential. They pursue a neo-colonial, not old-style colonial, policy. After many reverses, they have been compelled to change their strategy many times and use different strategies; in the North they have launched the air war of destruction, while in the South they

have also used infantrymen, first only the Saigon mercenary army, then also the U.S. expeditionary forces.

In the anti-US resistance war, the very important role and strategic position of the local people's war and guerilla war and the regional armed forces have come to the fore.

During the "concerted uprisings in the South, the popular armed forces were small. It was the huge political force and the still limited armed forces of the people which brought these "uprisings" to success, spreading them far and wide in the rural areas of the South. The strength of this self-defence militia, so closely linked to the political mass movement, has created a huge revolutionary force.

While the movement of armed uprising was developing powerfully in the years of resistance to the "special war", our people in the South stepped up guerilla warfare and local people's war, and built the regional armed forces. It was during the development of the regional people's war and the mass political struggle that the liberation regular army, though small in number, was able to operate very effectively. The result was that most of the enemy's "strategic hamlets" were destroyed, his new tactics, such as those using "heliborne" and "motorized" units were shattered, his "special war" was defeated and the Ngo Dinh Diem regime collapsed.

When the U.S. imperialists shifted to "limited war" by sending increasingly massive numbers of their troops into South Viet Nam, equipping them with ever more sophisticated weapons and raising their mobility, the importance of the local people's war in defeating the enemy showed all the more clearly. The powerful and ubiquitous units of guerilla and regional troops forced the enemy to scatter his forces and

reduce the intensity of his attacks; he was decimated or annihilated everywhere. Thanks to this, the lives and property of our people were protected and conditions were prepared for our regular army to launch annihilation battles.

When this "limited war" was at its height, it received punishing blows from our people and armed forces. The enemy was obliged to shift to the "Vietnamization of the war", a strategy more consistent with the objectives of neo-colonialism but at the same time fraught with inner contradictions. More consistent because the U.S. imperialists carried out the perfidious policy of pitting Vietnamese against Vietnamese and feeding the war by the war and using Vietnamese blood and American money and weapons to serve the sordid interests of U.S. monopoly capital, fraught with contradictions because, to attain his goal, the enemy must rely on our manpower and resources, things that no aggressor could obtain owing to the fundamental contradictions between our people and the enemy, and to the indomitable spirit of our people. For the execution of this new strategy, with a powerful buildup and using the most perfidious military and political manoeuvres, the Americans carried out their "pacification" policy, a policy which consisted in killing our people, destroying our bases, penning the inhabitants up in strategic hamlets, strenthening the puppet army and administration, coercing and exploiting the inhabitants. In this new situation, it is clear that the *schemes of the enemy are best thwarted by the preservation of the political bases and the strengthening of the armed forces of the masses*. Thus the self-defence militia, regional army and local people's war play a role of paramount importance. With powerful, ubiquitous guerilla units, inured to war, with a strong and experienced regional army, with adequate organization and

activity and a close co-ordination between armed struggle and political struggle at grassroots level through triple action – military, political and agitation work among enemy troops – we can protect the extensive force of the revolutionary masses, foil all coercive manoeuvres of the enemy and preserve the potential of the resistance.

The experience gained during the years of stubborn resistance to the enemy's "pacification" program has given us a clearer understanding of this fact: *the political forces of the people are the foundation of all revolutionary wars, and the armed forces of the masses that of all armed struggles.*

In many vast rural areas, our central task was rapidly assessed as the foiling of the "pacification" operations. Agitation work among the masses was given due attention, local military work stepped up and the form of organization and struggle were correctly analysed. As a result, even in the thick of the struggle, we were able to maintain our political and armed forces; the inhabitants clung to their villages and hamlets; the guerillas closed in upon the enemy; the Party cells were constantly by the side of the people; the cadres at higher level kept close to the grassroots; the enemy's coercive forces were in the end wiped out or disbanded; the enemy posts were overrun or evacuated or surrendered, many "strategic hamlets" were dismantled; the offensives and concerted uprisings were maintained or expanded by the masses, and greater and greater victories won. Together with the big battles of annihilation given by our regular army units co-ordinating their actions with the political struggle put up by the masses, especially in urban centres, the people's war which is being extensively waged in various localities

has contributed to the failure of the "Vietnamization" of the war and will surely defeat it completely.

In the North, we have totally beaten a most barbarous war of destruction launched by the US Air Force and Navy. If we analyse deeply the nature of the great people's war in the North, we realize that this is a *war of national defence* to safeguard the socialist North. On the other hand, taking the country as a whole, *this is a part of the war of liberation waged against the U.S., for national salvation*, for the defence of the great rear base so that the latter can fulfil its task toward the Southern battlefront, make the greatest contribution to national liberation and defeat the US imperialists' large-scale "limited war".

Without our militia and self-defence forces and the powerful regional army, would we, in recent times, have been able to win such big victories over the enemy's war of destruction? Certainly not. Thus, if greater attention had been paid to these forces, our successes would have been even greater.

A.A. defence units, missile launching units and the people's air force are the core and play a role of paramount importance. But the militia and self-defence force and the regional army have also a great role to play in attack as well as in A.A. defence, in the protection of the rear area and of production, in changing the orientation of the economy and production as well as in keeping order and security.

In the new conditions, the militia and self-defence force have great fighting possibilities. In Quang Binh, Vinh Linh and other localities, after receiving more powerful equipment, the militia and guerilla forces doubled the number of planes they were shooting down. With regard to the regional forces there

were battalions which had brought down 70 or 80 aircraft each. That is why, apart from rudimentary weapons, we must boldly increase the number of sophisticated armaments in the hands of the militia, self-defence units and regional army. This is a very sound policy.

In the people's A.A. defence, the militia and self-defence force play the leading role. Without their powerful units, could we carry out successfully civilian A.A. defence, protect and maintain production and keep order and security? No. Without the huge force of militia and self-defence units, local patriotic workers and sappers, without the population, could we keep traffic going while the communication lines were being hard hit by the enemy? No, we would have met with greater difficulties. It is the same in the struggle against enemy commandos. In the coastal areas, most of them have been wiped out by the militia and self-defence forces, who do a great part of such work as observation and deactivation of time-bombs and magnetic bombs on roads and waterways.

To fight against the enemy air force, navy and ground forces, we must have a strong regular army, equipped with modern arms, and, at the same time, we must have a powerful regional armed force. That is why we must build a good militia and self-defence force and do good local militia work.

This work must be done satisfactorily also if we want to defend our rear effectively at the same time as protecting and accelerating production during the war and changing our economic orientation. As an armed organization not separated from production, having a huge force composed of the best elements at grassroots level and with a close-knit organization and tight discipline, the militia and self-defence units are also

the shock force in production. Local military work must pay due attention to this problem.

One of the great achievements recorded by localities in the North is the achievement of a high level of *mobilization and enlistment*, in fulfilment of their duty toward the frontline. Why, within a short time have we been able to carry through such work as mobilization, organization, and training of a great number of the best elements among our young people to send them to the front? This is because we have managed to carry out militia and self-defence work and army reserve work. Under the leadership of the Party cadres at various levels, the provinces, municipalities and branches have contributed a great deal to that achievement.

At present, the primary task of the great rear base is to join forces with the great front in order to defeat the American aggressors. The consolidation of the regional military apparatus at all levels and in all branches is to help the regions carry out the task of mobilization and recruitment satisfactorily and at the same time efficiently build and train the reserve forces. In future, to defend the country and face the eventuality of war, mobilization and recruitment must be prepared even more carefully. It must be done in peace time in all localities, in all branches, in the town as well as in the countryside. To this end, we have to perform our regional military task well. This is a concrete manifestation of our high vigilance and an effective measure to defend the country.

In a word, in the light of Marxism-Leninism and of the Party line and in the practice of revolutionary armed struggle in each stage in our country, we have seen the very important strategic role of regional people's war and of the local armed

forces. Regional military work has become a most important task. It holds a key position in the revolutionary struggle in general and armed struggle in particular, in uprising and the war for liberation, and in the war for national defence. The more modern and the fiercer the war, the greater the importance of regional military work.

The regional military task is a fundamental link in the chain of the Party's military work and is one of the leading tasks of the Party's cadres at all levels in the locality.

CONCLUSION

From the above problems we can draw the following conclusions:

Firstly, *to carry out the Party's military line of people's war,* at the same time as developing people's war and building the people's army on a nation-wide scale, we must *carry out local military work in a satisfactory manner and build local people's armed forces.*

Local military work plays a role of great importance not only in the past and at present, but for a long time to come. Of course, with powerful regional forces but without powerful concentrated units of the regular army, it would be very difficult for us to defeat the enemy in the case of a large-scale war of aggression. On the other hand, if the regional military force is not powerful enough, it would be difficult to build a powerful regular army and, if this army exists, it would be difficult to develop our combat efficiency to the full to secure victory for the people's war.

This is a great experience of our party, a fundamental principle of people's war in Viet Nam, a country small in size and population, which relies mainly on its own power to defeat a large army of aggression.

Secondly, *the more modern the war and the more we have to face powerful imperialist armies using modern techniques and sophisticated weapons, the more we have to strengthen local military work, the militia and regional army, and to prepare for local people's war.* At present, good local military work is an indispensable and most effective way to defend the North, so as to be ready to smash all the frenzied schemes of the U.S. imperialists against the D.R.V.N. and fulfil our task in the war of anti-US resistance for national salvation.

Thirdly, *in a neo-colonial war, the enemy is bent on destroying our human and material reserves by hitting at the inhabitants*, disputing them with us, swelling the ranks of the quislings and setting up "civilian guards" for the Vietnamization of the war. That is why *in local people's war the militia and self-defence units and regional troops must play an ever more important role*; they exert a direct and decisive effect on the foiling of the enemy's perfidious schemes and on the maintenance of the people's political and economic bases.

Fourthly, the new possibilities of our socialist system, of the socialist man, of our technical equipment and of our fighting technique develop with every passing day. We are in a better condition to equip our militia, self-defence force and regional troops with better and more powerful means. Our fighting technique, especially that of opposing weaker forces to stronger ones, smaller units to bigger ones, is constantly enriched by innovations. That is why *our militia and regional army have a greater fighting capacity and are developing more vigorously than ever before.*

Fifthly, *local military work becomes more and more important due to the development of the regions, especially the provinces and towns, in manpower, materials, economic and defence potential, and in logistic possibilites to serve the local people's war.* By their all-sided development in the political, economic and military fields, the provinces and towns become basic economic units and basic units of people's war. Therefore local military work is of paramount importance in relation to operations mounted to defend the locality and the country as a whole.

Sixthly, *local military work is very important for the building, consolidation and defence of the rear and shows the effects of the rear on the frontline.*

We must in the shortest time make large-scale preparations for the population to change from a state of peace to a state of war, by protecting their lives and property and the property of the State, and by protecting the economic and national defence potential in war.

Seventhly: *local military work is closely linked to the important role of the reserve force in people's war and in people's national defence.* The reserve force must be built up satisfactorily: this is the only way to have a strong reserve so that in peace time it is possible to reduce the size of the regular army while enabling it to be rapidly expanded in case of need. To build this force and make it ready to replenish the army rapidly in war time, is a task of strategic importance.

The Party political and military line must be clearly grasped. The various regions and branches must understand

the strategic role of local military work in the present struggle against U.S. aggression for national salvation as well as in the future long term building of the people's national defence. Radical changes must be brought to leadership work by Party committees at all levels and by various administrative authorities, in all branches and even in the army as a contribution to the total victory of the anti-U.S. struggle and the establishment of a steady national defence.

II. TO PERFORM LOCAL MILITARY WORK WELL AND FULFIL EVERY DUTY TOWARD THE RESISTANCE WAR IS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE VICTORY OF THE WAR AGAINST U.S. AGGRESSION, FOR NATIONAL SALVATION

The anti U.S.-struggle of our people in both zones of the country has won great victories, but our resistance war is still going on fiercely.

The American imperialists have suffered repeated defeats, yet they are diehard and warlike. In the South they are doing their best to carry out "Vietnamization" in order to prolong their war of aggression. In the North they have increased their acts of war and brazenly bombed many localities. To seek a way out of their quagmire in Vietnam, they were rash enough to invade Cambodia and turn that peaceful and neutral land into a bloody battlefield. Meanwhile they stepped up the aggression of Laos. The Indochinese peninsula has become a single battlefield, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia, a single front-line against U.S. aggression.

The tasks of all our Party, people and army at present is to resolutely execute President Ho Chi Minh's sacred testament, intensify the war of resistance against the U.S.

aggressors till victory, liberate the South, defend the North and pave the way for the peaceful reunification of the country and the successful construction of socialism. Meanwhile we must strengthen our militant solidarity with the fraternal peoples of Laos and Cambodia, pooling our efforts with theirs to defeat the aggressors and oust them from Indochina; we will thus contribute a worthy part to the revolution of the people of the world.

In the South, at present the American troops have been obliged to proceed to a phased withdrawal, but the enemy are doing their best to reinforce and strengthen the puppet army, which is to replace the GIs and carry on their scheme of implanting neo-colonialism. They muster their troops to mount "pacification" raids so as to repress, terrorize and pen up the population, pressganging them into the army to strengthen the corrupt puppet administration. Under the N.F.L. and P.R.G. flag, our compatriots in the South, in the flush of their victories, have enthusiastically accelerated the resistance war in every respect and have gained an even clearer realization of the most important role of the people's war in the regions. Keeping step with the steady building of a broadly-based political force and the work of raising the fighting quality of the liberation troops, there is an urgent need for a powerful development of guerilla and local people's war and the further reinforcement of leadership over local military work in the plains, the highlands, and the urban centres. Through practice in various locatlities in the South, we have come to realize that only by constantly developing and strengthening the political forces of the masses, by building and consolidating the guerilla and self-defence forces and strengthening the regional army in the districts and provinces can we steadily

increase our offensive posture in the localities and bring into play the fighting force of the Liberation Army.

In the South Viet Nam battlefield at present, the enemy "pacification" program has suffered an important set-back in many provinces and this trend is being maintained and developed. This is precisely because these provinces have stressed the role of local people's war. They have grasped the policies and military line and powerfully developed the political forces and the guerilla and self-defence forces at the base. They heve strengthened leadership at grassroots level and over the regional troops in the provinces and districts, reinforced and unified leadership and strengthened the local military organs.

One of the major experiences gained in the South is as follows:

In order to defeat an aggressive army possessing a big buildup and a huge potential, maintain and constantly increase our own aggressiveness and thwart the U.S. neocolonialist schemes, one of the fundamental necessities is, simultaneously with the building of a powerful regular force, to rely on the powerful development of the army of our political forces to do local military work, step up local people's war, and strengthen and expand vigorously the local armed forces, especially the guerilla and self-defence units.

Our people in the South have profited by this very important experience to expand guerilla warfare and local people's war in all localities and strategic areas.

In the North, at the same time as the building of socialism and the carrying out of national defence after defeating the U.S. war of destruction, we in the rear are continuing to do

our best to fulfil our sacred task toward the great frontline. Fighting U.S. aggression for national salvation has always been the primary task of all our people. Everything to vanquish U.S. aggression! This is the lofty mission of all the Vietnamese people and the honour of all our Party and people at present.

We must satisfy all the requirements of the frontline. We must have the highest sense of political responsibility toward the frontline. We must devote ourselves heart and soul to the fierce struggle now unfolding on the battlefield so as to make a worthy contribution to its victory.

To build and defend the North, to strengthen its economy and national defence, and to fulfil our task in the rear toward the frontline, we must satisfactorily carry out our local military work. Recently, this has been clearly realized by the cadres at all levels and in all branches. In many localities, attention has been paid to the building of local armed forces and the regular training of the militia, self-defence units and the reserve force. Great efforts have been made for mobilization. Attention has been given to the combination of economic construction and national defence and also to civilian A.A. defence and combat readiness. The cadres at all levels in various regions and branches have constantly heightened their vigilance, and made a sound assessment of the new situation and new tasks. In face of the U.S. imperialists' dark designs and of the state of war now prevailing in half the country, this is a very correct position.

As a long-term duty, the heightening of vigilance and preventive measures against all imperialist schemes of aggression, is a need which should certainly never be belittled. In a country like ours, this is quite understandable. Because

she holds an important position and has rich resources, Viet Nam has been the target of aggression by many cruel enemies. In only a few decades we have had to cope with three powerful imperialisms. In time to come, as our country's position rises in importance after our victory over the American imperialists, we may have to cope with other insane schemes and adventurist acts on the part of imperialism. President Ho Chi Minh, when alive, constantly reminded us to look out far afield and to heighten our vigilance. If we do not look out, certainly we may easily neglect our national defence. Our President also stressed that, if we are to be vigilant, the most important thing is to build the militia and self-defence units into a powerful force. Some comrades and Party cadres in the localities have not grasped that problem. These comrades, including armymen, have not a profound knowledge of the present revolutionary task and the Party's military line. That is why they do not pay due attention to local military work. And, as I said above, to neglect this work is to make light of the building and consolidation of national defence at the grassroots, to make light of the achievement of indepedence and the defence of the country at the grassroots. This is a question of basic viewpoint, of revolutionary stand.

In our present struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, as well as in economic rehabilitation and development and in socialist construction, we are swamped with work. This urgent work needs to be done satisfactorily. The cadres in various branches and localities must endeavour to overtake and outstrip the target figures. Therefore if, in some localities, our Party cadres and inhabitants do not pay full attention to military matters, especially at grassroots level, it is quite possible that the local military task will be neglected.

The Party cadres and responsible cadres in these localities will pay less attention to this work; they may have no consideration for it or do it only perfunctorily. Perhaps the requirements of the front will not be met. The need to raise the fighting capacity and the sense of combat readiness of the local armed forces and the building of local military organs may be ignored. Economic construction and the consolidation of national defence may become separated and not given appropriate guidance. Of course, we must actively prevent these phenomena and, if they take place, eliminate them.

We must get down to the construction of socialism, the rehabilitation and development of the economy and the consolidation of national defence. National construction and national defence must be given their rightful due and cannot be dissociated from each other. Therefore, while devoting our efforts to economic work, we must attend carefully to national defence. The cadres at various Party levels and in all branches including villages, hamlets, cooperatives, agricultural farms, enterprises, town quarters and public offices must fully grasp this problem.

All the branches, including industry, agriculture, capital construction, post and telegraph, communications, health service, education, *must assume a great part of the responsibility for the construction of the people's national defence*. That is why, while fulfilling the mission entrusted to one's own branch, one must pay due attention to national defence, especially by a satisfactory performance of local military work. With regard to the various branches, public offices, enterprises and agricultural farms which have been newly set up and are not yet acquainted with local military work, they must carefully study the Party's military line, and

the experiences of other localities so as to carry through that work successfully. This is a problem of paramount importance, because the larger the size of socialist construction, the greater the number of economic undertakings and industrial centres. The self-defence force, which comprises the best sons and daughters of the working class and toiling people, will develop and play an important role. Like the rural militia and guerilla this force serves the proletarian dictatorship at the base. In peace time it is the armed force defending production and the shock force for production; in war time it is the armed force directly prosecuting the people's war in the locality, it is the core for the entire people to fight the enemy right at the local level. For this reason, in war time as in peace time, all branches of activity, public offices and enterprises must carry out local military work and pay attention to the building and training of the militia, self-defence force and reserve force.

The Party cadres in the army, the cadres in charge of military work in various localities, must fully understand their responsibility to improve their guidance with regard to the execution of this work. They must stick to the military line of the Party and the resolutions and directives of the Central Committee, the Government and the Central Military Committee; they must resolutely and creatively carry out this work by adopting appropriate plans and methods to push it vigorously ahead; they must prevent all symptoms of negligence, lack of vigilance, and conservatism checking their bold march forward.

The staffs, political and logistic departments, regular units, services and arms must understand clearly that, together with building the people's army, it is necessary to pay attention to arming the masses. They must not think that the regular army,

artillery, tanks, aicraft, can solve all problems. True, they can solve many problems, but what about that of the base? Everyone knows that the regular army, operating in concentrated units, is very important; it therefore requires building up and being made well-seasoned and powerful. However we must understand that, parallel to this, it is necessary to build strong units of the regional force and the militia and self-defence force. Recently, in the resistance to the U.S. war of destruction, had we increased even more the strength of the A.A. defence of the regions and strengthened, boldly and rapidly, the A.A. equipment of the militia and regional armed forces, we would certainly have seen a considerable increase in the strength of these local armed forces, and won even greater victories.

Our Navy has done good work by organizing the people's war on waterways and at sea; this should be continued so as to yield even better results.

All officers and men must fully realize the importance and content of local military work and actively take part in it.

The military cadres, including those in charge of local military work, *must also pay sufficient attention to economic construction.* They must study this and grasp the requirements of the economy in order to help the Party cadres and branches to combine economic activities with national defence, local economic construction with local military work. They must constantly bear in mind Uncle Ho's teaching: "Fighting the enemy cannot be divorced from political and economic activities; a military cadre who only knows military matters is like a man standing on one foot".

It is necessary to *continue to bring into play the exemplary and vanguard role of the militia and self-defence force in production.* It must be coordinated with production work in order to be strengthened and built and to gain political education and military training. At present this work is under way in some provinces in the Third and Fourth Military Areas, along the left bank of the Red River and in other regions. It must be given due attention by other localities. Apart from their vanguard role in agricultural production, we must highlight the role of the militia and self-defence force in industrial production and in other branches of activity, such as the Bach Dang works (Hai Phong), the Vang Danh and Ha Lam coal mines (Quang Ninh province). We must do it in such a way as to make this a widespread movement; this is the responsibility of the Party cadres and those attending to military work in the localities.

Once again, I want to stress that every one of us must be thoroughly acquainted with the new situation. We must heighten our vigilance in the realization that the struggle against U.S. aggression, for national salvation, is the primary task of our people in both zones of the country. To defend the country is at present and in future one of the cardinal tasks of our Party and people. Therefore, in national construction, in the building of socialism in our country and the effort to improve the livelihood of our people, we must clearly realize all our responsibility towards the frontline and the strengthening of national defence; we must fully understand the importance of local military work, its fundamental role in the struggle against U.S. aggression at present as well as the consolidation of national defence in future. To neglect local military work is to neglect national defence work at the base, and as a

consequence there will be neither powerful local people's war, nor powerful revolutionary military work.

In organization, there is plenty of work to do. *First, the cadres at all levels and in all branches must thoroughly understand the military line of the Party, its viewpoint on the role of local people's war and on local military work.* This is a basis on which to solve concrete problems consistent with the situation and task in each locality.

We must pay great attention to the building of regional armed forces and fully understand the importance of the building of the militia and self-defence force. Parallel to this work in the countryside, we must help to form *militia, self-defence, and combat self-defence forces,* as they embody the new fighting force of the working class and toiling people in urban centres under the socialist regime. Whatever the circumstances, it is necessary to build the militia and self-defence force and the reserve force so that they may develop powrfully and meet the requirements of the struggle against U.S. aggression at present and the consolidation of national defence on a permanent basis.

In the building of the militia, self-defence force and reserve force, we must *lay emphasis on military training* and the popularization of the necessary military knowledge to the entire people; we must push forward national defence sports and ogranize competitions of traditional sports and gymanastics in order to enhance their fighting force and spirit. This was formerly done by our ancestors as early as the Tran and Le dynasties, and is done today in many localities in our country. In an independent country, even in peace time, the reservists must always be subject to

military traning. This is very important as it makes us ready for combat, especially if the standing army is to be reduced.

Military training must be organized according to a clear program and not at random. In training attention should be paid to specialize teams ad brigades making up different arms of the militia and self-defence force. The militia, self-defence and reserve force must continuously improve their quality. In our country every citizen, every young person, must be a good worker; at the same time, he must have both resolve and ability to defend the Fatherland.

The building of the regional army must be attended to. The regional army in each province is much greater at present than it was formerly. Not only is it provided with infantry, but also with other necessary arms. This is the reason why the management, training and organization of the regional army should be all-sided and its quality raised to make it really strong; it must be turned into a nucleus, a school to train military cadres and return them to the localities so that the regional troops can be strengthened swiftly in case of need.

Economic work should be satisfactorily combined with national defence. This problem must be solved both at the central level and in the localities.

As we have found out, people's war in the whole country in general and in each locality in particular, shows our combined strength in the miliary, political and economic fields...This force has been brought into play recently, in our resistance to the U.S. war of destruction. On the basis of the new relations of production we have satisfactorily combined production with fighting. We have closely

combined the operations of the armed forces with the activities of the economic branches serving the people's life. Thanks to this our people have won great successes in all fields. At present we are building up the centrally-run economy while developing the local economies. The more developed the local economy, the greater possibility it creates for the improvement of the people's living conditions and the more it meets the new requirements of national defence and the development of the fighting capacity of the local armed forces and population. It is the material and technical basis of people's war; therefore , in their leadership, our cadres must not belittle the combination of economic development and the strengthening of national defence, the union of the local economic task and the local military task. With this harmonious combination, in the event of war, conditions will be created for the protection and maintenance of production, the reduction of damage and the continued development of the local economic potential to serve the requirements of the war and the people's life. This combination must be carried out in all respects, in all branches, in the development of agriculture, industry, transport and communications, post and telegaraph, the health and cultural services..., in the construction of the countryside as well as in the development of urban centres.

The local economic branches must see to the combination of their activities with the requirements of national defence; for instance, the combination between industry and the production and repair of armaments; that between various agricultural areas, transport and communications, post and telegraph, and the medical sevice respectively on the one hand, and national defence on the other; that between

national defence and all the above-mentioned branches. This combination must be given great attention all through the process of national construction because such major tasks as division of economic areas, distribution of manpower, and extension of the road network, need many years to complete. Therefore, gradual provision for such tasks must be made in peace time. If not, when the war flares up, we shall have to carry them through under the bombing and then the difficulties and damage incurred will be much greater and the quality of the work affected.

The harmonious combination of local economic construction and local military work requires an all-sided outlook. We must grasp the tasks of economic development, of socialist contruction and also of local defence and the vital interests of the nation. We will base ourselves on our economic possibilities, on the concrete situation of the material and human resources of the locality to work out a comprehensive plan with various stages combining immediate with long-term tasks. Work should be done by order of priority, and a plan must be mapped out for some of the tasks to be carried out only in the event of wâr. Those which are completely in accordance with the requirements of national defence and the national economy can be done forthwith.

Those which basically answer the requirements of these two branches but do not show, for the time being, a close co-ordination between them, are subject to further study and are to be done step by step.

This coordination should be understood even at the grassroots level. In all wok – construction of a factory, building of a hydraulic system, transformation of the fields, afforestation – we

must bear in mind that it is to be done in the interests of both the national economy and national defence.

The Party's leadership over local military work must be strengthened.

At present our cadres must have a thorough grasp of the military situation and tasks as well as the Party's military police so as to strengthen their guidance over local military work; they must give this work its rightful place, especially when the resistance war against U.S. aggression is raging in half our country and in Cambodia and Laos. While discussing economic construction and other tasks, our cadres must also take decisions on the local military task, they must strengthen the Party's leadership over the local military organs and send cadres acquainted with local military work to help in various organs and in military commands of provinces, towns and other bases so that they may discharge their task better as staffs of the Party committees. It is necessary to define the responsibility of the State organs and branches toward the strengthening of national defence, the building of local armed forces, and local military work, and to organize and supervise this work in each branch in order to help the Party committee and the head of this branch to guide it. In each village there is a militia staff; in each workshop or factory there must similarly be responsible cadres for military work Studies should be made to define the responsibility, organization and method of military work in various organs and branches, especially in those directly concerned with national defence.

We are facing a most glorious and important task – to unite the entire people, perseveringly step up the resistance in order

to bring our struggle against U.S. aggression for national salvation to total victory.

South Viet Nam has not been liberated yet, the war is going on, our fellow-countrymen and combatants are bravely fighting the enemy at the front. The peoples of the three Indochinese countries are defeating the American aggressors. We are determined to go ahead, carry out the instructions of President Ho Chi Minh in his sacred Testament, fulfil the task of the great rear area towards the great frontline-South Viet Nam – so as worthily to contribute to the cause of national liberation of the indochinese peoples and to the revolutionary movement of the world's people.

Whatever work we are doing, miltary, economic, cultural or social work, we must clearly realize that our first duty is to fight the U.S aggressors, to save the country. We must thoroughly grasp the slogan "All for victory over the American invaders." That is why all organizations at every level, all branches of activity, all localities, must pay special attention to national defence work, profoundly understand the role of local military work and the very important strategic significance of the local people's war, and try to do this work well.

It is hoped that those points will be reported back to the heads of committees, branches, localities so that all of them will actively execute the directives and resolutions of the Party Central Committee, the Government and the Central Military Committee on local military work, and make it progress vigorously. By so doing we shall make a valuable contribution to the present resistance to U.S. aggression, for national salvation, and to the safeguarding of lasting independence for our beloved Fatherland.

CHAPTER V

ON THE SEA AND RIVER BATTLEFRONT [1]

Our Navy is a young armed service. Its birth was connected with our people's sovereignty on our rivers and on our sea, with the victory of the Vietnamese nation in the struggle for independence and freedom. President Ho Chi Minh once said: "In the past, we had only night and forest. Now, we have day, sky and sea. Our coast is long and beautiful, we should know how to defend it". Now, under the leadership of the Party and of Uncle Ho, our people have won glorius victories through various stages of hard and resolute struggle. We already have day, sky and sea. This is a very great change, which brings independence and sovereignty to our land, the sovereignty on the rivers and the sea of our people.

We must defend our territorial waters and our very long and beautiful coast! This is a very glorious task entrusted to the Navy and the river and coastal forces by our Party and people. This is Uncle Ho's teaching we are determined to realize at all costs.

1. Speech delivered at the ceremony commemorating the 15th founding anniversary of the Navy (1970).

I • VICTORIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR ON THE SEA AND RIVER BATTLEFIELD

Viet Nam possesses a very long cost. In a not very large country like ours, the length of the coast and the quite well-developed network of rivers and canals are special features differing from many other countries.

The topography of our coast is complicated. There are rugged archipelagos with thousands of big and small islands such as the Ha Long and Bai Tu Long bays; there are long flat stretches of sea coast such as the coastal areas of the Bac Bo and Nam Bo deltas, and places where there are high cliffs forming closed bays such as Da Nang, Cam Ranh, etc.

Our country possesses many big rives with outlets to the sea: the Bach Dang, Hong (Red), Ma, Lam, Gianh rivers and many others in the North; the Huong, (Perfume), Tra Khuc, Ba rivers in Central Trung Bo; and the Mekong, a very big river that runs through the whole length of the Indochinese peninsula down to the Nam Bo plain where it splits up into many tributaries before draining into the sea.

Along our coastal areas and rivers there are populous centres and prosperous villages, especially along riversides and rivermouths.

Viet Nam's rivers and sea show enormous prospects of wealth and maritime products. At the same time they constitute very convenient communication and transport lines.

Due to the country's important position, its long coast and big rivers, the enemy from outside, in the past as well as now,

have often made use of the sea and rivers to invade our country. In the course of our history, the Vietnamese nation has many times held aloft the tradition of heroic and undaunted struggle against foreign invasion on the sea and on the rivers. Since the founding of the country by the Hung Kings, our nation has performed countless heroic exploits on our land and, more especially, on our rivers and sea.

In the first battle on the Bach Dang River, Ngo Quyen routed the troops of the Southern Han. In the second Bach Dang battle, Le Dai Hanh annihilated the Sung troops. In addition there were the battles of Chuong Duong and Ham Tu on the Red River, and the third battle of the Bach Dang where Tran Hung Dao smashed the Mongol invaders, the battles of Van Don and Cua Luc where Tran Khanh Du shattered the enemy's convoy of supply boats; the battle of Rach Gam-Xoai Mut in the South where Nguyen Hue defeated the Siamese troops, etc.

It is clear from our history that our forefathers from an early date knew how to use naval fleets to move their troops by sea and river. Ly Thuong Kiet deployed his troops by using the sea; Tran Hung Dao used both land and maritime routes for his temporary troop withdrawal along the Thai Binh and the Red River, getting ou at the Ba Lat river-mouth and then entering the Ma river. Nguyen Hue made use of the sea route many times to go from Qui Nhon to Thuan Hoa, from southern Trung Bo to Gia Dinh, and from Thuan Hoa to Vi Hoang; the greater part of his military forces, and at times hundreds of elephants and cannons were transported by boats.

All these heroic exploits and creative methods of troop movement testify to the fact that in the past and at the present time, the enemy have made use of the sea and the rivers to invade our country, whereas our people have performed outstanding exploits on those important battlefronts of the country.

The intelligence and resourcefulness of our ancestors in fighting the enemy on land as well as on the sea and rivers had developed from a very early date, Our Navy has had an excellent tradition of fighting both on the sea and on the rivers. Of primary importance is the fact that whether on the sea or on the rivers, there has always been a strict co-ordination between the maritime and the land forces. Those are outstanding features of the wars for national defence and the liberation of our nation, in which we have fought the enemy on land, on rivers and on the sea.

When the French imperialists first invaded our country, we were then under a declining, feudal regime politically and economically backward, while the aggressor was a Western capitalist power. The enemy deployed their Navy and made use of the rivers and the sea to invade our country. The hole which can still be seen on the wall of the Hanoi citadel was made by a cannon-shell fired from a French war vessel. Under the Nguyen dynasty the patriotic movement and the fighting spirit were not so strong as under the Tran, the Le and Nguyen Hue. War vessels with a great tonnage and strong resistance to firepower used by Nguyen Hue in attacks on Gia Dinh no longer existed ; the vessels of the Nguyen Navy now had sailors who "while rowing had to fan

themselves", as satirically described by Western missionaries pointing to its weakness.

When the French imperialists invaded our country for the second time, we were a people's democracy and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had already been founded. The social system was an advanced one, but the country's economy was still backward as it had just been freed from the yoke of colonialist and feudalist domination. At the start, the aggressors again used their war vessels to penetrate our rivers from the sea. Our army and people mounted very heroic battles against the enemy on the rivers and on the sea such as the attack on the warship *Craysac* vessel in Ha Long Bay and a number of other battles on the Lo and Red rivers in Bac Bo; attacks on enemy vessels in Trung Bo; and on enemy naval bases and troops on rivers in Nam Bo, etc.

The war of resistance against the French colonialists was brought to a successful end. But our people have had to carry on the struggle against the U.S. imperialists who came to replace the French colnialists to invade our country. This time the enemy came from a country with very great military and economic potentialities. In their mind, the strength of the U.S. Air Force and Navy is invincible. To put into effect their scheme of aggression against the two zones of our country, a land tens of thousands of miles away from the United States, they have done their utmost to bring into play their own Navy in which the Seventh Fleet plays an important role.

The U.S. imperialists have used ther Air Force and Navy to unleash a war of destruction. In South Viet Nam, they have striven to build and consolidate military bases along the coast and used their naval forces to carry out mopping-up operations and attacks against the coastal areas and the riversides so as to reinforce their infantry forces, blockade the sea, land their troops and transport supplies. In the course of their war of aggression against South Viet Nam, they have also tried to build up the puppet army, including the infantry, ai force and navy. The puppet navy has both maritime and river forces.

It is obvious that their navy constituted an important force when they came to invade our country. It is also obvious that, unlike the situation during former wars, there is a great difference between our own technical equipment as compared with that of the enemy.

For thousands of years, our nation had to confront invading troops coming from bigger countries but these were also under a feudal system like our own and so the inequality in ecnomy and technique of both sides was not so great. Often, the enemy were numerically superior, but our arms and equipment were equal to theirs.

At present, in our wars of resistance against the imperialist aggressors, we have the leadership of the Party, an advanced social system, and a highly conscious people. The entire people fight the enemy. But as far as arms and technique are concerned the enemy is at a more sophisticated level than we are and the inequality of naval forces is even more obvious. As everybody knows, man is the decisive

factor in a war whereas arms and equipment constitute a very important factor. So, in analysing and assessing the military victories of our people in the past as well as at present, it is necessary to take into account these two factors in a comprehensive manner.

Our Navy came into being in new historical conditions. We have the correct and creative line of our Paty on people's war. Our Navy has inherited our nation's glorious tradition, and developed our army's heroic tradition. It enjoys love and affection of our people, the wholehearted assistance and concerted action of other people's armed forces. As far as the men and the system are concerned we have very fundamental advantages. But as for material and technical bases, a very important aspect, we still have many shortcomings.

However, big progress has been made by our Navy throughout 15 years of building and fighting and the Navy together with the entire army and people, has achieved brilliant exploits.

We are proud of the maturty of our Navy and of the growth of the heroic Vietnamese people's armed forces. Our Navy constitutes the core of people's war on the fluvial and maritime front. It has contributed a worthy part, together with the army and people of the North, to the total defeat of the U.S. imperialist war of destruction and made great efforts in fulfilling the task of the great rear area towards the great heroic front. These exploits and achievements have embellished the Vietnam Navy's fine

tradition: "Fight with valour and resourcefulness, overcome difficulties, be determined to fight and win".

The achievements of the seamen are closely bound up with the merits and great victories obtained by the armed forces and people living along the seacoast and river banks in defending our territorial waters and seacoast.

We warmly hail *the regional army, militia and selfdefence forces* stationed along the seacoast and river banks who have matured in all fields and in their combined actions with the navy have shot down many aircraft, sunk or set afire many enemy vessels, neutralized thousands of torpedoes, bombs and mines of various kinds and heroically held fast to the sea to produce, transport, fight and serve the fighting forces, thus greatly contributing to the common victory.

The various arms and armed services of the people's army who have shown a high spirit of solidarity in taking up concerted actions to defeat the enemy and defend the country.

We are very proud and feel grateful to the *people throughout the country* for their love and support to the navy.

The people of Haiphong, Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Quang Binh, Vinh Linh and other coastal provinces, and cadres, workers and personnel from various branches and State offices have given devoted assistance to the seamen. They have created the most favourable conditions for the latter to act and fight and recorded many great achievements in their combined attacks with the navy against the enemy.

We warmly welcome the resounding military exploits of our *compatriots and the Liberation Army of the heroic South.* The victories of our army and people on this great front are a source of encouragement and a shining example for the people and fighters throughout the country.

We enthusiastically acclaim the great victories of the *fraternal people and Liberation Army of Laos and the fraternal people and Liberation Army of Cambodia* The Indochinese people's fighting spirit and solidarity will certainly smash every aggressive scheme of the American imperialists and their henchmen, traitors to their countries.

Besides these achievements, in the process of construction and fighting, the Navy still has weaknesses and faults which must be eliminated. The important question is that in the light of the correct and creative military line of our Party, in the reality of carrying out people's war on the river and sea battlefield, we have known how to draw experience in all fields as a basis for improving the constructive and fighting qualities of the seamen.

First of all, it is the experience of *the whole people fighting against the enemy on the sea and river battlefield with the naval force as the core, and with various forces joining in action,* to defend our territorial waters and rivers.

Fighting in our own country against an enemy who is equipped with more modern techniques than we are but has come from a faraway land to invade our territory, we have known how to strike at his strategic weakneses. With the determination to fight, with a resourceful and creative way of fighting in which a small force can defeat a bigger one, we

have won *battles in which high combat efficiency* was attained. That is a great success which contributes to highlight the correct and creative strategic thoughts of our Party, of a small nation which has defeated powerful imperialist countries.

One of the objectives of the U.S. imperialists was to strike at our supply lines and bases. Though the enemy used many cruel methods, mobilizing huge forces to attack us, he has finally been defeated. We have succeeded in transporting our supplies by water as well as by land. The results obtained in bringing supplies to the islands and other localities bear proof of the achievements and exploits in this field.

Concerning *the task of conducting patrols and fighting the enemy*, the very important thing is that we have managed to bring into play the people's immese strength, closely combine the force of the navy with that of the regular army, the militia and self-defence units situated along the seacoast and river banks, and the artillery and anti-aircraft units of the regular army, etc., set up a strong network for the people's war on the sea and river battlefield, and defend the people's life and property, and our territorial waters in peace as well as in wartime.

To keep the enemy under permanent observation on the sea, we have organized the modern observation network of the navy and at the same time set up observation groups of the coastal local forces. Therefore, we have usually been masters of the situation at sea in peacetime as well as in times of great difficulties during the enemy war of destruction.

We have thwarted the enemy scheme of blockading our communication lines with bombs and mines of various kinds. The armed forces and people, with the navy as the core, have organized adequate forces and taken effective measures to neutralize enemy mines and bombs, ensuring safe movement for ships and boats. The localities and various economic branches along the seacoast and river banks have organized their own forces equipped with adequate wapons and means, both rudimentary and modern, to operate on or along the rivers and narrow channels. The specialist forces have been active mainly on the sea or greater channels, on river sections which were hardest hit or in places where conditions for resisting blockade are the more complex and difficult. To bring into play our bravery and intelligence, we have actively cleared the channel, reducing the difficulties and damage to a minimum, and restricting the bad effects caused by enemy bombs and mines.

To resist the enemy blockade, we have done our best to *attack the enemy* especially his ships and aeroplanes which came to drop mines.

Such experiences must be drawn continuously and widely applied.

One of the great experiences is in the combination of naval with land forces.

In the present conditions of our country, and for a long time to come, our navy is not strongly equipped with technique. Therefore it is difficult for it to fight the enemy independently. Even with a powerful naval force, when

fighting the enemy on the sea and rivers we still have to combine closely the forces fighting by water with those fighting by land in the people's armed forces. Inland bases serve as starting points, supply bases and hiding places for the forces fighting by water. It can be said that to fight the enemy on the sea and river battlefield our Navy must necessarily need forces fighting both by water and by land.

Our Navy is entrusted with the task of fighting the enemy on the sea and rivers. Our country has a long seacoast and great rivers. That is why we have to build up the Navy to defend our fatherland. Formerly, our naval force was already developed and active on the sea and rivers. Nowadays, our Navy does the same work. This task determines how our Navy should be built up and should fight.

Another very important experience is that *the building up of the naval force must be closely associated with that of the armed forces stationed along the sea coast and river banks. The development of the naval force is closely related to that of the coastal localities and sea economic branches.*

The local armed forces situated along the seacoast and river banks are of great importance. Attention must be given to the building up and fostering of these forces so that they will become a widespread and powerful force which can take concerted actions with the Navy in defending our territorial waters and rivers.

We have detemined a correct orientation for building up the *reserve of the Navy.* The Navy must attach importance to recruiting people living along the seacoast and river banks or working in such economic branches as sea products and

sea transport. That will afford favourable conditions for the new recruits for they are used to living on the sea or rivers. Later, when they are demobilized, those seamen who have been trained in many fields can become cadres and technicians of various branches of activities or grassroots cadres of cooperatives in the localities situated along the seacoast or river banks.

We have clearly seen the *task of the Navy in economic construction.* The development of our Navy and army must be associated with that of the national economy. National defence must not be separated from the economy. The Navy must join forces with various economic activities in general and those on the sea and rivers in particular. Consequently, it will not only be able to bring important contributions to the development of economic activities on the sea and rivers, but also benefit from a number of conditions for building up and developing its forces, training technical cadres and personnel, building and repairing ships and boats, founding the material and technical basis and making a plan for taking closely concerted actions whenever a war breaks out, etc.

We have satisfactorily solved a problem which has the character of a principle. That is to bring about unity and co-ordinated actions between the Navy on the one hand and localities on the other.

As regards the building up of the naval force we have taken initial steps in determining the sections suitable for operations and combat; training a contingent of

undaunted cadres, and founding a fairly good technical and material basis.

We have acquired some experience in shooting at enemy aeroplanes, taking up concerted actions with A.A. units stationed along the shore, combining the task of combat with that of camouflaging and hiding our forces. We have gained initial experience in fighting enemy ships in conditions in which our ships were small whereas enemy ships were supported by powerful air cover. Besides, we have also obtained some experience in transforming the terrain in order to preserve our forces, and conduct combat actions in all fields in wartime.

Firmly grasping the ever more comprehensive and perfected military line of our Party, continuing and developing the tradition of fighting the enemy on the sea and river in the new historical conditions, our army and people have brought the people's war on the sea and river battlefield to a new stage of development and won new victories.

Recently, our Navy has recorded some exploits and achievements but they are only initial ones. We must be modest in learning, fighting and working, and try to go forward. It is necessary to rally and organize the forces of the people living along the seacoast and river banks, and build up our naval force in keeping with this orientation to make it worthy of being the nucleus force of the peoples' war on the sea and river battlefield.

II. THE NAVY IS THE NUCLEUS FORCE OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR ON THE SEA AND RIVER BATTLEFIELD

The war on the sea and river battlefield is waged by our people living on or beside the sea and rivers, with the naval force as the nucleus. Therefore, when speaking of the important role of the navy as the nucleus, we should know that the strenght of the people and the local armed forces living on or beside the sea and rivers is an essential factor of people's war on the sea and river battlefield. That is why in solving the questions of combat and build up of the Navy we must strive to bring into play the powerful strength of the people and the local armed forces living on or beside the sea and rivers.

To determine the task of combat and build-up of the Navy we must *rely on the following points:*

Firstly, it is necessary to base ourselves on the revolutionary task of the Party and the people's army in general and the Navy and the other forces fighting on the sea and river battlefield in particular. The task of our army is, together with the whole people, to defend the socialist North, liberate the South and fulfil its international obligations. As part of our people's armed forces, the Navy assumes the same task. It is a very heavy but very glorious task of our people, the people's army and the Navy.

Secondly, it is necessary to base ourselves on the sea and river conditions of our country. A nation always lives in a certain region. The conditions of geography, mountains, rivers, sea, population, and economy and the political regime are of great importance.

For centuries, the Vietnamese people have existed and developed on this stretch of land, our country. The fact that our country is not very large, and its population not very numerous, sets off a characteristic of people's war in Viet Nam, a small country which has defeated many more powerful aggressors.

Our country has a long seacoast, rich national resources and many rivers. For this reason we badly need a naval force, which together with the whole people must carry out the task of national defence on the dea and rivers.

Thirdly, we must rely on the development of socialist construction and the national economy. Socialism has already been established in North Viet Nam. Socialist construction has made new steps forward. The ever developing economy of our country is closely related to the building of our army and Navy. The more industry, agriculture, and other economic branches develop the quicker the shipbuilding, navigation and sea transport branches grow up and the better the material and technical conditions for developing the Navy. On that basis, *the task and orientation of the Navy* have been determined. Over the past years, side by side with the armed forces and people living on the seacoast and river banks, the Navy has tried hard to fulfil its task.

That is the task of defending our territorial waters and seacoast, ensuring safe movement for the ships and boats of our State and people and those of foreign countries on our territorial waters and safeguarding our pepple's interests on the high seas.

In war time, the Navy has the task of fighting the enemy on the sea and rivers, smashing their raids, attacking their

ships to prevent their troop landings, launching surprise attacks on their military bases situated along the seacoast and river banks, destroying their communication lines on the sea and rivers, etc.

In addition to fighting, the Navy has the duty to follow the enemy situation on the sea, to give combat support, and to ensure transport and communications on the sea and rivers. Besides, the Navy must take part in production work.

As regards the *Navy's fighting task,* conclusions have been reached on a number of questions.

First of all, let us deal with the *opposing forces*. Throughout their history, the Vietnamese people have fought against the fleets of many invaders, from foreign feudal dynasties to the French and the US and its Saigon puppet regime. At present our Navy's opponents are obviously the US and its puppet's navies. And while the US imperialists are trying to carry out their "Vietnamization" of the war, we must keep a strict watch on these two opponents without neglecting either. We should also keep track of the US satellites' navies and the navy of any other power which might come to invade our country.

In naval combat, *it is also of great importance to determine the theatre of operations.*

Experience has shown that nearly all the enemies who invaded our country made use of the sea and rivers to attack us. Therefore, our Navy's battlefield is not only the sea but also the rivers.

Here the sea includes the seacoasts, the inshore regions, the archipelagoes and the high seas. In the present time when our Navy's technical equipment is limited, great

attention should be paid to fighting the enemy on the seacoasts, the inshore regions and the archipelagoes. Meanwhile, with the increasing growth of our army in general and our Navy in particular, we can extend our theatre of operations farther.

On rivers, attention should be paid to the survey of river banks and tributaries, especially at places connected with the sea and big-river banks.

In the struggle against the U.S, imperialists for national salvation our army and people in the South have sunk and damaged thousands of big and small enemy boats and warships; our army and people in the North have sunk or set on fire hundreds of U.S. and Saigon puppet warships in our inshore areas. These achievements have proved that this view of our Navy's theatre of operations is quite correct.

While conducting people's war on the sea and river battlefields, *our Party's thinking on strategy and fighting must be correctly and creatively applied.*

First of all, it is the idea of the *entire people fighting against the enemy with the people's armed forces serving as the core, and the idea of a small country* defeating the aggressive army of a big country. From these two fundamental views we have worked out an original and creative military art enabling us to defeat any aggressor.

The people's war on the sea and rivers must certainy be carried out by the entire people and, concretely, by the people living by the sea and rivers, on the sea coasts and river banks, with the Navy and other armed forces serving as the core. With a close dependence on the mainland and a good knowledge of the sea and river channels they can gain the

upper hand in the fighting against the enemy. The problem is that we must organize these forces properly so that they can closely coordinate their activity so as to bring into play the strength of the people's war on the sea and river battlefield.

For every fighter of the Navy and every combatant of our people's army in general, to grasp thoroughly the thinking on people's war means first of all that he must clearly realize that he is fighting for the independence and liberty of his Fatherland, for the ideal of socialism and communism, that our army and navy are from the people and fight for the people. This is a fundamental point. The other important point is that, as far as military organization is concerned, we must clearly realize the role and usefulness of the regular army and of the armed forces of the masses. The navy forms the core of the regional troops, self-defence and militia forces of the people living on the seacoasts and riversides, at the same time it must fully bear in mind that only by linking itself closely with the people can it bring into full play its fighting strength and fulfil its task. Thus the Navy should try to help the people and their armed forces in those regions to fight the enemy and defend the country.

Thanks to its creative application of Marxist-Leninist doctrine on military organization to the concrete conditions of our country our Party has great experience in *arming the people* and building up a *people's army* with the people's armed forces serving as its core.

Fighting practice on the sea and rivers in our country has proved the correctness of that conception. Wherever fishermen and their self-defence forces are guided, organized and well-equipped there the army and the navy

can find a solid support and thus can make full use of their fighting strength.

Waging people's war on the sea and rivers we must also clearly realize that our country is small and our economy is not yet developed, therefore our army is in general inferior to the enemy in number and in technical equipment. Our task is to combat victoriously an enemy whose army is superior in number and whose technique and armaments are much more modern than ours. This has been a characteristic of our country.

By creatively applying Marxism -Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country, bringing into play the new strength of an advanced soicalist system and inheriting and continuing our nation's tradition of fighting against foreign invaders, our people have defeated a big force with a smaller one, and used equipment and armaments which were in general inferio to that of the enemy both in quantity and in sophistication to get the better of a huge aggressive army with abundant modern armaments and equipment.

This is an important content of Vietnamese military thought. Engels, more than a century ago, pointed out that a small country could defeat a big one and that an army not very large in number and not very strong in equipment could defeat an enemy with a huge, well-equipped army. That charateristic has become a basic law in the Vietnamese people's history of fighting against foreign aggression.

This thought must be thoroughly grasped and correctly applied in the fighting done by our Navy. With an army which is not very large in number and not very strong in technical equipment, we, and our entire people, are

determined to defeat, on the sea and river battlefields of our country, an enemy which has a powerful navy and modern technical equipment.

In order to apply this thought to our military art and increasingly develop it to defeat the enemy, the most important point for our army is to bring into full play our courage, resourcefulness, determination and creativeness. Facing an enemy army many times superior in number and technical equipment we must be courageous and resolved to fight. We must be clever, resourceful and creative, we must know how to fight. Only by so doing can we translate into reality the story of the "grasshopper versus the elephant". We must know how to defeat the enemy with a force inferior in number and armaments. This is our thinking on combat and it must be thoroughly grasped by our Navy. We must fight with dynamism and determination, flexibility, resourcefulness and creativeness and make the best use of secrecy and surprise. Only by so doing can we succeed in pitting a weak naval force against a stronger one.

Our army and people in the South, with creative combat methods, have destroyed thousands of enemy warships including 10,000-ton warships, Using appropriate means of transport on the sea and rivers we have succeeded in supplying armaments to islands and other units and regions. Also, with courageous spirit and creative methods, we have successfully removed enemy magnetic bombs and mines from our sea and rivers.

These combat methods are much in accordance with our military thought, with Vietnamese tradition. They are the results of applying proletarian principles on military science to the concrete conditions and special characteristics of Vietnam.

As regards numbers, ours is a small nation, but in view of its fighting spirit against foreign invaders and its ability to win, it is a great nation.

With a view to working out correct direction for the building up of the navy we must base ourselves on our general tasks, on various aspects of our country, on our adversaries and on the military line and strategic thought of our Party. But as was said above, the setting up of our navy must be closely combined with the formation of the armed forces of the masses living by the sea and rivers.

The navy must be built into a service with different arms in accordance with our country's conditions and with the navy's own task. Attention must be paid, on the one hand, to training it into a highly qualified, loyal and courageous navy, with a high technical and strategic level, possessing proper material bases and a large contingent of competent cadres and commanders. On the other hand, efforts must be made to build up militia and self-defence forces of the people living on the seacoasts and river banks into a powerful force so as to promote the strength of the people's war on the sea and river battlefields.

Here we shall not go into concrete details of the component forces which made up the navy, but on the whole the navy must have forces fighting on the sea and rivers

and forces fighting on the ground. These two forces should be taken into account and have an adequate strength. Apart from fighting forces it needs support forces, bases, and material and technical foundations. To have a powerful navy, of course, we must go through a period of development. But the main problem is that we must know how to work out appropriate initial steps, then through actual fighting and building, sum up experience with a view to elaborating the long-term direction.

I would like to stress once again that while building up the navy, attention should be paid to the formation of regional troops and self-defence and militia forces along the sea coasts and river banks, while coordination among various services of the people's armed forces operating on the sea and rivers must also be enhanced.

The armed forces of the masses operating on the seacoasts and river banks have shown their great capability in fighting in this theatre of operations. So far all enemy commando groups ionvading our soil from the sea have been wiped out by these forces. Patrols inshore and in the coastal regions are also carried out by forces of fishermen. They are the on-the-spot forces which observe the enemy's actions, marked bomb sites, removed all enemy mines, magnetic bombs, etc. In certain regions, equipped with artillery, they have sunk or set on fire many enemy warships.

Those achievements have proved their great capability as regards the defence of the sea and rivers of our country.

The various activities carried out by sea and rivers are playing an ever more important role in our national

economy and their material and technical bases are also becoming increasingly developed. Consequently the fighting strength of the regional troops and self-defence forces is continuously growing. Thus, attention should be paid to developing such forces along the coastal regions and river banks. The combination of productive work with fighting duties and the improvement of their technical level in production and their military knowledge must be satisfactorily carried out so that in peace time they are skilled producers and in war time a powerful fighting force.

Not only are they the on-the-spot fighting forces but they also form an *inexhaustible reserve force for the navy*. That is why the relations between the forces forming the core and the armed forces of the masses, between the regular forces and the reserve, must be intensified. Efforts must be made to give military training to the people living in those regions.

The Navy should try to enrol new men from the people living on the sea coasts and river banks. These men, trained and tempered during their time of service, will become grassroots cadres for agricultural co-operatives and other economic branches when they leave the Navy. By this means, not only will the relations between the Navy and the other forces of the masses be increased but also there will be favourable conditions for the building of the economy and national defence in these regions.

Apart from the navy, many other forces belonging to different armed services take part in fighting the enemy on the sea and river battlefields. This is why the navy must

have a good co-ordination with the various arms and services, the infantry, artillery, air defence and air force, as well as with the regional troops and self-defence and militia forces of the people living on the sea coasts and river banks.

Nearly all the military regions and many of the provinces of our country have long coasts and large rivers, therefore coordination and assistance among them should be intensified and organizational relations between the navy and those regions should be gradually set up. The navy must clearly realize that it acts as the core of those localities and that it must be responsible for raising military knowledge and organizing fighting coordination among them so as to promote the all-round strength of people's war on the sea and river battlefields.

While building up its fighting forces the navy must see to the setting up of material and technical bases. This is a problem of great importance especially for the navy, a force which consists of many different technical arms. Repair workshops, quays and ports, storehouses and dumps, etc. must be built. Special attention must be paid to the transformation of terrain and the building of projects. Only by so doing can the navy have a solid support.

The navy's material and technical bases are closely linked to the economic and defence potential of the country. One can have a powerful army only when one possesses a great economic and defence potential. Therefore the combination of economy with national defence in the setting up of the navy is a problem of great importance. As

long as this problem is correctly solved the building up of the navy will meet with favourable conditions.

Production work is one of the important tasks of our army. The present task of our navy is also to participate as a shock force in production work, to protect and help fishermen in their work. Our army is both a fighting and a productive force. To take part in production, to build up the economy in order to produce more wealth for the country and so lighten the contribution of the people : this is appropriate to the function of the army, suitable to the condition and capability of the Navy. To take part in production contributes to training our naval force in productive labour and in preparation for combat and to strengthening the material basis for this armed service.

By joining in production, helping the people and strengthening the relations with the marine branches of the economy, the navy is building a firmer and firmer solidarity between itself and the people. The more the Navy associates itself with the people's life the better it can understand the situation of building up the militia, and self-defence force. At the same time, it will better coordinate with the marine and coastal branches of the economy in effectively creating material and technical bases, repairing equipment, training cadres, and transforming the standing force of the Navy into the reserve.

By so doing we have helped to develop our economy and created conditions for building up the Navy.

In order to carry out these tasks, ever since our navy was founded it has paid special attention to Party work and

to political activities. The Party committees and cells and the political organs always have a full grasp of our Party's political and military line and policies and have instilled into the cadres and men an undrstanding of the revolutionary situation and tasks as well as the concrete tasks of their respective services, arms and units. It is through practice and trial that Party members, officers and men of the Navy, imbued with the spirit of valiant combat, have resourcefully overcome every difficulty. They have fulfilled their tasks of combat and production in tough and complicated situations and especially, they have ensured solidarity with other arms and services, with every branch of State activities and with the localities. We must use such strong points to the full and further strengthen Party activities and political work among the armed services. We must link political work with our military task, and master military thought, science and technology in order to ensure that our armed service fulfils its duties, both in building and in combat.

With regard to the building up of the Party, Party organs at all levels, especially those at the base, are being unceasinghly consolidated in conformity with the special organizational and combat charateristic of our Navy. The quality of Party members has improved steadily; the proportion of Party members among the masses is quite high and they are fairly well distributed among the various branches and units. In the campaign "to raise the quality of Party members and admit new members into the Ho Chi Minh batch", we should continue to pay further attention to the building up of the Party so as to strengthen the leadership of the Party branch.

Another problem of great importance, a key problem in the Navy's development is the *training and fostering of a contingent of cadres*. We have paid attention to every aspect of this question.

Generally speaking, the political and organizational level and military and professional standards of our naval officers are growing continuously thanks to their close contact with the realities of fighting. Nevertheless our cadres' standard is not, at present, sufficient for the requirements of building up the service. That is why we should try to raise our political and ideological as well as professional and military level still further in order to build up a really strong contingent of military cadres for our country's Navy. Special attention must be paid to the training and fostering of command cadres, cadres of different branches and high-level technicians. To train a contingent of qualified cadres, who combine a firm political understanding with a good technical level, and can master general military science together with advanced naval techniques, is both a most fundamental requirement, and, at the same time, an indispensable condition for the building up of our Navy.

As a means of heightening the level of our cadres, the work of research, the summing up of our activities, and the military schools play an important role. Our Navy has a research institute and has directed its research activities to practical subjects. We have also analysed past experiences. We must continuously improve our research institute and step up the work of research and analysis. We must make a deep study of naval matters in general as well as of our own

Navy's combat methods, fighting means and organizational orientation and step up training so as to enable our Navy to have a contingent of cadres armed with modern military knowledge . All these are very important for our Navy's organization and combat and will considerably help it to make greater advance.

This is a brief survey of the main problems facing our Navy in combat and organization. It is also very relevant to coastal and river localities and branches of activity operating on the rivers and the sea.

In the struggle against an enemy whose economic and military potential is far greater than ours, our people, under the leadership of our Party, headed by our great President Ho Chi Minh, are determined to fight for the safety of the country, and have created original, resourceful and skilful way of combat. Our engagements on the rivers and sea have shown that great determination and resourcefulness.

It is necessary to give a profound study to the above problems and to sum up in good time the experiences of building up our forces for naval combat. These are concrete contributions to enrich our Party's military line, to bring into full play the fighting capacity of our people on the river and sea battlefields and to make our Navy stronger and stronger, worthy to act as the core of the people's war on our Fatherland's sea and river battlefields.

PART TWO

NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR IN VIETNAM

All through the past forty years, under the glorious banner of our Party and our great leader Ho Chi Minh our people have fought unremittingly and achieved tremendous successes on the path of national liberation. They have ushered in a new era for our country, the era of independence, freedom and socialism, thus contributing a worthy share to the world revolution. Our people's armed forces were born and have grown up with our people's revolutionary high tide, skilfully led by our Party, carefully tended by Uncle Ho and staunchly supported by our people. Starting from scratch, they have become a powerful battle-seasoned revolutionary army with a record of glorious victories. This is above all due to the possession by our people and army of an invincible weapon : the Marxist political and military line of our Party.

Our Party's military line is an organic part of its political line; it is the creative application of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on war and the army to the concrete conditions of our country ; it sums up the rich practical experiences on mass uprising and people's war of the Vietnamese revolution. It continues and gives a new qualitative development to the age-old tradition of our people in the art of war while selectively assimilating the vanguard experiences of the world revolution in military struggle. This line has always been and will for ever remain the invincible banner of our armed forces and people.

CHAPTER I

MASS UPRISING AND PEOPLE'S WAR IN VIETNAM

The revolutionary struggle waged by our people under the leadership of our Party to liberate the country, gain independence and freedom and take Vietnamese society to socialism, continues the heroic struggle carried on by our people for thousands of years to defend and build the country. Our Party's military line in this revolutionary struggle cannot be divorced from the long military tradition of our people.

Because of its geographical position in Southeast Asia, ever since its foundation, our country has been compelled to fight foreign aggression almost continually, and this uninterrupted struggle for the nation's survival has made our history an epic replete with outstanding exploits. From the 1st to the 18th centuries, counting only nation-wide wars, our people fought over 20 times to liberate our country or defend our sovereignty.

During the thousand years under foreign feudal domination, our people repeatedly rose up to wrest back national independence. The first insurrection, led by the Trung sister, liberated the whole country ; later other uprisings and national liberation wars broke out under the

leadership of Lady Trieu, Ly Bon. Mai Thuc Loan, etc. Finally, the brilliant victory won by Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang river in 938 ended the ten-centuries-long foreign domination : the era of national independence and sovereignty began.

Ever since then, to safeguard that independence and sovereignty, our people had to wage a series of wars for national salvation, against foreign aggression. These were up to the 19th century :

The war of resistance fought in the 11th century, in the reign of the Ly, against an invasion by a Sung army, in which Ly Thuong Kiet launched a resolute and daring pre-emptive attack, followed by a counter offensive which completely foiled the enemy's scheme of aggression.

The war of resistance in the 13th century in the reign of the Tran against Mongol aggression ; it was a most typical resistance led by Tran Hung Dao who three times in thirty years[1], at the gate of the capital, Thang Long[2] defeated cruel and battle-seasoned armies who had won great victories and had conquered a great part of Asia and Europe.

In the 15th century, the Lam Son Isurrection under the leadership of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai, turned into a protracted national liberation war. It lasted 10 years and resulted in the Ming invaders being driven out and national independence being regained after 20 years of foreign domination.

The war of resistance led by Nguyen Hue in the 18th century relied on the emerging strength of a widespread revolutionary movement of the peasantry against the rotten

1. In 1258, 1285 and 1287,
2.. Old name of Hanoi.

feudal regime. Within a matter of days, a 200,000-strong army of the Ching was crushed. Thu was foiled the last foreign feudal aggression against our country.

Those wars and uprisings waged by our people to liberate or defend the country were, generaly speaking, led by the feudal class but they all bore an undisputable popular stamp for it was the people who, consciously and spontaneously, rose up as one man to fight and save the fatherland. They can be said to be *uprisings and wars with a popular character*. These long and unremitting struggles form the basis of our forefathers' rich knowledge in the military field and that of our people's military tradition so full of courage and intelligence.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, when the French colonialists began to invade our country, our people in spite of the ignominious capitulation of the Nguyen dynasty, heroically rose up everywhere under the leadership of such great patriots as Truong Cong Dinh, Nguyen Trung Truc in the South, and Phan Dinh Phung, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Hoang Hoa Tham in the North. Only about thirty years later were the French colonialists able to impose on our country their domination which was, however, repeatedly challenged. While previously we had to cope with aggressions by a foreign country which, although much bigger in size, was under the same feudal regime and on nearly the same economic, cultural and technical level, we had this time to face a war of colonial aggression by a capitalist power which was not only more populous but also vastly superior to us in the level of conomic and technical development as well as in equipment and armaments.

Our Party was founded with the historical task of leading the Vietnamese revolution in a new epoch of human history, the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale, beginning with the great Russian October Revolution. At this historical juncture, our Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, the first Vietnamese Communist, creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country and set forth a correct revolutionary line: people's democratic national revolution advancing to socialism without going through the stage of capitalist development. It took the national liberation war in our country to an entirely new path. With a correct political line defined right at the beginning in its Political Theses of 1930, during the process of leading the revolution, our Party mobilized the huge revolutionary forces of workers and toiling peasants – the basic forces of the national democratic revolution – and built up a strong worker-peasant alliance led by the working class as the foundation for a broad national united front. It was precisely on the basis of that correct political line that the military line of the Party was worked out and gradually perfected in the practice of the long revolutionary struggle of our people.

As soon as our Party came into being a revolutionary tempest of the masses swept the country, coming to a climax with the Nghe An - Ha Tinh Soviet movement in 1930 and 1931. For the first time in our country, the peasants' movement was closely linked with that of the workers, a firm worker-peasant alliance set up, and the exclusive leadership of the working class, represented by our Party, confirmed in practice. Led by the Party's regional organizations, the workers and peasants of Nghe An and Ha Tinh rose up,

using revolutionary violence to overthrow the colonial administrators and the local mandarins and bullies and set up worker-peasant power in a number of rural areas.

In the 1936-1939 democratic campaign, our Party skilfully combined legal and semi-legal struggles with illegal underground activities and started a seething movement of political struggle from town to country against the reactionary colonialists, the king and his mandarins, for freedom, democracy, and social progress and against aggressive fascism, in defence of world peace. This great democratic drive and the coming into being of those political forces paved the way for a new revolutionary struggle, which soon followed.

The outbreak of World War II created a new situation. Our Party regarded national liberation as the primary objective and the *preparation for uprising* as the central task of the time. It set up a national united front to rally all anti-imperialist forces. Under the leadership of the Party, the revolutionary movement shifted from political to armed struggle, from mass political organizations to revolutionary armed organizations ; this movement cleverly combined political action with armed struggle, started *local-scale guerilla warfare and partial uprisings,* causing a violent revolutionary upsurge to sweep the whole country, to be followed by a general insurrection to seize power.

The August 1945 Revolution was a *general insurrection* by the entire people. Within a short period of time, led by the Party, the revolutionary masses rose up simultaneously in town and country, from North to South, to overthrow the rule of the Japanese fascists and the pro-Japanese puppet administration, wrest back power in the whole country and

found the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the first people's democratic state in Southeast Asia. *The August Revolution marked the first triumph of Marxism-Leninism in a colonial and semi-feudal country; our people, seizing an extremely favourable historical opportunity, rose up in arms and won triumph all over the country.*

In the course of fifteen years of heroic struggle – from the revolutionary upsurge of 1930-1931 to the August 1945 Revolution – the *military line of our Party was grandually worked out in the main.*

Immediately after the August Revolution, our people had to resist aggression by the French colonialists, who propped up by the American interventionists, staged a comeback and invaded our country. That *first war of resistance* lasted nearly nine years, and ended with the victory of Winter 1953-Summer 1954. After our historic victory at Dien Bien Phu, the French colonialists were compelled to sign the Geneva Agreements. Peace was restored in Indochina on the basis of international recognition of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the peoples of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. The North of our country was completely liberated. That war of resistance which followed the August Revolution was a war waged by our people for national liberation and at the same time a war to defend the fatherland. It was a war of resistance waged by a small country with a backward agrarian economy, which had just won power through a general insurrection but had not had time to consolidate it, a country with only embryonic armed forces, which was besieged in the beginning by imperialism on all sides but, heroically fought and defeated the nearly half-a-million-strong professional aggressive army of an

imperialist power many times superior to it in armaments and technique and receiving important financial aid from the U.S. (80 per cent of the war expenditure in 1953-1954). For their part, in that war of resistance, our people received very important international support from the newly formed world socialist system. *Our victory over the French colonialists was the first great victory of the wars for national liberation waged by colonial countries.*

In the course of this war of resistance our Party's military line was evolved and perfected in every respect.

Hardly had our first resistance ended when our people had to resume their struggle, this time against U.S. imperialism which took the place of French colonialism in trying to grab South Vietnam and plotted to turn that part of our country into a new-type colony and a military base for an eventual attack on North Vietnam and the socialist camp, and for stemming the revolutionary movement in Southeast Asia. This time, the aggressor is U.S. imperialism, the ringleader and the most powerful country of the imperialist camp, one with a huge modern war machine and an immense economic and war potential. It is also the international gendarme and the number-one enemy of mankind.

Standing firmly in the frontline of the struggle under the banner of the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation, our Southern fellow-countrymen have evinced great revolutionary heroism and are adding each day more glorious pages to the history of our country.

Following years of vigorous and stubborn political struggle, *chain uprisings* broke out over vast rural areas of the South in 1959 and 1960. These were most heroic and

imaginative actions carried out by millions of our fellow-countrymen. Relying essentially on the masses' political forces supported by very small armed forces, they smashed the enemy's grip on the countryside and won control over a major part of the country in spite of his over 200,000-strong army and huge repressive apparatus. Those uprisings led to the collapse of the Ngo Dinh Diem fascist regime, and developed into a *revolutionary war, a war of liberation against the U.S. "special war"*. With a puppet army over half a million-strong and over 30,000 American "advisers", using the newest experiences gained by international imperialism against the national liberation movement, Washington attempted to counter-attack and crush the revolution in the South. Our people thus started their *second war of resistance,* that against the U.S. imperialist aggressors. Within four years, our Southern fellow-countrymen wiped out or put out of action a sizable part of the puppet army and administration, foiled the enemy's "strategic hamlet" policy and virtually defeated the U.S. "special war".

Then the American imperialists introduced en masse their troops and those of satellite countries for direct aggression on the South and started a war of destruction on the North in the hope of retrieving their failures in the South. Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's sacred appeal, our people throughout the country rose up as one man, resolved to fight the aggressors to liberate the South, defend the North and eventually reunify the country. This is *a revolutionary war, a war for liberation against the biggest and most ferocious "limited war" in the history of U.S. imperialism,* which was "escalated" by Washington to an unprecedented level of barbarity, until even Hanoi and Haiphong were

raided, over one million GIs, puppet and satellite troops involved, over a hundred billion dollars spent and all kinds of modern weapons resorted to, except nuclear ones. Displaying extraordinary heroism, our people resolutely brought their offensive posture into full play ; they gained ever more victories and grew stronger with each victory. Barely three years later, the armed forces and people of the South launched general offensives and concerted uprisings in the spring of 1968, marking a historic turning-point in the war and compelling the enemy to fall back on a defensive strategy on all battlefields, to acknowledge the bankruptcy of his "limited war" and to rush into a blind alley: the "de-Americanization" and "Vietnamization" of the war. The revolutionary war in the South has taken a new turn. It has recorded big victories in all fields and is heading for total victory.

The revolution and revolutionary war in South Vietnam are the application and development of the experience gained in the August Revolution, the resistance against the French colonialists and all experiences of the Vietnamese revolution.

In North Vietnam, our people and armed forces have defeated the war of destruction waged by the American imperialists by means of their modern aviation, in a "surface-to-air" people's war unprecedented in our country. For the first time, we have conducted a war for selfdefence in the socialist North now strengthened by a comprehensive State structure. We have defeated an alien aggressor, firmly defended the socialist North and fulfilled our duty as the great rear base of the whole country. We have fought the enemy with the combined strength of our entire people, conducted combat operations while actively

organizing A.A. civilian defence, carried out a war of resistance together with socialist constructions, fought while carrying on production, ensured good communications and transport, maintained order and security and frustrated all U.S. 'escalation" schemes. After four years of heroic struggle, we have completely foiled the U.S. war of destruction.

Our nation-wide anti-U.S. war of resistance is the greatest and most glorious war against foreign aggression in our history. It is at present the frontline and the climax of the struggle put up by the world's peoples against U.S. imperialism. In this war, *the Party's military line has been enriched with rich experiences in many respects and has known a new development.*

Thus, faithful to our tradition of unyielding struggle against foreign aggression, *our people have been tirelessly fighting for decades under the leadership of the Party ; they have successively beaten the aggressive armies of three imperialist powers, effectively contributed to the disintegration of old style colonialism and are now vigorously speeding up the collapse and bankruptcy of neo-colonialism in the world.*

CHAPTER II

THE ENTIRE PEOPLE FIGHT THE ENEMY

In their long struggle under the leadership of the Party, our people have accumulated rich experience in many fields.

With regard to the enemy and the various forms of war of aggression, our people have used armed uprisings and revolutionary wars to defeat successively three big imperialist powers in three continents: the ruthless Japanese fascists, the French colonialists, an old imperialist power in Europe, and the U.S. imperialists, the ringleader of international imperialism, the international gendarme. We have thwarted all forms of aggressions from the aggressive wars of the French colonialists and the Japanese fascists to the neo-colonial war of U.S. imperialism, from neo-colonial domination by fascist means and through the agency of puppet rulers to the "special war", "limited war" and air and naval war of destruction by the United States.

Regarding the mode of struggle and the use of revolutionary violence to seize and maintain power and to liberate and defend the country, our people have gained rich experience. They have launched insurrections by the entire people, in the countryside and in urban centres, partial and general. They have waged protracted people's war, mainly using armed

struggle to oppose the old-style colonial wars of aggression. They have waged people's war against neo-colonial wars of various forms, combining armed struggle with political action, military attacks with armed uprisings. They have conducted a "surface-to-air" people's war to foil the U.S. war of destruction.

With regard to internal and external historical situations, our people have acquired the experience of people's war and revolutionary war in the most varied historical conditions: when power was not yet in the people's hands ; then when they had won it in some regions ;then when they were in control of the whole country ; when our struggle relied on the nascent people's democratie regime, then when it rested on the superiority of the socialist system in the course of building; when the whole country applied a unified revolutionary strategy - that of people's democratic national revolution - then when, temporarily partitioned into two zones, it applied two different strategies ; when a world war was raging and the imperialists were fighting each other on a world scale, then when insurrection and war of resistance were conducted in the absence of a world war ; when our war of resistance was carried out in conditions of complete encirclement by imperialism and our forces were still quite modest, then when we had the immense backing of the socialist camp, etc.

Our people have had to wage a *protracted, arduous, complex and relentless war*. Owing to the extremely important strategic position of Viet Nam in Southeast Asia, these last decades, international imperialism - the French, the Japanese, again the French then the Americans - and its valets have repeatedly used counter-revolutionary violence against our people. In face of such powerful and ferocious enemies, our people, fighting under the glorious banner of our Party, *have displayed an unflinching will of resistance and a thoroughly*

revolutionary spirit ; they have firmly kept and developed the offensive posture of the revolution. They have won success after success, recorded achievements without precedent in our history, and in this way made worthy contribution to the world revolution. This testifies to the fact that our Party's general and military lines, whose theoretical basis in Marxism-Leninism,have at the same time deep roots in the practice of revolutionary struggle. The require from us a high sense of independence and creativeness which will prevent us from simply copying the experiences of foreign countries and from being content with our own acquired experiences.

From the above-mentioned points, we can sum up the *fundamental characteristics* of the wars waged by our people under the leadership of our Party as follows :

1. Ours is a just war, — a war for national liberation or a war for national defence — waged against an unjust and aggressive war by imperialism and aimed at implementing the political line of the Party and achieving the goals of the revolution in the interests of the Vietnamese people and nation and for the sake of world revolution.

War is continuation of politics. The Party's revolutionary line determines the political aim of revolutionary war and the just character of the war waged by our people. Conversely, the colonialist and aggressive policy of the imperialists determines the unjust and counter-revolutionary character of their war.

The military traditions bequeathed by our forefathers are all traditions of just wars, wars fought either to liberate or defend the country. The feudal class which led our uprisings and wars for national liberation always raised the banner of a just cause – salvation for the country and the people - and took

some democratic measures aimed at achieving national union. Though confined within the framework of feudalism, those military traditions were permeated with the great spirit of just wars to "defend the mountains and rivers of the country" (Ly Thuong Kiet), "unite the entire people for the struggle" and "foster the people's strength so as to strike deep roots and ensure a lasting base", regarding this as "the best way to defend the country" (Tran Hung Dao), and "to confront barbarity with justice and fight truculence with humanity" (Nguyen Trai). It is precisely because their aim was to save our country that our just wars had always been able to mobilize this invincible force : patriotism and national unity.

In our era, national-liberation revolution is part and parcel of international proletarian revolution. Our Party has clearly defined the fundamental objectives of the revolution : national independence, people's democracy and socialism. These are the political goals of all uprisings and wars for national liberationandfor national defence carried out by our people in the various stages of our revolution. Our revolution and revolutionary war at present link national liberation to the winning of democratic rights for the people, national liberation to socialism, the Vietnamese revolution to world revolution. President Ho Chi Minh said: "To save the country and liberate the people, the only way is that of proletarian revolution".

Today the national struggled by the Party has closely combined nation with class, and patriotism with internationalism. It reflects the objective law of development of Vietnamese society at present, the basic interests and profound aspirations of our working class and toiling people, of our whole nation, which are consistent with the interests of world revolution. Therefore, the righteousness of the

war for national liberation, the war for national salvation, waged by our people under the leadership of our Party, has a new *qualitative content and a completely new strength.* The justice of our cause has moved our entire people to resolutely stand up to liberate and defend the country ; the righteousness of our cause and the successes we have recorded have won for us the support of progressive people all over the world. This is for us an inexhaustible source of strength never fathomed by the enemy ; there lies the basis of the superiority of our Party's military line.

2. Ours is a war for national liberation, for national salvation waged by the people of a former colonial and semifeudal country, a country not very big in size and in population, and with a backward economy; but a country which has, on the other hand, a centuries-old record of struggle against foreign aggression and is building a new system — that of people's democracy and socialism — a country whose heroic, intelligent, persevering and resourceful people know how to fight victoriously against enemies superior in numbers and equipment, and defeat the aggressive armies of imperialist powers with immense territories and populations, huge economic and military potential and modern armaments and techniques.

Our wars against foreign aggression, at present and in the past, have always been fought against the invading armies of countries definitely greater than ours in size, population and with overwhelmingly superior military forces. But while in the past, the invading countries had the same feudal regime as ours today the aggressors are imperialist powers which are not only by far superior to

us in area and population, but also possess highly developed industries, huge economic and military potential and modern armaments, while our country is not very large in area and population, and is moreover an economically under-developed former colonial and semi-feudal country. On the other hand, unlike our forefathers, we are now striving to fully build a new social regime, that of people's democracy and socialism, definitely better than the rotten reactionary social regime of the aggressors. We are possessed of the immense strength of an advanced social regime and of the new Vietnamese man, master of that regime.

Correctly assessing the relation of forces between the enemy and us, in order to win the war for national liberation and national defence in our time, our people have taken full advantage of favourable conditions of population. terrain and climate and brought into full play the strength sprung from an advanced social regime and the Vietnamese man of the new era. On this basis, they have continued and developed the nation's military tradition; with courage and intelligence, they have succeeded not only in defeating a stronger and more numberous enemy in the new conditions, but also in making civilization triumph over brute force and overcoming the enemy's superior armaments with our absolute political and moral superiority. Thanks to their determination to fight and win and their intelligence and resourcefulness, our people have been able to use to the full their fundamental advantages and essential strengths, overcome the relative strong points of the enemy, aggravate his fundamental weaknesses and bring into full play the combined strenth of people's war in the new epoch in order to attack and crush the enemy.

3. This is a war for national liberation, for national defence, conducted in the world conditions of our era, the era of triumph of socialist revolution and national liberation revolution, when the revolutionary forces have grown superior to the reactionary forces on a world scale and world revolution is in a posture of unrelenting offensive on imperialism.

In the feudal period, our forefathers had to rely on their sole forces without any outside support and assistance. Today we are prosecuting a war for national liberation and national defence in quite different international conditions.

The triumph of the October Revolution ushered in a new era in the history of mankind, the era of the collapse of capitalism and triumph of socialism on a world scale. It linked the socialist revolutionary movement of the working class in developed capitalist countries to the national-liberation revolution of opperessed peoples. The Vietnamese revolution led by our Party is an integral part of the world revolution. It benefits from the broad support of and co-ordination with revolutionary movements in various countries. In particular, the victory of the Soviet Union over fascism in World War II paved the way for the triumph of the revolution in many countries of Europe and Asia. A world socialist system came into being and has become the decisive factor in the development of revolution in the world. The socialist camp is the bulwark and mainstay of the national-liberation struggle in the present epoch. With the triumph of the Chinese revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the world revolutionary forces, with the socialist camp as its core, have grown stronger than the forces of counter-revolution, of imperialism. The world revolution in a posture of uninterrupted offensive is relentlessly hammering at imperialism from many

sides and has won big victories. These are world conditions most propitious to revolution and revolutionary war in Vietnam at present.

Today our people are simultaneously building and defending socialism in the North and carrying out the war of resistance against U.S. aggression to liberate the South and eventually reunify the country. Revolution in our country reflects the meeting of the two revolutionary trends of our time: socialist revolution and national liberation revolution. This is a fundamental advantage which strengthens the position of our revolution in the world revolutionary movement. In their long and arduous struggle against powerful imperialist aggressors, our people, guided by our Party's sound revolutionary line and correct line of international solidarity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, have been contributing an active part to the world revolution. At the same time, they have received ever greater assistance from the Soviet Union, China and other fraternal socialist countries and staunch support from progressive peoples all over the world, including the Amerian people. This is a very important factor of victory.

As for the imperialist aggressors, they represent a reactionary social system condemned by history. They are striving to muster all forces available and frenziedly try to ward off the onslaught of the world revolution. However, together with other reactionary forces, they are in a defensive posture, grow weaker every day and suffer defeat after defeat. They are more and more vigorously opposed by their own people and more and more isolated in the world; their internal contradictions grow more and more acute. This is one of their fundamental weaknesses at present and also an immense advantage to our struggle. Our former aggressors were the

Japanese fascists, who were eventually defeated by the Soviet Union and the Allies, and the French colonialists whose country had been invaded by the Nazis in World War II and was recovering. Today the U.S. imperialists, the ringleader of the imperialist camp, are facing great difficulties and contraditions in every respect; they are sustaining repeated set-backs and growing ever weaker.

These characteristics of revolutionary war in our country are clearly reflected in the *military line of our Party.*

Our Party's military line — that of people's war — originates from its political line and must conform to it: it is the line of people's war waged by our people at present to achieve national independence, people's democracy and socialism. Applying the Marxist-Leninist conception of revolutionary violence, the Party's military line can be defined as follows: the whole nation fights the enemy under the leadership of the working class, develops its fighting forces to the full, carries on popular uprisings and people's war to get the better of the big aggressive armies of imperialism.

The founders of Marxism-Leninism already spoke of *people's war.* Engels highly valued the struggle put up by the French people in 1793 in the bourgeois revolution and called it the "insurrection of the masses, of the entire people", and "people's war". He also held that the struggle of the Chinese people against the British colonialists in the 19th century was a "people's war to safeguard the Chinese nation" and a "war which, in the last analysis, was a genuine people's war".

Our people possess a long record of uprisings and people's wars waged to liberate and defend the country.

Mentioned in our history are people's wars led by the feudal class against foreign aggressions, and that sprung from the Tay Son revolutionary peasant movement and waged against both

the country's rotten feudal rulers and foreign aggressors. Today, the people's war is led by the working class.

In the past, all people's wars displayed historical limitations in their objectives, leadership and motive powers. At present, *our people's war led by the working class is a war waged "by the people" and "for the people" with a full significance and content in the context of the present era.* Due to its aims of national independence, people's democracy and socialism, the revolutionary line of our Party, the Party of the Vietnamese working class allows our people's war to closely link "the country's salvation" to the "people's salvation" and national liberation and defence to the emancipation of the labouring people. That is why following our Party's political line, our popular fighting forces at present are the most powerful and broadest-based forces ever. Our Party has mobilized and rallied the entire people in a broad national united front based on the worker-peasant alliance, led by the working class and united with the working class and peoples of the world. This is a new, invincible strength of our people's war. Deeply aware of their revolutionary tasks and of the objectives of the war, our fighters draw their immense strength from the national consciousness and traditional patriotism of the Vietnamese people, which carries a new content. This is patriotism associated with democracy, love of socialism and proletarian internationalism. This is the ardent patriotism of our people combined with the revolutionary spirit of the working class.

In our time, with the strength of the whole nation rising up to fight, we rely mainly on our own forces. We fight the enemy on our soil, with the joint strength of the Vietnamese man and an advanced social regime. At the same time, we enjoy *the great support and assistance of the world revolution, the core of which is the socialist camp.*

Our Party's military line is a creative application of the Marxist-Leninist conception of revolutionary violence which regards revolution as the work of the masses, revolutionar violence as violence by the masses. Revolutionary violence must associate the political forces of the masses with the people's armed forces, armed struggle with political action, ending in *general uprising and people's war*. Only a deep and correct grasp of this conception of violence makes it possible to mobilize the forces of the entire people, the whole nation. The enemy is fought not only by the armed forces but also by the population, using every means available. Not only do the people intensify production and assumé combat support duty, they also take direct part in the fighting. We fight the enemy not only by armed struggle but also through political actions by the masses, persuasion work among puppet, American and other troops; we launch not only military attacks but also mass uprisings of various scopes and forms. *A new characteristic of the people's war in Viet Nam at present is the high national and class consciousness of the masses, the scientifc and tight organization of the struggle in the whole country, the flexible methods of struggle — which turn all the 30-odd million Vietnamese into valiant fighters for national salvation.*

Our line, embodied in the watchword :"Let the entire people fight the enemy", is concretized in the following essential problems:

-Mobilization and organization of the entire people for war, building of the people's political forces and armed forces, the latter including three categories of troops and constituting the core of the fighting people.

- Reliance on the political forces of the masses, setting up of resistance bases and rear-bases of people's war;

co-ordinating the local rear-base with the national rearbase while drawing support from the international rearbase: the socialist camp.

- Creative application of the monde of conduct and the military art of people's war, successfully opposing enemy troops more numerous and better equipped that our own, attacking the enemy by the combined force of armed struggle and political action in all strategic zones in town and country, and defeating the enemy step by step unitl we have gained complete victory.

- Strengthening of the Party's leadership in the conduct of the war, this being the decisive factor of victory.

To sum up, our experiences are mainly *those of staging armed uprising, revolutionary war and national liberation war* to seize power and overthrow imperialist rule; they are also, to a certain extent, experiences acquired in the *war waged to defend the national territory* when we already have a state with an adequate political and economic structure.

The military line of our Party stems from its correct political line, from the Marxist-Leninist theory on war and the army, from the military skill of our forefathers and from the advanced experiences of the revolutionary struggle in the world. At the same time, it reflects the wealth of precious experience acquired by our people in the practice of revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Party in the last forty years.

From its inception and during the process of its development, this military line has always proved to be correct and has shown invincible strength because it has constantly been guided by the Party's political line and supported by the huge forces and inexhaustible creative spirit of the great masses of the people. The strength of revolutionary war

epitomizes the force of the revolution. *Proceeding from the correct revolutionary task to the corrects political aim of people's war, from the correct thesis of revolutionary violence to the theses of popular uprising and people's war*, such is the dialectical relationship between the Party's military line and its political line, and there lies the source of the strength of our military line and that of the revolutionary war of our people.

In the contidtions of an uninterrupted war, our Party's military line has been constantly tested in combat; it has been completed, developed and perfected. It has made ceaseless progress in theory and scored new successes in combat. It is the invincible weapon of our people against all imperialist aggressors and their bourgeois military theories, which are reactionary and retrograde.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL FORCES AND MILITARY FORCES IN MASS UPRISING AND PEOPLE'S WAR

A people's war calls for a correct line in building up forces, a line which consists in *mobilizing and arming the entire people, involving them in insurrection and war in all form, organizing the immense politcial forces of the masses and the popular armed forces with their three categories of troops as the core of people's war.*

This line is the creative application to the concrete conditions of our country of Marxist-Leninist thought concerning the mobilization and arming of the people and the building of the new-type revolutionary army. In the building up of forces for revolutionary warfare, it embodies the thesis according to which revolutionary violence means violence by the masses. This line continues and develops the traditions of our nation in her wars of liberation and national salvation, these traditions being illustrated by such popular sayings as: "Every citizen a soldier", and "When bandits come, even the women must fight", etc.

For a people's war, *the entire nation must be mobilized*. This is a fundamental point in our Party's line concerning the building up of forces for people's war. Lenin said:

"Every force in the country must be summoned for this war. The whole country must be turned into a revolutionary camp. Everyone must help!" [1]

"The country's entire manpower and resources are placed entirely at the service of revolutionary defence".[2]

The mobilization and organization of the entire nation for insurrection and war is a continuous process of mass education and organization carried out by our Party, passing from lower to higher forms according to a correct revolutionary line.

Ever since its founding, our Party has conducted an immense work of propaganda, organization and leadership of the masses with a view to winning power through revolutionary violence. The mobilization and organization of the large masses during the revolutionary upsurge of 1930-1931, the period of the democratic movement in 1936-1939, and that of the national liberation movement in 1940-1945 account for the springing up of great insurrectional forces in the August Revolution, the mobilization of the entire nation in the former war of resistance against the French colonialists and the present resistance to the American imperialists.

At the time of partial insurrections, relying on under — ground political bases and armed organizations, our Party roused the popular masses to overthrow the enemy administration at the base and replace it by the revolutionary power. Then it launched a local guerilla war, intensified political and armed struggle, quickly developed the masses' political forces and revolutionary armed forces, thus bringing

1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol. 28, p.365.
2. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol.27, p.30.

about a revolutionary upsurge in the whole country and stepping up preparations for a general insurrection.

For the general insurrection, the entire people, mobilized and assembled in a broad national united front under the leadership of the Party, rose up everywhere, in both town and countryside, to break the yoke of the imperialists and feudalists and seize power on a national level. In the course of the revolutionary war, we already had a State organization in our rear and a popular power. In those conditions, the mobilization and organization of the people for the struggle was carried out in all fields with greater scope and depth and a higher organizational standard. Following the mottoes: "Resistance by the entire people, resistance in all fields", "Everything for victory", the numerous and diverse forces of the nation were mobilized to the maximum. During the war, our Party constantly paid great attention to propaganda, agitation and organization of the people's forces; it ceaselessly broadened the political forces and developed the armed forces with a view to an ever more intense mibilization of the people's capabilities for final victory.

The mobilization of the nation for uprising and war calls for the building both of large mass political forces and of popular armed forces as the core of people's war.

The political forces are the patriotic forces of the nation which are involved in uprising and war in an organized way under the leadership of the vanguard Party. They include the revolutionary classes, the patriotic social strata, the various ethnic groups, who are gathered in a broad national united front, on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance and under the leadership of the working class. They constitute a solid basis for building and developing, both at the front and in the

rear, the forces of revolutionary war in all fields: material and spiritual, political and military, economic and cultural.

The policial forces constitute the basis for building and developing the people's revolutionary armed forces. If it were not for the revolutionary people, their immense political forces, the political army of the masses (the bulk of which is constituted by the workers and peasants organized and led by the Party), there could never be powerful popular armed forces. From the first self-defence squads of the Nghe-Tinh Soviets (1930-1931), through the detachments of the Army for National Salvation, the Propaganda Brigade of the Vietnam Liberation Army, the Ba To guerillas, the thousands of self-defence squads and shockteams formed everywhere during the August Revolution, to the powerful units of our present army, the people's armed forces have quickly developed thanks to voluntary and especially to compulsory military service. Their growth is always based on that of powerful political forces of an organized revolutionary people with an ever higher political consciousness.

All this explains the revolutionary character of our armed forces and their extraordinary development at the great moments of the revolution and the decisive turningpoints of the wars of resistance.

Revolutionary practice in our country also shows clearly that the *political forces of the masses are themselves capable of attacking the enemy through revolutionary violence* both in war and, especially, during insurrection — organizing joint actions with the armed forces and using the most varied and effective methods.

Improving upon the experiences of the August 1945 general insurrection and the first war of resistance in a new historical juncture, the people's political forces in South Vietnam, under

the banner of the National Front for Liberation, have proved their valour in a protracted and intense struggle against all schemes of domination and all forms of aggressive war on the part of American neo-colonialism. Now more powerful than ever, they have played an essential, decisive role in the grat chain of concerted insurrections. They have foiled the strategy of "special war" and, together with the people's armed forces, are defeating that of "limited war" by the American imperialists.

The "political army" is a remarkable creation as a form of organization of the forces of revolutionary war in South Vietnam at present. It is organized on the basis of powerful forces with the workers and peasants at the core; it comprises the best and most courageous elements of the mass organizations; it includes people of all ages and walks of life; it has its grassroots organizations everywhere, in both the lowlands and the highlands, the rural and the urban areas. Admirably organized and militarized, it wages its struggle in a masterly way, using varied and manifold forms. It constitutes the mainstay of the masses, political struggle in revolutionary war in South Vietnam.

Armed uprising and revolutionary war are the highest forms of revolutionary struggle aimed at winning and keeping power. They necessarily imply action by the armed forces. That is why, with a view to preparing and carrying out armed uprising and revolutionary war, our Party, while building up political forces, has paid particular attention to *the building of popular armed forces, the core of people's war.*

Under the glorious banner of the Party, our armed forces were born and have developed in the nations' intense revolutionary struggle, on the basis of the people's political forces. *Our army is an army of the people, sprung from the*

people and fighting for the people. In the last decades, our popular armed forces have developed from groups of partisans and self-defence squads recruited from the masses and have grown into specialized military organizations; from small guerilla groups they have expanded into ever bigger units eventually comprising regulars, regionals, and militia; from poorly-equipped foot-soldiers they have become an army including ground, air and naval forces and with an ever more modern equipment. In this process, the Party's line and conceptions regarding the building of popular armed forces have been gradually perfected.

In our Party's theoretical conception, the key problem of building up armed forces is to give them a class character, a revolutionary character. Our army is an army of the people, mainly of the toiling people, in fact an army of workers and peasants led by the Party of the working class. It includes the best elements of the revolutionary classes, first of all of the working class and the peasantry, coming from all nationalities of Vietnam. It is the instrument serving the Party and the revolutionary State in revolutionary struggle aimed at fulfilling the tasks of the Party. It constitutes the armed forces of the State of people's democracy which formerly exercised the functions of the worker-peasant dictatorship of the proletariat. It defends the fruits of the revolution and people's power against internal and external foes. Its character is that of the working class; its ideology is that of Marxism-Leninism.

In the days of the first units of partisans as well as at present, when our armed forces have become a powerful and modern popular army, our Party has constantly paid attention to reinforcing their class stand, which it considers the surest guarantee and the fundamental factor of their fighting power. This strengthening of the class stand takes on particular

importance in a country where the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie make up the majority of the population while the leading class, the working class, is less numerous.

When the worker-peasant Red Army was being formed, Lenin considered the increase in the percentage of workers in its composition one of the important measures to strengthen the revolutionary character of the Soviet armed forces. In our country, the reinforcement of the Party's leadership, of proletarian ideological education and political work among the armed forces, together with the increase of worker and peasant elements among the cadres in particular, are essential measures to heighten the revolutionary character of those forces.

In the course of the development and consolidation of our armed forces, we have had to solve the following essential political problems:

- To ceaselessly strengthen the Party's leadership, an exclusive, direct, and all-inclusive leadership over the people's armed forces; this is the most fundamental principle.

- To ceaselessly strengthen political work, the source of the fighting power of the armed forces; this is a fundamental principle. To pay particular attention to political education and ideological leadership, so that cadres and combatants assimilate the political line and tasks, the military line and tasks, all the Party's directives and the State's legislation; to inculcate Marxism-Leninism in the armed forces; to heighten their class consciousness along with their national consciousness; to instil in them love of the fatherland and socialism and proletarian internationalism; on that basis, to increase their combativeness and their determination to fight and win.

- To ceaselessly consolidate the Party's organization and the system of political work from top to bottom.

- To train a body of cadres absolutely faithful to the Party's revolutionary cause and competent in leadership, organization and command.

- To apply democratic centralism. To apply correctly a freely accepted discipline, the iron discipline of a revolutionary army, on the basis of broadening internal democracy. To strengthen cohesion in the army, the union between the army and the people (as between fish and water), to promote fraternal international solidarity on the basis of proletarian internationalism.

It is thanks to all that educational and organizational work that our popular armed forces have gained a fine revolutionary character and proved to be "always faithful to the Party, devoted to the people, ready to fight and endure sacrifices for the sake of the country's independence and freedom and that of socialsm"; that they have proved to be an effective instrument of the worker-peasant dictatorship at the stage of the people's democratic national revolution, and of proletarian dictatorship at the stage of socialist revolution.

Our Party has successfully solved the problem of *building the armed forces organizationally* on the basis of building them up politically.

Our experience in people's war in the course of the last twenty-five years has shown that the *organization of the armed forces into three categories — the regulars, the regionals, and the people's militia — is the best way to mobilize and organize the whole nation for combat; that great attention must be paid to the building up of regular troops while seeing to the setting up of regional forces and the people's militia; that close coordination should be achieved between the building of regular forces and regional forces, of forces "on the spot" and*

mobile forces. This is a news development of our ancestral traditions in the organization of the nation's armed forces.

The people's militia — guerillas and self-defence squads — is made up of the large forces of the toiling people at the grassroots level. Without getting divorced from production work, it is the instrument of the dictatorship of the people's power at the base. Set up in hamlets and villages, factories, streets, etc., to meet the needs of combat and the characteristics of each region, those forces form a vast network which covers the whole country; they always stand ready to fight, and to fight well, with all appropriate weapons, both rudimentary and modern, and with highly effective methods; in this way they ensure the people's protection directly, safeguard and expand political bases, play their role as shock-groups in production and supply good cadres and fighters to regional and regular forces.

The regional troops form the core of armed struggle in a given region. Set up in accordance with the requirements and real conditions of each battlefield and each region, they make up strong, high-quality units, equipped with the necessary weapons, capable of operating either alone in a region or in close coordination with guerillas, partisans and regulars, and of fulfilling these missions: to annihilate the enemy, step up guerilla warfare, defend the population, and safeguard the people's power.

The regular troops are the mobile forces which operate everywhere in the country or in certain given strategic areas. They include various armies and armed services, essentially a land army of adequate strength, an air force and a navy in an appropriate ratio. They must be inspired with high combativeness and constitute real "fists of steel"; they must be capable of waging large-scale annihilation battles and deal the enemy harder and

harder blows: once involved in combat, they must win victory, liquidate ever more important enemy units, and bring about important changes in various theatres of operations.

Thus, the people's armed forces must not only fulfil their essential task of annihilating the enemy but also defend the population, contribute to the building and development of the masses' political forces, and serve as the core of people's war. In view of the characteristics of the revolutionary struggle in our country and the intensification of the war, especially in the conditions of a neo-conlonialist aggression, we must, while organizing regular troops of ever higher combativeness, set up powerful regional forces. Only then can the three categories of troops bring their combat capabilities into full play, closely co-ordinate their actions to destroy the enemy and effectively defend the people's potential, safeguard the people's power at various levels, and vigorously and fully boost people's war.

In close co-ordination with the political forces and *security forces*, the three categories of troops are organized and built up in *appropriate proportions* and rationally distributed in the various strategic sectors, theatres of operations and region, so as te keep ready important local forces and powerful mobile forces, and closely combine their actions in key sectors, at various levels, and in the whole country. This is a typical trait of the building up of popular armed forces and one of the factors leading to the overwhelming superiority of people's war. Having at our disposal strong local forces, we can attack everywhere with units knowing the terrain and the enemy well and where to strike: we can hit back everywhere in a timely way, decimate, destroy, disperse and pin down enemy forces, thus making it possible for our mobile forces to concentrate and destroy the enemy where he is the most exposed. In a country which is not very large in area and facing an enemy

having great mobility and numerous troops, such an organization and a distribution of forces can check the strong points of the enemy while favouring the growth of our own fortes and create a solid strategic stand making it possible to keep the initiative in all circumstances. They allow us to always have at our disposal enough troops to strike at the enemy everywhere while being able to concentrate powerful units to defeat the enemy's strategic mobile forces, thus to be in a position to win ever greater victories without being compelled to keep a standing army equal or superior in number to the enemy's.

Our army has gradually passed from the regime of volunteers to that of compulsory military service. The people's mobilization for the building of popular armed forces and the consolidation of national defence has thus made new progress.

Relying on the masses' political consciousness, in the first war of resistance we applied the regime of volunteers to build the army. Since 1954, the North, entirely liberated and engaged in socialist construction, has become a state with the complete structure of an independent country. The new revolutionary tasks require the strengthening of popular national defence, the building of a regular standing army of high quality and a powerful reserve force, the judicious alliance of economics and defence, the improvement of the people's armaments, the stepping up of their military training, the full development of their right to be masters of the country, the participation of all citizens to the defence of the fatherland. We have put an end to the inconveniences brought about by the prolongation of the regime of volunteers and decreed compulsory military service.

This is a new step forward, a new success in the building up of our people's army, the strengthening of our national defence. Along with military service, we step up military training on a minimum program as well as physical education

and sports, the popularization of military knowledge, especially among the youth so as to get the people ready to fulfil their military duties and defend the country.

Armaments and equipment constitute the material and technical basis and one of the fundamental factors of the armed forces' fighting capacity. To increase the latter, equipment must be improved. The Marxist-Leninist conception on the relationship between man and armaments considers man the determining factor, and armaments and equipment an important and indispensable factor. To solve this problem we take into account the concrete conditions of our country and the realities of our revolutionary war.

Where does the source of our equipment lie? We must rely on the popular masses, equip ourselves with what we have, try to manufacture arms ourselves, seize weapons from the enemy to destroy him, and, when conditions permit, get help from the fraternal countries so as ceaselessly to improve our equipment.

At the beginning, we ran into innumerable difficulties. Our country was economically backward, without industrial bases to manufacture arms, and moreover encircled on all sides by the imperialists. With the slogan "Let's fight with what we have" the Party called on the people to supply the armed forces with the necessary equipment, and to overcome all difficulties in organizing the production of arms and ammunition. It clear-sightedly stressed that the armed forces must seek to *get equipment on the fighting front itself by seizing weapons from the enemy to fight him.* During the first war of resistance, our armed forces' modern equipment was essentially taken from the enemy. Only in 1950 did we start receiving aid from the brother socialist countries.

Since 1954, we have relied on our quickly progressing socialist economy and the substantial aid of the fraternal

countries of the socialist camp to bring about a large-scale improvement of our equipment in the sense of modernization. In the course of our struggle against American aggression, we have been able to *make qualitative leaps forward in the improvement of the equipment and technique of our armed forces;* we have also been able to quicly expand our use of modern weapons, especially anti-aircraft defence and aviation, in order to defeat the American aggressors.

Drawing on those sources for equipment, adjusting ourselves to the concrete conditions of our country, following our general line of people's war with its peculiar tasks and its own military art so as to take full advantage of the fact that we are fighting on our own soil, we have combined the use of modern, or relatively modern, weapons with that of rudimentary ones and have ceaselessly improved and raised the level of modernization of our equipment.

The regular and regional troops are essentially equipped with modern and relatively modern weapons and means but, in both training and combat, must know how to make the best use of rudimentary materials. The people's militia gives priority to rudimentary weapons while gradually and partially equipping itself with modern and relatively modern ones. The practice of war in our country clearly shows that while modern weapons are most important in the destruction of the enemy, rudimentary ones are also very effective and make it possible for the entire people to participate in the resistance to aggression. Along with improving our equipment, we have made great efforts *to raise the level of organization and management, the knowledge of and the capacity to use all sorts of weapons* in accordance with our Party's line and military thought and the conditions prevailing in the various theatres of operations in our country.

At present our armed forces are possessed of a large *body of cadres*, battle-seasoned and absolutely faithful to the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people. Tempered by the revolutionary struggle, by the nation's protracted and intense armed fighting, they have successfully fulfilled all the tasks entrusted to them by the Party and the people. Fostered by the Party and relying on the masses, they have met the needs, in both quantity and quality, of the standing and the reserve forces and fulfilled the complex tasks of building and combat in conditions of both war and peace.

In the fostering of cadres, our Party has put forward a correct line; it has *defined a class line and other criteria and set forth a concrete and judicious policy concerning cadres.*

Our Party has stuck to this class orientation, with cadres of worker and peasant origin at the core. It pays great attention to selecting, perfecting and promoting élite cadres among worker and peasant elements and also among the best intellectuals who are in close touch with the working class and the peasantry and who have proved their absolute loyalty to the revolutionary cause. In applying the Party's line on the cadre policy,, we have energetically struggled against all tendencies to deviate from the class orientation and to underestimate the fostering of cadres of worker and peasant origin and against all manifestations of "workerism".

Those cadres are revolutionary and competent, imbued with a firm class stand, fervently patriotic, ready to fight and endure sacrifices for the country's independence and freedom and for socialism, absolutely faithful to the revolution, and to the Party's line and political and military tasks, resolved to carry them into effect, closely bound to the masses and highly qualified both technically and professionally. They are capable of fulfilling their duties in all circumstances. At all times, our

Party has striven to temper them in the practice of mass revolutionary struggle, especially in combat.

In the building of popular armed forces, *we have correctly solved problems relating to both quantity and quality; we have paid adequate attention to both while giving priority to quality.* This is a fundamental point in our military traditions; this was the conception followed by Tran Hung Dao and Nguyen Hue who, thanks to highquality troops, were able to defeat armies several times superior in number to their own.

The quality of the armed forces results from many factors; men and armaments; military, political, and logistical factors; ideology, organization, equipment, combat methods. *The most determining factors are: men, politics, and ideology.*

The best troops are those inspired by high combativeness and great resolve to act on the offensive. They must possess a high technical and tactical standard, good combat methods, a strong and streamlined organization, and good armaments. Cadres and command organs must have great organizational capabilities and good discipline. The troops must show stamina and great mobility over all terrains and in all weathers. They must be adequately equipped, from both the technical and material points of view. The three categories of troops have different requirements: the people's militia must be ubiquitous and strong, the regional and regular troops must be élite ones and in sufficient numbers.

Our population being not very great, our standing army is in general inferior to the enemy's in numbers. *And so its quality should manifest itself through high strategic effectiveness and high combat efficacy.* Strategically, we must defeat a numerically superior and better-equipped enemy; operationally and tactically, we must destroy large numbers of enemy personnel and record great successes with our troops inferior to the enemy's in number and armaments.

With high-quality troops capable of great combat efficiency, it is possible to increase severalfold the combativeness of any given number of soldiers while lightening problems of organization, direction, reinforcements, and supply. For us this is a problem of strategic importance.

To ensure for our troops ever-increasing combat power and ever greater successes in a long and arduous war, we have *built and developed our forces while fighting*. To fight in order to built and expand; to build and expand in order to fight ever bigger battles and win ever greater successes. Development should be gradual, but leaps forward must be made when favourable opportunities present themselves and are likely to lead to great victories.

Thanks to our Party's judicious line on building the armed forces, the latter have developed and grown up steadily and quickly and are now endowed with invincible combat capabilities. There lies the secret of their amazing feats of arms. Our Party's thesis regarding the building of people's armed forces has thus proved to be correct in the very practice of people's war.

Its great strength lies in the fact that it has mobilized, tempered and organized the forces of our entire people, our entire nation, to turn them into an iron whole entrustedwith tasks in a rational and scientific way and displaying great combativeness in attacking and defeating all armies of aggression, however ferocious, nummerous and well-equipped. This thesis is vividly and movingly embodied in President Ho Chi Minh's historic appeal : "The 31 million of our fellow-countrymen in both zones, young and old, men and women, must be 31 million valiant fighters in the struggle against American aggression, firmly determined to win final victory."

CHAPTER IV

PROBLEM OF BASES AND REAR AREA

"To wage the *in earnest*, we need a strong and organized rear"[1] The rear area is a permanent factor of victory for it supplies the front with men, food and materials and gives it constant political and moral encouragement. Without a solid rear area, the front cannot win : this is the general law of all wars.

Our Party faced the following problem : starting from scratch, without an inch of free soil, in a country with a modest area and population and a backward agricultural economy, how to bring the people to rise up to fight for liberation, to build bases and a solid rear area so as to defeat the imperialist aggressors ?

Our Party has solved this problem in a creative way. In the course of a long revolutionary struggle, it has accumulated rich and precious experience in building political foundations, bases and a rear area to support mass uprising and people's war in the concrete conditions of our country.

1. V.I. Lenin *Collected Works*, Progress publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol. 27, p.76.

1. To rely entirely on the people, to begin by building mass political foundations and proceed gradually to set up ever more solid bases and a rear area.

In the past, every time our people rose up to wrest back or safeguard their national independence, our fore-fathers always saw to the building of a support base. They took account of their fundamental advantages (the people's high morale and thorough knowledge of terrain) to set it up either in mountainous or swampy regions, or in the plains and bring the human and material resources available into full play in order to organize and expand the armed forces.

From the time of its founding, by opting for the path of violent revolution, armed insurrection and revolutionary war to overthrow the enemies of the class and the nation and win power, our Party faced the problem of building a support base. As the revolutionary struggle unfolded, we have advanced from the setting up of political foundations to that of bases and a rear area; gradually expanded bases that were at first of only small sizes, linked together bases that were at first isolated, eventually to arrive at the present great rear area — the socialist North — with a complete popular national defence.

In the first days, those of preparation for armed struggle and insurrection, we had not a single inch of free soil. *We drew our only support from the people's revolutionary organization, the patriotism of the politically conscious masses and their boundless loyalty to the revolution.* Through unrelenting efforts of revolutionary agitation, education and organization, our Party involved the masses in a many-sided political struggle. By so doing, it expanded and strengthened its own ranks, set up and developed mass political organizations, and carried into effect the slogan: wherever the

masses are, political bases and revolutionary organizations must be set up. From those political bases and in implementation of directives given by President Ho Chi Minh to the first guerilla units — to conduct armed propaganda and pay more attention to political action than military activities — our Party strove to organize *secret armed bases* and boost political action in co-ordination with ever more perfected armed struggle. Then it launched guerilla warfare and partial armed insurrections, set up *the Viet Bac liberated area and guerilla bases in other regions,* while powerfully expanding political bases in the whole country and bringing about a revolutionary upsurge of the masses. In that way, our people finally launched a general insurrection, won power all over the country and founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In the long war of resistance against the French colonialists, on the one hand we sought to preserve and strengthen *vast free areas* which served as solid bases on which to intensify people's war, and on the other strove ceaselessly to expand *guerilla zones and guerilla bases behind enemy lines.* The continual reinforcement of our rear area in all fields was a powerful source of political and moral encouragement for the people and of supply for the front's increasing requirements. In regions under temporary enemy control, the rule remained essentially the same for the setting up of bases: by relying on secret political bases among the masses and waging an intense struggle evolving from simple to more sophisticated forms, from legal to illegal action, from economic and political claims to armed action, the occupied regions were gradually turned into ever-expanding *guerilla zones or bases.*

At present, the South Vietnamese people who have risen up to fight for liberation lean on a great and solid rear area: the socialist North. At the same time they have striven to build on-the-spot bases and their immediate rear area: *the liberated zones*. Those ever-expanding zones have played and are playing an ever bigger role in all aspects of the revolutionary war. Creatively applying and developing the experience accumulated in the present historical context, the South Vietnamese people have built not only solid bases in the mountains and the plains but also jumping-off grounds in key sectors close to urban centres and enemy military posts and even in certain cities. *"Liberated regions with enemy enclaves"* have appeared in the very neighbourhood of great enemy military bases. These are regions where the Americans and their puppets, in spite of a fairly dense network of posts and the combination of extremely cruel military measures with perfidious demagogic schemes, have not succeeded in putting into operation a coercive apparatus. There the population, thanks to a tenacious, courageous and resourceful struggle, has remained master of the ground and is able to keep a blockade and a strong pressure on the enemy's military bases and rear area.

When the resistance to French colonialist aggression ended victoriously, the North embarked on socialist revolution and became an independent socialist State structure. It has striven to strengthen its forces in all fields, and to consolidate national defence by relying on the entire people, and has become a firm and powerful rear area for revolutionary struggle in the whole country. A great rear area for the great fighting front in the South, it plays an extremely important role in the nation's struggle against American aggression.

2. To rely on revolutionary forces in both rural and urban areas, to build solid bases and a solid rear area in the countryside while setting up revolutionary bases in the towns, and to co-ordinate local rear areas with the common national rear area.

Our people's war relies on the power of the entire people whose main strength lies in the workers and the peasants. Fighting the enemy on our own soil, we attack him by every means in both town and countryside. That is why we must and can rely on revolutionary forces in both rural and urban areas and build solid rear bases in the country-side and revolutionary bases in the cities.

In the *rural regions* (mountains and plains) there exist immense revolutionary forces — the toiling peasantry which is inspired by resolute revolutionary spirit and makes up 90% of the population. The economy, which can satisfy the local needs, is particularly favourable to the launching and maintenance of a people's war against a materially and technically superior enemy. The terrain is auspicious to the operations of our armed forces. Lastly the enemy administrative machinery is weak or relatively so and is full of loop-holes. The mountain regions with a rugged relief assume great strategic importance. The ethnic minorities living there are deeply attached to the revolution. On the other hand, the enemy system is generally weaker there than elsewhere and insufficiently protected. There lies a particularly solid rear base of the revolution and the revolutionary war. By leaning on it, our people can build, maintain and develop their forces, wage a protracted war in face of the worst difficulties and secure good jumping-off grounds for progressing towards the plains. The rural regions in the plains, populous and wealthy, are regions which the enemy constantly seeks to occupy in

order to grab their human and material resources, to "pit Vietnamese against Vietnamese and feed the war through war".

When the revolution has won control of the rural regions, it has at its disposal a firm support base which will allow it to mobilize men and resources, develop its forces, fight a long-drawn-out war, increase its power as the fighting goes on and foil all perfidious machinations of the enemy. A favourable situation will be created in which the rural regions in the mountains and the plains can lend powerful support to the revolutionary movement in the towns which strikes the enemy in his key centres and his lairs.

Obviously, *in our country the rural regions are firm and lasting support bases and combat positions; to lean squarely on them and set up there solid rear bases constitute an imperative requirement of strategic importance for revolutionary warfare in our country.*

While building up firm rear bases in the countryside, our Party attaches great importance to the implantation of revolutionary bases in *urban centres* where live most of the workers, the most revolutionary class, the leading class, which together with the toiling peasantry make up the fighting force of the revolution. Also in the urban centres live various strata of toilers, school and college students, progressive intellectuals, all animated by fairly ardent patriotism and anti-imperialist feeling. Urban centres, especially the cities and big provincial towns, are political, military, economic and cultural centres where the enemy concentrates his command organs and means of domination and repression, where he is relatively stronger than in the countryside but where he nevertheless displays weaknesses in the military and especially political fields.

The enemy's aim is first of all to turn the towns into a secure rear area for his war of aggression. For our part, in order to bring

revolutionary war to victory, we must actively set up revolutionary bases in the towns, create conditions for attacking the enemy by all appropriate means, and prevent him from setting up secure bases for himself. We must closely co-ordinate our urban with our rural revolutionary forces so as to strike the enemy in his very lairs, destroy his armed and political forces to the maximum extent, make it possible for the people to win power in everwidening regions and secure ultimate victory.

The co-ordinated organization of secure rear bases in rural regions and of revolutionary bases in the towns contributed to the original form taken by our insurrection at the time of the August Revolution and to the success of the first war of resistance, in which we relied on rural bases while intensifying struggle in the towns. The same co-ordination has greatly contributed to the important successes recorded by revolutionary war at present in the three strategic regions in the South.

In accordance with the law of development of the rear base in revolutionary warfare and with a view to mobilizing our national resources in all fields and turning them to best account, we have advocated co-ordination between *local rear bases and the common national rear base.*

Our experience points out that one must have a base, a rear area for the whole country and also bases and rear areas close at hand for each front, each region. The building of on-the-spot bases and rear areas for each front, each region, each echelon, starting from the lowest, is closely bound up with our Party's general line of mobilization of the whole nation for combat and with the policy of organizing powerful local forces everywhere for waging people's war. It is in harmony with the size of our country, which is not very big, and with our way of conducting people's war, which consists in holding our ground,

attacking the enemy everywhere and not yielding an inch. It favours the winning the keeping of sovereignty by the people and makes it possible to bring into full play the power of the new social regime which is taking shape and being consolidated in the liberated areas so as to answer the requirements of war in a rapid and timely way.

Our resistance to American aggression combines the local bases and rear areas in the South with the great national rear area, the socialist North, which is itself linked to the socialist camp. This co-ordination makes it possible fully to mobilize the power of the whole Vietnamese nation, of the socialist regime in the North and the new social regime in the liberated areas of the South, as well as the full weight of the achievements recorded by the revolution over several decades of uninterrupted and victorious struggle against the ringleader of the imperialists. This is a fundamental point which shows that in the present war of resistance, our people's forces and posture are much more powerful than in the first one.

3. To bring our spirit of offensive to the highest point, consolidate our bases and rear area in all fields; actively defend our rear area while attacking the enemy's ceaselessly and turning it into a fighting front; unceasingly expand our bases and rear area.

In a revolutionary war where the building of bases and rear area starts from scratch, the formation of the first bases is but a beginning. To maintain and develop this initial success and make it possible for those bases to withstand all trials and play a growing role, it is necessary to be constantly consolidating them in all fields.

In a people's war, the solidity of the bases and rear area rests on political, economic, military and geographical factors — first of all on the political factors — the people's morale and the social regime.

The building of the rear area must be pursued in all fields — political, economic, military and cultural; *first of all on the political plane* by strengthening the people's political and moral cohesion, enhancing the superiority of the new social regime in every respect, actively but gradually bringing about democratic reforms aimed at improving the material and moral living conditions of the population and ceaselessly reinforcing the potential of the rear area. In this way the latter can ensure its own defence and play an important role in the war.

The bases and rear area of people's war constitute a permanent threat for the enemy who seeks to attack them without respite and without mercy. Their consolidation is bound up with *the struggle waged to defend and enlarge them and allow them to play their role in all fields*. One must heighten the spirit of offensive, actively defend our rear area while ceaselessly attacking the enemy's rear area and turn it into a battlefield. Offensive, active offensive — such is the best way to safeguard and enlarge our rear area while reducing that of the enemy. This is an imperative requirement in building from scrach bases and a rear area for a people fighting to win, maintain and expand power.

During our first war of resistance, the fundamental principle governing the defence of our free zone was to intensify offensive activities against the enemy's rear area, expand guerilla warfare, while ceaselessly consolidating our own rear area in all fields and repelling all enemy attacks. In that way, we succeeded in maintaining and consolidating our free areas, implanting ever more bases and guerilla zones in the enemy's

rear area, and enlarging our rear area ever more while reducing that of the enemy.

That experience is being creatively applied and enriched by the armed forces and people of the South. Inspired by a powerful spirit of offensive, they strive to reinforce the free zone in all fields, and oppose an active and patient struggle to all enemy attempts to attact it, nibble at it, raid it or sabotage it. They resolutely bring the war into the enemy's rear area, combine political with military struggle, and purely military attacks with mass uprisings, so as to allow the population of occupied areas to win control in various forms and to various extents, sow insecurity in the enemy's rear area and gradually turn it into a battlefield and the people's own rear area.

These last few years, the great national rear area, — the North, has been firmly defended and has played an important role in the national struggle against American aggression. This is due to its constant reinforcement in all fields, which has made it possible for it to face the aggressors and foil their war of destruction, and to the unceasing development of the revolutionary forces in the South which have gone from victory to victory owing to their offensive strategy.

4. To build and consolidate the great rear area, the socialist North.

After the victory of Dien Bien Phu, the North, wholly liberated, embarked on the road to socialism and became the firm base and rear area for the revolutionary struggle in the whole country. This was a great turning-point, a great leap in the building and expansion of the base and rear area of people's war in Vietnam. For the first time since the Party

assumed its role as leader of the struggle for independence and freedom one half of the country was entirely liberated. Here we have been able to build socialism successfully, the most advanced social regime in our millennia-old history, in order to secure a firm and complete rear base for the pursuit of the nation's revolutionary struggle.

As soon as the first war of resistance ended in victory, the Party stressed that the North should be reinforced in all fields. The resolution adopted at the Party's Third National Congress held in 1960 said: "The more vigorously the North advances towards socialism, the more consolidated its forces are in all fields and the more favourable conditions grow for the libration revolution in the South, for the fulfilment of our revolutionary tasks in the whole country, for the maintenance and strengthening of peace in Indochina and the world. The North is the common base for the revolution in the whole country".

The consolidation and strengthening of the North have made its defence more powerful with each passing day, *a national defence of the people, by the people themselves, a defence based on the power of the people in all fields,* a defence which safeguards the interests of the people, the fruits of the revolution and the socialist regime. The conception of a *national defence of the people* was clearly defined for the first time in the resolution adopted at the 12th plenum of the Party Central Committee in 1957. This was the application of the thesis of people's war to the defence of the socialist North to get it fully prepared to foil all imperialist aggressive attempts and at the same time to play its role as the rear base of the revolution in the whole country. This was a new development of the theory of the building of the bases and rear area of people's war in the new conditions.

The setting up of a national defence of the people in the North must be carried out in all fields.

In order to have a powerful national defence of the people, one must, on the political plane, ceaselessly consolidate and reinforce the Party's leading role, reinforce the State of proletarian dictatorship, consolidate the socialist regime, strengthen the unity of the toiling people: workers, co-operative peasants, and socialist intellectuals, on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance. One must ceaselessly heighten the socialist consciousness of the masses, their patriotism and love of socialism, their consciousness of being the collective master and their will to reunify the country. On this basis, one must call on the entire people to increase production, build socialism while standing ready to fight heroically to defend the North should the need arise, fulfil all tasks relating to the revolutionary struggle in the South, and contribute to the fulfilment of our international duties. One must correctly carry out the policy of compulsory military service and that regarding wounded and sick militarymen, the families of soldiers fallen on the field of honour, those of armymen, etc.

As the national defence of the people in the North must rely on *a powerful socialist* economy, economic building takes on great importance. In this building, we must combine economics with national defence, peace-time needs with wartime needs, short-term requirements with long-range ones. Such co-ordination must be embodied not only in the over-all State plan, but also in the plans of each branch of activity (industry, agriculture, transport and communications, etc.) at the national and local levels, to that at each stage of economic development there should be a corresponding reinforcement of the defence potential and that in case of foreign aggression the

economy could quickly be put on a war footing. A correct line should be defined for the readjutment of economic building to wartime conditions in agreement with the principle of associating combat with production so that the latter could continue to increase and the economy to expand, and the requirements of the resistance and the people could be met even in time of war.

With a view to a powerful national defence, the North must be strengthened militarily. Military power does not lie only in that of the standing army, but in that of the entire people, with the people's armed forces serving as the core. It is based on the manifold power of the new social regime. The tasks of military building consist in arming and militarizing the entire people, reinforcing the people's armed forces with battle-seasoned regulars and powerful reserve forces, gradually turning villages and urban districts into combat positions, strengthening security. The whole country must be prepared in every respect. The armed forces and the people must redouble their vigilance, and stand ready to fight and smash al acts or schemes of aggression of the imperialists. It is also necesary to define the importance of each strategic region and reinforce the more important ones in all fields. One must also strengthen leadership by the Party and the administration at all levels in the consolidation of national defence and the building of the armed forces.

The development of culture, education, science and technology, public health work, physical training and sports, etc., takes on a deep significance for economic construction, the strengthening of national defence and the building of the armed forces, and especially for the making of new men, of cadres and fighters with a high revolutionary consciousness,

good general knowledge and scientific and technical knowhow, and good health. In short, the power of the people's national defence in the North is based upon the power of the socialist regime in its entirety and on the fruits of the socialist revolution. It has stood the test of the American air war of destruction. Our people's moral and political cohesion is more solid than ever. Production has been maintained and developed ; communication lines have remained open and transport ensured ; cultural activities, education and health continue to make progress ; the people's life has remained stable for the essentials, the army's requirement are met ; the national defence forces have been consolidated and have shown considerable growth. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam has held its ground, proud, and victorious ; she successfully carries on socialist construction and fulfils her duties towards the South. Socialism has proved its superiority. National defence by the entire people in the North has shown its power on the political, organizational, material and technical planes-as well as on the human plane, regarding the resolve, intelligence and moral qualities of the combatants.

5. To rely on the socialist camp, our vast rear area

Right from the first days the Vietnamese revolution has had the support of the world revolution of which it is an integral part, and this support has grown with each passing day. From the beginning encircled by the imperialists, we have succeeded in solidly learning on the socialist camp.

At present we are carrying in our war of resistance against the American aggressors in particularly favourable circumstances: the socialist camp, with a population of one billion, a powerful

economic potential and invincible armed forces, has been considerably strengthened. It constitutes a firm backing and a sure rampart for our people and the peoples of the world in their struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism.

Our people stand in the van of the world's people fighting against imperialism headed by American imperialism. A member of the socialist camp, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is also its forward post in South-east Asia. And so, while essentially relying on our own forces, we can and must secure the sympathy, support and help of the socialist camp in all fields. This a very important factor for the strengthening of the combat capabilities of our people.

With an ever-expanding and more powerful rear area, a national rear area and local ones, our people can besides lean on the immense potential of the vast rear area made up of the fraternal socialist countries. It can thus bring into full play its own economic and military potentialities while turning to account the favourable conditions of our time in order to take our present war of resistance to total victory.

CHAPTER V

MODE OF CONDUCTING THE WAR

Under the Party's leadership and through combat practice, we have succeeded in working out a mode of conducting the war and a military art which display high effectiveness and rich content.

These are a mode of conducting the war and a military art that are adapted to people's war waged in all fields by a nation not very large in size and not very numerous in population against aggressive armies of big imperialist powers. They consist in staging armed uprising and waging revolutionary war, for a long period resolutely attacking the enemy with armed and political forces in both town and countryside ; annihilating enemy forces while striving to win and keep sovereignty for the people so as to maintain and increase our potential and score successes as we fight on ; driving the enemy back step by step and destroying his forces piecemeal so as eventually to defeat him completely ; essentially relying on our own forces, bringing into full play our just cause and the propitious conditions deriving from the fact that this is a national war fought on our own soil, while striving to win the sympathy, support and help of the other peoples and turning to account the favourable factors of our time. All these combined forces of people's war make it

possible for us to defeat the enemy and liberate and defend our land.

1. To wage a war that is fought by the entire people in all fields ; to combine armed with political forces, armed with political struggle, armed uprising with revolutionary war.

Imperialism relies on its armies to invade our country and try to rule over our people. To defeat it, we must arm the entire people, organize armed forces and wage an armed struggle. However, in order to bring into full play the immense power of the entire people against an enemy who, although possessed of a huge and well-equipped army, is waging a war of aggression, an unjust war, and is rent by contradictions and affected by many weaknesses, we must fight him in all fields, —not only military, but also political, economic, cultural and diplomatic – and use various forms of struggle of which the most fundamental ones are armed and political struggle. *To combine armed with political forces, armed with political struggle, armed uprising with revolutionary war – there lies the essential content of our mode of conducting the war, a war fought by the entire people in all fields.*

In the course of our long history, while fielding regular armies, our forefathers already knew how to mobilize the masses against foreign aggressors, and to combine actions by the armed forces with struggles and uprisings by the population. At present, under the Party's leadership, our people have made considerable progress along that line.

Armed fighting is a fundamental form of struggle. It plays a decisive role and has a direct bearing on the destruction of

the enemy's military forces. Besides it must defend the people and be associated with uprisings and political struggles by the popular masses. The fiercer the war grows, the more the enemy intensifies the use of his armed forces, the more importance armed fighting assumes. We must destroy the hostile forces and foil their strategic plans. Military victory is indispensable for the success of the resistance.

Political action, the other fundamental form of struggle, is the basis on which to develop armed fighting and at the same time a mode of offensive against the enemy. It mobilizes and organizes the people, and involves them in combat, passing from lower to higher forms. It unmasks the enemy and foils his political machinations, disperses and weakens his armed forces, upsets his rear area, protects the life and work of the peoples, safeguards the political bases of the revolution. In uprisings and in war, political action never ceases to be closely allied with armed fighting and to evolve into armed fighting. The people's political forces gradually progress from the ordinary forms of political action to armed uprising and, hand in hand with the armed forces, decide the outcome of the war.

The combination of political with armed forces, of political action with armed fighting, of armed insurrection with revolutionary war, is the general rule of the use of revolutionary violence in our country. *At certain times, the political forces play the main role, relying on support by the armed forces and combining political action with armed fighting in order to launch a popular uprising in the whole country ; at other times, the armed forces play the major part, serving as the core of the entire people involved in fighting and combining armed with political struggle in order to wage a protracted people's war : at other times still, armed and*

political forces are brought into play concurrently and simultaneously, armed action is as-sociated with political struggle and armed insurrection with revolutionary war in a single and complex process.

In August 1945, the powerful political forces of the people, leaning on the liberation armed forces, launched a general insurrection to seize power all over the country, in both town and countryside. "The success of the August Revolution was fundamentally due to the fact that the people's political forces seized the favourable opportunity in a timely way to launch insurrection and win power. But if our Party had not built armed forces and set up solid resistance bases to support these forces and the political struggle, and, conditions having grown ripe, if it had not rapidly started an armed uprising, it would not have been possible for the revolution to triumph so quickly"[1]

In the first war of resistance, the entire people rose up, with the popular armed forces serving as the core, for armed fighting was essential. The armed forces passed from guerilla to regular warfare, associating ever more closely their operations with the political struggle and partial insurrections of the masses in the enemy's rear area. The revolutionary masses, both rural and unban, confronted old colonialism with various forms of struggle: struggle against terror and massacre, against bombing, strafing and plunder, against press-ganging of soldiers and labourers; struggle waged by women to demand the return of their forcibly drafted sons and husbands, agitation among puppet troops to win them over to the ranks of the revolution...; and lastly, combination of armed fighting with

1. Political report of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party at the Third National Congress (September 5, 1960).

political agitation and partial insurrections to overthrow the local enemy administrations in the countryside.

At present in the South, the association of armed with political struggle, of armed insurrection with revolutionary war, is carried out at another level and in new historical conditions. The aim is to topple neo-colonialist domination, and foil the neo-colonialist war of aggression waged by American imperialism. The war waged by the entire people in all fields has been brought to a very high level. All the people in the South participate in the struggle : they attack the Americans and the puppet administration and army with both military and political means, and carry out both revolutionary war and mass uprising.

As it extends, the revolutionary war reaches unprecedented proportions, and inflicts ever more bitter defeats on the best-equipped units of the American expeditionary corps. Thanks to general political struggle co-ordinated with action by the armed forces, mass insurrections have erupted repeatedly with increasing vigour. Insurrection expands the field of action of revolutionary war, strengthens it and causes it expand ceaselessly, while war ripens conditions for uprising and allows it to spread. Insurrection and war, though different, are inseparable. "It is hard to distinguish between war and insurrection", said Lenin.

Along with military and political struggle, we conduct a vast and patient political work in the enemy's ranks – a propaganda work which aims at awakening the political consciousness of the puppet militarymen and winning them over to the side of the people, thereby launching another strategic thrust, an important element of revolutionary action.

Economic struggle also plays a very important role, especially when we have already set up bases and rear areas, when liberation war extends and spreads, or when we fight a war for the defence of our fatherland. While mobilizing our own economy for war, we must wage economic struggle against the enemy in conjunction with military and political struggle in order to attack and destroy his economic bases, upset and ruin his economy while defending and developing our own, safeguarding the people's life and property and ensuring conditions for them to work and produce.

2. To set up firm positions in the rural areas, to wage people's war in both rural and urban regions, develop and closely combine offensive thrusts against the enemy in appropriate forms and in all three strategic zones : mountains, plains, and towns.

To fight the enemy in all three strategic zones, using appropriate forms, is a very important aspect of the mode of conducting revolutionary war. One must correctly define the strategic position of the rural and urban regions, establish firm positions in the rural ones, attack the enemy in both at the same time, closely co-ordinate our offensives in all three strategic zones, paying proper attention to conditions prevailing in each, combine armed with political struggle and uprising with war at a suitable level, and take into account the concrete conditions of each period of uprising or war in order to pick the zone which should receive particular attention from the leadership.

During the Second World War and before the August 1945 Revolution, the revolution essentially unfolded in the mountain

region in the form of local guerilla warfare and partial insurrections. However, the revolutionary movement continued to develop in the plains and the towns in suitable forms. When the favourable moment came, our people scored success in the August Revolution by co-ordinating the revolutionary movement in the towns with that in the countryside and political with armed forces and by seizing upon the right opportunity to bring the general insurrection to victory.

The first war of resistance broke out at first in the cities. Then over a long period, the people's war againstt French colonialist aggression, essentially using armed struggle, took place mainly in the rural areas. Our political struggle and armed action in the enemy's areas (rural regions and towns) also developed in close co-ordination with military operations in the other rural regions of the delta and the highlands.

The "chain uprisings" which broke out in the South in 1959-1960 did so at first in the countryside then became a vast guerilla movement closely bound to the political movement in the cities. From 1963 to 1965 in particular, armed actions and peasant uprisings for the destruction of "strategic hamlets". combined with action by the urban masses, made up a considerable aggregate force which foiled the "special war" of the American imperialists.

From 1965 to 1967, the armed forces and people of the South, continuing their victorious offensive, vigorously attacked the enemy in the three strategic zones with armed and political means. The main theatre for combat and insurrection remained the rural regions of the highlands and the delta while in the towns political action took place alongside combat activities of a certain scope. With the general offensive of early

1968, the armed forces and people of the South attacked and rose up everywhere in both town and countryside and recorded ever greater successes.

As said above, *the rural regions and the towns are both important but occupy different positions*. By combining armed with political struggle and combat with insurrection to an appropriate extent according to the strategic zone, setting up solid positions in the countryside and considering it our firmest support base while developing the revolutionary forces in the towns and considering them a crucial sector, we can attack the enemy in both town and countryside. We can also compel him to disperse his forces, while being able to co-ordinate our actions in all sectors, launch unremitting assaults everywhere and at all times, upset his rear areas and strike him dangerous blows. We can win in a protracted war, and we can also bring about favourable situations, steal a march on the enemy, deal him crushing blows at opportune moments and win ever greater victories.

When we have become masters of a State with its complete structure, its towns and countryside, and a developing industry, the role played by the urban and rural regions in defence and in war is no longer the same. Co-ordination between town and countryside in a national-defence war is not carried out in the same way as in a liberation war. This can be seen these last few years in the socialist North in the course of our heroic people's war waged against the American war of destruction. But rational co-ordination between town and countryside remains an important problem, a necessity for bringing into full play the potential of our country and our regime with a view to defeating the enemy.

3. To be inspired by an offensive strategic thought in both armed uprising and revolutionary war.

By mobilizing the entire people, by combining armed with political struggle in all three strategic zones, we have created that immense force of people's war in order to attack the enemy.

Revolution means offensive. In forty years of struggle under the leadership of the Party, our people have attacked the enemy in a resolute, continuous and successful way. Rising up to overthrow the yoke of the imperialists and their valets and to wrest back and safeguard their sovereignty, *they are deeply imbued with the offensive strategic thought of the revolution.*

An insurrection is an offensive. A revolutionary war viewed in the whole of its unfolding is an offensive. It is possible that at certain moments and in certain places one may act on the defensive, but this is in order to create necessary conditions for the continuation of the offensive.

In the 1940's our people, passing from political to armed struggle, launched resolute attacks. Especially from March 1945 onwards partial insurrections toppled enemy power at the base in vast rural regions. At the same time the enemy was attacked everywhere through appropriate forms of struggle. Then our people ceaselessly expanded partial insurrections and local guerilla war, intensified political struggle everywhere in the country and, launched the August general insurrection, thus triggering off a many-sided, vigorous and resolute strategic offensive at the most opportune moment to overthrow the enemy power and seize control all over the country.

Immediately after the August Revolution, our Party had to lead the national resistance against the French coloniialists. As the aggressors' army was then much more powerful than ours,

we decided to preserve the bulk of our forces, avoid disadvantageous engagements, operate a certain retreat while seeking tactically to attack the enemy everywhere and to destroy him partially through partial attacks. Later, determined to drive the enemy to the defensive we waged guerilla warfare, penetrated the enemy's rear areas and turned them into battlefields. Gradually, we developed our offensive, using both guerilla and regular warfare. Following local counter offensives in the wake of the Frontier Campaign (1950) we started a great strategic counter-offensive in winter 1953-spring 1954 which came to a climax with the heroic campaign of Dien Bien Phu, brought our war of resistance to a victorious conclusion and liberated the northern half of our country.

In the South, in the struggle against American neocolonialist domination, the revolution started the offensive with the chain uprisings of 1959-1960. Then expanding its offensive, it developed partial insurrections, mass political struggle and guerilla warfare, and gradually engaged in regular combat operations. Always combining armed with political action, it foiled the "special war" of the American imperialists. When the latter started a direct aggression with hundreds of thousands of well-equipped troops, our armed forces and people, without the slightest hesitation, continued to firmly keep the initiative, attacked the enemy ceaselessly and carried out an offensive strategy against the infamous "limited war", frustrating all enemy schemes. The general offensive and concerted uprisings of the spring of 1968 strengthened our offensive strategic posture even more and marked a turning point in the war.

Our armed forces and people are imbued with the thoroughly revolutionary spirit of the proletariat ; they are inspired by the offensive strategic thought which characterizes revolution and revolutionary war.

This offensive strategic thought is not without relation to our people's traditional military thought. In our history, the victorious uprisings and national wars led by the Trung Sisters, Ly Bon, Trieu Quang Phuc, Le Loi, Nguyen Trai were so many continual offensives against the yoke of foreign feudalists. The victorious national-defence wars led by Ly Thuong Kiet, Tran Hung Dao, Nguyen Hue included of course defensive stages and strategic retreats, which were indispensable at the beginning, but the offensive strategic thought remained dominant throughout, as illustrated by the heroic battles fought on the Nhu Nguyet river, at Van Kiep and Chi Lang, on the Bach Dang river, and at Dong Da.

How to launch resolute and continuous offensives against enemies having an economic and military potential by far superior to ours, drive them to the defensive and to passivity, eventually to defeat and destroy them ?

It is with a definitely offensive spirit that we engage in armed insurrections and revolutionary wars. *The offensive thought is the ideological basis of revolutionary strategy and war in Vietnam.* It springs from the thoroughly revolutionary character of our Party's political and military line, and from the ardent patriotism and resolute and heroic combativeness of our people fighting for independence, freedom and socialism.

Our offensive capability is closely bound up with our *correct appraisal of the features and trend of the relation of forces between the enemy and us.* The enemy has strong points,

but also weaknesses, even fundamental ones. Our people have weaknesses, but also fundamental strong points. These lie in the strength of an entire people rising up to defend their country, the strength of a just war in our time. It is entirely possible for us to bring our strong points into full play and aim our blows at the enemy's weaknesses.

Our offensive capability is also closely tied to *our skill in conducting people's war to our original and ingenious forms of struggle and methods of combat.* Knowing how to assail the enemy in all fields and using at the same time both armed and political struggle, military combat and mass uprising, guerilla and regular warfare, our armed forces and people have brought their capabilities into full play. By creating appropriate and highly effective combat methods, we have developed our offensive capacity to a high degree.

4. To apply the strategy of a protracted war and at the same time to strive to bring about a propitious moment and steal a march on the enemy so as to win ever bigger victories.

Our history had known many victorios insurrections and wars against powerful enemies. The duration of those uprisings and wars depended on many factors, first of all on the relation of forces between the two parties and on our skill in conducting the war. Some of those wars were relatively short, others were protracted liberation wars.

The Tran fought three wars of resistance against Yuan troops in the space of thirty years, but each of those wars lasted but a few months. The lightning offensive mounted by Nguyen Hue against Ching troops led to a great victory within a very

short time. On the other hand, the liberation war led by Le Loi and Nguyen Trai lasted ten years. So our people are possessed of traditions of persevering and protracted resistance and the art of fighting wars of long duration while knowing how to create and capitalize on propitious conditions to win success in a relatively short space of time.

At present, with a progressive political regime, strengthened by the unity of the entire people under the leadersip of the Party, we are in a position to bring into full play all the material and moral forces of our people and our country. We also receive precious help from the fraternal socialist countries and the sympathy and support of progressive people all over the world. But our territory is not very large, our population not very numerous ; we were formerly a colonial and semi-feudal country with an under-developed economy. We have been fighting against powerful, stubborn, machiavellian and adventurous imperialist countries. In those conditions we need time to gradually weaken and destroy enemy forces, check their strong points, aggravate their weaknesses, increase our own strength, promote our strong points, overcome our weaknesses, so that as the fighting goes on the enemy grows weaker and we stronger. The strategy of people's war is one of a protracted war. The continual battles and glorious victories of our people in the last few decades prove the soundness of that strategy.

This protracted war is, viewed in its entirety, a process of continual offensives against the enemy, who is destroyed part by part, driven back step by step, knocked down chunk by chunk, and sees his strategic designs foiled one after another while we go from success to ultimate victory.

The duration of a war depends on the way in which the relation of forces evolves and the war is conducted by each side. Our national wars show that in the course of a long war, whenever a new phase begins, there often happen abrupt changes, due either to our own efforts, or to the enemy's errors, or to favourable objective conditions. The passing from a progressive evolution to a development by leaps and bounds is the general law governing all movements. Insurrection and war are sharp confrontation, struggles to the death, in which this law manifests itself very clearly.

We strive to create favourable conditions leading to ever more important leaps and ever greater victories. We must know how to exert the greatest efforts, turn to account all propitious objective conditions, provoke errors on the part of the enemy and capitalize on his weaknesses, create ingenious and effective forms of struggle, provide clear-sighted strategic leadership, aim our attacks in the right direction and at the right target, seize the opportune moment, hit at key spots, skilfully combine armed with political struggle and military combat with insurrection. Thus, while carrying on a protracted war, we must exert the greatest efforts in all fields, and act speedily so as to record ever more important victories.

5. To couple the destruction of enemy troops with winning and maintaining control for the people; to actively annihilate hostile forces while fostering and strengthening our own, so as to grow stronger as we fight.

Power is the fundamental question of all revolutions and the destruction of hostile forces, that of all wars. Our war is a revolutionary one and is used as a way of struggle to win

power. It aims at destroying enemy forces and means to solve the problem of annihilating the enemy's power and winning power for the people.

In our people's war, we combine the military action of people's armed forces aimed at destroying hostile troops with mass uprisings with a view to win power. The toppling of enemy power and the winning of power for the people at various levels in different conditions will create new possibilities for attacking and annihilating the enemy. Conversely, it is necessary to destroy enemy forces in order to give support to the masses rising up to win power, and create new bases and forces.

In August 1945, the main action consisted of a mass uprising to win power ; but action by armed forces was needed to assist it.

In the first war of resistance, the main factor was the annihilation of enemy forces by our own armed forces; but the masses also rose up to disband puppet village councils of elders and punish traitors, wrest back power in areas behind enemy lines, build, consolidate and expand guerilla bases and zones right in enemy-coccupied regions.

At the same time our people and armed forces actively built and consolidated free zones in every respect, built and consolidated people's power, and repelled enemy counter-offensives.

At present in the South, the coupling of the annihilation of the enemy with the winning and safeguarding of power for the people has made a new step forward. The liberation armed forces actively attack the enemy to destroy him and lend support to mass uprisings and political struggles. The masses' political forces create favourable conditions for the armed

forces by attacking the enemy in appropriate ways, starting partial insurrections, toppling puppet power at the base, winning sovereignty at various levels, setting up revolutionary power in one form or another. In the liberated zones, the armed forces actively fight to protect the people, and to assert and consolidate their right to sovereignty in the political and economic fields.

All that requires conformity to this leading principle: *ceaselessly to safeguard and increase our forces while destroying the enemy's.*

To destroy the enemy's forces means to annihilate both his political and military forces, both the forces of the foreign aggressors and those of their valets.

To safeguard and increase our forces means to safeguard and increase both the forces of our army and those of our people, our military, political and economic forces.

Only by assimilating and correctly applying that rule, by getting imbued with that thought, can we carry out this leading principle ; *the more we fight, the stronger we grow : the more we fight, the more victories we win.* As we fight on, our forces grow more mature, field of action widens, our manifold offensive capabilities in revolutionary war expand, eventually to defeat the enemy's forces and foil his militarry strategy, break up his power at various levels, and win power in its entirety for the people.

6. To rely essentially on our own forces, while striving to secure international help.

This is also a general rule. It marks a new development in our Party's art of conducting the war, compared with previous

historical periods. Considering revolution the work of the masses, it expresses the unshakable confidence of our Party in the power of our people and nation. It also proceeds from the idea that the Vietnamese revulution is part and parcel of the world revolution and is closely bound up with the revolutionary movement of the world's peoples. It knows how to turn to account the favourable factors of our time to secure victory for the revolution and the revolutionary war in our country, and at the same time to bring our contribution to the revolutionary cause of the world's peoples.

The triumph of revolutionary war in our country is essentially due to internal causes : the judicious line of our Party, the sacrifices endured by our armed forces and people on the battlefields, our nation's political, moral and material capabilities, the immense advantages of human, geographical and climatic factors in a national war fought on our own soil.

And so, fully assuming its responsibilities with regard to the destiny of the nation and resolved to "rely essentially on our own forces", our Party has creatively applied Marxism-Leninism to the conditions of our country, correctly and independently defined its general line and military line, and mobilized and organized all the forces of our people and our country with a view to winning victory. The Vietnamese people must stand up and carry out the resistance themselves in order to gain national independence and freedom, without waiting for anyone else to do it for their sake. Our people's tremendous victories are due in the first place and essentially to the heroic struggle, full of self-abnegation and sacrifices, waged by our armed forces and the entire Vietnamese nation.

At the same time, those victories cannot be divorced from the support and help extended to us by the revolutionary peoples of the world. The world revolutionary movement has brought about objective conditions highly favourable to the Vietnamese revolution. Ever since the difficult beginnings of their struggle for national liberation under the banner of the Party, our people have benefited by the support and help, either direct or indirect, of the brother peoples of the socialist countries and the world's revolutionary peoples, on the political, moral and material planes. The policy of union on the international plane advocated by our Party has brought us the broad and strong help, sympathy and support of our brothers and friends on the five continents.

In our time, the socialist camp has become the determining factor in the development of human society; the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism is in full swing everywhere in the world. U.S led imperialism is assailed everywhere without respite. Our people must and can turn to full account the favourable factors of our time in order to strengthen their positions and increase their forces so as to defeat all aggressors.

International aid must be rendered more effective by the efforts of our people and our Party in the concrete conditions of our country. Therefore, while attaching great importance to this aid, we have always relied essentially on our own forces and combined those two factors in order to bring our struggle to victory.

CHAPTER VI

MILITARY ART

A very important part of the conduct of the war, *military art* has to solve all problems relating to armed struggle. Our military art reflects the laws of revolutionary armed struggle in general and those of our fight in particular, and the relation between armed struggle and political struggle, between revolutionary war and armed uprising.

Our military art correctly determines the organic relationship and interaction between its three components: *strategy, operational art* and *tactics*, and the role of each of them. Strategy plays the leading role. A correct strategy create basic conditions for the fulfilment of operational and tactical missions. Conversely, only by satisfactorily solving tactical and operational problems and fulfilling combat tasks can strategic objectives be attained.

1. Our military art is first and foremost the **military art of a war fought by the entire people**. In his appeal of December 1946, President Ho Chi Minh said:

"Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed, political affiliation and nationality, all Vietnamese must stand up to fight the French colonialists to save the Fatherland! Those who have rifles will use their rifles, those who have

swords will use their swords! Those have no swords will use spades, hoes or sticks!''.

Our military art directs the operational activity of the people's army and, at the same time, the military activity of the entire people in arms. It must correctly determine the task of the armed forces and armed struggle in the national war waged by our people. Parallel with the annihilation of the enemy's military forces, armed struggle must constantly create favourable conditions for the establishment and development of political bases; it must step up the political struggle of the masses and agitation work among enemy troops and pave the way for mass uprisings. Moreover, armed struggle must take the utmost advantage of the success of political struggle and agitation work. To this end the armed forces must grasp the tasks and requirements of the political struggle in each locality and actively support them.

Therefore, as we have stressed, *the close combination of military with political struggle, of combat task with agitation work, of the annihilation of the enemy's military forces with the mobilization of the masses to wrest power*, has long been a principle governing the operational direction of our armed forces.

The core of our people's war is constituted by the people's army with its three categories of troops. Only by *closely combining the operational activities of regular forces, regional forces and self-defence militia, by combining guerilla warfare with regular warfare and small engagements with medium-scale and big operations* can we maintain and intensify the revolutionary war until victory.

2. If our conduct of the war is imbued with a strategy of offensive, our military art is also essentially an art of offensive. It is **the art of offensive of the armed forces**.

In armed struggle, we try to attack the enemy as hard as we can, resolutely, unremittingly, all-sidedly with all forces, with all weapons, in all forms of tactical and operational engagements, on all scales, in all places and at all times. Mobilizing the armed forces and the entire people for the fighting, our military art brings into play all our skills and strikes at the weak points of the adversary, each time creating a relation of forces in our favour which enables us to attack the enemy and develop our offensive posture in the whole theatre of war. As regards combat methods, they include attack and defence, but attack is the chief means. When necessary, in certain places, and at certain times, defence is carried out to support attack but it is only partial and aims at enabling the bulk of our forces to launch an offensive; it is only a temporary means used to create conditions for switching over to attack. All defence tasks should be achieved with a dynamic, firm and persevering spirit with the constant aim of seeking to attack the adversary.

Animated by this offensive spirit, our military art aims at *turning to full account the moral factor, the political superiority, the courage and resourcefulness of our people,* of our closely united nation with its high political awareness, its traditions of fearless struggle and its military gifts. It develops the strong points of the socialist regime and of a just war waged on our own land, *makes the best use of all modern and rudimentary weapons, devises highly efficient combat methods to defeat an aggressive army superior in number and technique,* but plagued by basic weaknesses in the political,

moral and even military fields. While enhancing the revolutionary consciousness, the courage and intelligence of our men, correctly handling the relationship between man and weaponry, laying stress on the human factor, the political and moral factor, and nevertheless attaching great importance to weapons, to the material and technical factor, our military art has infused our armed forces and people with an ever higher dynamic and with huge offensive capabilities.

3. Our military art is **the art of "defeating a big force with a smaller one"**. At all times, national wars have set our nation an imperative strategic objective: to defeat an enemy having a huge army and an economic and military potential many times superior to ours. In face of this requirement, our forefathers mastered the art of "pitting a weak force against a stronger one", of "defeating a big force with a smaller one", of "winning great battles with small armies" in order to get the upper hand of huge aggressor armies or even, at times, wipe them out wholesale. With the present disparity of forces, especially in manpower and technical equipment, we must, now more than ever, try to "defeat a big force by using a smaller one".

In this spirit, on the operational and tactical planes we must know how to defeat an enemy superior in number and armament, and to concentrate our forces to annihilate him when necessary. To crush a big force with a smaller one means to win significant success over it with a lesser force, which does not exclude medium-scale and great battles. With only a smaller force, our forefathers often wiped out in a single engagement thousands and even tens of thousands of enemy troops. With small but seasoned units our Southern army and people have annihilated or put out of action, in a single battle, one regiment or even one brigade, or destroyed tens of aircraft, hundreds of armoured vehicles,

thousands and tens of thousands of tons of fuel and munitions. Likewise, in the North, in many engagements we have opposed small units of militia, A.A. artillery or fighter planes to important air force units of the enemy and downed his planes with but little ammunition.

When concentration of forces is needed, we must know how to deploy and use them in a most rational way to obtain a maximum striking power in order to crush the adversary by sweeping offensives. Our operational conduct requires that in each battle we must *fight from a position of strength, achieve superiority, create a global force stronger than that of the enemy so as to wipe him out*, by adequately organizing our forces, bringing into full play our courage and resourcefulness, making the best use of our armaments, choosing an ingenious and efficient combat method, securing and maintaining such conditions as to check the enemy's power and favourite combat methods, drive important hostile forces into passivity and expose them to our blows.

4. One of the leading principles of our military art **is to try by every means to annihilate the enemy**. Fighting him with a high offensive spirit and a small force, we must attain the goal of all operation activity : to wipe out the hostile military forces.

Parallel with the destruction and attrition of small detachments of the enemy by guerilla warfare throughout the war theatre, our regular armed forces must resolutely smash ever more important enemy forces. They must *be determined to shatter ever bigger units of the enemy, capture prisoners, seize weapons and control the battlefield while suffering only minimum losses.*

The hostile military forces include *manpower, war means and rear bases*. While manpower is the essential element, war means and rear bases also constitute very important components of imperialist armies. While annihilating the enemy's manpower,we must destroy his war means and rear bases, especially the more important ones.

Our armed forces must co-ordinate their action with our political forces to crush his administration at all levels, smash his local apparatus of coercion, and disintegrate his armed "civilian" organizations.

By destroying and disintegrating his military and political forces (both regular and regional troops), his manpower, war means and rear bases, shattering both his ordinary and his crack units, we can weaken the enemy in every respect. With a small force we can deal him very hard blows, inflict upon him very heavy losses, check his strong points and thwart his favourite combat methods, thereby vigorously pushing ahead our all-out war of resistance. This is also the most rational and efficient way to defeat an enemy having a huge manpower and an abundant modern equipment.

5. Our military art is that of fighting with **dynamic and initiative, determination and flexibility, resourcefulness and creativeness**, making the best use of **secrecy and surprise**.

Fired with a high offensive spirit, our armed forces and people constantly display zeal and initiative, seek out the enemy to go at him and fight him with determination, always starting from a posture of strength.

Each combat action of our armed forces and people is inspired by general rules from our military art; however, the war unfolds in a most diverse and changing way according

to each stage and the concrete situation of each theatre of operations as regards troop numbers, population, terrain and climate. So our military art requires much resourcefulness and creativeness. Only by bringing them into full play on the basis of the thoroughly revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, of ardent love for the fatherland and socialism, can we carry into effect the offensive spirit and the principle of defeating a big force with a smaller one in all circumstances.

In our military art, now as in the past, secrecy and surprise constitute a striking feature. Animated by a firm determination to destroy the enemy, knowing how to rely on the population and having a high sense of discipline, our armed forces always operate unexpectedly concerning the direction of attack, targets, time, deployment of troops, size of the engagement, combat methods, etc. While refuting the imperialists' thesis according to which "surprise decides the outcome of a war", we nevertheless set great store by the surprise element for the annihilation of the enemy. In strategy as well as in tactics, it has enabled our armed forces and people to win great victories.

Based on all those conceptions, the art of people's war has successfully solved many *problems of strategy, operational conduct and tactics*, by adapting itself to the specific conditions of each of our wars of liberation or national defence.

1. First, we **must vigorously impel the operational activity of the three categories of troops serving as the core of people's war, and wage both guerilla and regular warfare by closely combining them in the most efficient way.**

While co-ordination between armed forces and political forces, between armed struggle and political struggle and between revolutionary war and armed uprising, is the main

content of the method of conducting the war in the field of armed struggle, co-ordination between guerilla and regular warfare is the fundamental content of the art of mobilizing the entire people to fight.

Guerilla warfare is the form of armed struggle of the large masses of people. The entire people up in arms: this characteristic of our people's war makes guerilla warfare develop extensively, deeply, vigorously and multifariously.

Using guerilla fighting, the various popular strata and ethnic groups fight the enemy in their own localities, with all weapons and means available, in all places and at all times. Hence guerilla warfare develops a great strategic action by wearing down and destroying the enemy's forces, dispersing them to the utmost and upsetting their strategic battle-array, while creating an advantageous strategic posture for us, and protecting and tempering the revolutionary masses. Not only is guerilla warfare of great strategic importance, it has also a great revolutionary significance: *it enables the revolutionary masses to start partial uprisings and wrest back power at grassroots level.*

At the star, when the revolutionary people launch partial uprisings they have only small armed forces and can only wage guerilla warfare. To maintain our offensive posture and foil the enemy's counter-offensives, we must unceasingly widen guerilla warfare and partial uprisings, build an ever stronger regular army from regional forces, and pass from guerilla to regular warfare. *Only regular warfare*–in which regular troops,co-ordinating the actions of various arms in great battles, cooperate with regional troops, militia and guerilla units and the political forces of the entire people–can wipe out

sizable forces of the enemy, liberate vast areas and win greater and greater successes, thus creating conditions *for the war to* develop by leaps and bounds.

In our revolutionary war, guerilla warfare constitutes the basis of regular warfare. Regular warfare must always be closely co-ordinated with guerilla warfare and foil all the enemy's efforts so as to help guerilla warfare maintain and develop. Only when guerilla warfare expands can regular warfare fully develop and progress. The close co-ordination between the three categories of troops, the mutual support between the two forms of warfare and their co-ordination with political struggle and other aspects of the struggle contribute to the vigorious expansion of the might of people's war.

Guerilla warfare must advance to regular warfare and the two must be closely co-ordinated. This is a general law of our protracted revolutionary war. The problem in the conduct of the war is to know when and where to turn guerilla warfare into regular warfare, to co-ordinate them closely and appropriately in each period and on each battle-field so as to enable them to develop unceasingly and increase their strategic efficacy.

Should the enemy venture to invade North Vietnam our three categories of troops being ready, regular warfare and guerilla warfare would be fought simultaneously right from the beginning in close co-ordination with each other.

2. To enable all combat forces to develop their fighting ability to the fullest exten, it is necessary **to build an advantageous strategic posture**. The development of guerilla and regular warfare, together with political struggle and armed uprising, creates favourable conditions for the building of an advantageous strategic posture. *To build a favourable strategic*

posture for us, and drive the enemy into a disadvantageous strategic posture, is a most important problem in military art.

The strategic forces of each belligerent need to be appropriately deployed in order to develop their power fully. Imperialism wages its wars of aggression with regular armies abundantly provided with modern armaments and technical means on a large scale. These forces must be deployed on a definite frontline. In our revolutionary war we rely on the strength of the whole country, with the people's armed forces as the core, to fight the aggressor on our own soil. Mobilizing our entire people, we therefore create a *political and military encirclement and offensive* right in the areas occupied by the enemy. By co-ordinating political struggle with armed struggle, armed uprising with revolutionary war, guerilla warfare with regular warfare, and by co-ordinating our activities in the three strategic zones–mountain regions, plains, and cities– we create a posture in which *the forces of the two sides are interlocked like the hair with the teeth of a comb.*

The enemy's modern armies are sliced up, surrounded and attacked from all sides and everywhere; he can find no safe place in a war with no frontline, no rear, no definite fireline but with an ubiquitous battlefield. Engulfed in the ocean of peoples war, the enemy gets his ears stopped and his eyes blindfolded, hits only vacuums and canot apply his favourite combat methods. His forces are dispersed and weakened. His numerous troops and abundant material fail to give the expected results. Conversely, our armed and political forces can besiege the enemy, attack him and rise up everywhere. Thus they can engage in vigorous action, keep constant initiative and successfully attack at the place and time of their choice.

Therefore, despite his superiority in manpower and material, the enemy is incapable of putting up a solid defence everywhere. *His dispersed and passive strategic battle-array shows many weak points and shortcomings.* Relying on their advantageous strategic posture, our armed forces and people can field appropriate forces to deal him unexpected and hard blows.

In the course of development of our armed and political forces, the three categories of troops take shape and grow up in all theatres of operations. To defeat an adversary having a high mobility, we *must deploy our regular troops,regional forces and political forces and closely coordinate their action in vital strategic places.* With such a posture, we can at will deal hard blows at the enemy on important theatres while he is assailed wherever he sets foot. Despite the adversary's modern means of transportation, our troops, operating on their own soil, are more combat-ready. Thanhks to this disposition, when American troops landed in force to invade our country in 1965, our armed forces and people immediately attacked them wherever they set foot, developing an offensive strategy which caused heavy losses to the enemy and foiled his two dry season counter-offensives.

3. Judiciously to determine the direction and time of the offensive.

With a given force, if we attack in a certain direction, we can wipe out a given enemy force, but the effect on the situation as a whole may be only mediocre, success being at best tactical or operational; on the other hand, if we attack in another direction, our blows can be highly effective and we can win a success of strategic significance. Our people's armed struggle is rich in examples of victories due to the judicious

determination of the direction of attack in uprising and war. The choice of the direction of strategic attack is a great problem of military art.

The choice of the time of attack, together with that of the direction of attack has a decisive impact in uprising and a great importance in war. We must attack the enemy when his forces are dispersed, when he is not on his guard or when he is in a fix. As he cannot cope with the situation he can be easily annihilated.

4. To choose the most effective combat methods while determining the most appropriate forms of organization and methods of using our forces.

Together with the determination of strategic tasks, we must apply combat methods and forms of using our forces that are suited for each situation and for the balance of forces and other strategic conditions in each period.

During the preparation of the August Revolution, to promote guerilla warfare which had become a strategic task, our Party elaborated appropriate combat methods ("dispersal or regrouping according to circumstances", "ambush," "surprise attack") and appropriate forms of organization (clandestine armed gourps, guerilla detachments).

In the first years of the war of resistance against the French colonialists, to promote and step up guerilla warfare behind the enemy's lines we adopted armed propaganda and guerilla activities of various scopes with such organizational forms as armed propaganda platoons, autonomous companies and mobile battalions. Step by step we mounted small operations by regular regiments in co-ordination with regional forces, while in the enemy's rear we launched guerilla operations. Later,

we engaged in operations of a larger scale with mobile warfare and attacks on fortified positions in co-ordination with guerilla activities. To apply these combat methods, regular troops were organized into divisions (mainly composed of infantry) operating in co-ordination with specialized arms.

In South Vietnam, during their operations and uprisings, our armed forces and people have worked out multifarious combat methods, highly efficient and thoroughly suited for the situation of the theatre of operations. In the course of the war, there have gradually appeared many kinds of operations with a newer and newer content: guerilla operations and regular troops' campaign in co-ordination with regional armed forces and political forces of the masses, attacking the enemy in all strategic sectors. To apply these combat methods, we have built up an adequate organization for the use of such forces.

In North Vietnam, the ingenious combat methods of the anti-aircraft forces belonging to the three categories of troops and their appropriate organization and use have greatly contributed to the victory over the US war of destruction.

Thus, *with appropriate combat methods, appropriate organization and use of forces, we can successfully carry out our strategic tasks.*

By determining suitable *combat methods* in a timely way, we can increase the capacities of our forces to attack and destroy the enemy, thwart his combat methods and tactics, and foil his strategic plans and designs. It is important to co-ordinate the various combat methods cleverly and in a way suited to the specific conditions of any given place, time and stage of the war. We must direct the evolution of those methods and replace the obsolete ones when necessary. The

organization and execution of operations and combats must unceasingly develop; we must turn to advantage the experience acquired while watching out for all eventual changes and constantly relying on practice to improve our strategic, operational and tactical direction. We should neither make use of old experiences in a mechanical way nor cling to obsolete combat methods.

It is also important to settle satisfactorily the *problem of organization and use of forces*. By constantly improving the organization of forces to suit the requirements of combat methods, we have a good organizational basis on which to apply the latter on the battlefield. At present, with the ever growing political awareness of our armed forces and population and the building up of their technical equipment, our combat methods as well as our organization and use of forces become richer and more fecund in content day after day. The co-ordination of various arms gives birth to more and more efficient forms. We must direct the organization and use of forces in such a way as to bring into full play the role of each service, each arm as well as each category of troops in order to meet the evergrowing combat requirements.

5. Unceasingly to raise to the utmost the combat efficiency of our armed forces.

In the wars we have fought, the imperialist aggressors have set in motion a huge war machinery but have not been able to fulfil their strategic tasks, and finally have been beaten. On the battlefield they usually deploy big forces but fail to wipe out ours and achieve their operational goals. For our part, in various circumstances, we have victoriously fought against more numerous and better equipped forces, annihilated them

and thwarted their plans, inflicting upon them very heavy losses. The enemy cannot bring into play his combat efficiency while we can develop ours.

The reason is that the organization of our forces is rational, their numbers adequate and their quality high, that we have acquired an advantageous posture, and that we possess ingenious and efficient combat methods which enable us to bring into full play our might and exploit the enemy's weaknesses. We prevent him from developing his efficiency by fighting with initiative and energy, determination and flexibility, secrecy and suddenness.

*Our blows hit home and annihilate his forces, while he strikes at vacuums and cannot destroy us,*the efficiency of his troops not being in proportion to their numbers.

To assess the combat efficiency of troops, we must not base ourselves solely on the results of each battle. For there are key battles in which the enemy must be wiped out at any cost whatever the difficulties may be, because they pave the way for the victory of a whole campaign These victorious battles have a great efficiency.

The above-mentioned problems have been set and solved in our national history. To fight small engagements before waging great battles in order to win the final victory in a protracted war; to co-ordinate small engagements fought by regional forces with great battles fought by the army; to seek by all means to build an advantageous posture in the war so as to weaken then annihilate a stronger adversary; to choose the propitious direction and moment to deal the decisive blow; to apply bold combat methods, rapidly move an army to suddenly strike a decisive blow at the enemy's nerve centres

so as to win great lightning victories: such are the striking features of the military art of Ly Thuong Kiet, Tran Hung Dao, Le Loi, Nguyen Trai, Nguyen Hue. Our military art has inherited the military knowledge and skill of our people and raised them to a higher level, thus imparting an invincible strength to people's war.

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This is the main content, and these are the leading thoughts and principles,the problems and rules in the conduct of the war and the military art of our people, derived from the practice of combat during the last decades.

Closely related to one another and forming an indivisible whole, these problems are essentially experiences of national liberation war.

War is the fiercest test of strength between the forces of two sides in concrete objective conditions. Our Party has made a thorough analysis of the objective conditions of war, accurately assessed our forces and those of the enemy, elaborated the laws of development of war, successfully applied our mode of conduct of war and our military art, and played a decisive role in the victorious confrontation of our people with the aggressor armies of three imperialist powers.

Correct appraisal of the enemy's forces and our own is a fundamental problem. A great achievement of our Party is its ability *to assess the relation of forces between the enemy and us in a scientific way,* and to do it in concrete situations and specific circumstances.

The assessment of the relation between the opposing forces must be multi-sided and *go deep into the essence of things: on the military and political planes, in quantity and quality; it must take into account not only the strength of the army but also that of the revolutionary people; it must discern not only the enemy's strong points and our weaknesses, but also all our strengths and all his weak points.*

The appraisal of the fighting capacity of the two parties must be based not only on the forces facing each other, but also on their respective strategic postures, not only on each side's strenght and posture, but also on its combat efficiency: not only on the opposing forces in the whole of the operational theatre but also those in each regional theatre. The relation of forces between us and the enemy must be assessed not only in Vietnam but also in the world. Only an appraisal made at every level enables us to accurately assess the capacity of each party and to use all our potential on the battlefield.

The *assessment of the relation of forces must be dialectic,* and we must foresee all the changes and leaps likely to happen in the course of the war.

It is of great importance that, together with this assessment, *we accurately appraise the conduct of the war by each belligerent, confront the incomparable effects of correct line with those of the enemy's erroneous line, the effects of our superior military art with those of his reactionary and obsolete military art.*

It is on the basis of this objective appraisal of the enemy and ourselves made according to a correct viewpoint that our Party has led our people to rise up against the aggressor and

brought into full play its talents in the conduct of the war so as to win victory.

In the wars waged in our country, *the two sides rely on different forces, have different strengths and weaknesses, excel in different methods of struggle and have different strategic plans.*

The striking feature in our conduct of the war is that we know how to develop our might and carry out our methods of struggle, prevent the enemy from developing his might and carrying out his favourite methods of struggle, directly hit his weak points with our strong points, gradually wipe out his forces and foil all his strategic schemes on an ever larger scale, eventually to defeat him completely.

Faced with our Party's superior military line and correct conduct of the war, faced with our people's invincible force, the enemy is at last driven to impotence. He wants a lightning war but must fight a long war. He wants to combat on definite frontlines but must accept a war in which the belligerent forces interlock. He wants to keep the initiative, bring his might to bear and make war on his terms, but must passively cope with our might and our combat methods. He wants to launch offensives, but must act on the defensive. He wants to annihilate our forces, but his own is seriously worn down. His strategic goals founder one after another in an ever more lamentable way. The more efforts he makes, the more setbacks he suffers; the more he escalates, the heavier his failure. And so it goes until his final defeat.

Thus a big nation having a considerable force of aggression with a modern equipment may be perfectly beaten by a small but resolute people with ingenious and efficient combat

methods, *a people who are courageous and intelligent, are determined to fight and know how to fight.*

U.S. imperialism now sees its military theses collapse: "Numbers decide victory," "equipment and armaments make victory," "the air force is the decisive factor." Gone is the myth of the "fantastic might" of the U.S. army.

With an appropriate mode of conduct of the war and military art, the Vietnamese people have won great victories, brilliantly materializing this profound thought expressed by Engels 120 years ago:

> "... A people eager to wrest back independence should not confine themselves to routine modes of war prosecution. Mass insurrection, revolutionary warfare, ubiquitous guerilla detachments, such is the only method which makes it possible for a small nation to beat a bigger one, a weaker army to resist a stronger and better organized." [1]

1. F. Engels, *Setbacks of the Piedmontese People*, Neue Rheinish Zeitung, 1849.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY: THE ESSENTIAL FACTOR OF VICTORY

President Ho Chi Minh said:

"Soon after its birth, our Party organized and led the heroic movement of the Nghe-Tinh Soviets.

"At the age of twelve, it organized the guerilla movement against the French and the Japanese.

" When fifteen, it organized and led the August Revolution and brought it to victory.

"When sixteen, it led the war of resistance agaisnt the French colonialists, which ended in triumph eight years later."

Today our people are conducting against the American aggressors the greatest war of resistance in our nation's history.

The history of the struggles for liberation waged by our people over a century shows that in our epoch only under the leadership of the party of the working class can a national liberation war, a revolutionary war of a truly popular character be launched, organized and led to complete victory. *The leadership of our Party is the essential factor which accounts for the victory of the people's uprising, of the people's war waged to open the way to socialism and defend its achievements.*

The reason is that our Party is a *new-type party of the Vietnamese working class,* a party with a thoroughly revolutionary spirit, a scientific theory – Marxism-Leninism – a close-knit organization, a strict discipline and close ties with the masses.

Our Party was born of the alliance of Marxism-Leninism with the workers' movement and the national liberation movement in Viet Nam. Since its birth it has held undivided leadership of the revolution. The party of the working class, it is also the party of the nation. Nowadays only the party of the working class–the most revolutionary class, which represents the socialist mode of production, the fundamental interests of the broad masses of the working class and peasantry, of the toiling people, the fundamental and long—term interests of the nation-can assume the role of genuine leader of the nation, uphold the banner of national independence and democracy, bring the national and democratic revolution to success and our country to socialism: only such a party can mobilize our people to rise up and wage a revolutionary war until victory.

In Vietnam, our Party alone has had the revolutionary courage to resolutely lead the masses to stand up and break the yoke of the colonialists and feudalists, to overcome all difficulties and hardships and defeat strong and fierce imperialist aggressors, including U.S. imperialism – the ringleader of all imperialisms and the enemy number one of the world's peoples – to fulfil at all costs the tasks of the revolution. Our Party has become a party experienced in leading an all-people uprising and people's war, having a

judicious and creative revolutionary line, a solid knowledge of the laws of revolution and revolutionary war and guiding the implementation of its political and military line in a resolute, bold and scientific manner.

Closely associated with the masses of the people, it constitutes the firm core of the all-people united struggle. Hence it can mobilize broader and broader forces of the nation and closely rally them around it so as to overcome all trials and lead the revolutionary war to victory.

The leadership of our Party in the all-people uprising and people's war can be seen *first of all* in the defining of judicious political and military lines, of the fundamental as well as immediate *tasks* and *goals* of the revolution, in the elaboration and application of revolutionary *methods of action*, organizational forms, methods and means of struggle and of the most appropriate, efficient and revolutionary tactics as mentioned above.

This leadership can also be seen in the following problems.

1. To realize a sustained and sweeping political mobilization of the Party, the army and the people, foster and promote Vietnamese revolutionary heroism, enhance the determination to fight and to win, create the greatest politicomoral force in order to triumph over the enemy, and fulfil at all costs both the goals set for each period and the final aims of the revolution.

Said Lenin:

> "In the final analysis, victory in any war depends on the spirit animating the masses that spill their own blood on

the field of battle. The realization by the masses of the causes and aims of the war is of tremendous importance and ensures victory". [1]

True to this teaching, in the conduct of peoples war, *our Party has always set itself this essential goal: to inculcate upon the masses its general line and revolutionary tasks, the political aim of the war, to carry out a continual political mobilization of the masses and to reinforce the politico-moral factor of the revolutionary war.*

The politico-moral trength in a war is first and foremost determined by the revolutionary line, the political aim of the war. The revolutionary line of our Party and the political aim of the war reflect the law of evolution of history, the profound aspirations of our people, in the first place of the worker-peasant masses. Once this line has permeated the masses it arouses determination and firm will, and becomes a powerful motive force of the war, our Party has patiently and systematically inculcated the revolutionary line and tasks and the aim of the war upon its members, the army, the people and taught them to correctly assess the relation of forces in presence, to see the trend of evolution and grasp the character of the revolutionary war, a protracted and arduous but certainly victorious one. It has unceasingly intensified political education and ideological guidance among the army and the people, enhanced their class and national consciousness, patriotism, love for the new regime – the people's democratic regime and the socialist regime – and proletarian internationalism. It has popularized the great truth

1. V.I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 137.

expressed by President Ho Chi Minh — "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" and his determination to fight — "Rather sacrifice everything than lose our independence and fall back into slavery." It has exalted complete dedication to the Fatherland. It has constantly strunggled against deviations first and foremost right deviations, in particular any wavering in face of an arduous and protracted war.

The Party has succeeded in cultivating and enhancing revolutionary heroism among all Vietnamese. Brought to its highest point, collective heroism has become a new virtue for millions of people whether in the army or among the peole, at the front-line and in the rear, in all combat positions, in all fields of revolutionary war.

Vietnamese revolutionary heroism is the association of the revolutionary nature of the working class with our fine national traditions. It consists of courage and complete dedication; it spurs one to face any force, danger or difficulty: enhanced by intelligence and skill, it enables one to devise revolutionary courses of action, appropriate forms of struggle, and efficient combat methods so as to defeat the enemy in all fields. In the praise he bestowed on the people's armed forces – a praise which could be bestowed on our entire people – President Ho Chi Minh thus defined revolutionary heroism: " *To strive to fulfil any task, overcome any difficulty, and defeat any enemy*".

Vietnamese revolutionary heroism reflects the firm will of our people to gain independence and freedom, and to

safeguard the achievements of the revolution. Our people, who have suffered untold miseries under the old regime, are resolved to fight to the end to wrest back and defend the independence and freedom brought them by the new regime.

Vietnamese revolutionary heroism is the product of profound education combined with daily training in theory and ideology, of revolutionary thoughts and feelings. It vividly expresses perfect awareness of the revolutionary tasks and the aim of the war, ardent patriotism, deep hatred of the enemy, determination to fight and win, unshakable faith in the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, confidence in the might and the heroic traditions of the nation and the working class and in the combat capacity of both the collective and the individual.

Vietnamese revolutionary heroism reflects the immense moral strenght of our people, of our nation, of the Vietnamese living in a new era and under a new sòcial regime, and fighting a bitter combat to defend the Fatherland.

Our war methods and military art full of boldness and intelligence have taken shape and developed in the practice of the momentous struggle waged by millions of new men animated by revolutionary enthusiasm. Only by relying on revolutionary heroism and giving it full scope can our war methods and military art be translated into revolutionary deeds of the masses and bring about positive results. The striking military feats of our people and armed forces, both on the frontline and in the rear, stem from Vietnamese revolutionary heroism, a fine result of the political

mobilization, the ideological education and the forming of the new man by our Party.

2. To mobilize all the potential of people's war, intensify the war while gradually fulfilling the tasks of the revolution, strenghten the factors of victory in order to bring the war to fimal victory.

Lenin said:

> "Victory in war goes to the side whose people has greater reserves, greater sources of strenght and greater endurance."[1]

In our wars of liberation, we always "pit a small force against a bigger one" and "defeat an enemy superior in manpower." To secure victory we must build a strength superior to that of the adversary, oppose the strenght of our entire people, of our entire nation to that of the expeditionary corps of the imperialist aggressors; on the basis of a political mobilization of the nation, our Party pays particular attention to mobilizing all the potential of people's war and fostering the factors of its victory.

In the war of resistance against the French colonialists, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "The key to victory is to cement and broaden the *national united front*, consolidate the *worker-peasant alliance* and *people's power*, reinforce and build up the *army*, strengthen the *Party* and its leadership in all fields.". In the present war of resistance

1. V.I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol 30, Progress Publishers. Moscow, 1966, p. 74.

against American aggression, he again said: "Our Party's line and policy are judicous. Our people are united and of one mind, our army's heroism is matchless. Moreover, we enjoy the devoted assistance of the fraternal socialist countries and the wholehearted support of our friends in all continents. We will win, the US aggressors will be defeated."[1] That is a comprehensive epitome of the factors and conditions guaranteeing victory for our revolutionary war in the present time.

Our Party has endeavoured to build and develop all these factors in a systematic way so as to give our nation the biggest strenght possible and to win broad and active suport from the world's peoples.

With an eye to this aim, our Party addresses itself in particular to this fundamental problem: *judiciously to determine the relation between the intensification of the revolutionary war and the gradual achievement of the revolutionary tasks even while the war is still being fought.*

For our Party, revolutionary war is the most decisive means to ensure the realization of the strategic tasks of the revolution in the conditions of an imperialist aggression and counter -revolutionary war aimed at sabotaging our people's revolutionary cause. Hence, only by fully grasping the political aims of the war, by resolutely struggling until victory and overthrowing the yoke of the imperialists and their lackeys, can the funcdamental objectives of the

1. Speech on the anniversary day of the founding of the People's Army and the launching of the nation-wide war of resistance, 1967.

revolution be achieved. On the other hand, in order to consolidate and build up the revolutionary forces, foster the factors of victory and develop the forces of war in all fields, our Party has led our people in accordance with the requirements of each period to make them step by step realize the tasks of revolution in the course of the war.

In the war of resistance against the French colonialists, our Party laid down the policy of " *jointly carrying out fghting and national construction*", implementing President Ho Chi Minh's instruction to combat famine, illiteracy and foreign aggression at the same time. To foster and develop our people's strenght in the war of resistance, in particular that of the peasantry which constitutes the bulk of our forces, we undertook democratic reforms and realized our Party's agrarian policy step by step before mobilizing the masses for a systematic reduction of land rent and for land reform. This was a coorect and creative policy.

When the American imperialists extended the war to the North of our country, our Party put forward the policy of *waging a war of resistance while carrying on socialist building*. Adapting our economy to the conditions of the war so as to intensify our economic and military potential and stabilize the people's living conditions, we made use of the superiority of the socialist regime in all fields to foil the US war of destruction and fulfil our duties of the rear base towards the great Southern frontline. This was another correct and creative policy.

In the liberated areas of South Vietnam, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, our people have struggled heroically, wrested back and defended the achievements of the revolution, *fought the enemy while building a new life*, and ensured for our people the right to be masters in all fields: political, economic and cultural...

These measures have created a firm political and economic basis on which to foster our people's strenghts, cement the worker-peasant alliance (between the working class and the toiling peasants in the national-democratic revolution, between the working class and the cooperator peasants in the socialist revolution), strengthen people's power, consolidate the national united front, boost the combat skill of our people's armed forces, consolidate and strengthen the leadership of our Party.

To combine the intensification of the war of resistance with the gradual realization of the revolutionary tasks also means to combine the strenghtening of the frontline with the consolidation of the rear base, to combine the struggle against the enemy with the building and development of our own forces in order to grow ever stronger while fighting.

The gradual realization of the revolutionary tasks right in the course of the war is also a *fundamental measure to foster and bring into full play the politico-moral strength of the masses, exalt Vietnamese revolutionary heroism*, and integrate it into the new mode of production, the new social regime of which our people are the masters.

3. To build and consolidate the organization of the Party's leadership from top to bottom, in the people's armed forces and in all other mass organizations, in the armed struggle as well as in the political, economic and cultural struggles. To ensure an all-sided, centralized and unified leadership of the Party in war.

The leadership of the Party is the essential factor of victory; that is true and necessary for the war as a whole as well as for each locality and each aspect of the struggle. In our revolutionary war, we fight with the global strength of revolutionary violence, using all available methods, fighting the enemy wherever he is, and carrying out at the same time combat and building. That is why in this protracted war of resistance our Party must create and perfect the organization of its leadership from top to bottom, in the people's armed forces and in all other forces, on the military front and on all other fronts, in order to meet this requirement: wherever there is mass struggle, there must be all-inclusive, centralized and unified leadership by the Party.

Our Party has built and consolidated the organization of its leadership from the Central Committee down to the committees of various theatres of operations, provinces, districts and villages. In the regular army, the Party organization goes from the Central Military Committee down to the company cells. At the same time, our Party has defined the relationship between the Party organizations in the army and those in the localities, thus ensuring its centralized and

unified leadership over all forces, in all fields, in each locality and in the whole country.

In the countryside, the village is the basic unit of people's war with the party organization and its committee as its staff. In the present struggle against US aggression as in the war of resistance against the French colonialists, we succeeded in making each village a fortress and each Party cell a staff of people's war. On the one hand the Party organization in the village leads the population in the erection of defence works, intensification of guerilla warfare and political struggle, protection of the inhabitants, winning and maintenance of revolutionary power, coordination of local military activities with those of the regular army; on the other hand, it leads the population in developing production, building a new life, consolidating the rear bases, supplying the frontline in manpower and material resources. The Party's political line and all concrete measures laid down by the Central Committee find their application in the village. Without the firm and dynamic leadership of the Party basic organization, there cannot be a powerful and lasting resistance movement against aggression.

In order to bring people's war to a successful end, the leadership of the Party at all levels must be all-sided.

It must cover all fields, chiefly armed struggle, political struggle and agitation work among enemy soldiers, the building of our military, political and economic forces, as well as the consolidation of the people's right to be master of the country. Protracted wars have raised our Party's

organizational capacity. Its organizations at all levels have acquired much experience in this domain, thus ensuring concrete guidance over the manifold tasks of struggle and national construction, and realizing an all-sided, centralized and unified leadership of the Party over people's war. All this gives people's war the greatest efficacy and strength in each locality.

Since the August Revolution, our Party has held power. Political power under the leadership of the Party is, for it and for the people, the most important instrument to organize and wage revolutionary war. Our Party has unceasingly strenghtened its leadership over the people's armed forces, the people's power, the national united front, at all levels, and brought into full play their role and their action. Only by so doing can we ensure on the organizational plane a general mobilization of the forces of the entire people, a mobilization of the whole nation to fight the aggressor.

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To strengthen its leadership during the war, the Party must *train and temper its cadres and members, consolidate its cells and constantly improve their work.*

Cadres and members must propagate the Party's political line and the concrete measures laid down by the Party, and educate and organize the masses so that they understand them and carry them out. Therefore, their preparation and training constitute a key problem to ensure the undivided leadership

of the Party during the war, a fundamental task of its building. We must constantly have a sufficient body of qualified cadres capable of meeting the requirements of leadership in the course of the war. We must actively enlarge the Party membership in order to strengthen its leadership in all places and guide the masses on all fronts.

In the preparation and training of Party cadres and members, *the essential task is to heighten their class spirit and vanguard character. First of all, they must firmly stick to the working class stand and be imbued with Marxism-Leninism, ardent partriotism, a thoroughly revolutionary spirit, a steadfast will to fight and stand ready to sacrifice themselves for national liberation and the communist ideal*; they must constantly be in the van of the class struggle and the national liberation struggle.

However bitter the fight over the past decades has proved to be, Party cadres and members have heroically struggled in all circumstances and won deep love and great confidence from the people. Many have laid down their lives for the independence and freedom of the fatherland, for socialism, and for the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people. That is a great pride and a great honour for our Party.

In order to fulfil their tasks, *Party cadres and members must be able to lead the masses in fighting and in all other fields of people's war.* Military training becomes an urgent problem for Party cadres and members in the army and in other sectors as well. In the period of preparation for armed uprising, the Central Committee called on our Party cadres

and membres to follow military training. When the war of resistance against the French colomialists entered its most difficult and arduous phase, the Second Party Congress convened in 1951 decided to promote military training in the entire Party and to mobilize all branches to serve the war of resistance. In the present fight against US aggression, Party cadres and members have rapidly matured and acquired much experience in armed struggle, in communications and transport, and in the various fields of economic, cultural and health development in the conditions of a fierce war.

This body of Party cadres and members trained in a protracted war constitutes for our Party a very valuable asset to bring the resistance to victory and further advance the revolution.

The *cell*, the basic organization of the Party, has close ties with the masses. It is at the same time the link between the Party and the people, and the leader of the masses in the prosecution of the revolutionary war at the grassroots level, an implacable war at all times and on all fronts. We must step up the activity of the cells, build strong cells in the army and the localities, in the countryside and the towns, on the frontline and in the rear bases, even in the enemy-occupied areas where the bitterest struggles take place. The *Party cell is the leading core of the resistance at the grassroots level. Without strong, staunch and able Party cells there cannot be a broad and vigorous upsurge of people's war on all fronts.* In each locality, in each army unit, the cell must constantly ensure efficient leadership, stand firm in all circumstances,

guide the fighting and all other activities, thus providing an allsided, centralized and unified leadership.

We must consolidate the Party cell and improve its work in all fields, pay great importance to the education of its members and the expansion of its members to the strengthening of its Committee and the perfecting of its leadership. We must closely link the cell's task of consolidation with that of leadership to get each army unit, to fight victoriously and fulfil all other tasks. The cell must carry out its task of leadership in wartime and consolidate itself through this work. During the protracted struggle waged by our Party over the last decades, in all localities, in many army units, on the frontline and in all other fields there have emerged many valiant and dynamic cells, real steel fortresses, worthy leading cores of people's war at the grassroots level.

Guided by their experience and animated by warm revolutionary feelings, our people have absolute confidence in the Party. They are very proud of our Party and of its great leader, President Ho Chi Minh. The Party is intimately linked to the masses of the people who are closely united around it. Our Party alone can judiciously combine the interests of the class with those of the Vietnamese nation, ally the class factor with the national factor, genuine patriotism with lofty proletarian internationalism, continue our glorious age-old traditions and open for our people the way to a brilliant future. Our Party alone can mobilize to the utmost the forces of our nation and win the greatest support from the world revolution to defeat the imperialist

aggressors. Unceasingly to strengthen the leadership of our Party is the essential condition guaranteeing the victory of people's uprising and people's war.

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Noghing is more precious than independence and freedom!

Let us hold aloft the glorious banner of President Ho Chi Minh and valiantly march forward to defeat the US aggressors completely!

Within a few decades, our people, our nation, under the leadership of the Party, have won brilliant victories. *The era of independence and freedom, the era of socialism has begun. The Ho Chi Minh epoch, the most radiant and glorious one of our nation has just dawned.*

All the victories scored by our people originate from the firm and clearsighted leadership, the judicious political and military line of our Party. They are associated with the name of President Ho Chi Minh, the founder, teacher and leader of our Party, the beloved and venerated father of our people's armed forces.

President Ho Chi Minh is the great leader of our working class and nation, a strategist of genius, a national hero, an eminent militant of the international communist movement and national liberation movement in our epoch. He is "a lofty symbol of genuine patriotism closely combined with

proletarian internationalism."[1] The first Communist to apply Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of our country, he laid down a bold and creative revolutionary line stamped with a noble spirit of independence, and led our people in their onward march. We take great pride in the revolutionary line worked out by our Party and our President Ho Chi Minh for the national-democratic revolution, the socialist revolution, the people's war and our international relations... Following that line we shall continue to do our revolutionary duty until total victory.

President Ho Chi Minh is "the symbol of what is the finest in the Vietnamese nation," of her bravery and dauntlessness throughout four thousand years of history; he is also the symbol of the thoroughly revolutionary spirit of the working class. He reminded us that "*Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom*", that we should *"Rather sacrifice everything than lose our independence and fall back into slavery"*. He also said:

> *"Only socialism and communism can liberate the oppressed peoples and toilers the world over."*[2]

That is a truth borne out by the protracted struggle of our nation for her liberation, a truth of our epoch, the epoch in which the working class is the genuine leader of the struggle for national liberation and opens the way to socialism. That shows the indomitable spirit of our nation, the unshakable

1. Last tribute of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Worker's Party at the solemn obsequies of President Ho Chi Minh.
2. "The Parth Which Led Me to Leninism."

determination of our people. The ideology inculcated by President Ho Chi Minh is a strong motive force which has inspired our people to surmount all trials and wrest back their independence and freedom at all costs.

President Ho Chi Minh told us:

> "Even though our people's struggle against US aggression, for national salvation may have to go through more hardships and sacrifices we are bound to win total victory. This is a certainty".[1]

The struggle against US aggression, the greatest war of resistance of our nation, is a bitter test of strength between the most revolutionary forces and the most reactionary ones in the present epoch. Our people's victory is a common victory of the revolutionary forces and progressive peoples throughout the world. To fight the US aggressors until total victory is our sacred national task and at the same time our noble international duty.

The US imperialists have suffered heavy setbacks and are heading for inevitable defeat. However, they still persist in their aggression in South Vietnam and their odious role as international gendarme. Nixon's statements and policy since he took office have revealed these designs and this obduracy. By the "Vietnamization" of the war. Washington continues to seek a military solution and to secure a position of strength "Johnson's war" has become "Nixon's war". The Nixon administration goes ever deeper into its military venture in

1. President Ho Chi Minh's Testament.

Vietnam. That is a challenge to our people, to the revolutionary and peace forces throughout the world and at the same time to American progressive people.

Our people checked the neo-colonialist policy carried out by the US imperialists in South Vietnam through support to the Ngo Dinh Diem fascist regime. We beat them in the "special war". We have also foiled their "limited war" right at the highest rung of their escalation. How can the US imperialists, now in a phase of decline and failure, hope to win by prolonging their aggressive war, withdrawing their troops by driblets and reverting to a revamped "special war"?

The US aggressors have been perpetrating monstrous crimes against our people. They have committed so many savage massacres, so many Ba Lang Ans and Son Mys, so many new Oradours and Lidices in the South of our country! They are the most barbarous fascists, the Huns of the 20th century.

Nurturing an implacable hatred for the aggressors and the traitors, our Southern fellow-countrymen and the Liberation Army under the leadership of the NFL and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, are determined more than ever to thwart all their bellicose designs so as to gain independence and freedom and advance towards the peaceful reunie of the 20th century.

Our Party, our army and our people are resolved to put into effect the oath of honour they have taken, faithful to the sacred memory of President Ho Chi Minh: "For ever to carry aloft the banner of national independence, to fight and defeat the US aggressors, to liberate the South, defend the North,

and reunify the country in fulfilment of his wishes"[1] They will carry on to the end, until total victory, the fight against the US imperialists to contribute to the building of a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam.

We will win!

Hanoi, December 1969

1. Last tribute of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party at the solemn obsequies of President Ho Chi Minh.

PART THREE

TO ARM THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES TO BUILD THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

A heroic people, the Vietnamese have a very glorious tradition of struggle against foreign invaders. Centuries ago, they had already gained a rich experience in nation-wide insurrection and people's war against much larger and stronger armies of aggression.

Since the birth of the Vietnamese working class, under the leadership of our Party and striving after the revolutionary goals of national independence, democracy and socialism, our people have further developed the nation's tradition of struggle against foreign aggression and brought nation-wide insurrection and people's war to a very high level. Our people have overcome the Japanese fascists and French colonialists; they have defeated and are still defeating the US imperialists, enriching their history with more glorious pages and making worthy contributions to the revolutionary cause of the peoples in Indochina, South-east Asia and the world.

In the victorious combat against imperialism and colonialism, the brutal aggressive forces of the twentieth century, Vietnam has become the symbol of indomitable fighting spirit, of creative intelligence, of military skill in the struggle for national salvation, of the invincible power of people's war. The Vietnamese people's war has become a great event, a legend of the 20th century. The Vietnamese people have highlighted this shining truth that *in our time, a people, even though small, without vast territory, large population or developed economy, but united and determined, having a*

correct revolutionary line, creatively applying the Marxist - Leninist principle of nation-wide uprising and people's war to their specific conditions and enjoying the assistance of the socialist camp and progressive mankind, are fully capable of overcoming much bigger and stronger aggressors, including the leading imperialist power, the United States.

While mapping out a correct and creative line for the revolution and revolutionary war in Vietnam, our Party soon discovered and mastered the laws governing the development of our society and of revolutionary war and revolutionary violence in our country. The essence of the *law of revolutionary violence* lies in the combination of political and armed forces, of political struggle and armed insurrection and revolutionary war. In the process of leading the nation-wide insurrection and people's war, our Party has built up a *bloc of national unity* based on the worker-peasant alliance and led by the working class; it has organized the *political forces* of the broad masses, and built up powerful *armed forces* of the people, which include *the armed forces of the masses* and the *revolutionary army*. Our people have creatively made use of all forms of struggle, combining attacks and uprisings, applying a strategy of offensive in all three strategic areas,[1] with a view to destroying the enemy, seizing and maintaining power, overthrowing the rule of colonialism and its lackeys, defeating the aggressive war of imperialism.

This essay deals with the *problem of building up the armed forces of the people in insurrection and revolutionary war in our country*, one of the essential points of our Party's military line.

1. The highlands, the plains and the urban areas.

In the process of nation-wide insurrection, people's war and the building up of national defence by the entire people under the Party's leadership, our *people's armed forces* have come into being, rapidly matured and won glorious victories. Every Vietnamese patriot has risen up from the experience of the world's people. Our Party has to fight the enemy to save the country. Our people have brought to a new level the old national tradition of "everyone a soldier", organizing both the people's army and the *armed forces of the broad masses* which fight everywhere in the country. Today there are millions of fighters in the armed organizations of the masses, hundreds of thousands of fighters in the people's army, equipped with various kinds of weapons, rudimentary, semi-modern, and modern, skiful combatants, courageous and intelligent, who are fighting selflessly day and night for the independence, freedom and reunification of the fatherland and for socialism, against the leading imperialism of our time, aggressive US imperialism.

Looking back over the rapid growth and the path strewn with glorious victories of our people in general and the people's armed forces in particular in the fight against the Japanese fascists, French colonialists and US imperialists, we can say that *the forces of nation-wide insurrection and people's war, including both the political and armed forces, are typical of our Party's success in organizing and building up the total combined forces of the revolutionary masses, of revolutionary violence.* We can also say that *our people's armed forces, including the armed forces of the masses and the revolutionary army, organized and led by our Party, are typical of the success in organizing military forces by our people, a small people who in our time have successively defeated three big imperialist powers.*

This success is possible because our Party has mastered the full theory of Marxism-Leninism on military organization in armed uprising and revolutionary war, because it has inherited and brought to a new level our people's tradition of nation-wide resistance and experience in organizing the armed forces during national insurrections and national wars in former times and because it has selectively learned from the experience of the world's people. Our Party has creatively applied such theory and experience to the practice of insurrection and war in our country, that is to the conditions of a small country facing the strong forces of aggression of imperialism and colonialism, with a view to achieving the goals of our revolution set forth by our Party.

Adhering to the viewpoint of revolutionary violence and people's war our Party advocates the *arming of the broad masses while building up a powerful people's army, regarding the amred forces of the masses as the foundation of the people's army, and the people's army as the core of the armed forces of the masses, in armed insurrection and revolutionary war as well as in national defence by the entire people, in the national liberation war as well as in the war to defend the Fatherland.*

Viewing history in concrete development, our Party has, in the course of different periods of revolutionary struggle, successfully solved the problem of arming the masses and building up the people's army in accordance with the demands of the revolutionary tasks, the kind of enemy it has to fight and the forms of revolutionary struggle in each

period based on specific historical conditions in the political, social and economic fields.

At present the Nixon administration, though it has suffered heavy setbacks, is still stubbornly carrying on the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", intensifying and expanding the war all over Indochina. Our people in the South, mastering the law of revolutionary war in the new period, are intensifying the armed and political struggles, combining attacks and uprisings in all the three strategic areas and, together with the brotherly peoples of Cambodia and Laos, are determined to shatter the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", to shatter the Nixon doctrine over the whole Indochinese battlefield. More than ever before, while developing the political forces and carrying on the political struggle, our people must step up the building up of armed forces and the armed struggle in close combination with other forms of struggle, advancing forward to defeat completely the US aggressors and their stooges, liberating the South, defending the North, proceeding toward national reunification and fulfilling our internationalist duty.

In the course of the struggle to accomplish this primary tasks of our revolution, we must at the same time lay the basis and map out directions for the long-term building up of the people's armed forces and for national defence by the entire people, so as to defend our Fatherland firmly and defeat any war of aggression that may be unleashed by any enemy, however strong and well-equipped, who dares to encroach upon our people's beautiful land, or upon our independence and freedom.

We must find the best way to arm the revolutionary masses and build up the people's army in order to fulfil the above-mentioned immediate and long-term tasks of our people.

To do so, we must further study Marxist-Leninist principles regarding the military organization of the proletariat, analyse the experience and tradition of our people in organizing the armed forces in the past, and especially gradually sum up our Party's experience in building up the army and arming the masses during the past forty years or more.

The theory and practice of arming the masses and building up the army is a question of burning interest for the peoples of various nations who are today engaged in the struggle for national independence, democracy and socialism in face of the policies of violence and brutal war followed by imperialism with US imperialism at its head and in face of the rapid development of ever more modern weapons and means of war in the world.

CHAPTER I

THESES OF MARXISM-LENINISM ON THE MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

Marxism-Leninsm studies the problem of the military organization of the proletariat in its organic relationship with the theory of class struggle and the State.

With the disintegration of primitive communal society, society became divided into classes and its history is the history of class struggle. Since the formation of nations, the question of national oppression and national enslavement has arisen and the history of class struggle has also taken the form of national struggle. Slave owners and slaves, landowners and peasants, bourgeois and proletariat, oppressor nations and oppressed, aggressor countries and their victims, antagonistic social groups, etc., have waged unceasing struggles under various forms, the most acute of which is armed conflict or war. Since time immemorial, countless wars have taken place in class societies. They have been estimated to number over 10,000 including only those of relatively large scale and occurring within the past 5,000 years.

The army is the main instrument for waging war. Its birth is closely connected with the appearance of the State when society split up into antagonistic classes. The army is a special

organization of the State, an instrument of a given class which is used to carry out its political line by means of armed violence.

The class nature of the State determines the social nature of the army and its function. The army of all exploiting States has the following basic functions: internally, to keep down the exploited masses, forcing them to submit to the order of the ruling classes; externally, to conquer other countries and to defend ones's territory against foreign aggression.

Three types of exploiting State have appeared in the course of history. Therefore, corresponding to these three types, there have been three types of army: the army of the slave-owning State, the army of the feudal State, and the army of the bourgeois State.

In the course of history, those types of army have borne various names and had various forms of organization and recruitment in accordance with the specific conditions, but their nature has been the same: an army of an exploiting State has always been an instrument of the ruling class to repress the exploited masses in the country and to plunder and enslave other countries and peoples.

However, the armies of the ruling classes have not been the only ones in existence under exploiting regimes. To counter the armed violence, the exploited masses have also built up their own revolutionary armed organizations in the course of their revolutionary struggles. Even in antiquity, in Rome, the rebelling slaves under the leadership of Spartacus – whom Marx regarded as "the most splendid fellow in the whole of ancient history. Great general, noble character, real

representative of the ancient proletariat".[1] – organized a large insurgent army hundreds of thousands strong and waged a persistent fight against the army of the slave-owning State.

In feudal times, in Europe, Asia and Africa, etc.; armed organizations of peasants often appeared during insurrections, peasant wars and liberation wars in various countries which were quite large in size and had very great combat power. During bourgeois revolutions against feudalism, during the rise of capitalism, there also existed armed formations of the peasants and even of the workers in the stage of spontaneous struggle, fighting under the banner of the bourgeoisie.

Yet those revolutionary armed formations of the exploited classes, on account of their historical limitations and their lack of a correct political, military and organizational line, were, in spite of valiant fighting and the very great victories won at times, eventually suppressed by the enemy and betrayed by their own allies.

This betrayal revealed itself most fully in the bourgeois revolution. As Engels pointed out, the workers in France were armed after every revolution; "therefore, the first thing done by the bourgeoisie in power was to disarm the workers. Thus after every revolution won with the blood of the workers, a new struggle breaks out eventually leading to the workers' defeat."[2]

Only with the birth of Marxism and the appearance of the political parties of the proletariat, which became an independent political force passing from the state of "spontaneity" to that of

1."Letter to Engels", February 27, 1861. Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 123.

2. F.Engels: Preface to the "Civil War in France". K.Marx-F.Engels, *Selected Works, Su That* Publishers, Hanoi 1962, Vol. I. pp.756-757.

"consciousness" and bringing a qualitative leap forward to the whole of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle–only on that basis could the problem of the military organization of the exploited masses be completely solved in the military science of the proletariat. The appearance of political parties of the working class – Communist parties – on the political arena and their leading role in the revolution in various countries led to the birth of armed formations of a marked revolutionary and popular nature, born within proletarian revolution or bougeois democratic, people's democratic or national liberation revolutions led by the working class. Especially, since the success of the Russian October Revolution and of the revolutions in a series of other socialist countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America, there has appeared for the first time in the world a *completely new type of armed forces*. These are the real armed forces of the people, of the State of proletarian dictatorship–the most progressive State in the history of mankind.

1. Theses by Marx and Engels

When they defined the historic mission of the international working class as the grave-digger of capitalism and builder of a Communist society, a society without classes and without exploitation of man by man, Marx and Engels at the same time showed the proletariat the most correct way to liberate itself: the working class, under the leadership of the Communist Party and in close alliance with the peasantry, should make use of revolutionary violence to shatter the State machinery of the bourgeoisie and establish the State of proletarian dictatorship, using it as a tool to safeguard the rule of the proletariat and transform society along the principles of communism.

The military organization of the proletariat is set up primarily in connection with this great cause of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle. Rising up to break their fetters and overthrow the whole of the old world, the proletariat and the revolutionary masses must, of necessity, proceed to build their own military organization in the course of the revolutionary process. This is necessary because a material force can only be overcome by a material force, and only violence can help carry out the great historic mission of overthrowing the rule of the capitalists and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The ruling class never consents of their own accord to withdraw from the historical arena. The monarchic and bourgeois states always have large armed forces at their disposal, they ceaselessly see to the perfecting of those forces as an effective tool in repressing the toiling people in the country and carrying out plundering policies in the world. They always rely on this counter revolutionary military machinery to throttle all aspirations for freedom of the proletariat and the labouring masses and down their revolutionary struggles in blood. Engels already pointed out that "basic characteristic" of the bourgeoisie even when capitalism was rising: "...the bourgeoisie has demonstrated to us how cruelly they can retaliate once the proletariat dare to face them, as a separate class, with their own interests and their own demands".[1] The developments of capitalism and its deepening inner contradictions necessarily leads to growing militaristic tendencies to the expansion of the counter -revolutionary armed forces in the State machinery of the bourgeoisie. Engels wrote: "The army has become the main end of the State; the army itself has become an end: the people

1. F.Engels: Preface to "The Civil War in France", op, cit, p.758.

are only there to supply men and feed them. Militarism rules and devours Europe".[1]

Such a situation forces the proletariat and the oppressed masses to have their own military organizations to counter armed repression by the bourgeois State, to smash their military machinery and overcome their resistance, to win and preserve revolutionary power.

Then, if the military organization is a necessity in the struggle of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie, in what form should it be built up?

This is a question that has been fully solved by the masters of Marxism-Leninism. As founders of the military science of the proletariat, Marx and Engels were the first to lay the theoretical basis for the problem of *the form of the military organization of the proletariat* with their famous thesis: *to arm the working class, to replace the standing army by the armed people"*... The workers must be armed and organized. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, muskets, cannon and munitions must be put through at once... Any attempt at disarming must be frustrated, if necessary by force."[2] This burning appeal to arms was issued by Marx and Engels in the 1850s after the bloody experience of the first great battle of the French proletariat against the bourgeoisie in 1848, and was considered one of the main demands in the revolutionary programme of the proletariat, at a time when insurrections and civil wars had become immediate tasks of the revolution in some developed capitalist countries in Western Europe.

1 F.Engels: "Anti-Durhing". *Su That* Publishers. Hanoi 1959, p.286.
2. Marx-Engels: "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League", *Selected Works* Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p.113.

The history of European countries from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century was also that of bourgeois democratic revolutions. Under the prevailing circumstances, the proletariat had to ally itself with bourgeois democratic parties against the feudal rulers and reactionary bourgeois and more often than not they had provisionally to bring those parties to power once the revolution was successful. In such a situation, Marx and Engels regarded the arming of the proletariat as an indispensable condition not only in order to smash the State machinery of the feudal class and reactionary bouugeoisie and so ensure the victory of the insurrection, but also eventually to defeat the inevitable schemes of betrayal by the bourgeois democratic parties after they had come to power. It is also an indispensable condition of maintaining and strengthening the political independence of the working class, safeguarding the fruits of their struggles, and creating conditions for the advance to proletarian revolution by using their power to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Marx and Engels believed that one the proletariat was armed, it would have tremendous force. They themselves saw this force in the 1848 Revolution in Paris. Marx wrote: "It is well known how the workers, with unexampled bravery and ingenuity, without leaders, without a common plan, without means and, for the most part, lacking weapons, held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Paris National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed from the provinces".[1] And Engels eulogized the event as follows: "If 40,000 Paris workers were able to resist with such vigour a force four times as large as themselves, what great results

1. K.Marx: "The Class Struggle in France," Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p.161.

could be achieved by all the Paris workers acting with discipline and as one man".[1]

Developing the above ideas, in 1871, after a profound analysis of the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels set forth the principle that the concern of any successful revolution is to shatter the old army, to disband it, to replace it by a new army and to substitute the armed people for the regular army. Marx wrote: "Paris, the central seat of the old governmental power, and at the same time the social stronghold of the French working class... could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution"[2]

Marx and Engels pointed out that under capitalism the standing army is the main instrument through which the bourgeoisie maintains its domination over the working people. To smash that standing army means to eliminate the material tool of bourgeois power, to eradicate the danger of resistance and counter offensive on its part. Meanwhile, relying firmly on the forces of the revolutionary masses, the proletariat must speedily build up and develop its own military organization by arming the proletariat and the revolutionary masses, regarding them as the sole armed force that can safeguard the success of the insurrection and develop the revolution. The Paris Commune has taught the world proletariat that vital lesson. "The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was

1. K.Marx - F.Engels: *Selected Workrs.* German Edition, Book VII, part I, p.134.
2. K.Marx. "The Civil War in France", K.Marx—F.Engels,- *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p.519.

the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."[1] Marx and Engels set great store by this experience : that it is the task of the working class to smash the bureaucratic and military machinery of the old State and replace it by a new form of State organization of the proletariat. They regarded it as a creation of great historic significance, so that later, in their 1872 preface to the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels considered it as an amendment of the utmost importance to the programme set forth by the Manifesto.

Engels also foresaw that *arming the people was the form of military organization of the socialist State.*

This forecast proceeded primarily from Marx" and Engels' principle that the victory of socialism could only be achieved simultaneously in all or most of the developed capitalist countries. Moreover by its nature, the socialist regime does not launch aggression against anyone, therefore it would be unnecessary to have a standing army. As for internal security, it could be ensured by the armed people. Engels also based his analysis on the state of the existing armies and of military art and techniques in the second half of the 19th century. At that time France, Germany and Russia were the only developed capitalist countries with large military apparatuses, whereas other capitalist countries, including England and the United States, dit not yet possess important armed forces. Therefore, once the proletarian revolution was successful in all or most of the developed capitalist countries, the armed forces of the remaining capitalist states would not be very strong. In such conditions, and basing himself upon the experience of the Paris

1. K.Marx:"The Civil War in France" op., cit., p.519.

Commune, Engles believed that under socialism, and with its superiority, the people, armed, organized and militarily trained, would be able to defeat aggressor armies in self-defence wars to safeguard the socialist State.

From this analysis, Marx and Engels believed that in the process of socialist revolution, the standing army of the bourgeoisie must be replaced by the armed people.

Marx and Engels dealt with the question of arming the masses not only in the armed insurrections of the proletariat and in the military organization of the socialist State but also in *national wars*. Marx and Engels drew distinction between just wars and aggressive wars and always supported just wars, wars of liberation and self-defence waged by oppressed peoples and victims of aggression. Engels made a close study of contemporary events, summing up their experience so as to point out the way by which an oppressed people should wage a people's war and defeat the aggressors' professional armies. In many works dealing with the history of war, engels dwelt on the *great role and effectiveness of the armed masses in just wars and self-defence wars*. This idea of Engels was closely connected with the new mode of waging a people's war advocated by him. Engels wrote: "A people who want to win back independence for themselves must not limit themselves to the *conventional* means of waging war. Mass uprisings, revolutionary wars, guerillas everywhere—that is the only way by which a small people can defeat a large one, a less strong army can oppose a stronger and better organized one"[1] It is the broad masses of the armed people who are the fundamental elements for such kinds of war.

1. F.Engels "the Defeat of the Piedmontese", F.Engels, V.Lenin. J.Stalin: *On People's War*, Su That Publishers, Hanoi 1970, p.27

Engels praised the resistance wars waged by France (1793), by Spain (1807-1812) and Russia against Napoleon (1812), and by Hungary against Austria (1849), etc., as resistance wars in which methods of people's war had been applied, operations by the standing army had been combined with combat activities by the armed masses, thereby bringing into full play the great forces of the nation and the country to defeat much stronger aggressor armies.

When analysing the failure of the Piedmontese in Northern Italy in their self-defence war against the Austrians, Engels pointed out, "The great error of the Piedmontese at the outset lay in the fact that they only used the standing army to oppose the Austrians, that they only wanted to wage the most conventional, the most bourgeois, the most regular war".[1] Engels showed that the Piedmontese defeat at Novara "would have had no significance at all, if after this defeat a *real revolutionary war* had broken out, if the remaining part of the Italian army had at once declared themselves the nucleus of a general, nation-wide insurrection, if the conventional strategic *war of armies* had been turned into *a people's war*,similar to that waged by the French in 1793,"[2] and if the Turin government had had the courage to resort to revolutionary war. And Engels concluded that Italy's independence was lost because of the cowardice of the King's administration, not because of the invincibility of Austrian weapons.

Engels drew similar conclusions when he commented on the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. France, Engels held, was fully able to turn the tables, even after the Germans had occupied one-sixth of French territory and besieged the two

1 F.Engels: "The Defeat of the Piedmontese", op., cit., p.27
2. Ibid, p.29

fortresses of Metz and Paris. He pointed out that at the time when most of the German forces were tied down in the occupied territory, on the five-sixths of the land that remained, France was still everywhere able to set up a number of armed formations to harass the enemy, cut off communications, destroy logistic bases, attack isolated detachments and so on, and in this way, force the Germans to disperse their forces, and withdraw troops from the above mentioned fortresses to cope with the situation, so that Baden might have tried to get out of Metz while the siege of Paris would have become a "phantom". "What," Engels asked, "would have been the Germans' fate, if the French people had had the same ardent patriotism as that of the Spaniards in 1808, if every city and almost every village had turned into a fortress, every peasant and every citizen a fighter?"[1]

Engels also spoke of insurrection by the armed people and of the irregular units of Asian armed formations, with their multifarious methods of waging a people's war, as redoubtable adversaries of the European aggressor armies. He wrote:"They (the Chinese) poison the bread...wholesale, and with the coolest premeditation... They go with hidden arms on board trading steamers, and, when on the journey, massacre the crew...and seize the boat... The very coolies, emigrating to foreign countries, rise in mutiny... on board every emigrant ship, and fight for its possession, and, rather than surrender, go down to the bottom with it, or perish in its flames. Even out of China, the Chinese colonists... conspire and studdenly rise in mighly insurrections. What is an army to do against a people resorting to such means of warfare."[2]

1. F.Engels: "The Defeat of the Piedmontese", op, cit, p.155.
2. F.Engels: "Persia and China" *Marx on China*. Lawrence and Wishard, London 1965, p.48-49.

We can see that the view of the founders of scientific communism with regard to the form of military organization of the proletariat and oppressed masses was *to arm the working class, to arm the people, to arm the revolutionary masses.*

Marx and Engels laid the theoretical basis for this question in the insurrection to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the war to defend the socialist State and even in liberation wars and self-defence wars waged by oppressed peoples and countries under bourgeois rule which had been victims of aggression.

This is obviously a *very fundamental view.* It is a splendid success of Marx and Engels in applying the viewpoints of historical materialism regarding the classes, the masses and revolutionary violence to the building of the military organization of the proletariat and oppressed masses. It is a model of the correct appraisal of the decisive role of the masses in armed insurrection and revolutionary war. The great value of this thesis lies in the fact that, for the first time in the world, it shows the proletariat and oppressed peoples the direction and most correct way to create their own organization, of a completely new type, born of the proletariat and working people fighting for the people and for their class. With a correct revolutionary line, and when the revolutionary party firmly relies on the revolutionary masses, on the workers and peasants, to build up and develop its armed organization, it can create an invincible revolutionary armed force.

This view has become the *theoretical basis for building the armed forces in the military theory of Marxism-Leninism.* It is an extremly powerful weapon of the proletariat and all

oppressed peoples in the world; it gives them wings in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the old world and create a new one.

2. Lenin's Thesis

The Russian Marxists, headed by the great Lenin, applied these theses of Marx and Engels to the new historical conditions, when the socialist revolution and the bourgeois democratic revolution are carried out in the period of imperialism.

It was at a time when capitalism was passing into the stage of imperialism that Lenin set forth his famous new thesis that socialism cannot be simultaneously successful in all countries but it will first succeed in one or a certain number of countries. At the same time, with the new theory on the leadership of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic revolution and the transition from this revolution to the proletarian revolution, Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik Party worked out the military programme of the bourgeois democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in Russia. Lenin underlined the necessity of building up the military organization of the proletariat in the new historical conditions:

"A bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society...Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeosie. These are the only tactics possible for a revolutionary class, tactics that follow logically from and are dictated by the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism"[1]

1. "Military Programme of Proletarian Revlution", V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.23, Progress Publishers. Moscow 1964, pp. 80-81.

From the early years of the 20th century, while assuming the leadership of the 1905 Revolution and the Great October Revolution in application of Marx' and Engels' principle Lenin and the Russian Communist Party advocated *replacing the standing army by the armed people, by the militia force.* It was one of the main tasks of the programme of the bourgeois democratic revolution as well as of the socialist revolution.

Lenin pointed out that in Russia as well as in many countries in the world, the (bourgeois) standing army war used mainly not for combating foreign aggressors but for repressing the labouring people and waging aggressive wars to enslave other peoples. Lenin wrote: "Everywhere the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour, the executioner of the people's liberty".[1] This army, by its nature, cannot be the mainstay of the people. To abolish it is a condition for the victory of the revolution, to save the revolution from all the schemes of restoration by the reactionary force, to save the colossal expenditures needed for its maintenance. And instead there should be *the arming of the people primarily of the workers and poor peasants.* Under the prevailing historical conditions Lenin affirmed: No power on earth will dare to encroach upon free Russia, if the bulwark of her liberty is an armed people which has destroyed the military caste, which has made all soldiers citizens and all citizens capable of bearing arms, soldiers... Military science has proved that a people's militia is quite practicable, that it can rise to the military tasks presented by a war both of defence and of attack"[2]

1. V.I. Lenin,"The Armed Forces and the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 10 Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, p.56.
2. V.I. Lenin: "The Armed Forces and the Revolution", op, cit.,p.39.

Under Lenin's leadership, during the time before the October Revolution, and together with the building up of the *political army of the revolution,* the Russian Communist Party and working class did their best to put this slogan into effect. They stepped up propaganda work among soldiers and set up Party organizations within the Tsarist army with a view to undermining its units and winning them over to the Revolution; they promoted the study of military science in the Party and actively propagated military knowledge and military training among the masses ; they gave weapons to the workers and revotutionary masses ; they established and strengthened the leadership of the Communist Party in all military formations; they organized workers' militia and fighting units to serve as nuclei for the revolutionary armed forces ; they built up a revolutionary armed force in which the workers and peasants would be united with revolutionary soldiers, *a revolutionary armed force made up of three components* ; a) the armed proletariat and peasantry; b) the organized vanguard units made up of representatives of these classes ; c) army units which had rallied to the side of the people. Thanks to this, the revolution was able to build up an armed force made up mainly of the masses of armed workers and peasants fighting under Communist party leadership as a shock force for the revolutionary onrush of the masses. It was this force that played a decisive role in the victory of the February Revolution and later the October Revolution.

The victory of the Russian October Revolution led to the birth of the first Socialist Sate in the world, one which was subjected to hostile encierclement by imperialism. This victory ushered in a new era in human history and shook the whole capitalist world. Therefore, just as Lenin had foreseen,

imperialism was bent on smothering the proletarian State at birth. This danger of aggression immediately laid the Soviet State under the clear obligation of arming to defend the socialist Fatherland against imperialist aggression and reconsidering its form of military organization.

Lenin's great contribution lies in the fact that he not only confirmed Marx' and Engels' principle of arming the people but also developed their ideas by setting forth the principle of: the necessity of building a regular standing army of the Soviet State on the basis of arming the people, a new-type army of the working class and labouring people.

Lenin showed that in face of the extremely great danger of aggression, if the Soviet Republic did not want to fall an easy prey to imperlism, it needed a powerful regular standing army, well equipped and well trained with strict discipline, centralized and unified command. Lenin pointed out that, in conditions when the capitalist countries had big armies with proper training and modern equipment, when the armed forces of the Soviet State were increasingly equipped with modern materials and the soldiers needed more training time to master the use of equipment along the rules of modern military art, when the imperialists were always in a position to launch surprise attacks, the armed forces of the Soviet State could not be maintained in the form of people's militia but had to become a regular standing army. Lenin affirmed *:"Today the regular army must be put to the fore...."*[1] It was a regular army qualitatively different from the bourgeois army. It was a : *new-type army, a people's army, a revolutionary army, a socialist army.*

1. V.I. Lenin : *Collected Works*, Russian text, 3rd edition, Vol. 24, p. 750.

Considering the requirements of modern warfare the standing army has obvious advantages as compared with the militia system ; it has greater mobility as it is not tied to any region ; it is equipped with modern weapons and technical materials ; it can undergo intensive training for a long period of time in a systematic way according to the requirements of continually developing military techniques and art ; it has well-trained and experienced professional officers ; on account of all this, it has great combat power and high combat readiness, etc.

Facing a completely new problem and in conditions of great difficulty, relying on the support and creativeness of the people, while disbanding the old army, Lenin and the Russian Communist Party gradually and successfully solved a series of problems regarding *the principles of building a new-type regular army of the proletarian State—the worker-peasant Red Army*. Lenin defined the function and tasks of the Red Army, the revolutionary and popular nature of the army of the proletarian State, the system of Party organization, political work and the close leadership of the Communisty Party in the Army, the lines and policies regarding the training and forming of cadres, the principles of organization, equipment, education and training for the Soviet army, the Soviet military art, etc., as well as many other aspects of the Red Army's life.

In the course of building the Red Army, Lenin had to carry on a determined and persistent struggle against all erroneous tendencies. Lenin shattered the schemes of the Menshevik, social-revolutionary and anarchist elements who misused the slogan "arming the people" to launch a frantic opposition to the party's policy and line of building the Red Army. At the party's 8th Congress, Lenin and his comrades-in-arm also

defeated the "military opposition group" within the Party who opposed the heightening of discipline, the centralized and unified command, etc., i.e. the very principles of building a regular Red Army.

After the end of the Civil War, once again the problem of the form of the Soviet State's military organization was put to discussion. The Communist party headed by Lenin resolutely rejected the Trotskyist tendency which demanded that the Red Army be disbanded and wholly integrated with the system of people's militia.

Revolutionary practice has demonstrated that Lenin's thesis was extremely clearsighted and accurate. The victory of the Soviet State in defeating the armed intervention of the imperialist bloc in collusion with internal counter-revolutionaries in an attempt to smother the Soviet State at birth, the great victory of the Soviet Union in the patriotic war of 1941-1945 which defeated German fascism and Japanese militarism were indissolubly linked with that correct thesis of Lenin. It is known all over the world that, during the Second World War, it was the Soviet Red Army, the powerful regular army of the first Soviet State in the world that played the decisive and direct role in defeating the aggressor armies, over ten million strong and equipped with ultra-modern weapons, of German fascism and Japanese militarism, driving the aggressors out of the Soviet Fatherland and making a direct contribution to the liberation of many countries in Europe and Asia ; it pursued the German Nazis and destroyed them in their very hideouts, saving mankind from the fascist peril.

The Red Army not only proved itself absolutely superior to the enemy in politics and morale, but also turned out, in

the course of the war, to be superior to the enemy in both numerical strength and quality of men, in quantity and quality of modern weapons and equipment, in combat techniques and the art of command. It was that powerful force that enabled the Red Army to launch counter-offensive and offensive operations on a very large scale, annihilating tens of enemy divisions in a single campaign, breaking through their defensive lines, liberating large areas of terrotory, creating decisive turning points in the war and eventually leading it to great victory.

Lenin's thesis on building the regular Soviet Red Army was a further development of Marxr' and Engels' theory on the military organization of the socialist State under new historical conditions, when the socialist State was faced with a hostile encirclement by the capitalist world. The great value of this thesis lies in the fact that it has pointed out to the proletariat that in the imperialist period, when imperialism, with its extremely warlike nature, has under its command huge aggressive armies, equipped with ultra-modern weapons, it is essential that the socialist State, to safeguard its security, should have a powerful regular standing army and not only the armed people. Relying on the superiority of the new social system, on the ever developing material and technical basis of socialism, and using its State machinery, the proletariat in power is perfectly able to build such an army quickly a new-type, modern regular army, as a firm mainstay for the national defence of the socialist State.

The question then is : when the socialist State has built up such a powerful regular standing army, what about the problem of *arming the people ?*

Lenin held that it was necessary to : *build the socialist Red Army on the basis of arming the people*. At the third Congress of the All Russian Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers, Lenin told the story of an old Finnish woman who met a Red Army soldier when she was gathering fire-wood. Instead of seizing the wood as the Tsarist soldiers would have done, the Red Army soldier helped her to gather more. From this Lenin conluded that the people had voiced a different view of the soldier, the Red Army-man : "...They are saying that from now on they should not fear a man with a rifle, for this man will defend the labouring people and relentlessly smash the exploiters' yoke..."[1] This was a real revolutionary army, a people's army. Lenin went on to deal with the relations between the Red Army and the armed people : "This is what the people have felt, and that is why when the ordinary people without education say that the Red Guards are doing their utmost to fight the exploiters, this propaganda is an invincible force. It will penetrate millions and tens of millions of people and lay a firm foundation for the work that the French Commune in the 19th century began to build, but only for a short period of time as it was defeated by the bourgeoisie.This propaganda will build up *the socialist Red Army on the basis of arming the people*, a thing which all socialists have dreamt of."[2]

In the 8th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, when insisting on the necessity of concentrating efforts on building up the Red Army, Lenin also pointed out that the Party continued to: *maintain the system of people's militia*. The programme adopted at the Congress also set forth the task of giving

1. V.I. Lenin :*Collected works* French text, les Editions Sociales, Paris and Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958, Vol. 26 p.484.
2. V.I. Lenin : *Collected Works*. French text, op, cit, Vol 26 p.484.

military training to all labouring people and building close relations between reorganized troops and State enterprises, trade unions, organizations of poor peasants, etc.

In the Soviet Union, right after the victory of the October Revolution, the armed forces of the revolutionary masses, the guards, the guerilla detachments of workers and poor peasants already played a very important part in the struggle against the rebellions by counter-revolutionaries. When the Worker-Peasant Red Army was newly set up, it was the "red guards" that constituted its core.

Before the Red Army grew into a million-strong force, the guerilla detachments in the various regions of the country were one of the main forces in the people's fight against the foreign interventionists and white guards. During the civil war, hundreds of thousands of guerillas fought in the enemy's rear in close coordination with the Red Army. Many units and columns of the regular army were built up from guerilla detachments in the civil war.

After the victory of the civil war, parallel with the reduction of the numerical strength and the heightening of the quality of the Red Army, the system of people's militia was maintained for many years under various forms suitable to the specific conditions of each period.

During the great patriotic war of 1941-1945, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Stalin, the formations of guerillas, militia and fighting workers, etc., also played a great role in defeating German fascism in their Fatherland, in coordination with the Red Army.

In areas temporarily held by the Germans, a million guerilla fighters organized by the Communist Party in the course of

the war conducted a very heroic fight. They annihilated millions of enemy troops and immobilized one tenth of the total strength of the German land forces. Even on the main fronts, the armed people fought side by side with the Red Army, defending every inch of the Soviet motherland. During large-scale campaigns, tens of militia divisions together with the people fought in coordination with the Red Army to achieve immortal exploits in combat and ancillary services.

The close fighting coordination of the standing army of the Soviet State and the armed people in the great patriotic war, with the Soviet Red Army playing the essential part, was a vivid picture of people's war in modern conditions.

The Soviet people and Red Army fighters are very proud of the tremendous power of the people's sacred war against german fascism in 1941-1945. This pride was reflected in these lines of a Soviet song, very popular among the people :

"People's war,

The sacred war".

It was a victory of Soviet military science of the Marxist-Leninist line of people's war ; it was also the victory of the principle of building up military organizations worked out by Marx, Engels and Lenin which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union applied in new conditions.

During and after the Second World War, the revolutionary movements of the people in various countries were developing tempestuously ; many insurrections and revolutionary wars broke out everywhere from Europe to Asia. The great victory of the Red Army over fascism, the great victory of the revolutionary struggles of the world people led to the birth of a series of socialist countries forming a world system. The

struggles of the world people for socialism, nation independence, democracy and peace have given rise to a revolutionary high tide which is continually attacking imperialism.

It was in the flames of the armed insurrections and revolutionary wars since the October Revolution, during and after the Second World War, that the birth and rapid development of the revolutionary armed forces of the people of the socialist countries in Europe. Asia and Latin America took place, Owing to different specific conditions and historical backgrounds, the revolutionary armed forces of the socialist countries have different histories and levels of development and different organizational structures, but most of them were born from the guerilla movements against internal reactionaries and against fascist aggressors ; they were organized into armies while including armed formations of the masses under various forms.

In Asia, in the process of long and arduous revolutionary armed struggles against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, the Chinese people organized the worker-peasant Red Army, carried out the "mobilization of the whole people, arming the whole people", and achieved a great victory. The Vietnamese people successfully carried out armed insurrections and revolutionary wars ; the armed forces of our people are a typical example of success in the creative application of the Marxist-Leninist theses on arming the masses and building up the army ; we shall deal with that in later chapters.

By various forms of struggle, many colonies and dependent countries have also won independence to a varying degree.

Many have won independence through armed struggle. They have become nationalist countries. During the armed struggle as well as after victory, several of them, actively anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, have striven to build up their armed forces by organizing the armies of the nationalist State power, while arming the people to some extent.

At present, the people in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who are conducting armed struggles to win power and national indepedence are applying these lessons of experience for the organization of the revolutionary armed forces in their own specific conditions.

Subjected to attacks from several directions and suffering defeat after defeat, imperialism, with US imperialism at its head, has resorted to very perfidious and cruel policies to oppose the revolutionary movements of the world people, in an attempt to maintain its privileges and interests. The imperialists strive to increase the defence budgets, intensify the arms race, develop seapons of mass destruction, build military bases everywhere, set up military alliances, continually launch armed interventions, "special" and "limited" wars of aggression, and prepare for a new world war.

To defend the socialist fatherland, to defend world peace and to defeat the war schemes and manoeuvres of imperialism, the socialist countries are trying hard to strengthen their defence capacities at the same time as continuing the work of economic construction and scientific and technological development. Relying on the superiority of the socialist system and on the results achieved in the building of the material and technical foundation of socialism and communism, the socialist countries are concerned with building up the revolutionary

armies along modern lines to a different degree according to their specific conditions. They unceasingly heighten the revolutionary nature of the socialist armies, and equip them with ever more modern weapons and means including both nuclear weapons, missiles and conventional arms.

While building up a modern army, many socialist countries pay great attention to arming the popular masses - workers, collective peasants — on a large scale with forms of organization and equipment suited to their needs, so as to develop to the maximum the force of the masses and of the socialist system in strengthening national defence and defending the country.

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From the theoretical and practical basis outlined above, what conclusions should be drawn ? We may conclude that :

Arming the revolutionary masses in combination with building up the revolutionary army is the comprehensive principle of Marxism-Leninism regarding the form of military organization of the socialist countries' defence system, and of wars of liberation, national defence wars and revolutionary wars by the peoples in our time. This principle is developed from Marx' and Engels' thesis on arming the people to Lenin's thesis on building up the revolutionary army on the basis of arming the people.

Marx, Engels and Lenin thus brilliantly summed up the lessons of experience in building up the military organizations of the proletariat and oppressed peoples in the course of their protracted revolutionary struggle to seize

power and defend it. To some extent, it is also a continuation and creative development of the experience of organizing the armed forces of the revolutionary classes and the victims of oppression and aggression in the historical periods before the appearance of Marxism.

Starting from scrath in their revolutions to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, imperialists and feudalists, the proletariat, the labouring people and oppressed peoples could not, naturally, have an army at the outset. In the course of the revolution, when the question of armed struggle and armed insurrection arose, the proletariat, labouring people and oppressed peoples had, necessarily, to set up their own military organization. As a rule, its initial form was the armed masses, and the revolutionary army was gradually built up on the basis of arming the masses. In insurrections the armed masses usually played the main role ; sometimes the role of a shock force was played by a revolutionary army. As the insurrections developed into revolutionary wars, the position of the revolutionary armed forces included both the army and the armed masses.

The question of building up a regular and standing revolutionary army in the strict sense could only be tackled when the proletariat and labouring people had seized power and had a state. *: The form of military organization of the socialist State, the people's democratic State, which is able to develop to the maximum the combat power of the people and the new regime, consists in a combination of building up a regular modern revolutionary army with arming the revolutionary masses intensively and on a large scale.* The armed masses and the revolutionary army are two component parts of the armed forces of the State, in which the standing

army is the core force and the armed masses the extensive force. That is why attention should be paid to building up the army while developing the forces of the armed masses.

The close combination of the above components in the armed forces of the socialist State is one reason for absolute superiority of the socialist regime over the exploiting regimes.

Under the State regimes of the exploiting classes, as the interests of the ruling classes and those of the labouring people are completely opposed, there is a fundamental opposition between the popular masses on the one side and the State and its standing army on the other. The ruling State regards the armed revolutionary people as a danger to its existence. The reactionary rulers would often rather have the motherland lost to the enemy than arm the people. As Engels once observed, they will compromise with their cruellest enemy who has the same origin as theirs rather than ally themselves with the people. There have been instances when the feudal and bourgeois classes, still playing a progressive role in history and still animated by nationalism, proceeded to arm the people so that the latter could fight the aggressors alongside the standing army. But even in those cases the arming was limited.

Under the socialist regime, the situation is quite different. The exploiting classes have been overthrown, the system of exploitation of man by man abolished, the system of national and collective ownership built up, and the collective mastery of the labouring people established. The function of the socialist armed forces — the main instrument of violence of the State of dictatorship of the proletariat — is to suppress internal and external enemies, to defend the new regime, to defend the interests of the labouring people. It is this high political and moral

indentily in the new society, together with the ever developing material and technical forces of socialism, that constitutes the most solid basis for building up the new-type modern revolutionary armed forces and for bringing to new heights the combined combat strength of the revolutionary army and the armed masses. *The armed forces of the socialist State are the first ones in history to include workers and peasants who are really masters of their own destinies, having high political consciousness and ready to sacrifice everything for the socialist and communist ideal. They are invincible armed forces.*

CHAPTER II

OUR PEOPLE'S TRADITION AND EXPERIENCE IN BUILDING THE ARMED FORCES

The Marxist-Leninist thesis on the military organization of the proletariat is primarily based on the practice and experience of proletarian revolutions and national wars in Europe in the time of capitalism and imperialism, and also on the practice and experience of military struggle and the military organization of various classes and peoples through different ages.

When we study the history of struggle against foreign aggression and the history of military organization of our people, we notice salient features which differ from those of the military struggles and military organization of many European countries. What Engels wished for with regard to nation-wide insurrections and people's war and with regard to the arming of the masses in Europe in the 19th century had occurred rather frequently in our country many centuries before, even under feudalism. The original, vivid and rich practice and experience of our people have further demonstrated the genius of Marx, Engels and Lenin in working out the principles of nation-wide insurrection and people's war as well as that of the military organization of the proletariat and nations struggling for liberation.

Unlike many Western countries, where the formation of nations was generally related to the disintegration of feudalism and the appearance of capitalism, our nation was formed and developed from the struggles in ancient times against the aggression and rule of foreign feudalism. *Many national uprisings and national wars occurred continually in the course of the many centuries of our history.*

Vietnam was one of the cradles of mankind. From the time when the Hung kings founded the State of Van Lang, through the two thousand years or so before our era, in the struggles against nature and against other tribes to survice and grow, the Viet tribes had gradually built up fairly solid bases from which the nation was to take shape: they lived for a long time over a definite area of land; they had their own language; they set up an economy and a socio-political system with a certain level of development; they created their own cultural and moral traditions. And so our people developed a national feeling and consciousness, a sense of being masters in their own land, at a very early date, and their vitality was very strong. In the course of struggles against powerful aggressors, the Vietnamese people succeeded in preserving their native land; they fought heroically and intelligently and worked with diligence and tenacity so as to survive and develop.

Ours is a rich and beautiful land, with vast natural resources, located in a strategic position in Southeast Asia, at the crossroads of important land and sea routes from north to south and from east to west, like a starting base from the mainland to the ocean, a bridgehead from the ocean to the mainland. That is why powerful aggressive forces always coveted and tried to attack our country with a view to exploiting and enslaving our people and using our land as a

springboard to expand their influence to other directions. So, all through their long history, our people have had continually to face wars of aggression and to wage wars to defend the Fatherland and preserve national independence, continually to rise up in insurrections and fight wars of liberation to win back national independence. National feeling and national consciousness, the sense of being masters in their own land, a resolute determination to struggle to safeguard and win back national independence have developed throught those insurrections and wars. *Our people have gradually built and vigorously enriched a precious tradition: a tradition of heroic struggle against foreign aggression, for independence and freedom.*

Ours is a small country, without a large area or population. At the beginning of the Christian era, our people lived mainly in the present area of Bac Bo and Northern Trung Bo. The population was about one million in the time of the Trung sisters; later on, our territory was extended and our population increased. But the aggressors usually commanded much greater forces. In circumstances when they had to *oppose a small force to greater forces*, in order to preserve the native land, and to defeat cruel enemies, our people had to bring into full play the strength of the whole people, of the whole nation, and could not rely on the army alone.

All of our people's struggles against foreign aggression were just ones. Our people were always animated by an ardent patriotism, a high sense of national cohesion and sovereignty, a resolute and undaunted will to fight against overwhelming numbers. That is why *in the national insurrections and national wars of our history, as regards the military organization the force usually consisted of the armed people*

organized into insurgent units, or the national army and generally, there was a combination between the armed people and the national army and vice versa. Our people soon built up and developed the tradition of "the whole nation joining forces"[1] against foreign aggression. That was the key to victory which the national hero Tran Quoc Tuan[2] set forth as a principle as early as the 13th century, basing himself on the combat experience of our people thousands of years before. This principle has evolved into the line of *"unity of the whole people* in our own time. It was under the Tran that the saying "everyone a soldier" became comm on.[3] And since time immemorial, there has been the popular saying: "When the enemy comes to your house, even the women should fight". That is an impressive practice but also a very familiar one in our nation's life and struggles.

The participation of the masses in the national uprisings and wars in our country, the tradition of "the whole nation joining forces" and of the whole people fighting the enemy, enable us to affirm that national uprisings and wars in our history have long been *people's uprisings and people's wars.* Those people's uprisings and people's war, *led mainly by the feudal class*, occurred fairly frequently and attained a fairly high level of development, although there were limitations with regard to the leading class and other historical conditions. A further question arises: what about class struggles within our nation and the military organization in such struggles?

1. Tran Quoc Tuan "Testament": *Quoc Gia Tinh Luc.*
2. A general under the Tran dynasty.
3. *Kham Dinh Viet Su Thong Giam Cuong Muc*, (Texts and Comments on the Viet National History by Imperial Order), Book 6.

Like all class societies and ones divided by class antagonism, our Vietnamese society also evolved and developed through fierce class struggles within the nation, mainly between the feudal class and the peasants. *The army of the feudal State in our country was also an instrument of the feudal class to maintain its rule, with an internal function of repressing the people, primarily the peasants, and an external function of fighting the aggressors and waging aggressive wars against other countries.* When the class antagonism within the nation became acute, usually when no foreign aggression was occurring, the Vietnamese peasants, who had a fairly high sense of revolution and democracy, often rose up in fierce struggles, organizing their own armed forces and waging peasant insurrections and peasant wars against feudalism in the country. This is an important problem but it falls outside the scope of the essay.

However, when facing the peril of foreign aggression or under a continuous threat from aggressive forces in peace time, when the contradictions between our nation and foreign feudalist aggressors came to the fore, the various classes within our nation rallied together and temporarily set aside their contradictions to concentrate the forces of the whole nation against foreign aggression, except for a few cases when the feudalists betrayed the nation and surrendered to the aggressors. National struggle, in the view of Marxism, is also a form of class struggle; in our country, during those times, it was the struggle between the alliance of feudalists and peasants to defend the country on one side, and the foreign feudal class which committed aggression on the other side. The feudal class in our country, in the early stages of their rise, also possessed a national spirit. They took certain democratic measures to

encourage the people to fight against foreign aggression. Tran Quoc Tuan had the idea of "sparing the people's forces" to create "deep roots and solid bases" for the regime, considering it "the best policy for the defence of the country". That is why the national movement in our country was not separated from the feudal class in their organizing and leading activities at the time when this class still played a positive role in our history, above all, it could not be separated from the strong forces of the peasants, who were ardent patriots and then made up the vast majority of our people. Therefore, when the feudal class became decadent and betrayed the nation, our peasants rose up against feudalism. They seized the banner of national independence as happened during the Tay Son movement led by Nguyen Hue. The Tay Son peasant movement became a national movement and brought our national uprising and war to a very high level of development, overthrowing the country's feudalists, defeating foreign aggresion, achieving great vitories.

The birth and development of our nation, the tradition of the whole country fighting the enemy and the whole people becoming soldiers as exemplified in the national uprisings and wars are obviously original features and great realities in our history. They have dominated many aspects of our nation's social activities. They have had a profound effect on the insurrections and wars, *on the military organization of our nation during past national uprisings and wars.*

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The struggles against foreign aggression and the military organization of our people *during the centuries before our era*

are to some extent reflected in legends, mythology and historical documents.

It was not without reason that, during the time of the *Hung kings and the State of Van Lang*, besides the myth of Son Tinh-Thuy- Tinh (The Mountain Genie and the River Genie) referring to our people's arduous struggle against natural forces, there was also the *legend of Thanh Giong* praising our forefathers' heroic fight against foreign invaders. *The Legend of Thanh Giong* crystallizes the typical features of our nation's tradition of fighting foreign aggression: its indomitable fighting spirit, the invincible strength of the people in arms, etc. Thanh Giong magically grew up when he heard the call for national salvation. He used both an iron staff and bamboos to fight the enemy and was followed by peasants holding hoes, fishermen with their lines and little buffalo-tenders with their sticks... This pure and symbolic legend was the picture of "the whole nation fighting the enemy" and "the whole people in arms" in the remote past.

Also there were, in very early times, *armed people* who spontaneously rose up against foreign aggression. In the third century B.C., the Au Lac people and other Viet tribes fought for dozens of years against the Chin aggressors, chose the cleverest mens as generals, conducted surprise attacks at night, killed hundreds of thousands of enemy troops and eventually won victory. This way of fighting and organizing forces was characteristic of the popular masses who, prompted by hatred of the enemy rose up to annihilate them. This reminds us of the valiant and mobile way of fighting with scattered formations used by the American insurgents in the war of independence against British colonialist rule in the 18th century which Engels praised. The people in arms, fighting

spontaneously in such a way, were really "guerilla fighters" in the case of our people in antiquity.

In our history, the *organization of a national army* to fight foreign invaders also appeared at a very early time. King *An Duong Vuong's* army included ground troops and naval troops, the Co Loa Citadel was both a land base and a naval base. That army had a very effective weapon, the "multiple-arrow crossbow" which could discharge several arrows at a time, using the famous bronze arrowheads, made in great quantities, thousands of which have recently been unearthed in the Cc Loa area. All that speaks for the early development of military organization in our country. The appearance of the "multiple-arrow crossbow" and bronze arrowheads marked a big step forward in military techniques at the time. Was this the origin of the myth of "the magic crossbow"? But even with such "magic crossbows" King An Duong Vuong met with disaster as he did not rely on the people and slackened vigilance. He was defeated by Trieu Da.

The began the period of domination by foreign feudalists. *For ten long centuries, our people continually rose up in struggle to liberate the country and win back national independence.* It was a period when *national uprisings* succedeed each other in every century, and several of them turned into *wars of liberation.* It began with the uprising of the Trung Sisters which defeated the enemy over the whole country, followed by insurrections led respectively by Chu Dat, Luong Long, Lady Trieu, Ly Bi, Ly Tu Tien and Dinh Kien, Mai Thuc Loan, Phung Hung, Duong Thanh and crowned by the uprising of Khuc Thua Du and the victory of Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang River, which put an end to foreign domination and won back independence for the nation.

Generally speaking, during that period of foreign rule, our nation could not, naturally, have its own army. The people's armed forces consisted mainly of *insurgent troops* built up during the uprisings and led by the *lac hau* (civilian chiefs), *lac tuong* (military chiefs) and patriotic notables, the representatives of the feudal class of that time. Those troops had the character of armed forces of the insurgent people, and to some extent they were more or less like an army. The insurgent forces were sometimes limited and sometimes large, but included elements from various social strata – patriotic people, lowlanders and highlanders, patriotic notables, tribal chiefs and mandarins, etc.

After the victory of the insurrections or when they turned into wars of liberation, the leaders tried to organize a *national army* of a certain level to conduct the wars.

The people's movements of struggle and insurgents' uprisings had an effect on Vietnamese soldiers in the pay of the foreign administration: many *mutinies* broke out. In the mutiny of 803, the Vietnamese commander Vuong Quy Quyen joined his men in rising up and chasing out the foreign mandarins.

Our people's national consciousness and patriotism in this period revealed itself clearly in the many uprisings, the most typical of which was that of the Trung Sisters at the beginning of our era. Its originality lay in the fact that the uprising in Me Linh led by the two Sisters met with "simultaneous response"[1] from the people and civilian and military chiefs throughout the 65 districts and towns. i.e. the whole country at that time. That "simultaneous response" by

1. *Hau Han thu* (History of the Late Han).

the whole country to the Trung Sisters' call for national salvation was indeed a rare event in history. It could be said to be a "concerted uprising", a people's insurrection, reflecting the marked national consciousness of the chiefs and people in the various tribes that formed the old Kingdom of Au Lac.

The insurrection led by the Trung Sisters was successful. Our national independence was restored. The Sisters founded a court, organized a State and an army of the nation. Three years later, the aggressors invaded our country once again. The Sisters' young army was defeated by the enemy.

Ly Bi's insurrection in the middle of the 6th century was carried out on a very large scale as it succeeded in "rallying valiant fighters from various districts" in a simultaneous uprising, and overthrew foreign rule within three months. Ly Bi's insurgent troops immediately seized the city of Long Bien and successively defeated the two counter - offensives by the Luong aggressive army.

After victory, the State of Van Xuan and the army of the independent State were established. In the subsequent national war of resistance, Ly Bi's troops were defeated. But Trieu Quang Phuc reorganized the forces, withdrew to the Da Trach base and advocated a "protracted fighting strategy"[1] resorting to small attacks, isolated engagements, surprise assaults and night raids to wear out the enermy, then taking advantage of great disorders under the Luong dynasty, he launched a counter-offensive to defeat the aggressors and win back independence. The Van Xuan independent State lasted over half a century. That was a great victory of our people at that time. The idea of protracted fighting thus appeared. The tactics

1 *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (Complete History of Dai Viet): the early Ly period.

of small attacks, isolated engagements, surprise assaults and night raids developed to a new level.

After the defeat of the State of Van Xuan, during the next three centuries, our people never ceased to rise up in arms and launched many insurrections. Then in the 10th century the struggles gained impetus. Relying on this movement and while the Tang dynasty was weakened by successive peasant revolts, the Tang governor was dismissed and killed and *Khuc Thua Du* rose up with the support of the people and proclaimed himself governor, winning back national sovereignty. During the subsequent twenty years, this sovereignty underwent hard trials and was successively lost and recovered. It was only in 938 that *Ngo Quyen's army*, with the Bach Dang River victory, defeated the Nam Han aggressors and our nation really won back independence. This naval battle, using war vessels and iron-tipped wooden piles and fought in a valiant and resourceful manner, shows the level of fighting and development of our national army at the time. The historian Le Van Huu wrote, in praise of Ngo Quyen's exploit, that Ngo Quyen had "used the newly founded army of our Viet nation to defeat hundreds of thousands of Luu Hoang Thao's troops"; he "made use of clever tactics and clever fighting", "founded a State and proclaimed himself king", thus preventing the aggressors from invading our country once again.

The Bach Dang victory marked a great turning point in our history. That was the beginning of a period *when our nation, having won complete independence and having built up and developed an ever more prosperous feudal State, consolidated and preserved this independence for many centuries*. Through various dynasties, the centralized feudal State worked out ever more perfected ways by which to build up and consolidate the

administrative machinery at the central and various local levels, to step up economic construction and cultural development, to consolidate and strengthen national defence. Our people, under the leadership of the feudal class — which was playing a positive role in national development — waged various *wars for the defence of the Fatherland*, to preserve national independence. When the land was temporarily lost to the enemy, our people rose up in armed *insurrections* and waged *wars of liberation* to win back independence.

The development of the armed forces of our nation in this period was closely related to these wars and insurrections. It reflected the all-round development of an independent State set up on the basis of a feudal regime which was gradually being consolidated in every field.

A striking difference in the building of the armed forces of the feudal State in our country and many feudal States in Europe is the system of *"everyone a soldier"* instead of that of "mercenaries". The system of "arming the whole people" in Europe referred to by Engels appeared only during the first years of the French bourgeois revolution.

The system of "everyone a soldier" was set up and gradually completed through various dynasties.

In the Dinh-Le period, after putting down the "rebellion of the twelve *su quan*" (feudal warlords), the centralized feudal State just founded, began a system of census of the population to recruit soldiers. The armed forces were organized in such a way that "men were called up when needed, (...) and were sent back to farm work afteer their service"[1] That is why, with

1. Phan Huy Chu: *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi* (Rules and Regulations of Different Dynasties Classified by Categories) *Binh Che Chi* (Military System).

a not very large force in active service as the core, the feudal State at the time was able to form ten army corps totalling about one million men under the command of General Le Hoan. That figure must represent all able-bodied men in the population at the time. It really was a form or arming the whole people, a rare fact in feudal times, but quite necessary for such a small nation as ours to fight foreign aggression.

The many-sided development of the independent feudal State under the Ly could be clearly seen through the system and policies regarding the organization of the armed forces. There was the policy of *ngu binh u nong* (placing the military in farming) i.e. military service was brought to the countryside, the farmers being soldiers, and soldiers doing both military duty and farm work. The Ly divided the male population into *hoang nam* from 18 to 20 years of age and *dai hoang nam* from 20 to 60 years of age, all of whom had to enlist and take turns in serving in the army and they were all called up when there was a war. That was what is now usually called military service.

Under the Tran, the organization of the armed forces was based on the system of mobilizing the forces of the whole people, the whole nation, according to Tran Quoc Tuan's idea of "the whole nation joining forces", embodied in the concept "everyone a soldier" at that time. The historian Phan Huy Chu remarked: "The military was very strong at that epoch. As a rule, the troops were stationed in convenient places in peace time, and were eager to fight when a war broke out. So under the Tran all the people were soldiers; therefore they defeated cruel enemies and strengthened the position of the nation". The very well-defined system of organizing the army under the Tran reflected the obvious

growth and consolidation of the feudal system in our country through three centuries of peaceful construction.

On the basis of "everyone a soldier", with respect to *concrete forms of organization*, the feudal State built up various kinds of troops: *national troops under the royal court; regional troops under noblemen and tribal chiefs; village troops, militia or local troops in every village or locality.* The national troops were called "king's troops" under the Dinh and Le dynasties, "foot guards" or "royal guards" under the Ly and the Tran. They were in active service, like the standing forces in our time. As for those who were placed in the countryside, "sent back to farm work in peace time, called up all together according to the list in war time", they were called "outside troops", similar to the reserve forces nowadays. The *huong binh* (village troops), *tho binh* (local troops) were organized by the feudal authorities to ensure feudal order in the villages in peace time; when there was a war, they fought with the people against the aggressors, thus forming the armed forces of the broad masses.

While, during the ten centuries of struggle for independence, our people's armed forces had consisted mainly of insurgent troops with wide participation from the masses in time of insurrection, during the epoch of building and strengthening national independence, the role of the *army* came to the fore for national defence in the wars to defend the Fatherland. That was the regular army of the independent feudal State in our country, the organization of which was gradually perfected. The Ly army included foot soldiers, cavalry, elephant troops and naval troops; they were equipped not only with spears, lances, bows and crossbows, etc. but also with stone-throwing catapults. The Tran troops were already

armed with cannon of an early type. Our people paid great attention to equipping the army, they knew how to make effective weapons and war material on the basis of the level of development of the forces of production. They also paid great attention to supplying the troops with adequate foods, considering that "the soldiers" lives depend on their being properly fed". The men in active service were not very numerous but were well trained, and when a war broke out this force could be expanded very rapidly. Great attention was paid to training the troops too. Tran Quoc Tuan wrote *Binh Thu Yeu Luoc* (a handbook on military art) and *Van Kiep Tong Bi Truyen Thu* (dealing with military strategy and tactics) to help train officers and men.

The rules for military organization of the feudal state were described by the historian Phan Huy Chu in his book *Binh Che Chi* (monograph on army organization), part of his great work *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi* under the following headings 1) Military ranks; 2) Recruiting methods; 3) Rules for supplies and allowances to the troops; 4) Methods of training; 5) Prohibitions; 6) Methods of examination; 7) Rules of ceremony. This testifies to the fairly high degree of perfection of the military organization in our country in former times and to the vigilance of our forefathers who, after long years of peace, took great care to build up the armed forces, encourage the people to take military training and consolidate national defence so as to defend national independence. Naturally, the army of the feudal state did not have only the function of "defending the country", it also had the function of "suppressing rebellions", i.e. putting down the struggles of the people in the country.

As our nation had recovered independence and built a well-structured State, the patriotism and indomitable fighting spirit of our people rose to new heights. Whereas during the period of foreign rule, it was embodied in the determination to persevere in the fight to win back independence, in the period of independence, it manifested itself in the self-reliance in building the country, the resolute determination to fight to safeguard the territory and preserve the beautiful land that their forefathers had won back at the cost of great sacrifices and developed by their skill and by the sweat of their brows. Throught this patriotism and high spirit of the whole nation, with the armed forces built on the basis of an ever more prosperous feudal system, and thanks to the military genius of our national heroes, our people were able to win some of their most brilliant victories in defence of the country during that period. Our country, though built up and strengthened in every field, remained a small one. Relying on the system of "everyone a soldier", with small but very well-trained armies, our people gloriously defeated many of the largest, most powerful and most ferocious armies of aggression in that epoch, safeguarding the Fatherland's independence and freedom.

General *Le Hoan* defeated the Sung aggressive army in the battles of Chi Lang and Bach Dang.

Ly Thuong Kiet took the initiative in preemptive attacks on the enemy territory, destroying the important starting bases of the aggressors. During the subsequent war of resistance in the country, the enemy was intercepted both by the *big army* of the Court which fought several battles along the river Nhu Nguyet defence lines, destroying over half of the enemy forces, and by tens of thousands of troops in various regions including

the *tho binh* and the *huong binh* (local and village guards) in the enemy rear, who attacked small detachments of the enemy's combat and transport troops in coordination with the main army. In the area of Lang Son, the Tay people commanded by Than Canh Phuc withdrew into the jungle and made every effective use of the tactics of surprise and night raids, etc. Thus appeared the *fighting coordination between the main army and the regional forces, which gave rise to the strategic conjuncture of attacking the enemy both in front and in its rear.* This form of fighting combination was really an original feature in the military art of a small nation fighting against a stronger aggressor. The Sung war of aggression was defeated. The Sung had to recognize our country as an independent kingdom.

During the three resistance wars against the Yuan (Mongol) invaders in the 13th century, it was thanks to the existence of the army and the local village guards, organized on the basis of the system of "everyone a soldier", that *Tran Quoc Tuan* could cleverly combine the tactics of concentrated and big battles by the regular army with that of small attacks on the spot by the local and village guards and the armed people from the beginning to the end of the wars. The *army* obviously had a very important, direct and decisive role. Many outstanding battles of annihilation were successfully conducted in Dong Bo Dau, Ham Tu, Chuong Duong, Van Kiep, Bach Dang etc. But the *armed people* were in great numbers and played a very important role too. The people in mountainous areas intercepted, pinned down, wore out and annihilated many enemy forces. The militia in the delta areas fought the enemy on the spot, with their own villages as base camps. From early times, our people had the experience of fighting in the villages,

which might be said to be "fighting villages" such as we have now. The people also tried to hide their supplies, leaving "empty gardens and deserted houses" to the enemy, thus causing many difficulties to the enemy's food supply. The two words *Sat that* (Kill the Tartars) tattooed on the arms of officers and men expressed the very high determination to resist and the readiness to fight and to sacrifice themselves displayed by our people at that time. That really was a war of the entire people, of the whole nation. That was a true people's war in feudal times. The Mongol Yuan troops of aggression who had sown devastation over Asia and Europe, who had conquered and erased many states from the map of the world, attacked Vietnam three times but were three times ignominiously defeated by the Vietnamese people. The great victory of the resistance war in the Tran epoch led by the national hero Tran Quoc Tuan, which was due basically to the "whole nation joining forces" as Tran Quoc Tuan summed up the experience, spoke for the fairly high level of development of the military organization at the time and the great efficiency of the army and the armed people in the war to defend the Fatherland. This was a very glorious victory in a patriotic war waged on the basis of the feudal system, in the conditions of a country that had been built up and strengthened in every field and actively prepared in national defence during several centuries of peace.

By the middle of the 14th century, the Tran feudal group began to decline, and they intensified the oppression and exploitation of the people. Constant revolts of peasants and domestic serfs broke out during nearly half a century. Ho Quy Ly took advantage of that to usurp the throne and founded the Ho dynasty. The people were divided. The resistance organized

by Ho Quy Ly against the Ming aggressors relied solely on the army, sophisticated weapons and fortresses and not on the people ; therefore it failed.

But the aggressors could not impose their rule on our people. Insurrections multiplied.

Le Loi began his uprising in Lam Son with some 2,000 insurgents. *The uprising developed into a war of liberation.* His force included both the *insurgent troops* and the *armed people* rising up at his call. As the uprising developed into a war of liberation, the insurgents were organized into an *army*, and when victory was won this army numbered over two hundred thousand men, with an increasingly perfect organization as it was able to inherit and develop the experience of the previous Ly and Tran dynasties.

Nguyen Trai's celebrated line "raising the stick as banner, rallying the downtrodden from all parts"[1] reflected the broad mass character of the insurgent forces. The insurgent banner was a bamboo stick, the forces were made up of "farmhands and paupers". It might be said that these were made up of the large forces of labouring peasants in our country, who had fought without success against the Tran feudalists for nearly fifty years in the previous century, and who rallied around the national banner of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai. Moreover, the Lam Son uprising broke out in conditions different from those occurring during the ten centuries of foreign rule earlier. Our country lived under Ming rule for twenty years, but before that our people had built up an independent feudal State and consolidated and preserved its independence for nearly five centruries by successively defeating many wars of aggression

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Nguyen Trai : *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* (Proclamation of Victory over the Ngo)

by more powerful enemies. Therefore, though they met with difficulties in the early years when they had to withdraw more than once into the jungle and engaged only in small, isolated skirmishes to counter the enemy offensives, the insurgent forces developed very rapidly, especially after they had made a well-directed thrust by seizing Nghe An as a spring-board and liberating Thanh Hoa, then Tan Binh and Thuan Hoa. The insurgent forces were followed everywhere by the people who rose up in support, giving them supplies, joining them, arming themselves to fight in coordination, besieging and annihilating the enemy, shattering the foreign administration in the districts and liberating large areas.

The Ming sent in reinforcements. However, with an army "of hundreds of thousands of men but of one mind", which was different from the Ho army "which numbered a million but of a million minds", Le Loi and Nguyen Trai and their outstanding generals conducted many great battles and won resounding victories in Tot Dong — Chuc Dong, Chi Lang — Xuong Giang, annihilating hundreds of thousands of enemy troops. The people in various regions rose up at their call. The insurgents were everywhere "followed by large crowds and offered wine along their way", they "won more successes as they fought on, they destroyed the enemy as they would rotten things or dead wood".[1] The people also took a direct part in fighting the enemy with various strategems. A woman innkeeper of the Luong family in the Co Long citadel devised a trick to kill the enemy and seize the citadel : she later received the title of "Builder of the Country" from Le Loi.

Nguyen Trai also conducted "attacks on the minds", i.e. propaganda work among the enemy, persuading and forcing

Nguyen Trai : *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* (Proclamation of Victory over the Ngo).

the enemy to surrender in many cities : Nghe An, Dien Chau, Thi Cau, Dong Quan etc. One hundred thousand enemy troops surrendered and tens of thousands of locally recruited mercenaries crossed over to the people's side.

The victory of the resistance against the Ming was that of a people's war under the leadership of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai. But unlike the patriotic war under the Tran, this one was a national insurrection which developed into a war of liberation with *fighting by the insurgents who developed into an army, combined with widespread uprisings by the people*. "Once the insurgent banner was raised, people rose up like a beehive", and they had various ways of fighting, now "like thunder and lightning", now "like an ant-hole undermining the dyke", destroying enemy forces and overthrowing foreign local authorities, liberating the whole country, winning back national independence. Without uprising by the people, it would not have been possible to overthrow foreign local authorities, to give the insurgents greater prestige and wider fields of operation. But without the insurgent troops which later developed into an army which could conduct big battles of annihilation, it would not have been possible to defeat the war of aggression and shatter the foreign administration. The combination of the national army and the armed people recorded a further development as compared with the national defence war under the Tran and was characterized by widespread uprisings by the people.

After victory, Le Loi and Nguyen Trai speedily proceeded to rebuild the country, bringing the centralized feudal regime to a new stage of prosperity. The development of the military organization under the Le reflected this prosperity. Inheriting and developing the tradition of "everyone a soldier" and the

Ly's and Tran's experience, the Le also organized royal troops at central level, regional troops in various districts and military areas, village guards and militia in every locality. Noblemen did not have their own troops. The army was reduced to about one hundred thousand men in active service, the rest being demobilized. There was also a system of registering for the purposes of recruitment and call-up in case of war. "The names were listed in civil registers, revised every three years so that there could be no mistakes. When necessary, soldiers and civilians were called up according to those registers and all the people became soldiers". That was also the experience in organizing the armed forces in peace time, in strengthening national defence in coordination with economic construction, preparing the country for a war to defend the fatherland in case of foreign aggression. Naturally, it was also aimed at consolidating the rule of the feudal State.

The feudal system in our country shifted from prosperity to a period of decadence in the 16th century. For several centuries the feudal troops were engaged in mutual destruction. The civil war between the Trinh and the Mac lasted for over half a century and was followed by another atrocious civil war of fifty years between the Trinh and the Nguyen, which led to the division of our country for over a century. The decadent feudalists intensified the oppression and exploitation of the peasants. For fear of popular uprisings, they ordered the seizure of firearms and restricted their manufacture by the people. They used their army to suppress the peasants' struggles mercilessly. A succession of large-scale peasant uprisings and peasant wars broke out especially in the 18h century, and culminated in the *Tay Son insurrection* led by *Nguyen Hue*.

The Tay Son insurrection marked a further development of insurrection and war, of the *combination of the armed people and the army* in our country. It originated from the peasant movement which grew into a national movement and from the close combination of those two movements. While the decadent feudal class surrendered to the aggressors, the banner of national salvation was raised by the national hero Nguyen Hue, the outstanding leader of the peasant movement. Therefore, peasant insurrection and national war in those times had new and tremendous vigour in offensive.

At first, the insurgents' slogan "Take from the rich and give to the poor" encouraged the peasants and poor people to rise up. The insurrection spread far and wide, then developed into a peasant war to overthrow the feudal regime in the country and into a national war to defeat aggression by foreign feudalists.

The armed forces of the peasant isurrection developing into this national war were built up from the *insurgent forces*, then were gradually organized into an *army*, with the broad participation of the *peasants and other strata of the people*. This was a further development of the military organization of our nation as regards political objectives as well as in the size of its forces, the level of organization and military art. The first insurgent force in Tay Son was clearly an armed formation of the poor peope : peasants, artisans, etc., who equipped themselves with various weapons : bamboo staffs, lances, spears, swords and firearms. In the course of the insurrection, Nguyen Hue's troops were followed everywhere by peasants and other oppressed people who rose up in arms, joined the insurgents and smashed the power of the decadent feudal class. Nguyen Hue's prestige was very great. His troops grew up very quickly in numbers, and were gradually

organized into the *Tay Son army*. It was *a peasant army* which later on became *a national army*. It had a high level of organization and equipment being made up of infantry, cavalry, elephant troops and naval troops and equipped with firearms and cannon of various calibers, with different kinds of war vessels the biggest of which could carry combat elephants, hundreds of troops and big guns. Nguyen Hue also made use of cannon mounted on boats or elephants as a kind of field artillery.

With its reliance on the insurrection of the people, mainly of the pasants and other strata of poor people, and its use of clever tactics and high mobility, the powerful Tay Son army commanded by Nguyen Hue recorded new feats of arms in our history.

After many famous battles — the storming of the Qui Nhon citadel, the seizure of Quang Ngai, the liberation of Phu Yen, the five successful attacks against the Gia Dinh citadel — the Tay Son overthrew the more than two hundred-year-old rule of the Nguyen feudal group. Then, with the resounding victory of Rach Gam—Xoai Mut,in which tens of thousands of Siamese troops were annihilated Nguyen Hue smashed this attack of aggression.

This was followed by lightning troop movements, during which the Tay Son seized the Phu Xuan citadel, marched to the river Gianh and, with the support of the spontaneous rising of the population, routed the Trinh troops there within ten days.

"The army at once sailed to the northern sea"[1] Nguyen Hue mounted a sudden attack on Vi Hoang, liberated Thang Long[2] and within less than one month, overthrew the rule

1. Appeal of the Tay Son.
2. Old name for Hanoi.

of the Trinh feudal group which had lasted for almost three hundred years so laying the basis for national unification from Bac Ha to Gia Dinh.

The Le feudal group, trying to cling to their throne, invited in the Ching aggressors. Faced with the danger of foreign occupation, Nguyen Hue marched his army north. With a lightning troop movement, a fierce will to "win victory by a single battle", a firm determination to show the aggressors that "the heroic land of Vietnam has its own masters"[1], the national hero "in coarse clothes and waving a red banner" Nguyen Hue — who had by then been made Emperor — managed to smash the 200,000 — strong Ching army, within only five days of the glorious Ngoc Hoi-Dong Da battle, thus shattering their scheme of aggression.

The Tay Son insurrection – a peasant movement developing into a national movement – based on a *widespread armed uprising by the people and a very powerful army*, overthrew three reactionary feudal groups in the country, smashed two foreign armies of aggression, completed the unification of the country and safeguarded national independence. That was a glorious military exploit, a great success of our revolutionary peasants and our nation, unparalleled in the history of our nation and also rare in the history of peasant movements in other countries.

In the 19th century, our nation was faced with a very serious trial. The French imperialists began their aggression against our country. It was a new enemy, a Western capitalist power whic had great economic and military potential, very different from the previous feudal aggressor. In the country,

1. Nguyen Hue : Address to Officers and Men n Thanh Hoa.

the feudal regime had declined long before, the feudal class had ceased playing the role of a progressive force in national history and its extremely reactionary policies had thrown Vietnamese society into utter disorder and decadence. The feudal State made constant use of its army to suppress peasant revolts, and its army became completely opposed to the people, thus losing any support from the people and the nation. Meanwhile the peasants rose up in arms and staged hundreds of insurrections, big and small, to oppose the severe rule and brutal repression by the feudal class.

Faced with aggression by the French imperialists, and the imminent danger of foreign occupation, the peasant masses rose up everywhere, but the Nguyen feudal group refused all reforms and continued to repress the people. Following the selfish interests of their class, they preferred to surrender to the aggressors rather than ally themselves with the people ; therefore our country was lost to the French imperialists. However, our people went on fighting in spite of the ignominious capitulation of the Nguyen rulers. Throughout the nearly one hundred years of French rule, they continued to display the undaunted spirit of struggle of our nation and continuously rose up and organized *insurgent troops* to carry on various resistance movements, such as those of Truong Cong Dinh, Nguyen Trung Truc... in the South, of Phan Dinh Phung, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Hoang Hoa Tham, etc., in the North. Our people fought very bravely alongside the insurgents, others rose up to take the place of those who had fallen, but they could not achieve victory, because they lacked a correct line and a correct leadership adapted to the historical conditions of a new epoch. Only with the birth of the

Vietnamese working class and our Party did our national history reach its great turning point.

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The history of insurrections and wars in our country, and that of the military organization of our nation have proved that our people have had a very glorious tradition of fighting against foreign aggression, a tradition of a small country closely united and joining its forces together to defeat much more powerful aggressors. Insurrections and national wars in our country have been people's insurrections and people's wars at a fairly high level of development.

To lead those insurrections and national wars to victory, as regards *military organization*, our peopleb put into practice the motto "everyone a soldier", at a very early date, mobilizing the broad masses in various forms, the highest of which was the armed people fighting beside the army. Therefore, in *insurrections and national wars*, except for a few instances when there were only either the armed people or the army, the *military organization of our nation was generally composed of the national army and the armed forces of the masses combined together, under various forms of* organization and at various levels of development, with varying positions and roles according to the specific historical conditions and contexts. Thanks to that, insurrections and national wars in our country were able to bring into full play the strength of the whole nation, of the whole people, creatively applying the traditional military art of opposing a small, less numerous force to a bigger, more numerous one ; of "using the small to fight the big", "using the weak to defeat the strong".

Obviously, *the combination of the armed people with the national army, and vice versa, has become a principle of military organization, and even of military art to achieve victory in national insurrections and national wars for the defence of the Fatherland as well as in the wars of liberation waged by our Vietnamese people in former times.*

The military organization primarily depends on the political system, the class nature of the State. It is constantly and closely linked with the character and aims of insurrections and wars. Thus, if the military organization of our nation was able to mobilize the broad masses and the whole people in the fight against the enemy, it was primarily because of the just character of those insurrections and national wars, their political aims being the recovery and defence of national independence.

In those insurrections and national wars, there was an identity of national interest and of objectives in the fight, between the insurgent troops organized by representatives of the feudal class or the army of the feudal State and the broad masses, although this identity was limited by the nature of the feudal class and historical conditions. That is why those insurgent forces and armies could rely on the ardent patriotism national cohesion and the indomitable fighting spirit of the people. That is why the people actively joined the army, supported it and took a direct part in the fighting thus giving rise to the combination of the army and the armed people. The forces of *huong binh* and *tho binh* were also able to display their fighting strength. The armed forces of the people could sometimes be extended and closely combined with the national army in combat, thereby enhancing the strength of the whole country. The system of "everyone a soldier" enabled every patriotic citizen to take part in national salvation, to contribute

to the cause of defending the Fatherland. The feudal class also promulgated certain forms of democracy to mobilize the people in the fight, as we have seen. The national heroes had progressive ideas in building up the army which reflected the just character of the insurrections and national wars. They taught their officers and men "to devote themselves to the nation", "to die gloriously rather than live in shame", "to unite like father and son", "to cherish solidarity rather than numbers", etc.

In cases when the feudal State made use of the army not to "defend the country", but to "suppress rebellions", that is to repress the people, or when, in face of foreign aggression, the ruling feudal class placed its selfish interests above the national interests, using its army to oppose the peasant movement in the country instead of fighting the aggressors, the situation was quite different. This often happened when the feudal class was in decadence. The system of "everyone a soldier" was then abolished. The enlistment for the feudal army became a scourge. The antagonistic contradictions existing between the feudal class and the people become more acute. The people rose up against the feudal State and the reactionary army in various ways, including armed struggle, forming their own armed organizations to overthrow the feudal State and destroy its army.

The military organization built on the basis of the feudal system also depends on the material and technical conditions, on the level of the productive forces of that system. The development of technical equipment, from rudimentary bows to "multiple-arrow crossbows" and bronze-tipped arrows, to other weapons and catapults to cannon and then to large-size war vessels, cannon mounted on elephants, etc., has been one of the factors determining the specific forms of organization,

methods of fighting and combat power of the armed forces of our nation in former times.

It should be stressed here that during the whole of this time, the aggressors, though more powerful, were still at the same feudal stage as our country. Therefore, though they had larger armies, their equipment and weapons were not necessarily more sophisticated and sometimes they were less so than ours. The problem that faced our nation and our military organization a those times was how to oppose a small and less numerous force to a larger and more numerous one in conditions of usually equivalent equipment and weapons. Only in our time, when we have to fight the aggressive armies of imperialism, have we had to solve the problem of how to oppose a poorly-equipped armed force, built on the basis of a less developed economy than the enemy's, to aggressive armies that are not only numerically stronger but also better equipped with modern weapons.

The realities of insurrections and national wars in our country fought with the wide participation of the people have proved the correctness of historical materialism and proletarian military science on the role of the popular masses in history in general and in insurrections and wars in particular. They also have confirmed the brilliant Marxist-Leninist thesis on arming the masses and building up the army in insurrections and wars waged by revolutionary classes and oppressed peoples against the rule of exploiting classes and aggression by foreign powers.

If we compare this with the situation in European countries in the same historical periods, we can conclude that whereas the history of many wars in Europe in the Middle Ages was that of mutual massacre between various feudal groups with

mercenary troops, *the history of wars in our country in those times was primarily that of national insurrection and national wars, people's insurrections and people's wars.*

The tradition of "the whole nation joining forces" in the fight against foreign aggressors, the experience of people's insurrection and people's was, the experience of military organization including both the national army and the armed forces of the people have been a very *valuable tradition and experience* of our people. They have also been quite original features rarely found in the military history of other nations.

When the Vietnamese working class emerged and our Party was born, in the light of Marxism-Leninism and our Party's political and military lines, this valuable tradition and experience was inherited and developed to new levels by our Party and people, in new historical conditions, in order to defeat the most brutal aggressors of our time.

CHAPTER III

THE CREATIVE WORK OF OUR PARTY AND PEOPLE IN ARMING THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES AND BUILDING UP THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

Since its birth, our Party has assumed the great historic mission of leading the national liberation movement in the new epoch and has ushered in the most glorious era in the history of our nation, *the era of independence, freedom and socialism.*

Over the last few thousand years, our people have waged many insurrections and national wars to win back and safeguard the independence of the country. And in the course of the past forty years, in the protracted struggle along the correct, independent, and creative lines of the Party, our people have again continuously waged heroic *nation-wide insurrections and people's* wars to win back and safeguard national independence and build up and defend the people's democratic system and socialism in our country.

Our people successfully carried out the general uprising in the August Revolution, overthrew the Franco-Japanese fascist rule and founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the first people's democratic State in Southeast Asia. Our people victoriously waged the first sacred war of resistance, defeated the French colonialists' war of aggression, liberated half the country and took the North to socialism. Our people have been

successfully waging the second sacred war of resistance against US imperialism, the most glorious and greatest war against foreign aggression in our national history, in order to liberate the South, defend the North, advance toward peaceful national reunification and contribute to the revolutionary cause of the peoples all over the world. Never in its history did our nation fight for such a long time, carrying out armed uprisings and revolutionary war during several decades as at this time. Neither did our nation ever before successively and successfully face such brutal aggressors as Japanese fascism, a powerful force in Asia, French colonialism, an old colonial power in Europle, and US imperialism, the leading imperialist power, the number one enemy of mankind.

Our people have displayed a heroic mettle, an ironlike determination and have won great victories. Those glorious victories are inseparable from the birth of the *Vietnamese working class*, the *leadership of our Party* and of *beloved and respected President Ho Chi Minh* and the historical conditions and contexts of the new era ushered in by the great Russian October Revolution.

In order to fulfil successfully the historic mission of defeating those brutal aggressors, for the sake of independence, freedom and socialism, our nation has *mobilized the force of the whole people* and, with superb heroism, carried out a just fight under the leadership of our Party. In conjunction with *organizing the political forces of the masses* and on the basis of this large political army, our Party has successfully solved the problem of the *military organization* of the people, successfully built up the *people's armed forces.*

Our people's armed forces are one of the very important factors that determine the victory of revolutionary struggle in our country. Its development lies within that of an armed uprising and revolutionary war aimed at implementing the Party's lines. Therefore, the analysis of *new developments in armed uprisings and revolutionary war* in our country is just the basis for a clear understanding of the creativeness of our Party and our people in the building of the revolutionary armed forces.

Our Vietnamese people have already experienced in the past people's uprisings and people's wars led by the feudal class. They also experienced people's uprising and people's wars growing out of peasant movements, a product of the combination of the peasant movement and the national movement.

Today, our nation has a *nation-wide uprising and people's war led by the working class*, a product of the combination of the great revolutionary trends in our country : the national liberation revolution and the socialist revolution.

Creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of the revolutionary struggle in our country, inheriting and developing the national tradition of glorious struggle against foreign aggression, our Party and our people have brought armed uprising and revolutionary war to a new level of development, and have given it a *new content and a new quality*, as regards political aims, as regards the forces involved and methods of struggle, and on account of its extremely great offensive power.

With regard to the *political aims* of uprising and war, the former uprising and national wars in our history were aimed at winning back and preserving *national independence*,

opposing the rule and aggressive wars of foreign feudalism and at the same time building, defending and developing the feudal system in the country. Through these uprisings and national wars, the peasants also won certain economic and political rights, but only within the frame-work of the feudal system, of the policy of "sparing the people's forces" advocated by the feudal class which was playing a positive role at the time.

The armed uprisings and revolutionary wars in our country in our time have other political aims. These are to overthrow the rule of imperialism and its agents, defeat the aggressive war launched by imperialism, achieve *national independence, people's democracy and socialism* and build up, defend and develop the people's democratic and socialist system in our country. Those political aims are also the basic and immediate tasks of the Vietnamese revolution set forth by the Party. According to the Party's revolutionary line, the task of national liberation is closely linked with that of winning democratic rights, the road of national liberation is closely linked with that of socialist revolution, the revolutionary task of our country is closely linked with that of other countries in the world. Armed uprising and revolutionary war led by our Party are aimed at liberating the nation, bringing full independence to the Fatherland and also at class liberation, bringing various rights and interests to the labouring people, primarily to the workers and peasants, while contributing to the revolutionary cause of the world people. These political aims of the uprisings and wars are the very purpose of the fight, the source of strength of the revolutionary armed organization and of the people's armed forces.

With regard to the *forces* involved, the former uprisings and national wars in our history had the great strength of "the whole nation joining forces", thanks to our people's ardent patriotism and sense of national cohesion, and led by progressive feudal groups who promulgated certain forms of democracy to mobilize the people in the fight against aggression. Therefore, our nation was able to defeat many aggressors several times as strong. Howere, this strength of "the whole nation joining forces" still had some limitations due to historical conditions and the antagonism of class interests between the feudal class and the peasantry.

The armed uprisings and revolutionary wars in our country in our time have a new strength, that of the *unity of the whole people based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class*. It originates from the profound indentity of interest between the working class and all labouring people and other strata of patriotic people, both in the task of winning back independence and freedom for the nation and in that of building the new social system. It is the strength of ardent patriotism combined with very high class consciousness, indomitable fighting spirit combined with creative intelligence of the broad masses of the people, primarily of the workders and peasants, in the struggle for self-liberation, national liberation, class liberation to win and preserve national sovereignty, the right to be masters of their own destinies. This is the strength of the new social system, the people's democratic and socialist system, with its clear superiority in every field incomparison with any exploiting regime. The strength of the people's armed forces is based on the invincible force of the unity of the whole people with the worker-peasant

alliance under the leadership of the working class, and on the superiority of the new social system.

In the present fight, our people also enjoy the *assistance and support of the world revolution*, first of all of the brother countries in the socialist camp, whereas our forefathers in feudal times could only rely on their own forces. This international assistance has become a very important factor for the victory of armed uprisings and revolutionary war in our country and for creating the great strength of our nation.

With regard to *methods of struggle*, our people have mastered the Marxist-Leninist view on revolutionary violence, inherited and developed the experience of our nation in people's uprising and people's war in former times, and created new methods of struggle to win victory. Those varied methods of struggle reflect the law of revolutionary violence in our country, the offensiveness and attacking force of the revolutionary currents in our country within the common offensive position of the world revolution. They are the methods of struggle in uprising and war with the participation of the forces of *the whole people, the whole nation, the whole country*, with both the political and armed forces, in both the rural and urban areas, with both the powerful people's army and the omnipresent armed forces of the masses, applying many forms of struggle on various fronts, primarily combining armed struggle with political struggle, thus creating the greatest possible aggregate strength to win victory. Those methods of struggle make up an original and creative mode of carrying out uprising and waging war, the original and creative military art of Vietnamese nation-wide uprising and people's war in the new times.

With its new content and new quality in regard to political aims as well as to the forces involved and methods of struggle, bringing into full play the strength of the four-thousand-year history of building and defending the country, the present day armed uprising and revolutionary war in our country are endowed with *completely new strength.* This strength has enabled our Party and our people to solve, successfully and brilliantly, a new and very important problem, which did not arise in our ancestors' struggles : *How a small nation, with a backward economy, can defeat aggressive wars waged by big imperialist powers, which not only have larger populations but also very developed economies, large economic and military potential, and armies that are numerically stronger and equipped with more modern weapons and technical materials.*

Both in the past and in the present epoch, our nation has had to oppose a smaller force to a larger one. Yet the situations are not the same. Aggressors in former times were usually stronger than ourselves but were under the same feudal system; they had larger armies, but their weapons and technology were not more sophisticated, and sometimes were less sophisticated than ours whereas present-day rulers and aggressors have been more powerful enemies for they are the big imperialist powers including the leading one, US imperialism. They wage unjust wars ; their social systems are reactionary ; but they have developed economies, modern industries, great economic and military potentials and their armies are many times as large and equipped with much more modern technical materials. Our country, in contrast, is small, our territory is not very vast, our population not very large. Our uprisings and wars are just ones ; after seizing power, our people have built up an advanced

political regime, but the economy is still backward, an essentially agricultural one, and the material and technical basis is very limited. This is due to the thousand years of feudal stagnation plus the nearly one hundred years of French colonialist rule and exploitation ; then, since seizing power, our people have had to wage wars for several decades, without having much time for peaceful construction and economic development in the whole country. That is why, in spite of the considerable assistance from the brother countries in the socialist camp, our people's conditions are such that they have to rely mainly on their own economy to defeat aggressors who are much more powerful with regard to economic and military potential.

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In the process of leading the revolutionary struggle of our people, in order to successfully carry out armed uprisings and revolutionary wars, our Party and President Ho Chi Minh have created, organized and trained the invincible and heroic *Vietnam people's armed forces.* Closely linked to the development of nation-wide uprising and people's war the Vietnam people's armed forces, the present military organization of our people, have undergone further development as regards their class nature, forms of organization, armament and equipment as well as their military art and combat power.

As regards the *class nature,* the former armed forces in our country involved in insurrections and national wars were mainly organized and led by the feudal class, and therefore had a feudal nature ; between the insurgent forces organized

by representatives of the feudal class, the army of the feudal State, and the broad masses there was identity of national interests and combat purposes. That was the source of the great strength of the national armed forces in the victorious fights against the rule and aggression of foreign feudal groups. However, there was also opposition in class interests between the army of the feudal State and the broad masses in the country, for the army was the tool of the minority, i.e. the feudal class, to rule over and enslave the majority of the nation made up of peasants. Therefore, the identity of national interests and combat purposes in insurrections and national wars had certain limitations, which could not but affect the combat power of the national armies in those times.

Our people's present armed forrces are *new-type armed forces, new-type military organizations,* organized and led by the Party of the working class, having a *working-class nature.* They are the people's military organization, primarily of the labouring people, above all the workers and peasants and of the various nationalities living on the Vietnamese land. Their combat aims are those revolutionary aims set forth by the Party. They are composed of cadres and fighters originating from the revolutionary classes, firstly and primarily from the workers and peasant masses. The are the tool of our Party and State — the people's democratic and socialist State — to carry out armed insurrection and revolutionary war under the leadership of our Party against the aggressors and their agents. Between the people's armed forces, the army of our State and the entire population, there is not only complete identity as regards national interests, and objectives in the uprisings and wars against foreign aggression, but also very high identity as regards class interests and combat purposes

in the tasks of building the country, building and developing the new social system — the people's democratic and socialist system in our country.

This identity of objective between the armed forces and the people in both external and internal tasks, the consciousness of both national and class interests, patriotism, attachment to the new social system and proletarian internationalism are all at the root of the *very high fighting spirit, of the revolutionary heroism* of the people's armed forces. That is why the Vietnam people's armed forces are really "faithful to the Party, loyal to the people, ready to fight and to sacrifice themselves for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. They fulfil every task, overcome every difficulty and defeat every enemy".[1] The invincible strength of our people's armed forces has its primary source in the leadership of our Party, in the revolutionary nature of the armed forces, in the intimate relations between the army and the people. Therefore, the most fundamental guarantee for the strengthening of the combat power of our army lies in strengthening the Party leadership, building solid Party organizations and intensifying political work in the army, and building it up in every respect on the basis of political and ideological work.

With regard to the *forms of organization of the forces,* our Party has creatively applied the Marxist-Leninist thesis on the military organization of the proletariat and inherited and develop the national experience of the past in organizing the armed forces. On the basis of the political and social conditions and of the material and technical foundations, it has successfully realized the intensive and widespread *arming of*

1. President Ho Chi Minh

the whole people, giving arms to the revolutionary masses, while building *the people's army,* organizing *three kinds of troops :* the regular troops, the regional troops and the *militia and self-defence units.* Our Party also organized the *people's armed security forces.* The *people's armed forces* originate from the political forces of the masses, which were gradually turned into the armed forces of the masses and gradually organized into the people's army. The *armed forces of the masses* developed from small detachments of militia and self-defence groups into a large force, on a wide scale, with increasingly higher level of organization and better equipment. The *people's army* developed from the original platoons and companies into a powerful army, with an increasingly larger scale of organization and more modern technical equipment. At the beginning it consisted only of infantry but it soon became a regular, modern army made up of various arms and services. The armed forces of the masses and the people's army are constantly and closely combined on various occasions: in nation-wide insurrection, in people's war as well as in national defence, in the war of liberation as well as in the war to defend the Fatherland.

The most prominent feature here is the *very broad mass character* of the people's armed forces. Following the Party's line of "unity of the whole people" and relying on the strength of the whole people in the fight for the revolutionary goals, our people have played a larger part in the combat than they ever did at any previous period of our national history. This is a "leap" in the development of the "mass character" of the revolutionary military organization born in revolutionary struggles referred to by Engels. After our people won power and founded a new-type State, the people's democratic and

socialist State led by the Party, the people's armed forces become an instrument of violence of our State to fight internal and external enemies, to defend the system, preserve the revolutionary power and safeguard the interests of the people. That is why the people voluntarily take part in the fighting to defend the State and the regime and the State can arm the people on a large scale, and on this basis build up a powerful people's army. Just as the founders of the military science of the proletariat predicted, the liberation of the proletariat will also have an effect in the military field, and will produce new-type armed forces with greater mass participation than those produced by the bourgeois revolution.

Our Party always pays attention to the question of the *material and technical basis, the equipment and armament* of the armed forces. For men and weapons are the essential factors of the combat power of the armed forces, of which men constitute the most essential and decisive factor. Engels said that the revolutionary effect in military organization comes through the invention of better weapons and the changes in the soldier, in the forces of men taking part in the fighting. The people's armed forces are a *community of men* having revolutionary consciousness, high morale, conscious and strict discipline, grouped into appropriate *forms of organization,* making use of all *weapons and means* at their disposal, and having appropriate *methods of fighting* to defeat the enemy.

Through armed insurrections and revolutionary wars in our country, there has obviously been a qualitative change in the people's revolutionary consciousness which helps create *new men* in the Vietnamese nation, *Vietnamese fighters* in the new times. But on the other hand, great limitations remain with regard to material and technical means. A striking success of

our Party lies in the fact that it always keeps in view the dialectic relationship between men, equipment and armament and methods of fighting ; it can clearly see and analyse the mutual effects of those elements so as to build up the most appropriate military organization. In conditions of a backward economy, our Party knows how to rely on the revolutionary consciousness of the people, the revolutionary spirit of the fighters, the very high morale of the troops, the mass character of the armed forces, the varied methods of fighting, to make use of and bring into full play all weapons and means at its disposal – rudimentary or relatively modern ones at first, then gradually more modern ones – in face of enemies equipped with automatic rifles and tanks, having artillery, air force and navy. Thanks to their bravery, their intelligence and their creative way of fighting, the armed forces of our people have made use and increased the power and effectiveness of various kinds of weapons and means, from rudimentary arms and instruments like bamboo spikes, stone traps, sticks carrying poles, etc., to more or less modern ones, the products of the technological achievements in the 20th century such as artillery, tanks, aircraft, missiles, etc., in their fight against the enemy.

With an army which is numerically weaker than the enemy, but supported by the armed forces of the masses and the large political forces of the masses in combined fighting, our people have defeated aggressive armies several times as large. With weapons and war materials that are inferior both in quantity and modernity, our people have defeated aggressive armies equipped with much more modern weapons and war materials. That is a remarkable achievement of the Vietnam people's armed forces, of the heroic Vietnamese people. That is also a remarkable achievement of Vietnam's military science.

worker-peasant army" and of a "worker-peasant self-defence corps". Thus from the very first day our Party has advocated *the arming of the masses and building of an army,* at the same time pointing out the class character of the organization of revolutionary armed forces.

Very soon after the founding of our Party, the country was swept by a revolutionary tempest which culminated in the Nghe Tinh Soviets (1930-1931). For the first time in our country's history, the worker and peasant masses under the leadership of the Party rose up and used revolutionary violence to overthrow the oppressive rule of colonialists, mandarins and local tyrants in a locality, and set up Soviet power, filling the colonialist and feudal rulers with dismay.

The Nghe Tinh Soviets lasted only a short time but their significance was very great. It may be said that this was a first step, and one which had a decisive influence on the whole development of our revolution. It affirmed the leadership of the working class of which our Parrty was the vanguard, and showed its capacity for leadership. It demonstrated the might of the worker-peasant masses, of the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class. It pointed out the road of violent revolution and the way of using the masses' revolutionary violence to seize power. It was a general rehearsal by our people under the leadership of the Party, a forerunner of the successful general insurrection fifteen years later.

Our people's *armed forces* during the revolutionary period of the thirties were in the form of *self-defence organizations*. These were the *seeds of the extensive armed forces of the masses and* also of the *revolutionary army* later on. At the same time the self-defence organizations were workers' and

Our people's armed forces have undergone a process of development from a small and weak force to a large and strong one, during decades of fighting full of sacrifices, hardships and glorious exploits : from the Nghe Tinh Soviets to the general uprising in the August Revolution, from the anti-French resistance war to the years of peaceful construction in the North, through the fight against the air war of destruction and the present patriotic resistance war against US aggression in both zones of our country. In the long and fierce struggle of our people against the most cruel and strongest aggressors of our times, our Party has based itself on the revolutionary tasks of each period, and on the specific forms of struggle and fighting objective in those periods, and solved in a creative way the problem of arming the whole people, building the people's army and arming the revolutionary masses in accordance with specific historical conditions and context. Our people's armed forces have gained many valuable lessons of experience, at each stage of their development they have solved the key problems arising from the fight in order to build up and increase their forces, to develop continually, to defeat all enemies, to perform glorious feats of arms and to fulfil all the tasks entrusted to them by the Party and the people.

Our Party affirmed its view on revolutionary violence upon its foundation in its Revolutionary Programme. It recognized that power must be seized through armed struggle and prescribed the way how revolutionary forces should be organized. In his *Summarized Party Political Programme* of February 1930, President Ho Chi Minh proposed the "organization of a worker-peasant army". Later on, *the Party Political Thesis* of October 1930 also clearly mentioned the "arming of workers and peasants", the "organization of a

However, we have always realized that an inferior material and technical basis is a very great deficiency which must be overcome. In the hands of the revolutionary armed forces, in the hands of cadres and fighters of the people's army, more modern weapons and equiment will greatly heighten the combat power of the people's armed forces. That is why, in the process of leading the heroic and long fight of our people, our Party always pays attention to improving the equipment of the armed forces, *to modernizing* the army. The way to solve the problem of equipping our armed forces is to rely on the masses, to fight with any weapons at one's disposal, to take arms from the enemy, to produce our own weapons when possible, while making most of the assistance of the brother countries in the socialist camp and gradually improving the equipment of our armed forces. Since our people seized power, our Party has relied on the new social system which has been gradually built up, on the developing economy in our country, and on the great international support for our country to renew the equipment of the people's armed forces on an ever larger scale and with more modern means. It might be said that the technical equipment of our armed forces reflects not only the economy and the level of development of the productive forces in our country but also to some extent, the economy and the level of development of the productive forces in the brother countries in the socialist camp. Therefore, the technical equipment of our people's armed forces has been gradually modernized ; not only is the people's army further equipped with modern weapons and equipment, but the armed forces of the masses are also equipped with a number of relatively modern weapons adapted to their needs and means so as to heighten their combat power.

peasants' organizations in the cities and the countryside, whose tasks and functions were indicated by their name : they were the masses' self-defence forces, with the task of protecting the masses during the various forms of struggle against the enemy.

The self-defence units played a great role. During the demonstrations and strikes by Phu Rieng rubber plantation workers in February 1930, the workers' self-defence unit fought against enemy troops who were put to flight after a French sergeant had had his arm broken, and the demonstration went on as planned. The success of the meeting held at Nha Be later in 1930, followed by the strike of 700 to 800 workers was due to "the intervention of the Nha Be workers' self-defence unit who fractured the skull of a policeman and threw away his pistol, thus forcing him to free the speaker who was able to finish his speech and continue the meeting till its end"[1]

In the Nghe Tinh Soviet movement, workers and peasants, armed with sticks, sickles, and pikes rose up to punish local tyrants, tear down offices of district chiefs and jails, lay siege to barracks and set up an administration... In many factories and villages, the best elements were selected from among members of workers' and peasants' associations, and the communist youth league to form worker-peasant self-defence units. The meeting of over twenty thousand people at Thanh Chuong (Nghe An) on September 18, 1930 to celebrate their victory was protected by more than 1,000 self-defence corps members.

Our Party fought against erroneous conceptions and mistaken actions as regards the organization of self-defence

1. Communique of the Party Central Committee of January 1931, Party Military Documents, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1969, p. 61.

units. Some condemned organization of self-defence units as rash act. In other places, temporary instead of permanent self-defence units were organized or, if permanent self-defence corps were organized, there was no political action among the masses or military training for them, etc.

About the arming of the masses, our Party pointed out, "When conditions are ripe, armed violence of the worker-peasant masses under the Party's command to seize power will necessarily break out"; "if no preparation is promptly made to arm the masses, the revolution cannot succeed". "While giving military training to the masses and preparing to arm them, a vigorous attack should be directed against the tendency to act rashly and concentrate on making rifles and handgrenades while neglecting daily political action among the labouring masses".

Regarding the forms of organization of the armed forces, the Party pointed out that "a worker-peasant self-defence corps is not like a guerilla force, neither is it a Red Army. While a Red Army or a guerilla force cannot be created immediately whenever we like, the self-defence corps can and must be organized without delay, however weak we are, as soon as there is any revolutionary agitation work carried out among the masses. No enterprise, no village with base organizations of the Party, Youth League and associations of the revolutionary masses should be allowed to remain without a self-defence force".

It is necessary to organize simultaneously permanent self-defence units and numerous self-defence forces of the masses.

About Party leadership and the class character of the self-defence corps, the Party pointed out: "The revolutionary worker-peasant self-defence force is to be put under the unified command of the Military Committee of the Communist Party Central Committee", "the revolutionary character of the self-defence corps should be carefully preserved". "The leadership of the Party in the permanent self-defence force must be maintained for this purpose the most resolute party and youth league members should be brought into the self-defence force and put into the command of this force. The unit chiefs and Party representatives should cooperate in the command. Daily action must be subjected to control by Party cadres of corresponding rank. General military activities must be subjected to the control of superior self-defence command levels and the corresponding Party Army Committee"[1]

It may be said that the above views were the *initial but fundamental thoughts of the Party regarding the building of our people's revolutionary armed forces*. These thoughts and the realities of the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement prove that at an early stage our Party and our people were creatively applying Marxist-Leninist thought on revolutionary violence, the *arming of the revolutionary masses and the building of the worker-peasant Red Army* to the concrete conditions of our country.

During the years 1936-1939, in face of the danger from the German, Italian and Japanese fascists who were making active preparations to launch a world war, our Party changed the direction of the struggle, and decided to temporarily put aside

1. *Party Military Documents* 1930-1945, People's Army Publisting House, Hanoi 1969, p. 113-120.

the slogans "overthrow French imperialism" and "seize land from the landowners for distribution to the tillers". The *Indochina Democratic Front* was founded, directing its opposition to the reactionary colonialists and feudal clique of king and mandarins, demanding democratic freedoms and improvement of living conditions, struggling against the fascist aggressors and for the preservation of world peace. The Party also changed the forms of struggle, moving from underground struggle to open struggle coordinated with underground activities, skilfully combining legal and semi-legal activities with illegal struggle. In this way, the Party succeeded in launching an unprecedentedly vigorous and widespread movement of struggle extending in both the towns and the countryside, enabling millions of people to be politically awakened, enhancing class consciousness among the worker-peasant masses and arousing the patriotism of the entire people. This was a rare situation in the conditions of a colonial country. Following the Nghe-Tinh Soviet movement of 1930-1931, the *building of political forces* and launching of a *political struggle movement* during the period of the Democratic Front of 1936-1939 was a further fundamental step in the preparation for our people's decisive struggle by political forces and armed forces, political struggle and armed struggle, during the next revolutionary period, *the period of preparation for an armed insurrection and the launching of a general insurrection to seize power.*

World War II broke out. While in Europe the French imperialists abjectly surrendered to the German fascists, and in Asia the French colonialists handed over Indochina to the

Japanese militarists, the Vietnamese people heroically rose up and fought against both the Japanese and French fascists.

Three uprisings broke out at Bac Son, Nam Ky, and Do Luong, heralding a new stage of struggle in our country.

In 1939, the 6th Congress and in 1940, the 7th session of the Party Central Committee judiciously decided on a shift in strategic direction. National liberation was put forward as the foremost task and the slogan of agrarian revolution was temporarily put aside in order to concentrate on the struggle against the imperialists and their lackeys. In the spring of 1941, its 8th session, presided over by Presdent Ho Chi Minh, completed the Party's strategic shift of direction in the new circumstances. The Congress affirmed that the revolution in the immediate future should be a *national liberation revolution* and decided on the creation of the *Viet Minh Front* which would include patriotic associations from different sections of the population. It also decided to build up and develop *revolutionary armed forces,* to organize *self defence units,* small guerilla groups for national salvation and *permanent guerilla* detacments, to set up *revolutionary base areas,* to intensify activities in all fields, to move gradually from *political to armed struggle* and, while closely coordinating these forms of struggle, to actively prepare for *an armed uprising* to seize power.

The nation-wide revolutionary movement was in a state of ferment. The Viet Minh Front, the *political army* of the revolution, developed rapidly and very vigorousy first of all in the countryside then, despite harsh repression by the French and Japanese fascists, in the towns. The *armed* forces of the

masses backed by the political force of the masses also expanded rapidly especially after the Party Central Committee's appeal "to get weapons and drive out the common enemy".

A large number of permanent guerilla detachments were organized. The *Bac Son guerilla detachment* created during the Bac Son uprising, was maintained and developed into a *National Salvation Army* by the end of 1940. With the creation of the Armed Propaganda Brigade for the Liberation of Vietnam in December 1944, our Party line of *nation-wide war and arming of the entire people,* of building *the army, and local armed forces* was clearly set forth in President Ho Chi Minh's instructions: "Because our resistance war is the work of the entire people, the entire people must be mobilized and armed. And so, when we assemble our forces to create our first troops, we should maintain the regional armed forces so as to coordinate action with them and give them assistance in every field...".

On March 9,1945, as foreseen by our Party, the French were overthrown by the Japanese. A vigorous patriotic movement against the Japanese fascists was growing throughout the country, the forerunner of the general uprising. The Vietnamese revolutionary tide reached a new height with partial uprisings and local guerilla wars in many places. The different armed forces were unified into the *Vietnam Liberation Army.* The organizations of *ordinary self-defence forces* and *combat self-defence forces* were expanding. Then the *liberated zone* came into being, comprising the provinces of Viet Bac, which became the

main revolutionary base for the whole country and was the seed of the future Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Thus, from the Nam Ky guerillas,[1] from the National Salvation Army, from the Armed Propaganda Brigade for Liberation, the Ba To guerillas, etc., the *revolutionary army was born* while the armed forces of the masses continued to be simultaneously formed by patriotic associations. For the first time in our country, *a revolutionary armed force, a new-type army*, really one of the people, came into existence, organized and led by the Party.

The Second World War was drawing to a close. The German and Italian fascists had surrendered; the Japanese fascists were approaching their end. On August 13, 1945, the 2nd National Congress of the Party, held at Tan Trao, decided on a general insurrection. The success of the insurrection on August, 19,1945 in the capital, Hanoi, had a decisive effect on the revolutionary situation in the whole country. The uprising spread rapidly to the towns and villages of all provinces from Bac Bo and Trung Bo to Nam Bo. The *general insurrection of August 1945* was a brilliant victory. The colonial rule which had lasted nearly one hundred years and the feudal rule of the past several thousand years collapsed within the space of some ten days. On September 2,1945 , in Hanoi, President Ho Chi Minh read *the Declaration of Independence: the Democratic Republic of Vietnam came into existence*, opening up a new era in the history of the Vietnamese people.

The general insurrection of August 1945 was an *uprising of the entire people* under the leadership of the Party of the

1 Created during the Nam Ky uprising of November 1940.

working class. Responding to the Party's appeal, our people rose up throughout the country, in the towns and the countryside, closely coordinating political and armed forces and seizing power by armed insurrection. "The August Revolution succeeded chiefly because the people's political forces had availed themselves of the most favourable occasion to stage an uprising and seize state power. But if, before that, our Party had not build up armed forces and created vast base areas to support the political forces and the movement of political struggle, and had failed to stage an armed uprising promptly when conditions were ripe, the revolution would not have been able to win victory as quickly as it did"[1]

The mighty *political army* of the revolution included millions of people throughout the country, and, with its extensive armed forces, was the main force which had brought victory to the insurrection. In the action of the masses who took up arms to overthrow enemy power by a direct attack, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the political and armed forces of the masses. It may be said that our people's *armed forces* during the August General Insurrection consisted of:

1. Units of the *Liberation Army;*

2. *Self-defence forces* and a multitude of *small guerilla groups* which embraced hundreds of thousands of people from patriotic associations throughout the country. In addition there were the forces of the broad masses who, when the occasion arose, stood up; with every available weapon — sticks, hatchets, hammers and sickles, pikes — to seize power.

1. "Political Report", Congress Documents, published by the Vietnam Workers, Party Central Committee, Hanoi, 1960, Vol. 1, pp. 145-146.

In this earth-shaking offensive *of the entire people*, the armed forces of the masses took a great leap forward. Their number had grown, their morale was high and they had a great offensive capacity. In these conditions our Liberation Army, though only a few thousand strong, enjoyed great prestige; they had tremendous fighting capabilities, could easily demoralize the enemy, and provide a strong stimulus to the insurrectionary movement of the revolutionary masses.

The experience of the August Revolution shows that in the conditions of a cononial country, where every democratic freedom is denied and the smallest weapon forbidden, it is very difficult, in the early days, to create a large revolutionary army to defeat the well-organized, well-equiped army of the colonialist rulers. Therefore, once the political objective of the insurrection has been correctly determined, it is necessary, in order to bring the entire people's uprising to victory, to have a strong political force, a powerful political army and on that base to build up extensive armed forces of the masses, and a revolutionary army of a certain level of organization.

The masses' large political army and their extensive armed forces became the main forces which allowed the insurrection to be victorious. This was because the Party had been building up and training these forces continuously all through its leadership of the revolution, it had acted with foresight and known when to seize the opportunity for an insurrection. "The opportunity for dealing the decisive blow, for starting an insurrection... is the moment when the crisis has reached its peak, when the vanguard forces are ready to fight to the end; when the reserve forces are ready to support the vanguard and when enemy ranks are utterly dislocated."[1] In these

1. J. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Su that Publishing House, Hanoi 1959, p.88.

circumstances, in face of the people's offensive power, the rulers have neither the will nor the capabilities to use their army to oppose the insurrection. To seize *the opportunity* is one of the key points in the art of staging an insurrection. In the August general insurrection, our Party had been able to foresee the opportunity for an uprising and had grasped it when it came; it had made thorough preparations and launched the insurrection at the most favourable moment. It was when fascist Japan had surrendered and the Japanese troops in Indochina had lost all fighting spirit, when the Japanese militarits there no longer had the will to use their army to oppose the insurrection, that the masses' political army and their extensive armed forces rose up and, using their strength in a decisive manner, overthrew the enemy regime and seized power for the people.

However, without a revolutionary army of a certain level of organization to serve as a shock force to attack and annihilate part of the enemy army and enemy administration which were thus to be paralyzed or broken up wherever they opposed the insurrection, we could not have mobilized the masses for an uprising and created favourable conditions for bringing the uprising of the entire people to victory. During the August Revolution at the same time as the partial uprisings and local guerilla war to prepare for the general insurrection, many armed clashes broke out between the revolutionary army and the reactionary army. Even at the time when the general uprising was breaking out, at the height of the masses' insurrectionary movement, many armed clashes between the revolutionary army and the reactionary army occurred in a number of localities. Therefore, the main force in an uprising is constituted by the political force of the armed masses; but

with the support of a revolutionary army, the insurrection novement of the masses receives effective assistance and encouragement and the uprising has more chance of succeeding . The use of a Liberation Army — though of small size — as a support was a good experience, a positive success, of the August Revolution.

To ensure success for the insurrection, it is also necessary to carry out propaganda work among enemy troops, to win them over to our cause, to paralyse and dislocate their ranks, demoralize them, and to reduce them to a passive, wavering mood, so as to prevent them from intervening against the masses' uprising, or to rally them to our own side. Lenin said: "Only when the worker-peasant masses and the best elements in the army (the enemy army — Author's note) coordinate their attacks, are favourable conditions created to stage a *successful insurrection*, that is to start an insurrection at the right moment".[1] *Propaganda work among enemy troops* is in agreement with the slogan of "worker-peasant-soldier alliance"; it is of strategic significance in an insurrection.

In a war when two armies are fighting against each other the situation is different. Though it is still necessary to do agitation work among enemy troops, the main task is to annihilate, to defeat the enemy. "A real victory of an insurrection over the military, (i.e. the enemy army)... in street fighting, a victory as between two armies, is one of the rarest exceptions... But in all cases, the fight was won because the troops failed to respond, because the commanding officers lost the falcuty to decide or because their hands were tied".[2] This

1."Insurrection in the Army and the Navy". K.Marx, F.Engels, V.Lenin, J.Stalin: *Military Essay*, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi 1964, p.72.

2. F.Engels: "Introduction" of "The Class Struggles in France", Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, pp.130-131.

work of agitation is mainly carried out by the masses' political forces and their armed forces with some support from the revolutionary army. The fact is that in the August Revolution, the insurgent masses relied on their overwhelming strength and the propaganda and persuasion work among enemy troops which almost paralysed the Japanese troops and their Vietnamese mercenaries by reducing them to a passive attitude before the masses and discouraging them from opposing the uprising. In a number of localites, Vietnamese soldiers serving in the enemy ranks joined the revolution. Agitation work among enemy troops must always be carried out. However, if those in power still have the ability and the will to use their troops to oppose the insurrection we must resolutely push forward our revolutionary offensive, we must intensify armed struggle and enlarge and strengthen the revolutionary army in order to defeat the reactionary troops, develop the armed insurrection into a revolutionary war and win victory for the people.

To speak briefly, in the August Revolution our Party led our people to victory in the struggle to seize power in the whole country because of its correct political line and its correct line in the organization of forces, because it seized the right moment for an insurrection and mobilized the entire people, using the might of the masses' large political army and their extensive armed forces.

The August Revolution was the first victory of Marxism-Leninsm in a colonial, semi-feudal country. It proves that in the *favourable international situation in our era, a small, oppressed and dominated people is quite capable of rising up and using the form of armed insurrection, to seize power and overthrow the regime of oppression and exploitation of the co-*

lonialist imperialists with their imposing administrative machine and their professional army equipped with modern weapons.

Shortly after our people had seized control over the whole country, when the new regime had hardly consolidated its power, the French colonialists returned to launch an aggressive war against our country.

Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's appeal, "Rather sacrifice everything then lose national independence and be reduced to slavery", our entire people stood up as one man, valiantly fought a resistance war to annihilate the enemy, save the country, preserve national independence, safeguard the newly-established people's power. The insurrection of the entire people in the August Revolution developed into a people's war, *a liberation war and at the same time a war to defend the Fatherland.*

The war of resistance against the French colonialist was a "protracted war launched on every font by the entire people relying on their own strength"[1]

The war broke out first in Nam Bo. The armed forces and people of Nam Bo, with unparallelled heroism, used rudimentary weapons such as sharpened sticks to fight against French colonialist troops equipped with heavy guns, tanks, planes, and supported by British and Japanese troops.

On December 19, 1946, the nation-wide resistance war broke out. Together with the population of towns and cities, our *people's armed forces*, poorly equipped and lacking experience but animated with a great spirit of sacrifice, waged an unequal but victorious fight to immobilize, decimate an annhilate the enemy.

1. Party Central Committee's Directives on the Entire People's Participation in the Resistance War, December 22, 1946.

The resistance war gradually shifted from the towns to the countryside. We tried to make vigorous attacks on the enemy, at the same time taking care to preserve our main force for a long resistance. Everywhere they went, the enemy met with strong opposition from *militiamen and guerillas*. With the population's assistance, they destroyed bridges and roads, harassed and decimated the enemy and evacuated the inhabitants from their homes at the enemy's approach.

Late in 1947, the French colonialists launched a large-scale attack against the Viet Bac region in an attempt to wipe out the main force and the leadership organs of the resistance, to destroy the resistance base of the whole country in order to end the war quickly. With major attacks by the main force and numerous minor attacks by regional troops, militiamen and guerillas all along the enemy lines, the armed forces and people of Viet Bac, acting in close coordination with the battle-fronts throughout the country, had by and large defeated the French colonialists' offensive in the winter of 1947.

The war took a turn favourable to us. The enemy who had hoped to win quick victory by rapid attacks now found themselves forced to wage a long war, so as to consolidate their rear on all three battlefronts in North, Central and South Vietnam. They put into action schemes for sustaining the war by the war and using Vietnamese to fight against Vietnamese. On our part, we penetrated deep into the enemy's rear and waged vigorous and extensive *guerilla warfare*. By dispersing one part of the main force as *independent companies and battalion-size groups* we were able to give strong impulse to the *militia and guerilla forces* and the regional forces in the enemy's rear. At the same time, we endeavoured to build up *mobile units*, and to push forward with mobile warfare. The

people's armed forces with its *three categories of armed forces* had definitely taken shape.

The victory won in the battle for the frontier zone of autumn and winter 1950 was a mark of the great progress of the three categories of armed forces, especially the regular army. Organized on a larger scale, with improved equipment and armaments, our army had, for the first time, launched a major offensive, annihilating an important part of the enemy's crack mobile forces, breaking up their frontier defence line and liberating a vast territory. The people's war had evolved from guerilla warfare into *conventional warfare*. With the founding of the People's Republic of China, our victory in the battle for the frontier zone had put an end to the imperialist encirclement of the Vietnamese revolution. Our communication lines with the socialst countries were open.

The Second Party Congress early in 1951 took many decision on fundamental questions of the Vietnamese revolution and of the long drawn-out resistance. They Party's correct policies,which were applied following the Congress, and particularly, its policy on agrarian reform, stimulated the labouring peasant masses to stand up with an enhanced revolutionary spirit so as to defeat the imperialists and the feudal clique. An added vigour was given to the mobilization of manpower and resources for the resistance and for the building of the armed forces. The people's war had gained a renewed force enabling it to completely defeat the French aggressors, even though these had received important aid from the US imperialist since 1950.

Large-scale offensives and counter-offensives were repeatedly launched by the regular army, especially in Bac Bo,

the principal battlefront. Guerilla war was also intensified on all battlefronts. The population in many places in the enemy's rear, with the militia, guerilla and regional forces as its core, closely combined *political struggle* with *armed struggle* and staged *armed uprisings* to liquidate the puppet village administration, wipe out enemy posts, set up people's power and so turn the enemy's rear into our front lines. Guerilla war went thought a new stage of development, in close coordination with conventional war, especially in the major campaigns. While the revolutionary movement in the countryside was intensified, the movement of struggle in the urban areas continued to develop.

By the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954, a great strategic counter-offensive was launched throughout the country, in several strategically important directions. *Both conventional war and guerilla war were intensified and waged in close coordination. Our army* and people won great victories on all battlefronts. At Dien Bien Phu especially, we annihilated an important part of the enemy's crack mobile force in Indochina. The resounding victory at Dien Bien Phu, a historic battle of decisive strategic importance, together with the victories won on other battlefronts, dealt a finishing blow to the enemy's will to continue their aggressive war. It changed the whole character of the war and brought the resistance war against French aggression to glorious victory.

The experience of the August Revolution and the resistance war against French aggression allow us to draw the following conclusion as regards the *forces* used in an insurrection and a revolutionary war. The principal force used in the August insurrection was the political army of the masses and their extensive armed forces, but in the people's war against French

imperialist aggression, the principal force was the *people's armed forces based on the political forces of the great union of the people and coordinating its action with these political forces*. This is because in general an insurrection is an uprising of the masses, while a war opposes two armies. Evidently, in a people's war there are also uprisings of the masses and in an insurrection of the entire people battles between the armies of the two sides also take place. In the resistance war against the French colonialist, our people skilfully combined armed forces with political forces. The political forces were the base of the *armed forces and the three categories of armed forces constituted the backbone of the resistance in a war by the entire people*. Our people skilfully combined armed struggle with political struggle, military operations with uprising, with *armed struggle as the essential form of struggle*.

During the years of resistance, our Party worked hard to build up the *people's armed forces*. On the basis of the people's political forces with the worker-peasant alliance as their foundation, under the leadership of the working class, our people's armed forces, created during the days of preparation for an armed insurrection to seize power, made a big leap forward in the first years of the people's power, and were tempered and rapidly developed during the long resistance war. The Liberation Army became the *Vietnam People's Army*, the regular army of our State. The *self-defence units and the militia and guerilla forces were* growing continuously. *The three categories of people's armed forces*, the main force, the regional forces and the militia and guerilla forces, became increasingly strong.

The regular army is the essential fore, it is mobile force used on the important battlefronts over the whole country. It

has the task of annihilating the enemy's regular army, especially their strategic mobile force, dealing staggering blows at their armed forces, liberating territory, and uniting with the guerilla forces so as to change the situation of the war. These actions have a strategic importance as a means to smash the enemy's will to wage a war of aggression and win complete victory for the resistance. The regular forces and conventional warfare also created conditions for a vigorous development of guerilla warfare and stimulated the masses' political struggle and armed uprisings as well as the work of agitation among enemy troops and enemy administration.

In the resistance against French aggression, our main force grew from small units in the beginning to a strategic mobile force composed of battle-hardened mobile combat groups with continuously improving equipment, good training, high morale and great fighting power, capable of annihilating several enemy battalions or regiments in a battle. Our mobile combat groups which engaged the enemy for the first time in the frontier campaign (1950) and then in other major campaigns such as Hoa Binh, Tay Bac, etc,. acting in close coordination with the regional armed forces and the three categories of armed forces, proved to be extremely effective, and greatly contributed to the progress of the resistance war. The Dien Bien Phu battle showed the very advanced stage of development reached by our strategic mobile forces in the resistance war against French aggression. While our army and people were winning great victories in many aspects, our crack mobile combat groups on the Dien Bien Phu battlefront, reinforced by technical units and with the strong support of the entire people, wiped out the biggest enemy stronghold in Indochina.

The regional forces built up in accordance with concrete conditions and concrete tasks on each battlefront, in each region, constitute the backbone of the *armed struggle in the regions*. Organized into strong units, the regional forces operate inside the region, now concentrating their forces, now scattering, acting in close coordination with the militia and guerilla units and the main force to annihilate the enemy and sustain and develop guerilla war, and coordinating action with the masses' movements of political struggle and insurrection to foil enemy attempts to pen up the population and pressgang the youth . They protect the people and safeguard the people's power, preserving manpower and resources to serve the resistance.

From the armed propaganda groups, independent compaines and battalion-size groups of the first years of the resistance, the regional forces in provinces and districts had shown a steady development. Their equipment and armaments were continuously improving, chiefly by means of captured enemy weapons.

The regional forces had annihilated many enemy platoons and companies, taken many enemy posts and, in the last phase of the resistance war, they were even wiping out whole enemy battalions.

Militia and guerilla forces are the extensive armed forces of the people. They coordinated with the regional forces to wage *guerilla war* and cooperated with the masse's political forces in operations to liquidate the puppet village administrations and traitors and organize *uprisings* to seize local power . The militiamen and guerillas did not leave production work, they made use of all kinds of weapons, and

varied forms of combat to launch well-timed attacks against the enemy troops in their localities, decimating or annihilating the enemy in the villages and the streets wherever and whenever they showed themselves, and even in their supposedly safe rear. To local militia and guerilla forces are also bases for building the people's army and developing regular warfare.

During the resistance against French aggresion the militia and guerilla forces greatly increased in number and improved their fighting capabilities. Based in the increasingly numerous combat villages, skilfully using rudimentary weapons which were gradually improved, they annihilated many enemy sections and platoons and by the end of the resistance war, whole companies in some places. In cooperation with the regional troops, they became more effective. They built up, maintained and expanded guerilla zones and guerilla bases. They defended the liberated zone, defeated enemy sweeps and attempts to seize territory and intensified the people's war in the regions. The militia and guerilla forces and the regional forces played a very important role during the long resistance war, especially in crucial periods such as 1948-1949, when the Party decided to launch a guerilla war in the enemy rear, and later behind the enemy line during the campaigns of Hoa Binh, Dien Bien Phu, etc.

The development of the people's armed forces into three categories of forces, the *regular forces and regional forces* forming the *people's army, the militia and guerilla forces* being the *armed forces of the masses*, show that our military organization during the people's war against French colonialist aggression was an organization of the entire people.

In that war, the organizational relations between the regular forces, regional forces and militia and guerilla forces during the development of the revolutionary armed forces, as well as the coordination between the three categories of forces, that is between the people's army and the armed forces of the masses, are linked with the process of the development of the resistance from a guerilla war to a regular war, and the close coordination betwen the two in order to defeat the enemy.

The experience of the resistance war against French aggression shows that the *coordination between the regular forces, the regional forces and the militia and guerilla forces, between regular war and guerilla war* is an outstanding feature of a people's war making it possible to mobilize the entire people against the enemy, and to use the added power of fighting a just war, the liberation war, on one's own territory. It prevented a professional army with a large number of troops and modern equipment from waging a classical war and making the most of its strenth and capabilities. The aggressors had to deal not only with the revolutionary army but also with an entire people who had risen up to join their revolutionary armed forces in a resolute resistance in all fields. The aggressor troops were submerged in the ocean of the people's war. They faced a war without front line and without rear, with a battlefront which was nowhere and everywhere. The inherent contradictions of all aggressive wars, between dispersal and concentration, occupation and mobility, further deepened. The large aggressive army, well-equipped with modern arms, became ineffective. Not only were they unable to destroy the people's armed forces, but in addition they were increasingly decimated and were finally defeated by the three categories of the people's armed forces supported by the entire people.

Thus, with a people's army numerically inferior to that of the enemy but supported by the masses' extensive armed forces, our people waged an *all-embracing resistance war by the entire people*, with a close coordination between guerilla war and regular war, and defeated the French colonialist army, nearly half a million strong and equipped with the most modern means of warfare.

This was the first victory for a national liberation war in a colonial country. It proves that in our era, *a small nation with no vast territory and no large population and no developed economy, is quite capable of waging a revolutionary war to defeat an old-type colonialist war of aggression.*

Following the great victory of the resistance war against French aggression, the North was entirely liberated, with the complete structure of an independent State and moved to *the stage of socialist revolution and socialist construction in conditions of peace*. Meanwhile our people were continuing their efforts to complete the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country, as the South still remained under the rule of the US imperialists and their agents.

After completing agrarian reform and the restoration of national economy, our people in the North began socialist transformation and socialist construction, carrying out the most profound and thorough revolution in our history. With agrarian reform essentially completed, the exploitation of man by man was fundamantally eliminated, new relations of production were established and the socialist ownership of the means of production was achieved. The material and technical bases of socialism were gradually built up. In the North, our people's political and moral unity was stronger than ever. Patriotism,

the love of socialism, and the new socialist man's consciousness of being collective master, were continuously enhanced. In their construction work and their combat, our people enjoyed increasing aid from fraternal countries in the socialist camp.

The new progress of the people's armed forces is related to the development of society in the North in the historical conditions described above. They are the *military organization for national defence of the entire people of an independent state engaged in socialist construction in conditions of peace.* Their function is to serve as the tool of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat to defend the socialist North and to work toward revolution in the whole country, ready to foil all the schemes of US imperialism.

To build up the army, to consolidate national defence in conditions of peace and under a socialist regime, was a new experience for our Party and our people. In the past, our people had for many centuries, gained experience in building an army and consolidating national defence in peace time in an independent country, but that was under a feudal regime. Since our Party came into being, our people have been fighting continuously for several decades. We have gained most precious experience in building armed forces to stage an insurrection and seize power, in the conditions of a country still under colonal and feudal rule and afterwards in waging a long liberation war, in the conditions of the an increasingly consolidated people's democratic regime.

At present, our Party and people have successfully solved a new problem.

In conditions of peace, our people's foremost task is to concentrate on building up the country and building a socialist

economy. That it why a most fundamental question in building the army and consolidating national defence in this period is to find a *correct solution to the question of relations between the economy and national defence.* Only with a strong economy can we have a strong national defence. Conversely, only with a strong national defence can we protect our people's peaceful labour, build up the country and ensure the security of the Fatherland. The relations between the economy and national defence must be established in accordance with the situation of a temporarily divided country, the South still being subjected to foreign aggression and the North having to be rapidly built up into a strong base for revolution in the whole country, in the conditions of a small country which must be ready to fight against US imperialism, a powerful aggressor, and to win victory. Therefore, while building the economy, we have to take into consideration the needs of national defence, with regard not only the the direction and tasks of the general economic plan, and the division into major economic regions,... but also to the different branches – industry, agriculture, communications and transport and cultural and social activities.

At the same time, we have to prepare, in the organizational field, to move from a peace-time economy to a war-time economy.

With respect to the building of the army and the consolidation of national defence, our Party holds firmly to the idea of a *people's war and national defence by the entire people. It has armed the entire poeple in the new conditions, at the same time building up a powerful people's army and arming the revolutionary masses*, strengthening the *three categories of peoples' armed forces*, in keeping with the new

situation and new tasks. With the extensive armed forces of the entire people whose members continue their production work, and a well-trained army with a strong combative spirit, we can have a strong national defence force at the same time as keeping sufficient manpower for production work, building and developing the economy. This is the only correct national defence policy for a small country like ours, which in peace-time must strive to develop the economy and in time of war must wage a victorious opposition to strong imperialist enemies.

We must have a thorough grasp of the necessity of closely coordinating the economy with national defence in the present situation, when peace has been restored in the North but our country is still partitioned and the aggressors remain in South Viet Nam. This thorough grasp is indicative of the high vigilance of our peopel who are well aware that they have to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of the socialist North, to be ready, even in peace time, to smash all enemy schemes, and at the same time, to be fully prepared and determined to liberate the country.

In accordance with this policy, our Party decided on the *building up of a powerful people's army which should develop into a regular, modern army, the organization of extensive militia and self-defence forces, and the building up of strong reserve forces.*

A number of men were demobilized to take part in production in the rear; meanwhile we have been working to consolidate a *standing army of adequate size and high morale.* Many army units combine military preparedness with the task of taking part in building the economy. In place of voluntary

recruitment, our State has instituted *compulsory military service* – the duty of every citizen to defend the Fatherland– so as to build a powerful *reserve force.* Soldiers who have been demobilized or transferred to civilian service are registered and classified, according to their qualifications, as reserve officers or soldiers. We have reorganized and consolidated the *militia and self-defence forces*, speeded up the organization of combat communes, villages and town districts, and strengthened the maintenance of security and order. Our young men are given basic military training, and sports and physical education with a bearing on national defence are encouraged. *The people's armed security force* is being organized.

Regarding the strengthening of the people's armed forces in the North and the role of the people's army, the Resolution of the *Third Party Congress in 1960* specified: *"The people's army* is the State's main force to safeguard national independence and protect the peaceful labour of the people in the North, and it also provides a strong support to the struggle for reunifying the country. We have to further consolidate national defence, make the standing army into a regular, modern army, consolidate the people's armed police forces and at the same time consolidate and develop the militia and self-defence forces and build up reserve forces."[1]

On the basis of the achievements of the socialist revolution and socialist construction in every field, the people's armed forces in the North were rapidly developed.

The formation of a *modern regular people's army* marks a new progress for the people's armed forces in this period. Our army, the revolutionary army of a socialist state, has

1. Congress Documents published by the Vietnam Workers' Party Central Committee, Hanoi 1960, Vol, I, p.190.

become a modern army with several services and arms, with an army, air force and navy; the army includes infantry, artillery, armour engineering corps, signal corps, anti-chemical units, transport corps... Regulations have been laid down concerning the organization of the various services; the troops fighting spirit and discipline have been heightened. The *regular army* is thus organized into powerful army corps with increasingly modern armaments and equipment, growing mobility, better and better coordination between different services and great fighting power. The regional troops, consolidated and better equipped, are raising their fighting capacity. Supported by the people's patriotism and love of socialism, with the institution of military service, the powerful reserve forces and the extensive militia and self-defence forces, the people's army has a vast source of manpower and can rapidly expand its forces.

The militia and sefl-defence forces also developed vigorously following the establishment of new relations of production in the countryside and the towns. They are the *armed forces of the masses* in the conditions of socialism extensively organized among the labouring people. The *militia and guerilla forces* are the armed organizations of the collectivized peasants. The *self-defence and combat self-defence forces* are the armed forces of the workers in factories, enterprises, mines, construction sites, State farms, of cadres and workers, employed in government organs and of the labouring people in the towns. The members of militia and self-defence organizations and of reserve forces have a high political consciousness and a relatively advanced cultural level. They are well ogranized and well trained, armed with different kinds of weapons including modern ones, and have developed

suitable methods of fighting. Thus, they have great capabilities for fighting in their own localities or reinforing the permanent forces.

In 1965, when the "special war" was threatened with total failure in South Vietnam, the US imperialists brazenly used their air force to attack the North and sent an expeditionary corps to invade the South. So began the fight of our people in the North against the US imperialists's war of destruction. This was part of the nation-wide resistance war against US aggression, and at the same time it was a war to defend the socialist Fatherland against the enemy air force.

In the war of destruction against the northern part of our country, the US aggressors have mobilized an important part of their modern air force and navy. They have dropped on the North millions of tons of bombs, committing unpardonable crimes against our people. In a continuous escalation of the war, they attacked different regions and then the capital itself, the heart of the whole country. The US aggressors imagined they could subdue our people with their great military power.

They were grossly mistaken. The Vietnamese people, with their tradition of heroic struggle against foreign aggressors, have never submitted to any invader. Our army and people in the socialist North, responding to the call of President Ho Chi Minh that "Nothing is more precious than independence and freendom", resolutely rose up and waged a *land-against-air people's war.*

That was for us an entirely new form of people's war. *The whole people fight against the enemy air force and navy, the whole people carry out defence and participate in efforts to maintain communication and transport, they are working and*

fighting at the same time, protecting the rear and serving the front. That was a new development of the people's war in our country. In the anti-French resistance, we fought a people's war in the conditions of a newly-established people's democratic regime, when people's power had just been conquered but not yet consolidated, and our country was surrounded by the imperialists. In the present time, we are waging a people's war in the conditions of a newly-established socialist regime, when our completely independent state has been consolidated and developed through ten years of peace, and is receiving importan aid from fraternal countries of the socialist camp. During the resistance against French aggression, when we had to fight chiely against the enemy land forces, our entire people participated in the war and we defeated the French imperialits army of aggression equipped with more modern weapons. In the present time, our entire people are fighting chiefly against the enemy air force, and we have to deal with one of the most modern arms of the US imperialist armed forces.

Our Party decided to *mobilize the forces of the entire people and to move the country into a state of war so as to intensify the people's war*. We rapidly expanded *the people's armed forces* to meet the urgent requirements of the resistance. We *changed the direction of the economy,* dispersing national industry and developing regional industry. We evacuated the inhabitants from populated areas and priority target areas of enemy attacks and we *coordinated fighting with production,* increasing production even while we were waging war. Our Party pointed out that, whatever the circumstance, *we must continue to lead the North toward socialism*, in order to strengthen the resistance in all spheres, allow the Norht to play

its part in the nation wide revolution, and at the same time, prepare for the long-term building of the country. The three revolutions were pushed forward. Socialist relations of production were increasingly consolidated; the people's political and moral unity was continuously enhanced; the material and technical base of socialism was gradually strengthened. Our Party and people have striven to make good use of the superiority of the socialist regime in all aspects, so as to fulfil all the tasks of the people's war against the US war of destruction.

The development of the forces of the entire people at war, of the *military organization,* of the role of the people's army and of the masses' armed forces during this period was related to the characteristics of land-against-air people's war in the conditions of the socialist regime, to the characteristic of the resistance war against US aggression for national salvation carried out by our entire people throughout the land.

In the first place, there has been an outstanding development, in a short time, of the *people's army air defence forces and air force,* the anti-aircraft units in the regular army and regional forces. This force was the backbone of the land-against-air people'war supported by the extensive militia and self-defence forces. Our air defence force and air force equipped with anti-aircraft guns of various calibers, modern missiles, jet planes and many modern technical means, form mobile and fixed units to shoot down enemy aircraft and to protect the chief targets of enemy attacks. Many major battles were fought by mixed combat groups including several branches of our air-defence service and our air force, with the support of infantry troops belonging to the regular army, the regional forces, and the population to defend important points

of communication lines, industrial centres and big cities. Our young air-defence force and air force have won great victories. That was a new form of regular warfare by our army in the "land-against-air" people's war.

While our air-defence force was maturing rapidly, our *military transport force* was also passing through a vigorous development. The army transport force included several modern branches: transport, engineering, air defence, infantry... Subjected to violent attacks by enemy planes, the military transport force, together with the people's communication and transport forces, have fought with great heroism and intelligence to maintain communications in all circumstances, fulfilling their duties on communication lines throughout the country, from the rear to the front.

The *regular army corps,* with several technical branches, have made marked progress in building up a modernized force with greater fighting power, ready to fight against the enemy anywhere and to smash all enemy military ventures. The *regional forces* have shown a rapid expansion, and improved their organization, equipment and fighting capabilities. Many provinces have their own anti-aircraft units which have shot down many enemy planes, landbased batteries which have sunk enemy warships and engineering units which graetly contributed to maintaining communication and transport lines.

With the people's patriotism and love of socialism, with the newly-established system of military service, we have satisfactorily carried out *war-time mobilization* rapidly expanding the peole's armed forces on the basis of the large reserve forces set up in peace time. Responding to the sacred call of the Fatherland, in order to defend the socialist North

and fulfil their duty toward the nation's holy resistance war, the flower of our youth, in large numbers from the countryside to the towns, from cooperatives and enterprises, government organs, school...have left for the front, to serve in army units or shock youth groups; they have been fighting valiantly, working with self-sacrifice on every battlefront and accomplishing brilliant military exploits.

Organized and well prepared in peace time, the *masses' armed forces* developed very rapidly in war time both quantitatively and qualitatively. Their equipment was markedly increased and improved. In many communes firepower teams and groups have been organized by the militia force, equipped with rifles, machine-guns, small-caliber anti-aircraft guns, ground artillery...there were also specialized teams and groups for engineering, reconnaissance, first aid...In many places, there are mobile forces, each operating on the area of a commune. In many factories and enterprises strong self-defence forces rgranized in a rational manner engage in production work and fighting at the same time, making effective use of a number of modern weapons.

The militia and self-defence forces played a great role during the war. In the "plough in one hand and rifle in the other". "hammer in one hand and rifle in the other" movements, young and old people, men and women in the countryside and the towns, from the plains to mountain regions, actively participated in shooting down enemy planes. They formed a low-altitude anti-aircraft fire network which covered the whole country and protected the population and production; they also closely cooperated with the air defence force and the air force in forming a fire network for different alititudes and directions, one which was mobile and able to

fight in different conditions, covering large areas but concentraiting on the defence of a number of objectives to shoop down US planes flying at different altitudes, over all areas, in all circumstances. Using infantry weapons, militiamen and guerillas have shot down many modern US jet planes and captured a large number of pilots. The shooting at enemy planes flying at low altitude was clearly a new form of guerilla warfare in the land-against-air people's war. Militiamen and guerillas have also captured or annihilated many enemy commando groups and defused tens of thousands of tons of US bombs and mines, of the latest types. In the context of a socialist regime the masses' armed forces have greatly increased their fighting capabilities.

It may be said that the very fact that militiamen and guerillas using machine guns and rifle have brought down modern US jet planes over North Viet Nam also explains why a small, underdeveloped country whose army is not so well equipped has been able to defeat the aggression of a big imperialist power with a large army equipped with modern weapons.

The militia and self-defence forces took part not only in the fighting but also in other tasks on other fronts of the people's war; ensuring communications and transport; organizing people's air defence; maintaining law and order, together with the people's armed police; building combat communes and villages, protecting local production and the population's lives and properties; playing a crucial role in production etc., thus contributing a very important part to the defeating of all enemy schemes in the war of destruction.

The people's armed police force created in peace time rapidly developed and played an important role during the war. With increasing vigilance, it has fulfilled its tasks of guarding the provisional military demarcation line, the frontier and islands, maintaining order and security, fighting valiantly and working with self-sacrifice, bringing down enemy planes, capturing pilots, anihilating or capturing groups of bandits and commandos...

Our people enthusiastically participated in fifhting and serving the front, contributing millions of work days to build roads, build earthworks, transport supplies, give first aid and offer every possible assistance to the troops. They worked hard to increase production and develop the economy, culture, education, the medical service, maintaining normal living conditions even as the war was raging. Our army and people have demonstrated revolutionary heroism in fighting and serving the front, ensuring communications and transport, organizing people's air defence and also in production work and the building of a new life.

The US war of destruction was a severe test for the socialist regime and the military organization built up in the North in peace time. Coordinating our war effort with that of our fellow-countrymen and the Liberation Army in South Vietnam, receiving important aid from the fraternal countries in the socialist camp, our army and people in the North have won great victories. The US aggressors have suffered an ignominious defeat in their criminal war of destruction. Their dark schemes were smashed. Over 3,000 modern aircraft of more than 40 different types, including the latest models in use for the first time, were shot down over North Vietnam A large number of firstrate pilots from the US air force were

killed or captured. The socialist North remained as strong as a steel wall, its ecomomy and defence were further consolidated. As a powerful base for the revolution in the whole country, it carried on its glorious task of serving the great battle front, and with the participation of the army and people in the entire country, has brought ever greater victories to the resistance war.

The victory of our people's war against the war of destruction in the socialist North was a victory of our people in the whole country. It was of great significance not only to our people but also to the world. It was a victory of our Party's political and military line, its line of resistance against US aggression for national salvation and of socialist construction, and its correct independent, creative foreign policy.

Unlike the August Insurrection and the resistance war against the French , this was the first time when our Party *led to victory a land-against -air people's war* on the basis of the socialist system. *On the strength of the militant solidarity of the entire people, with , as the backbone, the modern regular people's army consisting of regular and regional forces acting in coordination with militia and self-defence forces, these extensive and mighty armed forces of the masses with the use of weapons of all kinds, modern and relatively modern, have defeated the US air war of aggression.* Our army and people have made a new development, in new conditions and circumstances of the art of using a small force to attack a large one, using few to oppose more and using less modern weapons to defeat more modern weapons.

The first tasks in a war to defend the Fatherland is clearly to *shift the whole country from peace-time conditions to war-time ones*. The most important tasks are the *mobilization of the entire people* with a view to expanding the people's armed forces, and the *reorientation of the economy*, the organization of a *war-time economy* in order to meet all the needs of the war and of the people's life in war time. The success of the shift of the country to war-time conditions depends firstly on a correct solution of the relations between the economy and national defence and secondly on the comprehensive preparations made, even in peace time, on a national and regional scale. The strengthening of the rear in its economic, political, material and moral aspects is a sure guarantee of supply of men and material to the front. A strong rear is undoubtedly one of the most important factors of victory in any war, especially in a patriotic war.

In the aspect of military organization, the people's armed forces reached a fairly high level, because unlike the armed forces in the general insurrection and the liberation war, they had been organized, built up and prepared in peace time, taking advantage of the favourable conditions of an independent, sovereign State and of a gradually built and consolidated socialist regime.

In the insurrection and the liberation war, our people rose up and fought with bare hands. For that reason, in the beginning we had to enlighten and mobilize the masses, organize a political force and, on that basis, build up revolutionary armed forces, in the first place the armed forces of the masses, from which the revolutionary army was gradually formed. In the wake of the victorious insurrection and the revolutionary war, we gradually raised the level of the armed forces in every field, Thus a political struggle generally develops into an armed struggle and a combination of the two,

and a guerilla war generally develops into a regular war and a combination of the two. In the insurrection and during the liberation war, the armed struggle was always closely combined with political struggle, uprisings with combats and annihilation of enemy forces with seizing power for the people, etc.

In the war for the defence of the socialist North against the enemy air force, we had from the beginning *a modern regular army* which was fairly strong, consisting of regular forces and regional forces, built up in peace time and rapidly expanded after the war broke out. We also had extensive armed forces of the masses made up of millions of militiamen and self-defence units in all towns and villages, who had also been organized, built, equipped and trained in peace time. The building of revolutionary armed forces is based on our people's patriotism and love of socialism and on the concrete policies and regulations decreed by the people's power.

Because we had a modern regular people's army and extensive armed forces of the masses, *regular warfare* and guerilla warfare were from the beginning waged *simultaneously and in close coordination.* The people's war against the war of destruction had shown the *importance of the role played by the people's army* and regular warfare. Air defence and air force units of the main force have fought many major battles, destroying a large number of enemy aircraft and defeating their successive escalations. The expanded regional forces with new fighting capabilities, were the core of the people's war in the regions. *The militia and self-defence forces also played a crucial role in combat* in communications and transport and in people's air defence and service of the front.

It is certain that in a land combat against an enemy army, all arms and services of the people's army, together with the armed forces of the masses, will fight with all their might and coordinate action in an effective manner to defeat the enemy and defend the Fatherland.

Naturally, in the war for the defence of the Fatherland, in order to make the most of the power of the entire people, the entire country, and build up the greatest possible combined forces, we are able to apply the experience gained during the insurrection and the liberation war. For the war for national defence in our country like *the liberation war,* is a people's war fought by the entire people in every field. On the other hand when, during the liberation war, we had a revolutionary base, a liberated area developing into an increasingly vast free zone, the characteristics of a war for the defence of the Fatherland also appeared and developed.

The great victory of our army and people in the socialist North proves that a *small country with an under-developed economy, whose army has little modern equipment and technique, but which has a correct revolutionary line, and is determined to fight for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, relying on the power of the entire people with the people's army and the armed forces of the masses as backbone, and enjoying international sympathy and support, is quite capable of waging a people's war to defeat a war of destruction by the modern air force of US imperialism.* Our people's victory in the North and that of our fellow -countrymen and combatants in the South have shown the great potential of the people's war which can defeat any aggressor.

Our people's nation-wide resistance against US aggression took the form of a national liberation war in South Vietnam and a war for the defence of the socialits regime in the North. The realities of this resistance war and the extremely rich experience gained have helped us solve correctly the question of building up the people's armed forces and consolidating national defence with the participation of the entire people: in the short term to protect the North and bring the war of resistance *to total victory* and in the long term, to provide a strong defence for the independence of the Vietnamese Fatherland.

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Our people's *revolutionary war in South Vietnam* was started over ten years ago. It is a *liberation war* against the US imperialists' neo-colonialist war of aggression, waged in order to liberate the South, fulfil the tasks of the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country, and by contributing to the defence of the socialist North, to advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country.

The war in South Vietnam was waged by our fellowcountrymen and combatants against a new enemy, the US imperialists, and a new form of aggressive war, the neocolonialist war of aggression. It was waged in the new conditions, when our people had successfully carried out the August Revolution in the whole country, won victory in the resistance against the French and liberated half of the country. The North was carrying out a socialist revolution and was building socialism, becoming a powerful revolutionary base for the whole country and a member of the socialits camp. Our

revolution was receiving increasingly important aid from the fraternal socialist countries. The international situation was favourable for the revolutionary forces in the world, had become far stronger than the counter-revolutionary forces and were launching a continuous offensive against imperialism, with the US imperialists at its head.

For these reasons, the revolutionary war in South Vietnam has made great strides forward and gained immensely in strength. The growth of *South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces* is linked with the conditions of the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam in the different periods outlined above: simultaneous uprisings, people's war against "special war", people's war against "limited war", people's war against "Vietnamized war".

In the years 1959-1960, our people in South Viet Nam rose up in arms, staging simultaneous uprisings in many places all over the countryside. The force which carried out these uprisings was the *political army of the masses supported* by small *armed self-defence units*. This political army which had been painstakingly built up during the revolutionary movement preceding the 1945 general insurrection and had rapidly developed during the August Revolution and the resistance against the French colonialists, was further tempered during the first years of the fierce struggles against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. It had high morale, great fighting spirit, and a rich experience of struggle. The population in the different regions took advantage of the moment when the weaknesses of the puppet regime, with its deep internal contradictions, were openly displayed and valiantly rose up and staged local uprisings, coordinating the political forces with armed forces, with the *political forces playing the main role*. The powerful

movement of simultaneous uprisings overthrew the local puppet administration in several regions although the central government still had hundreds of thousands of troops and a ruthless organization of fascist repression at its disposal. The policy of domination by means of classical neocolonialist methods had failed miserably.

When the US imperialists launched a " *special war"* to carry on the aggression against South Vietnam, the simultaneous uprisings of our people there developed into a *liberation war.* Fully grasping the laws of development of the revolution and the revolutionary war in South Vietnam and having carefully studied the US imperialists' neo-colonialist war of aggression our people, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation, intensified the offencive which they had started with the simultaneous uprisings. *They greatly increased the combined political and armed forces, intensified both the political struggle and the armed struggle, and attacked the enemy with armed action and political action, while carrying on agitation work among enemy troops in all three strategic areas :* highlands, plain, and urban areas.

With the existence of a large and strong political army of the revolutionary masses, the South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces grew up rapidly. Units of the *Liberation Army* in different localities, and units of the main force for all South Vietnam were built up. *Guerilla, militia and self-defence forces* were organized everywhere. The *three categories* of the liberation armed forces gradually came into shape. The weapons used by these people's armed forces were of poor quality, most of them captured from the enemy or home-made.

The people's war was intensified in many places all over the countryside. The army and people in South Vietnam closely combined political with armed struggle, they staged attacks and uprisings and intensified *guerilla warfare* and *partial uprisings*. They decimated or annihilated the puppet forces, defeated the "heliborne" and "armoured troop-carrier" tactics, won control over the base levels, broke up two-thirds of the "strategic hamlets" and shook the puppet central government to its foundation. The movement of struggle in the urban areas including the big cities was intensified in coordination with the revolutionary movement in the countryside. *The large political army* and *the extensive armed forces of the masses* were playing a most important role . Even the enemy had to admit that the "Viet Cong" were past masters in the art of guerilla warfare".

The character of the war was moving continuously in our favour. Torn apart by more and more acute internal contradictions the enemy increasingly found itself in an impasse. The US imperialists were forced to "change horses in mid-stream", and liquidated their henchman Ngo Dinh Diem.

The people's war further developed with the appearance of *mobile regular forces* of the Liberation Army. Battles involving large concentrations of troops were fought at Binh Gia, Dong Xoai, Ba Gia, during which whole units of the enemy regular forces were wiped out. The revolutionary war gained new offensive power.

The close combination of the political and armed forces, of the armed forces of the masses and the Liberation troops brought about a new situation. The whole puppet army and the whole puppet administration were threatened with total

collapse, although the number of their troops had increased to 550,000 and the Liberation forces had not much increased numerically and were only beginning to engage in major battles involving large numbers of troops. This was because our people's local political and armed forces were then very powerful, the masses's movement of political struggle and insurrection was mounting, and guerilla warfare was highly developed. At the same time the regular troops which has just appeared on the scene already had a high prestige, great offensive power, great capabilities in threatening, overwhelming and annihilating the enemy, and they had been making continuous attacks and winning victories.

Faced with the brankruptcy of the "special war" strategy, the US imperialists were forced to dispatch a huge expeditionary corps to South Vietnam in an attempt to save the situation.

Thus, in the new conditions and circumstances of the years 1960-1965, the revolutionary war in South Vietnam developed from a political struggle into an armed struggle and a combination of armed and political struggle, from an armed insurrection into a liberation war and a combination of liberation war and armed insurrection, from guerilla warfare to pitched battles and a combination of pitched battles and guerilla attacks. The South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces were also created from political forces; during the war the armed shelf-defence units of the insurection days grew into three *categories of forces. The regular forces and the regional forces formed the South Vietnam Liberation Army; the militia, guerilla and self-defence organizations* formed the *armed forces of the masses*. With the support of the political

forces and in combination with them, the South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces played an important strategic role in the masses' *partial uprisings* to overthrow the puppet administration at the base levels and seize power for the people, as well as in the *military offensives* to defeat various categories of puppet forces under the command of US "advisers".

When the US aggressors were forced to introduce US troops en masse into South Vietnam, and use their air force to attack the North, launching the biggest and most brutal "limited war" in their history of aggression, our people and their revolutionary armed forces throughout the country had to face an unprecedentedly serious challenge. The US imperialists are the strongest of all the imperialists with the greatest economic and military potential in the capitalist world, with a large army equipped with most modern weapons. They gradually mobilized a total of one million US, puppet and satellite troops including 500,000 US troops, for the aggression against South Vietnam. For this war, they spent hundreds of billions of dollars, and used tens of millions of bombs and shells and all the most sophisticated types of weapons and means of warfare, except nuclear weapons.

Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's sacred appeal to fight against US aggression, for national salvation, faithful to their traditions of indomitable courage, our entire people from North to South rose up in close unity, determined to fight to save their country and homes, to fulfil their sacred national duty and their lofty internationalist obligations.

Our army and people have made a correct evaluation of the US imperialists' schemes and the balance of forces. We have assessed the enmy's strong and weak points,

their difficulties and contradictions, and we know our own advantages and difficulties, our strength and our strong position. On that basis, our army and people are united in their determination to completely defeat the US aggressors by continuing their offensive strategy and fighting against the enemy's large and well-equipped army.

The Vietnamese people's patriotic resistance war against US aggression became the front line of the struggle of the people of the world against the US imperialist aggressors. The peoples of the socialist countries and progressive peoples the world over were closely united with our people in the struggle against the common enemy. The strong sympathy, support and assistance from progressive mankind was a decisive factor which helped us win victory in the patriotic resistance war against US aggression.

On the South Vietnam battlefield, relying on their two strategic forces, the US expeditionary force and the puppet troops, with the US troops as the main force, the US aggressors launched a violent counter-offensive in an attempt to annihilate the revolutionary forces, especially the regular units of the Liberation Army. At the same time they continued the perfidious "pacification programme" in order to enslave our people by keeping them under tight control. They carried out a so-called "war on the military and political fronts", an "all-out war", combining ruthless military operations with deceitful economic and political schemes and perfidious psywar tricks.

The people and army of South Vietnam pushing forward their offensive, used their victorious position to *intensify their political struggle and armed struggle* to defeat all schemes and manoeuvres of the US imperialists. The South Vietnam

people's liberation armed forces stepped up *major engagements involving large numbers of troops and guerilla warfare*. They attacked US, puppet and satellite troops and combined big, average and small operations. They annihilated large numbers of enemy troops and destroyed a great quantity of war material, giving strong support to the movement of political struggle and the uprisings to seize power for the people. Less numerous than the enemy and not so well equipped, the South Vietnam liberation forces dealt the US expeditionary corps stunning blows at Van Tuong in Central Trung Bo on the Tay Nguyen highlands, in Eastern Nam Bo and in the Quang Tri-Thua Thien region... The increasingly extensive campaigns of the Liberation main force and the guerilla activities of the regional forces took place in all theatres of operations. A vigorous movement of political struggle had been launched in the cities, especially Da Nang and Hue. The US expeditionary corps soon lost their initial aggressiveness; they received unexpected blows and suffered defeat after defeat. The 1965-1966 dry-season counter-offensive by 200,000US troops was smashed, the "search and destroy" strategy was a failure, like the "break the Viet Cong backbone" strategy and the "pacification program". The liberation forces opened the Tri-Thien front and continued vigorous attacks on all fronts. The 1966-1967 dry-season counter-offensive by 300,000 US troops was again smashed, the "search and destroy" and "pacification" strategic operations failed completely.

Just when the escalation of the US war of aggression, at its hightest point in both North and South Vietnam, had met with failure, the *general offensive in the spring of 1968* by the South Vietnam army and people broke out like a thunderbolt, rocking South Vietnam and the United States.

This unique, creative and perfectly mounted strategic attack by the South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces, in coordination with mass insurrections, dealt decisive blows at the "limited war" strategy and brought a historic turning point to the course of the war.

In the people's war against the "limited war", the task was to intensify the military struggle and closely coordinate the military struggle with the political struggle so as to inflict a military defeat on the US imperialists. To achieve this, the *South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces* further developed their forces in both quantity and quality, in organization and equipment and in the art of warfare.

The *regular forces* of the Liberation Army were given new services and were organized into increasingly powerful mobile army corps. The *regional forces* were expanded and strengthened. The *militia, guerilla and self-defence forces* saw a vigorous and extensive development on all fronts. Elite units made their appearance. The armament and equipment of the armed forces were markedly improved. As a result, all the *three categories of armed forces,* to varying degrees, were able not only to annihilate enemy infantry troops but also to destroy tanks and armoured vehicles and shoot down enemy planes. The experience gained at each stage of the combat was studied. The determination and confidence of the cadres and combatants were continuously strengthened in the fighting against the US aggressors. The cadres' capacity for organization and command was steadily improving. The entire army and people, with all the three categories of the liberation armed forces, were galvanized by an emulation movement to attack the US aggressors, annihilate puppet troops, to become valiant anti-US combatants.

The South Vietnam Liberation Army benefited from the favourable strategic situation inherent in the fighting of a people's war, and benefited also from the immense force resulting from a combination of armed struggle and political struggle. With great fighting spirit and using sufficiently large number of troops supported by the extensive armed forces of the masses and the people's large and powerful *political army,* it dealt the US expeditionary corps, the puppet and satellite troops heavy blows, and gradually brought them to defeat.

On the battlefields, the regular forces of the Liberation Army could concentrate their forces in a rational manner, and frequently used a small force to attack a larger one in order to decimate the enemy, it could use the combined forces of different services or the forces of a single service operating independently. The regional forces developed their combat methods so as to win great victories. By using small, well-tried units the South Vietnam Liberation Army has dealt the enemy painful and dangerous blows. They have annihilated a large number of US troops and destroyed a large quantity of modern war material, inflicting severe losses, particularly on US command organs US officers and technical personnel, US aircraft and technical equipment of the latest type. With the regional forces as mainstay, the militia, guerilla and self-defence forces gave a new impulse to guerilla warfare, making the most of rudimentary, relatively modern and modern weapons and developing most varied methods of annihilating the enemy. Many creative, effective methods of people's warfare were applied and developed: attacks with concentrated forces, guerilla raids, attacks against the enemy rear, communication lines and towns, a combination of fighting with agitation work within the enemy ranks.

In each region and in the whole of South Vietnam, there was coordination between *mobile forces* and local forces, so that they could be advantageously deployed, a *strategic posture* which should combine solidity and mobility on all fronts, especially over the most important sectors in all three strategic zones. The local armed forces consisting of strong units of the regional forces, extensive militia, guerilla and self-defence organizations with the firm support of the political forces and in close coordination with the local political forces, from the mountains to the plain and from the countryside to the towns, brilliantly succeeded in dispersing US, puppet and satellite forces over a wide area, immobilizing them in all places, encircling, attacking, decimating, annihilating them and destroying a large quantity of war material. At the same time, the Liberation Army mobile forces, using increasingly big concentrations of troops at different battlefronts, dealt the enemy heavy blows, annihilating great sections of the enemy forces.

In the people's war in South Vietnam, the enemy were relentlessly beaten, encircled and cut up, they were continuously attacked and decimated. The US expeditionary corps, the puppet and satellite troops, totalling over one million, with most modern equipment, could not fight as effectively as they wished. They were in a situation when their immense army proved to be insufficiently large, when apparent strength proved to be weakness. They attacked but could not hit the right target and were increasingly decimated by the South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces. Their forces were dispersed, their offensive power continuously decreased, and they were forced to return gradually to the defensive. They wanted to end the war quickly but were compelled to prolong

it. Their large and modern army was reduced to a more and more passive posture. It was suffering increasingly heavy losses and was gradually being put to defeat by a highly developed people's revolutionary war. At the same time, their modern air force and navy were dealt deadly blows in our people's land-against-air war in the North. Our army and people won glorious victories in the fight against the huge military machine of the US imperialists. Our people defeated the biggest US "limited war" of aggression at the stage of its highest escalation in both parts of our country.

The "limited war" strategy was defeated. The Johnson administration had to deescalate the war, unconditionally end the bombing of the North, return to a defensive posture in South Vietnam and carry out a "de -Americanization" of the war in an attempt to find a way out of the impasse.

Nixon, an unscrupulous and obstinate politician, on coming to power in the United States shifted to a "Vietnamization" of the war hoping to prolong the war of aggression and continue the enslavement of our people in South Vietnam by maintaining the US neo-colonialist rule.

The "Vietnamization of the war" strategy was but a continuation of the neo-colonialist war of aggression with new methods, the application of the so-called Nixon doctrine to the US imperialist war of aggression against South Vietnam. That most reactionary doctrine was the US imperialists' new global strategy for the seventies, appearing at a time when they were suffering repeated defeats in their aggression against Vietnam, and when the changing balance of forces in the world was more and more unfavourable to them. The objective of the Nixon doctrine was to maintain the US imperialists' role of

world gendarme and enable them to continue to implant their neo-colonialism in the world with new methods and manoeuvres: to rely on US might and at the same time to make satellite countries contribute more men and material.

To carry out the "Vietnamization" of the war, the US imperialists and their henchmen concentrated forces for the realization of their ruthless pacification programme, which was regarded as the main strategic measure to enslave our people in South Vietnam. The US imperialists' perfidious scheme was to make Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese, to feed the war by the war, to use the blood of their lackeys together with US dollars, bombs and shells to serve their dirty interests. They endeavoured to build the Saigon puppet army into a modern army to be used as the main strategic force in South Vietnam, a shock force in Indochina which should gradually replace US troops in land combat. The Nixon administration also brazenly ordered an invasion of neutralist Cambodia, an intensification of the war in Laos, and the extension of the aggressive war to the whole of Indochina. The United States endeavoured to "Khmerize", "Laotianize" these wars and, encouraging the collusion between the Saigon puppet and Cambodian puppet forces, and between the Thai reactionaries and the Lao and Cambodian puppets, organized a kind of regional alliance among the puppet forces, using Indochinese against Indochinese, Asians against Asians.

In the wake of their victories, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, well aware of the characteristics and laws of development of the war in the new stage, the army and people of South Vietnam further intensified the strategic posture of offensive

of the people's war in order to defeat the enemy's "Vietnamization" strategy. *In all three strategic zones*, our army and people in South Vietnam *greatly intensified and closely combined armed struggle and political struggle: they carried out attacks accompanied with uprisings and uprisings accompanied with attacks while at the same time stepping up agitation work among enemy troops*, with a view to annihilating and disintegrating the enemy forces, winning power for the people, expanding the liberated zone, and defeating the enemy.

Our army and people closely coordinated their resistance war with the revolutionary struggle of the armies and peoples of fraternal Laos and Cambodia, in oder to defeat the Nixon doctrine as applied in Indochina. The offensive of the revolutionary war in South Vietnam developed into that of the people of the three Indochinese countries who shoulder to shoulder fought against the common enemy. The Lao people's patriotic war won new and brilliant victories. The Cambodian revolution had made a big leap forward.

In the process of defeating the enemy plan to "Vietnamize" the war, the *South Vietnam Liberation Army*, with a sufficient number of troops and great fighting capabilities, greatly increased their fighting power to meet the new requirements of the revolutionary war: the weapons used were more and more modern, the technical branches developed vigorously, the capacity to mount concentrated attacks with coordination between different arms was enhanced. The victories won by the South Vietnam Liberation Army in early 1969 caused a large number of US casualties and dealt the aggressors a heavy blow in the first days of the Nixon administration. From 1970, after Nixon sent US troops to Cambodia and Laos, the

revolutionary armies of all three Indochinese countries, used powerful regular army units to launch repeated attacks against the enemy and won resounding victories. Despite strong US air and logistic support, despite their increased US-supplied equipment, the puppet forces suffered defeat after defeat. Not only the Vientiane and Phnom Penh puppet troops suffered heavy losses, but the Saigon puppet troops, the backbone of the "Vietnamization" strategy, the shock force of the Nixon doctrine in Indochina, were severely defeated. The great victories of the peoples of the three countries, especially the resounding victory on Highway 9 in Southern Laos, had a great strategic significance opening the prospect of defeating the "Vietnamization" strategy and the Nixon doctrine in Indochina by military means.

While the enemy were making strenuous efforts to enlarge their reactionary armies and other forces of repression to build a thick network of military posts to control the population and carry out their ruthless pacification programme in the countryside, the role of the *people's war* in individual regions of the country and that of the *regional armed forces* became more and more important. In many vast areas of the South Vietnamese countryside, our army and people closely combined armed with political struggle and pushed forward the three converging prongs of the offensive in order to smash the "pacification programme". Greatly encouraged by the victories of the main force, the militiamen and guerillas, more and more strongly supported by the regional forces, carried out the slogan "the cadres stick to the people, the people stick to the land, the guerillas stick to the enemy". They raised the guerilla war, the people's war at the base level to a higher stage of development, annihilating and decimating important

regional reactionary forces, and taking many enemy posts. They coordinated their action with the movement of political struggle and insurrection to win power for the people, eliminate wicked elements, break the enemy's grip, disintegrate enemy civilian defence forces and overthrow the puppet administration at the base level. The revolutionary forces of the masses were firmly maintained, consolidated and developed. The regional people's war checked the enmy pacification programme. Severely defeated, the enemy were forced to draw back. While the regular forces of the Liberation Army were winning great victories and the regional people's war was increasingly intensified, the *movement of political struggle* of the urban population in South Vietnam underwent a remarkable development both in scope and in depth, with new and varied forms of struggle.

During the past three years, since Nixon came to power and carried out the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, our army and people in South Vietnam have won great victories. In 1971, when they hoped to have fundamentally completed their "Vietnamization" plan, the US imperialists and their lackeys, suffered the most severe defeats, despite the great efforts made by the Nixon administration on all fronts. Our people won tremendous victories, and the "Vietnamization of the war" suffered a severe setback. This proves that the strategy of "Vietnamization" and the Nixon doctrine contain many insoluble contradictions and insuperable weaknesses. Nixon's strategy of "Vietnamization" was nothing but an illusion. *In the political field*, he hoped to be able to use the neo-colonialist bait of independence and freedom to camouflage the fundamental contradictions between our people and the US aggressors. At the very moment when our entire

people were closely united in their patriotic fight against US aggression and when the above contradictions were most acute, he hoped to use lackeys without any national feeling to carry out the policy of "making Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", to serve the interests of the US aggressors. In *the military field*, when the United States with over one million US and puppet troops had been defeated, and had to gradually withdraw US troops, Nixon hoped to turn weakness into strength, defeat into victory, to put puppet troops back on their feet and use them to replace US troops. Countered by the heroic struggle of our people, a people with a long tradition of national unity and unshakable determination to oppose foreign aggression, who in the wake of their victories were in a position of strength and constantly on the offensive, the "Vietnamization" strategy, the main test of the Nixon doctrine, was bound to fail miserably. Our people in the whole country, in close unity with the brother peoples of Laos and Cambodia, persevered in their resistance and intensified the war, determined to defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and the Nixon doctrine in Indochina and to win complete victory.

Looking back, we can say that in the revolutionary war in the South our people have synthesized the experience gained over the past decades in military and political struggle, in armed insurrection and revolutionary war and in military organization. Well aware of the laws of revolutionary development and revolutionary methods of action in South Vietnam, and the laws of development of US neo-clonialism and of the US neo-colonialist war of aggression, the people and army of South Vietnam have brought all this experience to a higher level, in a new situation. In the revolutionary war

in South Vietnam, our people have increased their great total force derived from the *close combination of political forces with armed forces, waging simultaneously an armed struggle and a political struggle, combining insurrection with war and war with insurrection in order to win victory*. In accordance with the concrete situation at each stage of development of the war, the army and people of South Vietnam combined the armed forces with the political forces in a flexible and creative manner and repeatedly defeated all forms of neo-colonialist war of aggression, even at the peak of US aggressive war.

The resistance war for national salvation against US aggression achieved a high degree of mobilization and arming of the entire people. Relying on the great power given by the correct line followed by the people's democratic national revolution in South Vietnam, and the superiority of the socialist system in the North, our people have built up *political forces* tested by many years of struggle, increasingly better organized and developing with ever greater vigour; on that basis we have built ever more powerful *people's armed forces* consisting of the well organized extensive *armed force of the masses* and a continually modernized regular *revolutionary army*. Those forces played different roles, on different battlefields at different stages of development of the resistance war. But generally speaking, in *the revolutionary war in South Vietnam both the armed forces and the political forces have played a fundamental and decisive strategic role*; in the South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces, the *Liberation Army composed of the regular army and the regional forces and the armed forces of the masses made up of militia, guerilla and self-defence forces have played a great strategic role and are becoming more and more important as the war develops.*

Their defeat in the war of aggression against Vietnam and Indochina is the worst defeat the US imperialists have met with in their history of aggression. Our people's great victory in the struggle against US aggression, for national salvation proves that *in our era, a small nation is quite capable of mobilizing the forces of the entire people, the entire nation, closely combining the political and armed forces, the revolutionary army and the masses' armed forces, carrying out a political struggle and an armed struggle, armed insurrection and revolutiionary war, in order to defeat the neocolonialist war of aggression by the great imperialist powers including the biggest one, the United States.*

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Looking back at the process of revolutionary struggle, the process of development of armed insurrection and revolutionary war and of the people's armed forces in our country during the last forty years, we feel extremely proud of our Party and of venerated President Ho Chi Minh, of our people and our nation, As I said above, never before in their 4000-year history of building and defending the country, has our nation been so continuously engaged in insurrection over so long a period. We can say that never before in our history had our nation successively defeated in the space of a few decades three most brutal aggressors, including US -imperialism, that cruel and unscrupulous world gendarme, a country which possesses the greatest economic and military potential on earth.

In order to win victory in the nation-wide insurrection and people's war, our Party has combined its work of propaganda, education and organization with the building up of the *political forces* of the masses–regarding these as a fundamental necessity in all stages of the revolutionary struggle–and of the *people's armed forces*. It has solved the question of *military organization*, considered as another essential factor.

Our ancestors used to say that "the whole nation joining forces" led to "everyone a soldier". So today our Party is carrying out the line of "unity of the entire people", organizing" *the entire people to fight against the aggressors*", making "*each village, each commune a fortress*", "*each street a front line*", "*our 31 million fellow-countrymen 31 million valiant combatants*".

Our Party has extensively carried out *the arming of the entire people*, building up the *people's army* and at the same time, *arming the revolutionary masses*. This has been done in different circumstances and conditions of struggle, different with regard to the enemy and the form of aggression used by them, with regard to our way of using revolutionary violence, the situation in our country and in the world, and the balance of forces between us and the enemy. Originating from the political organizations of the masses, starting from small self-defence units and from secret armed organizations at the base level, our people's armed forces have developed into a mighty revolutionary armed force with a most brilliant fighting record, a glorious tradition of loyalty to the Party and the people, and of invincibility. These armed forces are made up of a well-tried *people's army* consisting of an army, air force and navy which are more and more modernized and the *extensive and powerful armed forces of the masses*, which are

organized everywhere and use varied types of weapons including a number of modern ones.

In their growth and in their fighting record in different conditions and circumstances of struggle, our people's armed forces have adopted different concrete forms of organization and varied positions and roles. Each day they have attained a higher and higher level but they have always been made up of a *union between two fundamental parts*:

First, the *people's army* consisting of the regular army and the regional forces.

Second, the *armed forces of the masses* consisting of the extensive militia and self-defence organizations.

The realities of insurrection and war in our country show that *arming the entire people* means arming the broad masses and building up a people's army. The *people's army* has many advantages over the masses' armed forces: strong organization, high discipline, careful training, relatively advanced technical equipment, unified command and leadership, great fighting capabilities and high combat-readiness. On the other hand, the *armed forces of the masses* have advantages over the army as a result of their close coordination with the masses whose power is their direct support, and their use of the most varied weapons and a multitude of fighting methods anywhere and at any time.

To build the people's army and at the same time to arm the masses is to simultaneously build up the *backbone force and the extensive forces, the mobile forces and the stationary forces* in order to defeat large armies of aggression possessed of modern equipment, high mobility and great firepower. We must build a force to serve as backbone and a mobile force

for the whole country and also a backbone and mobile force for each region. We must build stationary forces everywhere in all three strategic areas in the highlands and the plain, in the countryside and the urban areas. The mobile force to serve as backbone for the whole country is *the regular army*. The mobile backbone force for each region is the *regional force*. Thus the people's armed forces consist of *three categories of forces*: the regular army, the regional forces and the militia and selfdefence forces. The regular army and the regional forces form the *People's Army*. The militia and self-defence forces are the. *armed forces of the masses*. On the national scale, the regular army is the mobile force while the regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces are the stationary forces. The regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces form the *regional people's armed forces*. On the regional scale, the regional forces are the mobile forces, while the militia and self-defence forces are the stationary forces. The relation between the regional force and the militia and self-defence force in a region reflects the relation between the people's army and the masses' armed forces on the national scale.

The combination of the people's army with the masses armed forces and vice versa is clearly the form of military organization most suited to the full realization of the power of the *entire people, the entire country, the entire nation*. As the combination of political forces with armed forces, of political struggle with armed struggle and of armed insurrection with revolutionary war is the fundamental form of revolutionary violence in our country, so the combination of the revolutionary army with the masses' armed forces is the military organization best suited for uniting the armed forces

with the political forces, armed struggle with political struggle and applying the methods of insurrection and war as well as the military art of the entire people's insurrection and people's war.

The above-mentioned realities and exprience bring us to this conclusion: *the combination of the revolutionary army with the masses' armed forces and vice versa, the building of the three categories of the people's armed forces, these are laws of organization and employment of the people's armed forces which will allow the full realization of the force of the entire people, the entire nation, the entire country in an insurrection of the entire people, in a people's war as well as in national defence by the entire people, in the liberation war as in the war for the defence of the Fatherland by our nation, a small nation which has had to struggle against domination and wars of aggression by big imperialist powers.*

The creativeness of our Party and people with respect to the arming of the revolutionary masses and building of the people's army springs from the Marxist-Leninist thesis on mlitary organization by the proletariat and the continuation and development of our ancestors'experience on building armed forces. Our Party has closely combined modern proletarian military science with our own original national tradition, correctly applied this science and this experience to the realities of our people's struggle in the new circumstances and historical conditions of our era. That is why the very high development of armed insurrection and revolutionary war and of the present military organization in our country, under the leadership of the Party, is a necessary and logical development of our people's history and tradition of struggle in an era when

the Vietnamese working class has become the authentic representative of the nation. Under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, our people have maintained and gloriously developed their heroic tradition of struggle against foreign aggression. The insurrection of the entire Vietnamese people and the people's war under the leadership of the Party of the working class are the culminating point of armed insurrection and revolutionary war in our country. *They are the insurrection of the entire Vietnamese people and the people's war in the new era, the Ho Chi Minh era.*

Our people's repeated victories in the fight against three imperialist powers testify to the *great might of the people's war* under the leadership of the working class and their Marxist-Leninist party in this new era of the history of mankind and to the *invincible power of the people's armed forces*, the new-type military organization of the working class, the labouring people and the oppressed peoples who have taken up arms and fought to liberate themselves and build a new society.

With the great power of insurrection and national war of the national army and the armed masses, our ancestors gloriously succeeded in reconquering and preserving national independence. They defeated enemies who were much stronger, but who like us, were also under a feudal regime and whose forces of production and technical base were at the same stage of development. Nowadays, with the new power of the insurrection of the entire people and the people's war under the leadership of the working class, the new power of the entire people united under the Party banner, the new power

of the people's army and the masses' armed forces, our Party and people have gloriously succeeded in the great mission entrusted to them by history. Relying on the force of the entire people of a small nation whose economic potential, material and technical base were inferior to the enemy's, taking advantage of the superiority of the new regime, our Party and people have defeated aggressive armies of big imperialist powers, armies which are superior in number and are equipped with more modern weapons and means of warfare.

In order to solve this most important strategic problem, our Party has *thoroughly grasped and correctly solved the dialectical relationship between the organization of forces and the material-technical base, between men and weapons*, as has been analysed above. In war, victory is generally won by armies which fight for a just cause, and besides are greater in number, armed with more sophisticated weapons and supported by a more highly-developed economy. But a main characteristic of our country has been the fact that in our insurrections and wars, our nation has won victories fighting against an enemy superior in number and equipment. Today we are winning victory even though we are poorly equipped, or not so well equipped as the enemy who has up-to-date weapons and is supported by a more highly developed economy. The secret of that brilliant success lies in the fact that our Party has known how to relate men to weapons, and has realized that, although weapons constitute a very important factor, men are the determining factor. The Vietnamese man, the Vietnamese combatant in the new era, has a new political consciousness and a high fighting spirit. The new social system, the people's democratic regime and the socialist

regime have great vitality and superiority in all aspects. The new-type military organization allows the mobilization of more people than ever before in our history to fight against the aggressors. The combination of the army with the masses' armed forces has further developed the military art of the people's armed forces and has a radically revolutionary content, an intense spirit of offensive, creative and original fighting methods. These new acquisitions formed the basis on which the power of the entire nation, of the people's armed forces could be developed even when we were still poorly armed and equipped. As a result, when the entire nation has risen up, the entire people's armed forces have a tremendous power and can defeat an enemy like the US imperialists, who are superior in number and equipped with most modern weapons. Never before in our history had we faced a one-million strong army of aggression equipped with the most modern weapons like the US expeditionary corps and the puppet troops. Never had our people confronted an enemy with so great an economic and military potential as the US imperialists. But our army and people have won increasingly great victories, and will certainly win complete victory.

The military victory of our people, of the people's armed forces has shattered bourgeois military thinking according to which weapons and technique play a decisive role in war, and it proves the correctness of proletarian military thinking which holds that it is men who play a decisive role. It shows the superiority of proletarian military science over bourgeois military science. The era when big imperialist powers could use their military might to do as they pleased, to dominate and enslave the smaller nations, is definitely over.

The great victory of the Vietnamese nation, a small nation with not very large territory and population and with an underdeveloped economy, in its resistance against imperialist powers with great economic and military potential, with large and well equipped armies, is an eloquent proof of the might of nations, including the smaller ones, in their just wars, and it has exposed the limited capabilities of big imperialist powers in their unjust wars of aggression. It is clear that *in our era, even a small nation, if it is united and determined, follows a correct revolutionary line, and is able to mobilize the entire people to rise up and wage war, to build and consolidate national defence, and to gain international support and assistance, such a nation is quite capable of overthrowing colonialist rule and defeating the aggressive war of big imperialist powers including the leading imperialist power, the United States.*

CHAPTER IV

TO ARM THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES STRONGLY AND EXTENSIVELY TO BUILD A MODERN REGULAR PEOPLE'S ARMY

The resistance war against US aggression, for the national salvation of our people in both parts of the country has won great victories and is entering a decisive stage.

On the South Vietnam battlefield, although is has suffered a serious setback during the past years in both the military and political fields, the Nixon administration is still obdurately carrying out the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy. While withdrawing a large part of the US combat troops, the US imperialists are feverishly strengthening the puppet army in order to use it in place of the US troops in South Vietnam and as an additional force under US management and command on the Indochinese battlefield. They have stepped up the "pacification" programme, carrying out sweeps, penning up the population, building a thick network of military posts, and turning South Vietnam into a giant concentration camp, in order to keep a tight control over the population, destroy revolutionary bases and grab manpower and resources for their neo-colonialist war of aggression. They are endeavouring to maintain the Nguyen Van Thieu fascist clique in power by ruthlessly repressing all the tendencies and aspirations of

different strata of the population in South Vietnam for peace, independence, neutrality, national concord, democratic freedom and improvement of living conditions.

In the North, they are obdurately continuing acts of war, their aircraft are continuously carrying out reconnaissance flights, bombing populated areas and committing untold crimes against our people. Nixon and Laird are again threatening to resume the air and naval war of destruction with a view to preventing the great rear's assistance to the great front line, destroying the economic and military potential of the socialist North and shaking our people's determination to fight.

In Laos, they are intensifying the "special war", using their planes for extermination bombing of the Lao liberated zone, stepping up the "Laotianization of the war" and bringing in a large number of Thai troops to save the severely beaten Vientiane troops and Vang Pao bandits. With these puppets and bandits they are launching counter-attacks in an attempt to stem the offensive of the Lao revolution.

In Cambodia, they are pushing forward with the "Khmerization" of the war", giving the Phnom Penh puppet regime a shot in the arm, strengthening the puppet army, carrying out the "pacification programme", concentrating the population, using Phnom Penh puppet troops with US air support to launch criminal military operations against the people. The Nixon administration is also forcing the reactionary Thai authorities to send Thai troops to Cambodia to fight against the people of that country.

It is clear that even while they are heading for defeat, the US imperialists have not given up their schemes of aggression against our country, they are obdurately prolonging and

extending the war with a view to maintaining their neo-colonialist rule over South Vietnam and their role of world gendarme in Southeast Asia. For this purpose they are speaking of "sharing responsibilities" in accordance with the "Nixon doctrine" which only means to use other people's blood together with US money and weapons to defend the dirty interests of the American monopoly capitalist groups. Therefore, the aggressor is still US imperialism, but the concrete hostile forces on the battlefields in our people's war and that of all three Indochinese countries have undergone some changes In the present stage of the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, *the puppet troops at the service of the United States,* organized, equipped and trained by the Americans, provided with US-supplied modern weapons and means of warfare, including modern services and arms and enjoying US air, naval and logistics support are *gradually becoming the main hostile force on the battlefield* in the revolutionary war. The US imperialists are also striving to strengthen their modern air force and navy to attack the North of our country.[1]

Having recognized this main objective on the battlefield, our people throughout the country are determined to defeat the aggressive war of the US imperialists and their lackeys. The *South Vietnam people's liberation armed forces* in coordination with the political forces of the masses have annihilated or broken up the Saigon puppet troops, the "backbone" of the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, at the same time smashing the "pacification programme" the source of manpower and resources for that strategy. Our *people's armed forces* in the North must defeat the attacks by the US

1.This article was written in March 1972 *(Ed)*

air force and navy, repulse all rash military ventures of the US imperialists, strongly defend the socialist North and contribute to fulfiling the obligations of the great rear toward the great frontline. Our people have the duty to coordinate action closely with the people of fraternal Laos and Cambodia in order to defeat the Nixon doctrine formula for the Indochina battlefronts, "reactionary puppet forces + US air force".

In their tasks of continuing the socialist revolution and socialist construction in the North, completing the people's democratic national revolution in South Vietnam and proceeding to peaceful national reunification, our people will meet with many difficulties, but we will certainly win victory. *Our people's military organization must be equal not only to the urgent, immediate tasks, but also to any tasks in all circumstances*, in the progress of the revolution, even after the US imperialists and their lackeys have been defeated. The people's armed forces in the North must be strong enough to defend the socialist North, smash all acts of aggression and sabotage by the imperialists and their lackeys, serve as an effective tool of proletarian dictatorship and strengthen the North in all aspects so as to make it a powerful base for the struggle to reunify the country. The liberation armed forces in South Vietnam must be strong enough to safeguard the gains of the revolution, preserve the independence and neutrality of South Vietnam, defeat all schemes of the imperialists and the reactionary clique, contribute to the progress of the revolution and build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam.

Because our country has a very important strategic position in Southeast Asia, as has been said in the first part of this essay, Vietnam has for centuries been the objective of cruel aggressors.

Within a few decades, our country has been successively attacked by three imperialist powers. Even when US imperialism has been defeated, international imperialism will not give up its schemes against our country. Our nation cherishes independence and freedom, we also love peace and wish to have peace to build our country and improve our people's living conditions in all aspects. But we must remain very vigilant. *We must be strong in the fields of politics, economics and national defence–there must be a close union between economic construction and the strenghtening of national defence.* Whatever happens we must have a *strong national defence, with powerful armed forces made up of a strong standing army and extensive armed forces of the masses,* in order to protect the people's peaceful labour, to be ready to wage a victorious war for the defence of the Fatherland against any aggressor and to protect State power against sabotaging elements from within.

In the long term, after our country has been unified, the *situation will undergo great changes.* Vietnam will become a strong and prosperous country with a modern agriculture, a modern industry and advanced culture and science with a population of from fifty to seventy million within a few decades... Our people have the necessary basis for building a strong national defence. We are capable of raising the people's army and the arming of the revolutionary masses to a higher level in order to ensure the defeat of any imperialist aggressor.

The war for the defence of the Fatherland in our country at present, or in the future if it breaks out again, is always a *just war for self-defence, taking place on our own soil.* Consequently, it can make the most of the force of the entire people, the entire country, the entire nation in order to defeat

the enemy. A number of conditions and circumstances of a future war for the defence of the Fatherland may be similiar to those of the present war, for example the geographical conditions, the need to fight against a greater force. As an enemy who launches aggression against our country will necessarily be stronger than we, the need to use a smaller force to fight against a greater force will arise as it does today, although the balance of forces between us and the enemy may be different. As for the geographical conditions, they will remain basically the same for a long time, despite continuous transformations due to our people's industrious labour. If another war for the defence of the Fatherland broke out, it would take place in the geographical conditions of our country, a small country with a narrow and long territory, mostly mountainous, partitioned by a large number of rivers, with some thousand kilometres of coast line, a tropical climate...

For these reasons, we may conclude that *we have inherited much experience in waging wars for the defence of the Fatherland, in insurrection and liberation war, and also in military organization in the present time and in the past. This experience we are capable of using and developing in the new conditions and circumstances* to build national defence by the entire people and the people's armed forces of the socialist North, of independent and neutral South Vietnam and of reunified Vietnam in future. A future war for the defence of the Fatherland in our country would be a highly-developed people's war; our people's armed forces will have made outstanding progress in all aspects: numerical strength, the level of cadres and soldiers of all ranks and in every field of activity, equipment and technique, organizational capabilities, fighting method, fighting power.

At present, to fulfil our historic mission of completely defeating the US aggressors our people must have *powerful political forces and also powerful armed forces,* on the basis of a general strengthening in the political, economic and national defence fields. We must throughly grasp the Party line of arming the entire people, *strive to develop very strong and extensive armed forces of the masses and at the same time, an outstandingly poweful people's army,* and mobilize and develop to the greatest extent our people's forces on the military front in order to join hands with the entire people in defeating the enemy in all circumstances.

In South Vietnam, the army and people, carrying out a simultaneous armed struggle and political struggle to defeat the US "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, are steadily pushing forward the revolutionary war in every field, closely combining armed struggle with political struggle, military offensive with uprisings, concentrated attacks with guerilla attacks, annihilation of enemy troops with extending the people's power in all three strategic zones. At the same time as they are waging war they are developing the military and political forces and actively expanding and consolidating the liberated zone, becoming stronger while fighting.

As the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the High Command of the South Vietnam Liberation Armed Forces have pointed out, to *develop vigorously and extensively the masses' armed forces at the same time as building the Liberation Army into an outstandingly powerful army* and strengthening the three categories of liberation armed forces–such is the fundamental content of the strengthening of the armed forces of South Vietnam in the present time.

On the battlefield, the US and puppet forces are falling back on a strategic defensive. With a ruthless oppression and control machinery extending from the central level to the base level, they are carrying out a barbarous fascist policy toward our people. In these conditions, with the *political army which they are continuing to build and expand,* the South Vietnamese people are *striving to bring about a rapid growth of the masses' armed forces, actively building up militia, guerilla and self-defence forces in all three strategic zones.*

The necessity for a *vigorous, extensive development of guerrilla and self-defence forces goes hand in hand with the need to bring guerilla warfare to a high level* in order to join efforts in launching concentrated attacks to militarily defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy; it is also linked with the need to intensify *the masses's movement of offensive and insurrection,* and, by attacking with three converging prongs, to smash the "pacification" programme. The armed forces of the masses and the guerillas with the regional forces as backbone must coordinate closely with the political forces to cling to the land, using creative, flexible methods to attack the enemy on the spot. They will decimate and annihilate the enemy in as many places as possible, disperse him, immobilize him, encircle him, and devide his forces, launch surprise attacks on key points, destroy logistics bases, cut off water and land communication lines and so contribute to defeat enemy military operations. They will check sweeps aimed at penning up the population, protect our political bases, break up or wipe out the puppet coercive apparatus in the countryside and the local reactionary armed forces and shatter the network of enemy military posts. They will preserve and increase the potential of the resistance war in all aspects, defeat the US

imperialists' wicked scheme of "making Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", "feeding the war with the war".

In our people's long revolutionary war in South Vietnam, the armed forces of the masses play an unceasingly important role as the revolution progresses. Whenever there are political bases of the people, there are armed forces of the masses. With the revolutionary political army which is continuously expanding on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, the South Vietnamese people are striving to strengthen the masses' armed forces numerically and qualitatively and to give them forms of organization appropriate to their needs, so that everywhere in South Vietnam, from the mountains to the plain, from the countryside to the towns, in the liberated zone and in the temporarily occupied zone, there are armed forces to fight against the enemy, armed forces which, together with the masses' political forces, constitute a great force in each region and over the whole battlefield.

With the support of the people's political forces and the masses' armed forces, the South Vietnamese army and people are striving to *build a large and powerful Liberation Army.* The necessity to build a Liberation Army composed of the regular army and the regional forces is linked with the need to intensify the military struggle *to develop regular warfare hand in hand with guerilla warfare,* to defeat the enemy militarily and, in combination with the political struggle, to bring the resistance war to final victory.

The *regular units of the Liberation Army* are being developed numerically and, above all, in quality and equipment. They include the necessary services and possess a strong, highly mobile reserve forces with good logistics, and

a sound material and technical base,more and more skilful in carrying out operations using combined units from different services, on a varying scale and on different grounds. On the southern battlefield, regular warfare is developing steadily, with increasing force and effectiveness on a larger and larger scale, the regular troops of the Liberation. Army have annihilated an important part of the Saigon armed forces. They have wiped out big enemy units, smashed the enemy's defence lines, checked their combat methods, expanded the liberated zone and won increasingly great victories. The great victories of Liberation Army regular forces over the puppet armed forces have had a serious effect on the morale and organization of the entire structure of the puppet army and the puppet administratioin, dealing a heavy blow at the US imperialists' will to wage a war of aggression, giving strong support to the political struggle and the insurrection movement of the masses, and opening great possibilities for persuasion work within the ranks of the enemy. In this way they have played an important part in changing the balance of forces, and making the trend of the war more and more favourable to our side.

The units of the Liberation Army *regional forces* are being strengthened so that they, together with the militia and guerilla forces, can serve as a backbone for the people's war in the regions, increasingly raise the level of guerilla warfare and the masses' insurrectionary movement, smash the US puppet "pacification programme", and at the same time, effectively cooperate with the regular forces in launching concentrated attacks to defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy by military means. The regional forces are being built up, so that each district, each province or town will have a good organization and an adequate number of units, together with

the necessary technical units, all well trained in different methods of fighting. The regional forces must be very strong and well trained; they must fight well, and also know how to win support of the population. Now concentrating, now dispersing their forces, they are the iron first of the people's war in the regions. In close coordination with the militia and guerilla forces, many units of the regional forces in South Vietnam have annihilated enemy *bao an* (security) and *dan ve* (militia) forces, wiped out chains of military posts and broken up a large number of strategic hamlets and population concentration areas. They have given strong support to the political struggle and the uprisings of the masses and at the same time have effectively coordinated action with the Liberation Army main force operating in a region.

At present, on the South Vietnam battlefield, many regions and provinces have fully grasped the line of people's war and arming the entire people, and resolutely and creatively applied it. These have succeeded in building not only extensive and strong political forces but also strong regional armed forces including large and strong militia and guerilla forces and strong regional troops with a great fighting spirit capable of waging a brilliant fight against the enemy operating in a region. As a result, the people's war in the regions and the offensive and insurrection movement have made further progress, gradually defeating the enemy's pacification" programme and their schemes to concentrate the population and force young men into the army. They have preserved and developed in all aspects the force of the revolution.

The realities of the revolutionary war in South Vietnam prove that the *masses constitute the strong base of the revolution in all its tasks: the political forces of the masses*

are the strong foundation of the armed forces, the armed forces of the masses are the strong base of the revolutionary army. Therefore, to ensure considerable forces for the revolutionary war, to use to the full the great power of the people's war, it is necessary to *strive to build the political army of the revolution and, on that basis, to build the people's armed forces composed of the armed forces of the masses and the revolutionary army, to sufficiently develop the three categories of armed forces and deploy them for a strategic offensive on all battlefields, to closely combine concentrated operations with guerilla warfare and armed struggle with political struggle and agitation work among enemy troops.* Only by so doing can we have the greatest possible combination of forces to annihilate or break up the puppet army, smash the "pacification" programme, check the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and eventually completely defeat the US imperialists' war of aggression.

Especially now, when the US imperialists have shifted to the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", carrying out their machiavellian design to "make Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", striving to build up a puppet army with a main force and regional forces to be used as a tool to continue the war of aggression, the need to fully master the law of organizing the people's armed forces takes on an extremely great importance.

We must have a great political force and powerful armed forces; strong and extensive armed forces of masses and a Liberation Army of high quality and sufficient size; strong and large militia and self-defence forces, powerful regional forces to form strong and extensive local forces, and at the same time a very powerful and mobile regular army. With two forces

and three categories of armed forces closely coordinating action and brilliantly playing their strategic role in the revolutionary war, unceasingly developing to a high level the armed struggle and the political struggle, regular warfare and guerilla warfare, our fellow-countrymen and combatants in the South will certainly defeat the puppet army, overthrow the puppet administration, completely defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and bring the struggle against US aggression for national salvation to final victory.

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While further prolonging the war of aggression in South Vietnam and extending the war to the whole of Indochina, the Nixon administration has unceasingly intensified its acts of war against North Vietnam. The US imperialists nurture many wicked designs for the present and the future against the socialist North, the great rear supporting the great front, the strong base of the revolution in the whole country. Therefore we have to make continuous efforts to *build up the people's armed forces in the North* which, together with the entire people, will completely defeat the US aggressors and strongly defend the socialist North both now and in the times to come.

The North must be very *strong in the political and economic fields and in the fields of national defence.* Therefore, we must endeavour to push forward the socialist revolution and socialist construction, continually increase the people's political and moral unity, build and develop the economy and culture and, on that basis, *consolidate and strengthen national defence by the entire people, closely coordinating economic development with national defence.*

Only with a strong economy consisting of a central economy and a regional economy can we have strong national defence, and wage a people's war on a national and regional scale. We must be always ready to combat and prepare the country in all aspects so as to give ourselves freedom of movement whatever happens.

Whatever the circumstances, we must always bear in mind the following law for the military organization of our people: *to arm the entire people, to arm the revolutionary masses and at the same time to build the people's army, to combine the people's army with the armed forces of the masses and vice versa.*

We have *to make great efforts to build up a modern regular people's army and, at the same time, develop strong and extensive armed forces of the masses and strengthen all the three categories of the people's armed forces: the regular force, the regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces.* We must further consolidate *the people's armed police forces.* We must have a *powerful standing army* and, at the same time, a *very strong reserve force.*

We must continue our strict application of the defence. We must gradually strengthen the *material policy and regulations promulgated* by the State concerning the building of the people's armed forces and the consolidation of national defence by the entire people, and amend the existing policy and regulations in the light of future developments in our country. Great importance should be attached to the *training of cadres* for they will play a crucial role in the building of the armed forces and strengthening of national defence. We must gradually strengthen the *material and technical bases, the logistics base*, of the armed forces in the whole of North Vietnam and in each region.

In the first place, it is necessary to *step up the building of our army into a people's revolutionary army of a really new type, a modern regular army adapted to the conditions of our country,* which should serve as the backbone of the people's military organization, in order to give strong protection to the achievements of the revolution and to our beloved Fatherland, defeat any aggressor in the present and the future and fulfil all tasks of combat, production or anything else entrusted by the Party and the people.

At present and in the near future, we must *continue to build the Vietnam People's Army into a modern, regular socialist army, composed of a regular force and regional forces, with a standing force of adequate size and high fighting capabilities and a large, well-organized, well-trained reserve force.*

Our army must be a really revolutionary, really popular army, and also a highly modern force with a modern army, air force and navy.

Our land army must have all necessary services, with a structure and a size adequate for its increasingly important combat tasks, with great fire-power and a strong assault force possessing high mobility in every kind of terrain and in all the climatic conditions of our country, capable of playing a decisive role in winning victory on the battlefield.

Our air force must be further strengthened so that it will have an adequate size and high fighting capabilities combined with creative fighting methods, in order to defend the Fatherland's sky against the air force of any aggressor, and closely coordinate action with the army and the navy in combined operations.

Our navy must be strengthened so that it will have an adequate size and very high fighting capabilities, a continuously

improving organization, increasingly modern equipment, appropriate methods of fighting on our waterways and sea, to defend our long coast-line and the abundant waterways of our country.

Firsly and for all time our army must be a *truly revolutionary popular army*. This is a principle of key importance in our Party's theory on the building of the army, one that we must constantly bear in mind under all circumstance.

The fighting strength of a revolutionary army is the combined strength of the following factors: its revolutionary consciousness, the fighting spirit of the officers and men, the rational organization and the leval of technical equipment of the army, the technical and tactical level of the men, the level of scientific and military art, the leadership of its officers. This strength results from the dialectical combination of men and weapons, politics and technique, military science and war means, ideology and organization.

Both theory and practice have shown that the factors making up the army's fighting strength play an extremely important role and are very closely interrelated. Only when each factor is comprehensively developed and closely combined with the others can the army have a maximum fighting strength.

Without a fighting spirit — with poor morale — there cannot be creative revolutionary energy, active fighting, or any base to promote the strength of the material, technical and operational factors... A well-organized, equipped and trained army with a poor fighting spirit is early defeated. Hight morale alone, however, cannot bring victory. If it is handicapped by poor technical equipment, an irrational military organization, and incorrect operational methods it cannot create a great fighting force, because the factor of morale has not been comprehensively developed and cannot

be transformed into a huge material force capable of crushing the enemy on the battlefield.

Stressing the great impact of the factor of morale in a war, Lenin said: "In the final analysis, victory in any war depends on the spirit animating the masses that spill their own blood on the field of battle."[1] Further he said: "Even the best of armies, even people most sincerely devoted to the revolutionary cause will be immediately exterminated by the enemy, if they are not adequately armed, supplied with food and trained." [2]

Therefore, when dealing with the fighting strength of our army, one has to grasp the dialectical unity between the above-mentioned factors. To stress only the material, technical factor as the decisive one, and to underestimate the political, morale factor is evidently an error. Inversely, to stress only the morale factor, detached from the material base, is also incorrect. While defining the importance of the factors making up the fighting strength of a revolutionary army, we consider that *the most fundamental factor is the political-morale factor, that is the consciousness of the army with regard to the revolutionary ideal, the goal of the fighting and the political aim of the war, and the fighting spirit of the officers and men.* In a war, "the realization by the masses of the causes and aims of the war is of tremendous importance and ensures victory."[3] Once they are deeply conscious of their class and national interests, ready to sacrifice themselves in the struggle for independence, freedom and socialism, and go to war with the sole aspiration and determination to triumph over the enemy, the officers and men of a revolutionary army will have tremendous energy and strength. The history of our army's struggle and development — how, starting from

1 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.31, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1966. p.137.
2 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, p.76.
3 Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1966. p.137.

nothing it grew so strong that it could defeat the cruellest imperialist aggressors of our time — bears eloquent proof of Lenin's assertion.

Armed struggle is the most violent form of class struggle, of national struggle. A characteristic of armed struggle is that it entails bloody sacrifices. Hence, a revolutionary army must have an unshakable determination to fight and a very high spirit of self-denial. Then it can withstand all trials, overcome all difficulties and ordeals of a war, use weapons to the best, creatively apply operational methods and promote military organization so as to vanquish the enemy.

Thanks to the Party's correct leadership and the difficulties and combats endured in the course of a protracted, arduous and violent revolutionary struggle, our army has acquired a very strong *revolutionary nature and political virtue, a very high fighting spirit*, which faithfully reflects the thinking, feeling and spirit of the Vietnamese working class and nation and of our present time. It consists in an absolute loyalty to the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people; an unshakable determination to fight for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, "rather sacrifice all than lose the country and be enslaved", an ardent love for the country and for socialism, a spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism. It consists in a determination to fight and to win, a will to attack and annihilate the enemy, a valiant fighting spirit, creative mind and marvellous resourcefulness, a spirit of union and coordination, a spirit of strict organization and discipline. It consists in an ardent love for one's fellow-countrymen and comrades, a deep hatred of the imperialists and their henchmen and of oppression and exploitation. This is the high spirit of revolutionary vigilance, always on the watch for the designs and manoeuvres of all the enemies to the class and the nation under

any circumstance. This political virtue and this brilliant spirit have been assessed by President Ho Chi Minh as follows: "Our army is faithful to the Party devoted to the people, ready to fight selflessly for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. It fulfils any mission, overcomes any difficulty and defeats any enemy". Here lies the overwhelming strength of our army, the source of its fighting power. This is an extremely precious asset of our army in its building and fighting at present as well as in the future. In building our army into a regular and modern one, *we are determined constantly to maintain and develop this precious asset, to turn these virtues into deeply rooted qualities, into fine traditions of the Vietnam People's Army for all generations to come.*

Now more than ever, confronted with the US imperialists' obstinate intention to prolong their aggressive war in Vietnam and extend it throughout Indochina, our army must consequently heighten its spirit of self-denial, its fearlessness of difficulties and sacrifices, persevere in and intensify its patriotic resistance to US aggression, and promote to the full the role, impact and function of the people's army.

To continuously strengthen the revolutionary nature of the army, we have constantly to bear in mind and *strictly apply the Leninist principles on the political building of the army.* This has become a fine tradition of our army. These principles are:

Ensure absolute, direct and overall leadership of the Party over the army — the most fundamental principle;

Consolidate the Party's organization and system of political work; constantly strengthen political work within the army;

Pay great attention to the propagation of the Party's line, its revolutionary tasks, directives and policies. Heighten the

army's political awareness, its national and class consciousness and determination to fight and to win;

Attach great importance to the army's full understanding of the Party's military line and thinking, military science and military art of people's war;

Train an army of cadres absolutely loyal to the Party's revolutionary cause, with capacities for leadership, command and organization;

Broaden democracy, strengthen self-imposed discipline, the iron discipline of a revolutionary army;

Establish good relations between the army and the Party, the army and the revolutionary power, the army and the people, good relations inside the army as well as between our army and the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries.

With regard to the Party, our army always displays an absolute confidence in the Party's line and leadership, freely submits to the Party's leadership, strictly implements all Party lines, directives and policies, resolutely struggles to defend all its lines, principles and viewpoints, and successfully fulfils all tasks entrusted by it.

With regard to the revolutionary power, our army always shows a high spirit of respect and a determination to defend the revolutionary power, it works closely with the State organs and strictly implements all State lines, directives, policies and laws.

With regard to the people, our officers and men serve, respect and help them with devotion, fight selflessly to defend the people's interests, and strictly respect the discipline of the masses.

In their internal relations, our officers and men show a high spirit of unity, single-mindedness, perfect cohesion,

mutual affection, common share of good times and bad, sincere mutual aid. At the same time, they show a high spirit of obedience to the organization, strictly implement all commands, instructions and decisions of their superiors, carry out all statutes, regulations and orders of the army.

With regard to the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries, our army constantly shows a high spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism, accepts all sacrifices and diffculties, sincerely unites with the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries in the fight against the common enemy, and always considers the revolutionary cause of the fraternal countries as its own.

To promote the strength and the efficiency of the Party leadership, *one must raise the level of understanding of the Party's political and military line, raise the capacity for practical organization of the Party's organs, cadres and Party members in the army* and meet the requirement to build the people's army into a regular and modern one so as to fulfil all the political and military tasks entrusted to it by the Party. Our Party has gathered much experience in the political and ideological building of an army, and in the building of an army assentially made up of infantry and a limited number of other services. Our Party is well on the road to solving the problems of building a regular and modern people's army consisting of many arms and services for both the present and the future, according to the specific conditions of our country. Therefore, one of the important tasks at present is to study further so as to *have a firm understanding of the laws on the building and operation of a regular and modern people's army* in our country, and to apply them correctly in working out an advanced Vietnamese military science in order to defeat the US aggressors at present and to defend the Fatherland in the

future. From this basis we will perfect, develop and concretize the Party's military line and its line on the building of a regular and modern revolutionary army.

On the basis of strengthening the revolutionary nature of our army, we must intensify *its transformation into an army which is regular and modern*, an army which has attained some degree of perfection and organization has a natural tendency to become a regular army. Even in the past, in our country as in many others, the problem of building a regular army has been put and solved. The more modern an army, the more imperious the need for centralization and the more urgent the problem of regularization.

As Lenin said, in fighting with a strong enemy, one must be prepared for bold actions at any time. Now that an army uses an ever more sophisticated range of modern equipment and techniques, while modern operations require extremely close and flexible coordination, unity of mind and action is impossible to realize without high centralization. Without such centralization tens of thousands or millions of men operating over a vast area cannot effect a rapid change in their combat methods, following a single will according to the developments on the battlefields, and so solve the fighting tasks in a modern war.

To make an army regular means to provide it with a homogeneous organization through statutes, regulations and orders so as to give it a uniform activity, to strengthen its organized, centralized, scientific character, to get resolute and single-minded action and close coordination between the various parts of an army in a war. Regularization goes along with the working out of statutes, regulations and orders and their implementation.

The revolutionary army, like the armies of the exploiting classes, must be made into a regular army. However, owing to their diametrically opposed political nature, this process is completely different in *its goal, content and methods*. For the armies of the exploiting classes, the goal is to serve their reactionary political designs; all their statutes and regulations reflect the anti-revolutionary nature and the unequal internal relations in these armies. They are based on an enforced and rigid discipline, orders must be blindly obeyed. It is quite the opposite with the building of a regular revolutionary army. Its goal is to serve the lofty political ends of the revolution; all its statutes and regulations reflect the revolutionary nature of the army, the finest principles of building a new-type army. They are based on the political consciousness, the self-imposed discipline, the initiative and creative spirit of the officers and men for their implementation. It is this fine political base which enables a regular revolutionary army to surpass an army of the exploiting classes.

In the past years, the promulgation, revision and perfection of rules and regulations have had a great impact on the building of our army. The regulation of military service, commissioned and non-commissioned officers' service and military grades, rules concerning internal organization, military formation, military police, military discipline, fighting regulations, the work of the general staff, political work and logistics... have contributed to reinforce centralization, intensify the army's regular character and raise its fighting strengh. In the main, these rules and regulations have become a more and more faithful reflection of the revolutionary nature of our army; they embody our Party's military thinking, its military line and art, and its principles for the building of the army in conformity with the specific conditions of our army and our country. The

realities of the war have helped us make the necessary additions and corrections and have provided us with rich experience in working out rules and regulations. Basing ourselves on the constantly evolving situation and our army's task of building and fighting we must *go on studying and improving these rules and regulations so that they are a better instrument* for the task of building a regular army at present and in future. This system must encompass all the activities of our army, namely:

— Important regulations reflecting the general policies and directives of the Party and Government on the task of buidling the army and consolidating national defence, which should have the force of law with regard to our army and entire people.

— Rules on the establishment and equipment of the army, of its arms and services, serving as bases by which the organization of the army may be unified.

— Regulations on internal affairs, military formation, military police, military discipline, serving as bases for the organization of the regular army.

— Fighting regulations of the army, its arms and services aimed at defining the basic operational methods of the men, the sections and army corps.

— Orders on staff work, political work, logistics, education and the work of various branches.

According to our view, no amount of rules and regulations however elaborate, can encompass all the requirements of practice. The regulations only give a basic orientation for the activities of the army, they do not solve all the problems, in any place, at any time. Therefore, while stressing the strict implementation of regulation, we must constantly *promote the*

creative spirit and resourcefulness of officers and men and avoid stereotyped answers and mechanistic thinking.

The content of the regulations reflects experience and the fighting and building needs of the army at a given time and in given conditions. Our army's practice of building and fighting, its own capacities in various fields, as well as those of the enemy and military science and art are constantly evolving. Therefore, *regulations must be continually amended and developed* to give a new vitality and to be a more effective guide for the army in all its practical activities.

On the basis of drafting and gradually perfecting these rules and regulations we must continue to *push ahead with the work of education within the army for their strict implementation.* The implementation of rules and regulations must first of all rely on the officers' and men's spirit of organization and discipline, then it must be gradually built into routine and behaviour to become a new habit, the habits of the working class engaged in modern production, and not the habits of small producers engaged in scattered, unregulated handicraft production.

A problem of utmost improtance for the rapid building of a regular army is to heighten the *spirit of organization and discipline* of the army. Lenin stressed that the building of *a strict military discipline and a thorough implementation of all orders and decisions* is of the utmost importance to heighten the regular character and the fighting strength of the Red Army. As Lenin pointed out: "The army must have a most vigorous discipline"[1] "We must turn the commanding organs from top to bottom into steel arms which wil execute combat orders at any cost"[2]

1.Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian edition, Political Literature State Publishing House, Fourth edition, 1950-Vol.29, p.226.

2. Lenin, *Military Correspondence* (1917-1920) Military Publishing House, Soviet Defence Ministry. 1956, p.30.

The discipline of our army is the strict self-imposed discipline of a revolutionary army.This discipline reflects the revolutionary nature and the principles of ideological and organizational building for an army of the working class. It is a genuine iron discipline, a new-type discipline, a truly firm discipline unknown to any army of the exploiting classes.

Under the Party's leadership and during the long process of building and fighting, our army has acquired a fine tradition of revolutionary discipline. This tradition of discipline has always been an important factor for all the victories of our army.

However, there are not only strong points in this discipline. Our army was born and has grown up in a backward agricultural country in the first steps of socialist building, in which the attitudes of small-scale production are still strong in all fields of social and human life. Moreover, it has matured in the fire of a protracted revolutionary war. Starting from scratch, it has developed while waging guerilla warfare and then regular warfare, operating on many battlefields and fighting for decades under the hardest, most exacting conditions... Therefore, besides their good points which are fundamental, our officers and men also have thoughts, habits and ways of living unsuited to the high spirit of organization of a modern army. We do not have as yet a very high level of military discipline conforming to the new developments in organization and equipment, and thoroughly adapted to the increasingly heavy and complex tasks of fighting and building our army.

Hence, we must continue to inculcate in our army *the role and requirement of discipline for* a regular and modern army; we must bring about a *drastic change in the spirit of organization and discipline as well as in the administration of the army*, so that the entire army strictly implements all the

rules and regulations and thoroughly carries out all commands and instructions from superior authorities.

The problem we are facing is how to turn a people's army, a revolutionary army into a regular army. That is why in the course of this process, we must satisfactorily solve the relations between concentration and democracy, between the leadership of the Party committee and the role of the commander, the solidarity between the officers and the men, between the higher and the lower echelons. We must closely combine ideological work with organizational work, closely link education and persuasion to serious training and administration, combine voluntariness with imperative duty; and distribute just rewards and punishments. We must promote the spirit of responsibility, of collective mastery among all officers and men as regards the administration of discipline and the implementation of rules and regulations. In this matter, the example given by the officers and their level of organization and administration bears a very high significance.

Along with regularization we must continue to concern ourselves with the *modernization of our army*. This is one requirement which has the character of a law as regards the raising of our army's fighting strength at a time when our people have begun to build socialism and the material technical base of large-scale socialist production, especially now when world science and technique has reached a very high level bringing great and rapid changes in the equipment and technique of armies. Thanks to modernization, our army will have an incrreasingly high equipment and technique to hold its own against any aggressor.

Modernization implies continual change of *equipment and technique for the army, development of technical arms and services, better use of new weapons and war means by officers*

and men. It also implies the *building of a modern national defence industry and the expansion of a modern system of communications* for the army to operate in conditions of modern warfare. When modern equipment and technique are added to a sound political nature and good scientific organization, the fighting strength of our army will develop in leaps and bounds. The new man in the people's army must have ardent patriotism, thorough socialist consciousness, high spirit of organization and discipline, and modern military knowledge.

Relying on the achievements of the technical revolution in the socialist building of the North over the past years, and on the help of the fraternal socialist countries, our army has got a material and technical base stronger than ever before. Our infantry has been equipped with very modern weapons. The arms and services of our army — ground forces, air force, navy, artillery, anti-aircraft defence, armoured units, engineering units, chemical units, signal service, transport service — have been equipped with modern weapons and war means. Along with the development of arms and services, a system of technical bases has come into being. Our officers and men have made notable progress in the use of modern weapons and war means in the specific conditions of the Vietnamese battlefield. It is clear that since the later stages of the resistance against French aggression our army has made great strides ahead as regards modernization. The great victories of our army in the patriotic resistance against US aggression cannot be separated from these new developments in equipment and technique.

However, these are only first steps. Compared with the armies of many countries in our camp and in the world, the level of modernization of our army is still low. Between our army and the enemy there still exists a discrepancy in equipment and technique.

Our present patriotic resistance against US aggression as well as the defence of our country, in the future require still greater efforts in modernization. This is the task and also the aspiration of our army and our people.

We must build a *modern army suited to the specific conditions and perfectly adapted to the national defence requirements of our country.* Therefore, we must hold firm to the Paty's political economic and military lines, and, through an understanding of the resources and specific conditions of our country, the characteristics of our enemy and the balance of forces between him and us, the military art of people's war and the direction of development of military science and technique in the world, work out a creative solution to the problems involved in the modernization of our army.

We must keep on making improvements in the equipment and technique of our army to make it modern or relatively modern, so as to increase its firepower, impact and mobility. To this end, we must have a firm base in the development of our economy and make the most of the help of the fraternal socialist countries so as to speed up our army's modernization.

A modern army in our times must include many arms and services. Therefore, we must *establish a well balanced range of arms and services suitable for our needs.* At present and for a relatively long period in the future, the ground forces will still remain the main arm of the Viet Nam People's Army; in the ground forces, the infantry is the main service, while artillery is the main firepower. We will continue to strengthen our air force, anti-aircraft defence, navy, armoured units, engineering units, signal units, chemical units, and transport units, to establish fighting services as well as support services in a rational way so that the technical arms and services make up an increasing proportion of our army's administrative

structure, and improve their impact in the coordinated operations of modern warfare. Our army must be ready to defeat the enemy both while he uses conventional weapons and if he recklessly uses nuclear weapons.

To make its full impact in a war, a modern army must have good technique and good communication. Therefore, on the basis of a close coordination between the needs of national defence and those of the economy and between the building of a rear for the State and a rear for the army, we must speed up the building of a national defence industry and a system of communications adapted to the fighting requirement of our army and the specific conditions of our country.

This national defence industry must be able to make all sorts of repairs, turn out spare parts and additional parts to improve equipment and war material according to the tactical requirements; at the same time, it must strive to turn out certain categories of weapons and war material according to our means. We must continually expand the system of communications including roads, railways, waterways and airways, closely combine militarily important communication lines with economically important ones, and central communications with local ones to contribute to the mobility of a modern army under all circumstances.

The modernization of an army is a long process. It depends on the development of the building of the material and technical bases for socialism. Hence, on the basis of a close coordination with the economic and cultural development plans we must have a *long-term plan for the modernization of the army*, so as to define the orientation and the great objectives underlying the training of cadres, scientific and technical research, basic construction, etc. At the same time, we must

have short-term plans to deal with specific objectives, thus advancing our army step by step.

A people's army includes a regular army and regional forces. The later have a very important strategic role in a people's war. Therefore, while building our people's army, we pay equally *great attention to both*.

Owing to the Party's correct policy, in the patriotic resistance against US aggression the regional forces have undergone new developments in organization, equipment, level of fighting and command... especially in the case of the forces which have had to deal with the enemy's war of destruction like the air-defence forces, artillery, engineering units... Many provinces, towns, districts and industrial zones have anti-aricraft units which shot down many US planes, artillery units which set fire to US vessels, sapper units which kept the traffic open, infantry units which rapidly disposed of enemy commando groups and satisfactorily fulfilled their fighting tasks. With a new fighting strength, the regional forces are making themselves ready, together with the other armed forces, to thwart all military adventures by the US imperialists and defend the land. It is clear that, compared with the regular army in the later stage of the resistance against French aggression, the regional forces are now more developed in certain fields. This has helped increase the power of people's war in the regions. This fact shows the correctness of the decision to strengthen the regional forces, provide them with necessary services, and equip them with a number of modern weapons and war means, thus *gradually making them regular and modern.*

The building of regional forces must be carried out according to the principles and orientations defined above as regards the building of the people's army. However, as their fighting task, the character of their action, their operational

methods are somewhat different from those of the regular army, and as their action is linked to the locality, we must *apply the principles and orientations for the building of the people's army in a way suitable to their needs*. The building of regional forces must be based on the characteristics of each locality, its military position, its fighting task, its capacities in manpower and economy, its topography, the situation of the enemy in the region... For each province town, district industrial zone... the size, composition, equipment, fighting method of its regional forces cannot be patterned after those of the regular army, nor can they be the same with all localities.

Even in the case of the regular army, when we carry out its regularization and modernization, we must pay enough attention to the characteristics of the fighting tasks and the operational methods of different forces acting on different battlefields to define the most suitable composition, organization, equipment and way of life of the troops avoiding all mechanical attempts at uniformity.

For the regularization of the regional forces, *we must pay even more attention to the specific conditions and characteristics of the locality*. Regularization must be concrete and reflect the necessity of unity and centralization at the same time as the unavoidable differences between the various regions. It is gross error to rely on the characteristics of the locality and disregard the requirements of unity and centralization, the spirit of organization and discipline, to neglect the implementation of the rules and regulations in the regional forces; inversely, it is incorrect to carry out unity and centralization in a uniform and mechanical way. On our road to modernization, we must also define its concrete requirements, ably use appropriate weapons and war means,

and closely combine modern weapons and war means with relatively modern and rudimentary ones. Experience shows that up-to-date weapons unsuited to the locality are inefficient; appropriate weapons, though less modern may have a great effect. *To defeat the enemy, to fulfil the role of the regional forces as the backbone, the strike force of the armed struggle in the regions, and to successfully implement all tasks*, these are our aims in the implementation of the principles for the building of the regional army.

At present, the provinces, cities and industrial zones in the North have a fairly large area with a population reaching 1-2 million for some. Together with the development of the centrally-run economy, our Party has advocated the development of regional economies, the building of provinces, cities and industrial zones into increasingly strong economic units. We must closely combine economy with national defence in each locality, build provinces, cities and industrial zones strong in all fields to serve as basic strategic units of people's war in the region. The victory of the socialist revolution and building of socialism in each region as well as in the whole North has been creating increasingly great possibilities in all fields for the building and development of the regional forces.

Confronted with the need to intensify military work in the regions so as to contribute a worthy share to frustrating all military adventures of the US imperialists, defending the socialist North and fulfilling the duty of the great rear to the great front, we must *actively advance the building of regional forces*. The regional forces must *include not only a sizable permanent force but also strong, well-organized, and well-trained reserves* ready to make a rapid development of their forces when need be. We must have strong infantry units; moreover,

there must be necessary services equipped with modern and relatively modern weapons and war means, well trained and having a creative fighting method, a high mobility, and a prodigious fighting strength. The regional forces must excel in regular warfare and in guerilla warfare, closely coordinate with the militia and self-defence units, while standing ready to coordinate with the regular army to exterminate the enemy and defend the localities.

With strong regional forces adapted to the conditions and fighting requirements of each locality, with strong and ubiquitous militia and self-defence units closely combined with the people's armed security units, the *people's regional armed forces* in the socialist North will acquire a new and mighty fighting strength, and people's war in the localities will take on new and tremendous possibilities.

To make a success of building regional armed forces in particular and regional military work in general, we must pay attention to *strengthening the leadership of Party committees at all levels over regional military work, consolidating regional military organs, and forming a contingent of regional military cadres*. Regional military organs must be strengthened to fulfil the military tasks of each locality and to serve as general staff for the local Party committees in intensifying military work in the regions; they must guide and command the regional forces in their building and fighting; and they must guide the people's armed forces in the regions.

We must raise the level of leadership over regional military work, keep abreast of the present and future requirements of national defence in the regions and of the increasingly great capacities of regional economic construction and development.

For the army to master modern equipment and technique, to have a full understanding and a skilful application of the

principles of military art, and possess a high fighting capability, due attention must be paid to *military training*. This is a very important routine work in the building of an army in peace time as well as in war time, one of the decisive problems to raise the fighting quality and military preparedness of an army.

As training is aimed at defeating the enemy, it must *be adapted to the military task and line, to the requirement of military art, and to the real situation of the enemy and ourselves in each period*. We must be imbued with these principles: to educate the army in everything required by the war, to give comprehensive training to the army in fighting will, spirit of organization and discipline, fighting behaviour, technique, tactics, physical strength...; to raise the level of this overall training and relate it to real fighting conditions, to promote a spirit of offensive, determination and courage and the resourcefulness of officers and men in all their fighting actions.

To adapt ourselves to the requirements of modern warfare, by gaining a complete mastery over the operational thought and the military art of our army, we must *train our officers and men to understand and make perfect use of all modern equipment and techniques; to understand and skilfully apply operational and tactical principles and the principles of organization and command in the coordinated operations of various arms and services*. We must train our army in *many fighting methods*: it must be good in offensive as well as in defensive action, in mobile as in siege warfare, in coordinated as in isolated operations; in fighting on various scales, terrains and in different climates and circumstances. Our army must be ready to defeat the enemy whether they use conventional weapons or recklessly resort to nuclear or chemical weapons.

To win coordinated operations, our army must be strong in its *entire structure,* from top to bottom, from commanding organs to basic units, at all levels, in all branches and sections. Therefore, we must satisfactorily train each man, section and army corps; each commanding organ, fighting unit and support unit. We must take great care of the *training of officers and commanding organs,* and build strong and seasoned basic units.

We must continually make our army aware of the evolution of the enemy's overall situation and ready to frustrate all his new operational schemes. We must pay particular attention to studying and creatively developing the rich fighting experiences of our army while selectively learning from the experience of the armies of the fraternal socialist countries.

In war time or in peace time, it is very dangerous to be complacent over one's victories and neglect one's military art. Hence, we must closely combine training with the *study of miltary science, ceaselessly develop* and perfect our military art, pay utmost attention to summing up our training experience and improving its content and methods, thus enabling our army to make continous improvements in its excellent military art and great fighting strength to defeat the enemy.

To fulfil the task of building a regular and modern people's army, a key problem is to form an *officers' corps which is capable and strong in every field.*

This officers' corps must have a high quality and sufficient numbers, it must meet the increasingly great requirements of the revolutionary task and reflect the constant growth of our army, making up a solid nucleus with abundant reserves and replacements. This officers' corps must have a comprehensive and well-balanced composition including leading and command cadres, professional and technical cadres, cadres in the general staff and at the level of the base, cadres in the regular and

regional army and cadres for the permanent army and for the reserve force; it must meet the peace time as well as the war-time needs, at present and in the future, of our army's various arms and services.

To form such an officers' corps, we must first of all master and strictly implement the *Party's line on cadres*. This is the line on cadres of the working class. The working class nature of the officers' corps is one of the fundamental contents of this line. The degree to which this problem is solved or not has a great bearing on the maintenance and development of our army's revolution ary on its firmness and constancy in all situation, on the raising of its spirit of revolutionary offensive and heroism . Whatever the situation, we must grasp the Party's line on cadres and strictly implement the class orientation and political criterion set by the Party in each stage of devepopment of the revolution. We must constantly master the principle that, so long as there are classes, wars and armies, the problem of the class character of the officers' corps of the armed forces must not be neglected at any price.

As cadres of a revolutionary, regular and modern army, our officers must have a *firm political stand-point, a high political, military, professional and technical level, and an increasingly high cultural level. The quality of the officers must be achieved in their ability to fulfil all fighting and other tasks entrusted by the Party.*

First and foremost, our officers must be absolutely loyal to the Party, to the revolutionnary cause of the proletariat and to the communist ideal, imbued with ardent patriotism ,and devoted to the people and the Fatherland. They must have pure revoutionary feeling, a strong spirit of revolutionary offensive with determination to fight and to win and deep hatred of the enemy. They must fight valiantly, work tirelessly, possess a

high spirit of organization and discipline, a good fighting and work style, selfdenial in face of hardships and sacrifices, courage and stubbornness, resourcefulness and creative spirit to fulfil all tasks under any circumstances.

Our officers must strive to have a deep knowledge in political, military, scientific, technical and economic matters with an ability to lead and command, to organize and act. They must diligently study to master the Marxist-Leinist principles on war and the army, the Party's political and military line and its military science, and our nation's tradition and experiences of fighting. They must try to have a deeper understanding of their enemy, selectively and creatively learn from the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries, and at the same time follow the new achievements of military science in the world. They must perseveringly strive to raise their cultural, scientific and technical level, their ability to administer and train their men, to lead and command and to organize coordinated operations of various arms and services.

The task of building a regular and modern people's army requires of our army a *corps of technically proficient and politically reliable cadres* to serve as the core in the use, management, improvement and invention of modern equipment and technique. This corps of technical cadres must include all necessary branches and varied professional qualifications: middle-level and high-level cadres, engineers-in-chief and research workers; they must master modern science and technique and creatively apply them to find a satisfactory solution to the technical problems of our army while contributing to build our country's science and technique.

We must also have a *contingent of research workers* with a good knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, military science and the practice of the revolution and revolutionary war in our

country, in order to serve as the nucleus for research work into the development of military theory and science.

We cannot speak of the cadres of the people's army without mentioning the contingent of *reserve officers,* whose important role is directly related to the position of the reserve force of the army in the war. That is why, at the same time as paying attention to the building of the contingent of cadres of the regular force, we must attach importance to building up the force of reserve cadres. These must constitute a strong force with a high quality and sufficient quantity, a comprehensive and balanced structure capable at any time of meeting the need to broaden the army or any of its branches and services. It is necessary to take pains over the organization of demobilized armymen or armymen who have been transferred to civil services and, at the same time, to adopt a consistent training program for the reserve cadres, keep an efficient system of registration, census and mobilization in the various branches and services of the State, in the factories, in schools, and in the people's armed forces.

The law of development of the revolution as well as of the revolutionary armed forces requires that our Party *closely combine veteran officers with young officers.* While we must actively work to perfect the veteran and experienced officers we must make great efforts to train, perfect and boldly promote young cadres who have been steeled by combat and work, those who possess high revolutionary virtues ad solid capabilities with the promise of a distinguished and long career in the army.

We must combine many measures in the building of a contigent of army cadres : training in combat and work, training and developing at school and in their existing job. At present, and in the future too, the system of army schools will

play a very important role. We must strengthen, expand and consolidate the schools of the army which consist of the institutes, military colleges and full time and complementary schools of the various arms and services and military zones.

Along with the building of the regular, modern people's army, we must *endeavour to develop the armed forces of the masses as a numerous and powerful force*. We must expand the *militia and self-defence foces throughout the countryside* and the towns, making them into a very big force with continuously improved quality and combat strength, suited to the all-round development of our country in the building of socialism and to the ever higher combat requirement of the people's war, a war to defend our socialist fatherland in the conditions of the present time.

This force must be strong enough to serve as backbone for the entire people in the fight to defend the regions. It must give full scope to its role of a shock force in the economic development of the area and serve as a mighty reserve force for the people's army. This force must become a really steady and powerful basis for the national defence of the entire people and for the people's war. In combination with the peoples army it must form a mighty armed force for the socialist State, capable of defeating the US imperialist aggressors at present as well as any eventual aggressor in the future and fulfilling any tasks entrusted by the Party and the people so as to firmly preserve the revolutionary gains and defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the fatherland.

To intensify the building of the armed forces of the masses in all circumstances, in time of war as well as in time of peace, is a *concentrated expression of the high revolutionary vigilance of our people*. In the present patriotic resistance against US aggression, this task is necessary in order to contribute to the

defence and building of the socialist North, defeating all war schemes and acts of the US imperialists. In the future, too, when the protracted and arduous resistance against the US aggressors has come to a victorious conclusion, when our people have regained complete independence and freedom and embark on national construction in peaceful conditions and when the regular armed forces may be reduced, we will have to pay still greater attention to building up the armed forces of the masses in order to be ready to cope with all eventualities. We must closely combine economic construction with national defence, national construction with preparation to defend the fatherland.

As everyone of us knows, the armed forces of the masses are one of the two basic components of the military apparatus of our State. The militia and self-defence forces are one of the three categories of the people's armed forces. As a revolutionary armed organization of the Party, the militia and self-defence forces must be built along the same lines, viewpoints and general principle as the revolutionary armed forces. This is a question of position and principle which must be strictly observed. As an armed organization linked with production, being at the same time the army and the people, the militia and self-defence forces are not a regular armed force and, as such, are to be distinguished from the main force and the regional army which are regular armed forces. Only by firmly grasping the differences between the militia and self-defence forces and the people's army can we push forward the building of the armed forces of the masses and give full scope to the important strategic role of the militia and self-defence forces.

The militia and self-defence forces are the broad armed forces of the masses giving a most concentrated and direct

expression to the mass character of the military organization of the proletarian State, a character growing out of the emancipation of the working class, as Engels predicted. This is the armed force with the closest and most direct link with the political forces. Its combat strength directly stems from the force of the masses in the locality where it operates. That is why, in the building of the militia and self-defence forces, it is very important to broaden its numerical strength and mobilize to the highest extent the participation of the political force of its locality.

The militia and self-defence forces are an armed force not detached from production. They take a direct part in production as well as in combat to defend production and defend the lives and property of the local population. All military activities of the militia and self-defence force are closely linked with the productive, economic and cultural activities in the locality. They draw their strength from the comprehensive strength of productive organization. In the countryside, the strength of the militia and self-defence forces is closely associated with the strength of the cooperatives. In the towns and industrial centres, their strength cannot be dissociated from the all-round strength of the factories, enterprises, construction sites, etc. That is why, in the building of the militia and self-defence force, we must always *closely combine the requirements of production with those of combat, and economic with national defence requirements.* Any departure from this principle would make it impossible to build efficient militia and self-defence forces and would deprive the latter of their combat strength.

The militia and sefl-defence forces is the armed force most closely and directly linked with the base and locality. They are the main instrument of violence of the people's

administration at the grassroots level, organized, led and built up by the local Party organization in the specific conditions and circumstances of each locality and each base area, and growing and fighting on the spot. The fighting capacity of any militia or self-defence force is reflected in its capacity to fulfil its combats and production tasks right in its base area and its own locality. In the building of the militia and self-defence forces it is necessary to proceed from the requirements and tasks of combat and production in each locality and each base area and from the practice of the locality and base area in its political, economic, military and geographical conditions in order to work out appropriate directives and measures an avoid uniformity and mechanical attitudes.

The chief combat method of the militia and self-defence forces consists of scattered, small, guerilla-type actions, clinging to the people and sticking to the land, fighting the enemy right in their productive base and living area. They decimate the enemy force unceasingly by attacking and wiping out small enemy units, directly protecting and defending the lives and property of the local population. That is why the building of the militia and self-defence force cannot be a simple carbon copy of the method of building the main force and regional army which are concentrated armed forces operating according to concentrated and regular combat method, though to different degrees.

The militia and self-defence forces in North Vietnam at present are built on the basis of a soicalist system which is continuously being strengthened and developed. Therefore, we must have a firm understanding of the characteristics of the socialist system in terms of the production relations, class structure, etc, in order to give full play to the superiority of the new system on the politico-moral and organizational fields,

and make full use of the new capacities offered by the material and technical bases, as well as by the all-round development of the new man among the working class and collective farmers in order to push forward vigorously with the building of the militia and self-defence forces.

First of all, it is necessarry to exppand to the fullest extent the *numerical strength* of the militia and self-defence force. This is a permanent requirement of the task of building the armed forces of the masses. Lenin has pointed out: "The victory of the revolution depends on the number of the proletarian masses and the peasants standing up to defend the revolution."[1].

Relying on the superiority of the socialist system, we have the full capacity to organize the broadest masses of the people into local combat or combat service organizations and raise still higher the proportion of the population who are members of the militia and self-defence forces making the militia and self-defence forces really become the broad military organization of the labouring people. It is our policy to give general military education to the people with a view to preparing militarily, to a necessary and appropriate level, all our people, young and old, men and women, so that they may realize their desire of participating in the fight against the aggressors to defend the country. We shall see to it that the aggressors, if they are reckless enough to launch an all-out war of aggression against our country, will meet the riposte of not only a few hundreds of thousands or some millions but of tens of millions of people, of our entire people, from the mountains to the plains, from the midlands to the coastal areas, from the countryside to the towns, who will, like one man, stand firmly at their posts closely coordinating with the people's army

1. Lenin, *Articles and Speeches on Military Problems*. People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, Vol I, p. 351.

to hit back at the adversary anywhere, using whatever means and weapons available.

But the strength of the armed forces of the masses in the socialist system consists not only in their numerical strength but also in their quality. That is their organizational spirit, the level of their equipment and their operational methods and, in the first place, their *political and moral strength*. That is why it is necessary to firmly grasp the principle of the Party concerning the building of the militia and self-defence forces. We must unceasingly strengthen and intensify the Party leadership of the militia and self-defence forces, attach special importance to political work and firmly master the class line and political criteria as regards the organization of the militia and self-defence force in order to keep it as efficient and reliable instrument of proletarian dictatorship at the base level. The level of political consciousness of the militia and self-defence forces is in direct proportion to that of the labouring people. The political and ideological education of the militia and self-defence forces is inseparably linked with the political and ideological education of the entire labouring people in the locality and in the base and must be jointly carried out by the Party organization, the various mass organizations and State offices, production bases and military organs in the locatity. As far as the content of this education is concerned, apart from the common requirements for every citizen, it is necessary to teach the militia and self-defence forces the task of the revolutionary armed forces in general and the militia and self-defence forces in particular. They should have a clear understanding of the military task of the locality, heighten their revolutionary vigilance, their determination to defend the country and their readiness to fight and endure sacrifices to protect the lives and property of the people right in the villages and hamlets, in the

streets, in the cooperatives and factories so as to defend the people's power, defend the locality and develop their sense of being the collective masters in the defence and building of the country.

In the *organizational sphere,* we must pay attention to building the militia and guerillas in the countryside and in the cooperatives as well as to building the self-defence forces and combat seld-fefence units in the towns and industrial centres, on the construction sites, in State farms, public offices and schools. As the development of socialist construction advances, the industrial centres and new economic centres are becoming more and more important and accordingly the percentage of workers, cadres, public servants and urban workers among the population is rising unceasingly. At the same time, profound changes are also taking place in the countryside, with the agricultural cooperatives becoming more and more consolidated with regard to the production relations and strengthened in their material and technical bases and the class of collective farmers growing and maturing more and more. This situation determines the ever more important role of the self-defence forces and the militia. At the same time, it gives importance to the need to *build the self-defence forces along with the building of the militia.* The self-defence forces must correctly reflect the general development and fighting strength of the class of collective farmers, of the socialist countryside in North Vietnam.

Our country is endowed with mountainous regions, the midlands and the plains and coastal areas. We have a vast countryside and also towns and industrial centres. Each area has its own important position in the political, economic and national defence spheres, its peculiarities in the fields of geography, population, customs and habits and also its own

potential different from the other areas. We must base ourselves on the regional peculiarities to work out the *appropriate tasks and orientation of the building of the armed forces of the masses.* Different policies and orientations must be applied to the mountainous regions and the plains, to the coastal areas and the hinterland, to the countryside and the towns and industrial centres or along the strategic communication lines.

Only in this way can the militia and self-defence forces in any locality make full use of the specific potentialities of its area in manpower, equipment, weapons and supply, in order to build *seasoned local units, skilled in fighting and serving the fight in the special conditions of each locality.* These will serve as a spearhead for a vigorous development of the people's war at the grassroots level and as the shock force in the building and development of the local economy.

The militia and self-defence forces are charged with military duty as well as productive tasks or any other task in every aspect of the activity of the State machine. That is why, in building the militia and self-defence forces, we must take into full account the specific conditions of the production activity, work, study and life of the people and rely on the production bases: production brigades, cooperatives, factories, construction sites, State farms, public offices, schools, communes, villages, and street quarters. Only so can we ensure that the activities of the militia and self-defence forces are *closely combined with combat, production and work* in all circumstances, in time of war as well as in time of peace.

We must exploit to the fullest extent the existing and ever increasing capacities of the various sectors of the national economy and other branches of social life, and we must *make a rational organization and use of the militia and self-defence forces* in these branches in order to raise its combat capacity

and ensure its readiness to fight and give combat support. During the war of resistance to the US war of destruction, there have taken shape in a number of towns and industrial centres various self-defene organizations in different branches such as the engineering service, building, land and river communication, postal and medical services and the other branches of activity both on land and on water. Experience has shown that if we know how to make the best use of the existing technical and specialized capacities of each branch, we will be able to *divide the militia and self-defence forces into different categories with different tasks and on this basis to lay down the direction for their correct building and use and the correct organization and rational distribution* of work among them. In this way, the armed forces of the masses will be provided with a new, very great, potential able to meet the new requirements of modern war, to achieve effective combination with the regional army and the regular army and to replenish the various services and arms of the people's army.

With regard to the equipment, proceeding from the requirements of combat and the different types of terrains, we are resolved to gradually *equip the guerilla and combat self-defence forces with a number of appropriate relatively modern weapons and war means while not losing sight of the necessity to develop the primitive and improved weapons.* The goal of the technical revolution in the North is to build a new material and technical basis of socialism and turn handicraft work into mechanized labour. At present the watchword "equip ourselves with whatever we have" no longer has the same content as it had in the past. If, in the past, for the militia and self-defence forces, this slogan chiefly meant the equipment of this force with primitive weapons, today it is more and more

associated with the adoption of modern technique. With the new capabilities of the localities, we must pay due attention to making the fullest use of the existing relatively modern or modern weapons in the localities to equip the core of the militia and self-defence forces. However, we should in no way slight primitive or improved weapons and means. As has been clearly demonstrated by the long practice of war in our country, the primitive and improved weapons, and equipment have proved very effective and created a very big force enabling them to take part in the destruction of the enemy by multiform and imaginative ways, creating a self-defence war carried out in our own land. Moreover, no country, however advanced its industrial development, can arm the whole of its people. That is why, while the core of the people's armed forces is equipped with new and relatively more modern weapons and war means, the majority of the people still need to be equipped with primitive or improved weapons and means to fight against the enemy. Otherwise, the question of arming the entire people or arming the broad masses of the people will suffer.

It is necessary to continue stepping up the *building and development of technical teams, groups or units forming special branches in the militia and self-defence forces.* This is a logical step of development in the raising of the combat capacity of the militia and self-defence forces in the conditions of modern warfare when the equimpment of these forces is being unceasingly improved and strengthened and when our people are pushing forward with socialist industrialization and building the material and technical basis of socialism.

As a result of the correct policy of our Party, during the years of resistance against the US war of destruction there have appeared in the militia and self-defence forces many units of

anti-aircraft machineguns and artillery, ground artillery, engineering, communications and antichemical warfare while many combat units have been equipped with mortars and some other modern weapons. The combat efficiency of the militia and self-defence forces as well as their capacity to serve the fight has been markedly improved. In many places, the militia and self-defence forces have by themselves shot down US aircraft, set fire to US warships, quickly annihilated commando groups of the enemy and expertly manned many modern or relatively modern weapons and war means, making important contributions to the detection and deactivation of modern US bombs and land or water mines. They have repaired and built roads, bridges, air bases, and other military projects and even produced some modern technical means for the anti-aircraf, issile, communication, engineering and naval units of the army. That reality allows us to affirm that the militia and self-defence forces in socialist North Vietnam have the full capacity to make good use of the various types of modern weapons and war means to fight the enemy and serve the fight. This capacity will increase in proportion to the ever rising cultural, technical and organizational level of our people, and is helped by the fact that we have a very big force of armymen who have been demobilized or transferred to civilian services. These are becoming the backbone of the armed forces of the masses in all parts of the country and include officers and men who have served in various arms and services of the people's army.

We must pay great attention to the *military training* of the militia and self-defence forces and the entire people. Proceeding from out methods of conducting war and our military art, from the combat requirements of the localities in

different conditions of the war, from our enemies in the fields, from the reality of the organization, equipment and the productive activities and work of the militia and self-defence forces, it is necessary to make elaborate studies in order to *determine the most appropriate content of the training programme and the method of training for the militia and self-defence forces*. The training programme must ensure that the militia and self-defence forces have a spirit of offensive, firmly grasp the guidelines for combat as well as the combat methods of guerilla warfare in modern conditions, and possess a high technical and tactical level commensurate with the combat requirements in each locality. We must ensure that the militia and self-defence forces have a perfect knowledge of their locality, a high capacity for independent fighting and also the capacity to achieve close coordination with the other armed forces operating in the locality. The military training programme for the militia and self-defence forces must be linked to their production activities. Whenever possible, we should combine the raising of the combat capabilities of the militia and self-defence forces and their capacity to serve the fight with the raising of their production technique. We must seriously regard the way in which the militia and self-defence forces fight the enemy as an art and an important content of our military science, and hence pay due attention to summing up the combat experiences of the armed forces of the masses in both zones of the country. We should carry out studies in order to build and develop unceasingly the art of fighting the enemy practised by the masses' armed forces in our country.

Hand in hand with training the militia and self-defence forces, and the reserve force we must give importance to military education in the Party and step up popular military

education among the people. To foster the military traditions of the nation for the defence of the country over many centuries of independence, our forefathers made use of many different competitions to encourage the people to improve their military art such as contests in military art, wresting contests, archery competitions, etc. Today we must continue this tradition. In the years to come, we shall promulgate general military education among the people in ordor to raise their sense of national defence, improve the military standard and develop the military traditions among the entire people. We must vigorously develop the movement of military sports and physical culture, and endow it with an ever richer content commensurate with the requirements of the people's war in our country in present-day conditions. *It is necessary to have a wide dissemination of military knowledge* among the people in varied forms appropriate to different age groups most of all for the young men and women. At the same time we must gradually develop mass organizations for military study and research, such as aviation, communication, chemical clubs, etc..., while stepping up the movement to establish sworn-brotherhood relations between mass organizations and army units.

A modern regular army must necessarily have a well-organized and strong reserve force. The armed forces of the masses form an inexhaustible reserve of the people's army. *The buiding and administration of the reserve force is* of paramount importance in time of war because this is the force of replenishment for the army, and in time of peace beause it will prepare the country to cope with all contingencies. The reserve force must be well organized both numerically and qualitatively in order to meet the need to expand the force and replenish the infantry and the other services and arms of the people's army. We must work out sound policies, systems and

plans for the building and administration of the reserve force regarding the registration and administration of the demobilized armymen and those who have been transferred to civilian sevices but are still able to serve in the reserve force. We must work out plans for military exercise and mobilization so that when necessary we can quickly restore and expand our armed forces. It is necessary to have an *appropriate training programme* to keep the officers and men of the reserve force always abreast with the development of a modern army and modern military science and help them give full scope to their role of core of the regional armed forces and to serve in the army when necessity arises. We must pay particular attention to the management and training of a reserve force among state employees and college students. We must see to it that in the future we can determine which reserve force in what branch and locality will best replenish such and such military branch and service such and such armed force in a given locality. For instance, reserve military engineering units should be formed within the building service, signal units within the posts and telecommunications service, medical units within the public health service, naval unitswithin the economic branches operating on the river, in the sea and among the population of coastal or riverine areas... In this way, the officers and men newly assigned to a unit can quickly receive and master the techniques and speciality of the military arm or service to which they are detailed. Later on after a reservist is demobilized and returns to his former civil occupation he would become the nucleus of the popular armed forces at his workplace and be able to give full scope to his technical abilities and his special knowledge to boost production and raise his work efficiency. This will very beneficial to both fighting and

construction, to both national defence and economy, in time of war and in time of peace alike.

To arm the masses, in the view of our Party, does not only mean to organize, educate , train and equip the broad masses of the people but also to actively *build the rear in all aspects — political, economic and national defence — to build solid platform for the people's war at the base and in the localities.*

The strength of the rear of the people's war throughout North Vietnam as well as in each locality depends on the successes of our people in socialist construction. That is why, in order to build a strong rear, we must strive our hardest to implement the triple revolution[1], carry out an active consolidation of the regions politically, make them prosperous economically and strong militarily, make them prosperous economically and strong militarily. While promoting the building of the regional economy, we must have *economic construction and the need for strengthening national defence in all branches*: agriculture, industry, communications and transport, posts and telecommunications, health and cultural services, building service...

It is necessary to speed up the building of fighting villages, fighting street quarters and fighting areas, forming them into a comprehensive system in order to stand prepared to meet all contingencies of war while ensuring facilities for normal production activities and the people's life in peace time. These must be solid offensive and defensive positions for our three categories of armed forces and steady bases from which the people will fight the enemy and carry on production at the same time in the conditions of a fierce war.

1. The revolution in relations of production, the technical revolution, and the cultural and ideological revolution. (*Ed*).

Preparations must be made to provide against the worst should the enemy use nuclear weapons. The building of fighting communes, fighting villages and fighting street quarters must be made on a *comprehensive basis*. We must have a strong Party organization, a mighty political force of the masses, a powerful militia and self-defence forces. We must have plans to improve the terrains of battle, and work out operationl plans and training programmes for regional armed forces as well as the entire population. We must make effetive preparations to turn each hamlet, each village and each street quarter into a really strong bastion of the people's war at the grassroots level and turn each province into a strategic unit of the national defence of the entire people.

In the building of the armed forces of the masses, along with the strengthening of the Party leadership at local level, and the guidance of the regional military organism, one question of prime importance is to build a strong and reliable *contigent of cadres for the masses' armed forces and the militia and self-defence forces*. This contigent must respond to the constant growth of the masses' armed forces in quantity and quality, in organization and equipment, in combat methods... and respond to the ever bigger and more complicated task of consolidating national defence and conducting a people's war at the base level.

The cadres of the militia and self-defence force are military cadres not detached from production, doing their production task and military task at the same time, working and fighting in close connection with production activity and the people's life at the base level. We must pay special attention to their quality and have a firm understanding of the importance of *class orientation and political criteria* in the building of the contingent of cadres for the militia and seld-defence

forces. In addition to the common requirement in political standards for all cadres of the revolutionary armed forces, the cadres of the militia, and self-defence forces must also have assimilated the political lines and tasks of the Party, the political economic and military tasks of the locality, and be strong in their determination to abide by all resolutions of the Party Committee and the instructions of the local administration as well as all instructions and orders of the superior military organs. They must have a necessary level of military knowledge, a comprehensive understanding of the political, economic and cultural situation in the locality and a thorough knowledge of the situation at the base, able to skilfully coordinate military with economic and other tasks. They must have the ability to help the local Party Committee in directing military affairs and to assume leading and commanding roles as well as to organize the fulfilment of the tasks of building, fighting, serving the fight, supplying the front, disseminating a basic knowledge of military science among the population, building up the reserve force, carrying out the policy concerning the rear as well as all other activities for consolidating national defence in their localities.

It is through the revolutionary movements in the localities and through the practice of fighting and work that we shall choose the best men and women for the contingent of cadres. This selection should also be combined with the building of the Party and the mass organizations in the localities. It is necessary to make a rational division of work among the cadres, and actively create conditions for them to improve their standard in their respective areas of responsibility, accumulate experiences and develop to the fullest their abilities in the fulfilment of all tasks within the localities.

By firmly grasping and satisfactorily carrying out the above tasks, from the quick expansion of the militia and self-defence forces to the continuous raising of their quality in all fields — politics and ideology, organization, equipment, training, building the rear base, training the cadres — we will effectively carry out the teaching of venerated President Ho Chi Minh: *"Each citizen must be a valiant fighter, each commune, village or street quarter must be a bastion, each cooperative and enterprise must be a supply base for the people's war and, in this way, we will turn the whole of our country into a single battleground to wipe out any aggressor".*

By their victorious, heroic and imaginative fight against the most brutal aggressive forces — those of US imperialism-by their creative labour in building a new social system, our people are living the most exalting days of their national history in the era of independence, freedom and socialism for the Vietnamese fatherland.

The present resistance against US aggression for national salvation makes us recall with justified pride and a high sense of responsibility the whole history of the glorious resistance of our nation against foreign aggressors, in particular the great and victorious resistance under the Tran dynasty. At that time, our people had to confront the Yuan Mongol aggressors, the most brutal enemy of our people in ancient times, the most ruthless aggressor of mankind in the Medieval period, who had trampled upon Asia and Europe, conquered and wiped out the names of many nations from the world map. Our people, fulfilling with flying colours their sacred national task, ushered in the period of the collapse of the Yuang Mongol Empire, making a worthy contribution to the fight of the other countries and nations at that time against foreign aggression.

Today, in the new era of human history inaugurated by the Great Russian October Revolution, in the Ho Chi Minh era in our country, our people, under the leadership of our Party, have again waged and are waging a glorious and victorious resistance, this time against US imperialism, the most brutal and strongest aggressor of our nation in modern history and also the enemy number one of the whole mankind. The anti-US war of resistance for national salvation is the most glorious and greatest of all resistance wars ever conducted by the heroic Vietnamese nation against foreign aggression. This resistance is being looked upon as the focus, the front line of the world people's movement against US imperialist aggression.

Our people are clearly and fully conscious of our sacred national task and our noble international obligation .We have the necessary determination and strength to completely defeat the US aggressors, liberate the South, defend the North and proceed to the peaceful reunification of the country. This will mark a turning point in the historical process of the collapse of the US imperialist neo-colonialism, making a worthy contribution to the revolutionary struggle of the people all over the world.

The secret of our people's success in the 13th century, in the 20th century, as well as in the whole historical process of our victorious fight against aggressive forces much bigger and stronger than ourselves to survive and develop, lies actually in the fact that we have relied on the *patriotism of the entire people. We have given full play to the strength of the whole country, and mobilized the entire nation to rise up, to combine efforts of the whole country and the entire people in the resistance and wage an insurrection of the entire people and a people's war with the army and the armed forces of the masses as the core.*

General Tran Quoc Tuan's thought of "the whole nation joining forces" and his policy of "everyone a soldier" which dates back to the 13th century has not ceased to develop and to acquire an ever richer content, an ever higher quality and a growing strength. Today it reaches its peak with the great military thought of President Ho Chi Minh which consists in "uniting the entire people", "the whole country fighting the aggressors" and "the 31 million of our compatriots being 31 million valiant fighters against the US aggressors".

Nowadays, our people are guided by the political, military and international line of our Party which is a judicious, independent, sovereign and creative line. We have a vanguard social system and an ever increasing politico-moral and technico-material force. Moreover, we enjoy the active assistance of the other countries in the socialist camp and the sympathy and support of the whole of progressive mankind. In the new era, we have the *invincible strength of the militant solidarity of the entire people, of the whole country, of the entire nation based on the worker-peasant alliance and placed under the leadership of the working class.* We have mighty political forces and armed forces. Our people's armed forces are composed of a regular and modern people's army and strong extensive armed forces of the masses. We are sure to accomplish our sacred national task and our noble international obligation.

The thought of "the whole nation joining forces", "everyone a soldier", "the whole people uniting", "the whole country fighting against the aggressors", the organization of the army along the lines of "arming the entire people, combining the army with the popular armed forces" is an original feature of *Vietnamese military thought,* the military thought by which a

small country can defeat bigger aggressors in its just fight for independence and freedom.

The principle of "arming the entire people, combining the people's army with the armed forces of the masses and vice versa, making the armed forces of the masses the base of the people's army and making the people's army the core of the armed forces of the masses and building up the three categories of the people's armed forces" is a very important part of the policy of building the people's armed forces in particular and the military line of our Party in general a very important part of Vietnamese military science in the present era. The determination of this organizational principle is a great and original work, a major success of our Party and people. Experience has shown that in the revolutionary struggle in general and in the armed struggle in particular, once we have a correct line, a correct resolution of the organizational problem is of primary importance for winning victory.

This principle of military organization is a precious weapon in the storehouse of national experience, especially for small nations subjected to aggression and enslavement who rise up and fight victoriously against imperialism and colonialism, for national independence, democracy and social progress. Whatever the circumstances this principle must be firmly grasped. We should closely follow the realities of society, war and the development of production, science and technology. We should learn actively but selectively from the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries and other nations in the world. In the process of the bitter struggle between us and the enemy we should always base ourselves on the concrete historical conditions and circumstances of each period to put into practice the Party military line and principles of military organization, without ceasing to promote creativeness and

development, without indulging in conservatism and self-complacency, while avoiding uniformity and mechanical attitudes in order to increase the fighting strength of our entire people, vigorously develop the Vietnamese people's war, steadily con solidate the national defence of the Vietnamese fatherland, and build ever mightier armed forces of the Vietnames people.

Our people, our nation are resolved to forge ahead and win complete victory for the patriotic anti-US resistance in order to build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam.

Our people, our nation will forever defend the beautiful land bequeathed by our forefathers and will forever safeguard the independence of our beloved Vienamese motherland.

PART FOUR

THE TWO GREATEST FIGURES IN VIETNAM'S HISTORY: NGUYEN TRAI AND HO CHI MINH

NGUYEN TRAI[1]
A GREAT NATIONAL HERO, AN OUTSTANDING MAN OF CULTURE[2]

I
A GREAT NATIONAL HERO

Nguyen Trai was born in 1380. He grew up in a period *full of upheavals and tempests*. The declining Tran dynasty was being shaken to its roots by a wave of uprisings of peasants and serfs against the regime of big apanages allotted to the aristocratic strata and the harsh exploitation by the latter.

The Ho dynasty which replaced it was soon confronted with an invasion by the northern feudalists.

Our country's very existence was under threat. Our nation was going through unprecedented hard trials.

In November 1406, the Ming dynasty mobilized 800,000 troops for a massive invasion of our country.

At the beginning of the XV century, the Ming dynasty had become a powerful Oriental empire. It nurtured expansionist ambitions against the whole of Southeast and South Asia. For this purpose, it sent Trinh Hoa as commander of a big fleet to stage seven invasions through Indonesia, India, Iran and the Arab countries. It went to the Red Sea and the eastern shores

1. National hero of Vietnam, outstanding politician, military man and diplomat, and great poet (1380 - 1442)
2. Speech made at the ceremony on the 6th Birth Centennial of Nguyen Trai (1380 - 1980) held in Hanoi under the decision of UNESCO on the commemoration of the world's celebrities.

of Africa. With all kinds of tricks, Trinh Hoa compelled several countries in this area to submit and pay tributes to the so-called "heavenly dynasty"

With its important strategic position and barring the Ming's expansion to the south, Dai Viet became the main target of aggression in the overall expansionist scheme of the greater Ming empire.

Ho Quy Ly[1] realized at an early date the danger of an invasion from the north. Along with the implementation of important reforms, the Ho dynasty made intense efforts to strengthen its army, built fortresses and citadels, forged weapons, preparing to cope with the Ming invaders. But it committed mistakes, lost the political support of the people, and conducted a mainly defensive strategy. As a result, the resistance rapidly collapsed.

With their ruthless nature the Chinese feudal invaders perpetrated countless crimes against the Vietnamese people. They resorted to merciless massacres and plunder. They compelled the Vietnamese to abandon their national customs and to adopt the Han way of life. They carried out a policy of division. They made every attempt to destroy the long-standing culture of Dai Viet. All written documents were burnt, all steles were smashed. The purpose was to erase for ever the name of the country and to turn Dai Viet into a district of the greater Ming empire.

In face of these perfidious schemes and ruthless actions, the Vietnamese people remained undaunted and rose up in a fight to the death against the enemy. Insurrection upon

1. National character (1336 - 1407). Ho Quy Ly overthrew the Tran Dynasty, founded the Ho Dynasty but failed to win the people's support. After his unsuccessful struggle against Ming invaders (China), he was arrested and deported to China where he died.

insurrection broke out, but all were defeated. Prospects of victory seemed to be far off.

A very pressing issue for the Vietnamese was to find a *correct way* to lead the national liberation cause to complete victory.

Le Loi and Nguyen Trai were prominent sons of the nation who were soon to find a correct and creative path to achieve this.

Nguyen Trai was born into a family of poor scholars. He lost his mother at an early age and lived with his maternal grandfather Tran Nguyen Dan - a fourth-generation descendant of Tran Quang Khai[1] - and his father Nguyen Phi Khanh. He graduated at the age of 20 and together with his father, became a mandarin under the Ho dynasty. A short time later, the resistance war of the Ho dynasty encountered defeat. Nguyen Phi Khanh and Ho Quy Ly were taken prisoner and deported to China. Nguyen Trai engraved on his heart the advice given by his father in bidding him farewell: "You must seek a way to wash away the shame for our country and to avenge your father, only by so doing can you show your filial gratitude".

Nguyen Trai managed to evade the enemy's hands. For ten long years, he wandered in various parts of the country. Wherever he went, he witnessed the sufferings of the people and the intolerable crimes of the Ming invaders. He realized more and more clearly the threat of destruction which confronted our nation and culture.

He became aware of the strength of the people in the uprisings that repeatedly broke out at the time. In the mountain areas there was the great "red clothes movement" of the ethnic minorities. In the plain and right in the vanity of Dong Quan (Hanoi), a series of insurrections were recorded, mostly those

1. National character (1241 - 1294). A famous general in the resistance war of Vietnam against the Mongolian invaders (13th century)

of peasants and serfs, of local notables. Heroes and patriots rose up against the "ruthless Ming invaders" and the puppet traitors and fought for the restoration of national independence and sovereignty and the people's right to live.

From the realities of history, Nguyen Trai drew up important experiences bearing the character of a law. The prosperity and independence of the country depended on a decisive factor, the people's strength. The people can be compared to the "water", which may "carry the boat" or "capsize" it and it is only when the boat has been overturned that we are aware of their strength. When speaking of the "people", Nguyen Trai had in mind in the first place the masses of serfs and peasant pariahs. With his love of, and confidence in, the people he was deeply conscious of their decisive role in the evolution of history. He asserted that only by gaining the hearts and minds of the people, is it possible to achieve great works.

Also from the realities of history, Nguyen Trai deeply realized that to save the country and the people, care must be taken in the first place to use force to drive away the Ming invaders and their lackeys. In his view the salvation of the country is closely linked to that of the people, to save the country is for the purpose of saving the people, the fight for the country must be combined with the fight for the people, it is a great cause. That is *the decisive turning point in Nguyen Trai's search for a path to national salvation.*

Nguyen Trai had inherited the good traditions of our nation and through the realities of the Vietnamese society at the time, he had found the way to lead the national salvation cause to victory. This path consists in "using the just cause to defeat cruelty", "replacing violence with benevolence". Such is the main content of the *Dai sach binh Ngo* (the Great Strategy for

fighting the Ngo) worked out by Nguyen Trai after long years of meditation.

At that time, in the Lam Son mountain area, a patriotic notable Le Loi[1] was secretly rallying forces to reconquer the country and secure a peaceful life for the villages. In early 1418, Binh Dinh Vuong's banner of insurrection was flying in the sky of Thanh Hoa.

Following years of pondering, Nguyen Trai came to Lam Son, and offered Le Loi the great strategy for fighting the Ngo (the Ming aggressors). He had found in Le Loi a worthy leader capable of raising high the banner of national salvation and to carry the fight to victory.

Under the banner of the just cause, the Lam Son insurrection rallied increasing forces from all social strata and achieved an alliance of uprisings throughout the country which became a broad tide of resistance against the Ming aggressors.

Nguyen Trai rendered a great service in collaborating with Le Loi and the other leaders of the Lam Son uprising to develop major strategies and important decisions to conduct the national liberation war through countless difficulties and hardships to ever greater victories.

He constantly stood in the vanguard of the battle. He helped in the defence of the historic Lam Son land during the most critical hours and in the building of a foothold in Nghe An[2] as a springbroad to push forward the national salvation war. He participated in leading the insurrectionsists' fight to smash the enemy's lines, destroy enemy reinforcement troops and besiege citadels. At times, he conducted negotiations with the aggressors, valiantly entered the enemy's lair to strike at the

1. National character (1385 - 1433), leader of the resistance war against the Ming invaders, founder of the Later Lê dynasty.
2. In Central Vietnam

hearts and minds of enemy troops and caused the disintegration of many enemy columns and the surrender of several enemy citadels.

Throughout the duration of the liberation war, Nguyen Trai was the author of letters, orders and appeals. He used his writing brush as a sharp spearhead of attack, "more powerful than one hundred thousand elite troops"!

After ten years of hard and heroic war (1418-1427), the Lam Son insurrectionists won a great victory, restored the independence and sovereignty of Dai Viet and smashed the aggressive will of the northern feudalists. The result was:

"From now on our country steady,

Our rivers and mountain are renovated,

Eternal peace has been established,

A secular shame has been washed away!"

The great victory of the struggle against the Ngo aggressors was that of a patriotic war waged by the entire people in which Le Loi and Nguyen Trai played an outstanding role.

This glorious victory had a great historic significance not only for our nation, it also made an important contribution to the checking of the expansionist designs of the northern feudalists with regard to Southeast and South Asia.

In the Vietnamese people's history of struggle for national construction and defence, *Le Loi and Nguyen Trai deserve for ever to be great national heroes.*

II
A STRATEGIST OF GENIUS

Nguyen Trai worked out the great strategy for fighting the Chinese invaders and helped Le Loi conduct the resistance

war for national salvation against the Ming aggressors. After total victory, Nguyen Trai summed up the great patriotic war in the *Dai Cao Binh Ngo* (Great Proclamation about defeating the Ngo), a Declaration of Independence of Vietnam at the time.

Today the *Great Strategy for defeating the Ngo* is no longer in existence. But through Nguyen Trai's famous summing up report, through his works in prose and in poetry, through the epic realities of the resistance war against the Ming invaders, we can see that the Great Strategy for defeating the Ngo aggressors was precisely the strategic line of the Lam Son uprising which developed into a victorious war for national liberation.

That was the line of raising aloft the banner of the great cause and of benevolence. The Vietnamese people resolutely rose up to defeat cruelty, to resort to benevolence instead of brutality and driving the Ming aggressors out of the country and reconquering our beautiful country. The Great Strategy for defeating the Ngo aggressors spoke little of attacks against citadels but much of the work to gain the minds of the enemy troops combining military attacks with efforts to persuade them to surrender. The Great Strategy for defeating the Ngo aggressors was adopted by Le Loi, and became a clearsighted program which led the Lam Son uprising and the resistance against the Ming aggressors to victory.

It took ten long years for the insurrection to develop into a widespread liberation war.

At the start under Binh Dinh Vuong[1] banner there were only several thousand men who had not enough food and clothes and no weapons at all.

1. Namely Le Loi - See note on page 543

"On our side, talent was rare as stars at dawn and leaves in autumn,

Officers and advisers were lacking."

During the first seven years when the enemy was in a strong position, the insurrectionists fought valiantly, defeated seven attacks by the Ming aggressors, overcame many critical periods to hold on. But subsequently, the situation changed for the better at a wonderfully quick tempo.

From late 1424, the insurrectionists launched surprise attacks in the direction of Nghe An, captured Tra Long citadel, wiped out enemy reinforcement troops at Kha Luu, Bo Ai, besieged Nghe An citadel, marched on straight to Dien Chau, Thanh Hoa, Thuan Hoa, Tan Binh. Wherever they came, they received a warm welcome from the population. Tens of thousands of young people joined their ranks. Uprisings upon uprisings broke out. Many mutinies were recorded among the enemy troops.

Within only 10 months, all districts south of Thanh Hoa were liberated and became a solid strategic rear area for the national salvation war.

A new opportunity had arisen. The enemy was concentrated in Nghe An while all citadels in Dong Do were devoid of troops. Le Loi and Nguyen Trai sent four columns of no more than 2,000 or 3,000 men each in the direction of Dong Do, "to capture lands, rally the population, and deprive the enemy of all possibilities of reinforcement". Everywhere from the plain to the mountain area, the local people, especially the poor peasant masses, stood up in a tidal wave, and helped besiege the enemy's citadels.

In just over one month, the local administrative apparatus of the enemy in 10 districts of Dong Do completely collapsed; the puppet troops were either wiped out or disintegrated.

The Chinese general Vuong Thong launched a strategic counter-offensive with ten thousand troops. The Lam Son insurrectionists acting in close coordination with the local militias smashed this counter attack, and won a resounding victory in Ninh Kieu and Tot Dong, annihilating in three days over 60,000 enemy troops.

"The streams of blood shed by the enemy at Ninh Kieu stank for a thousand miles.

The piles of corpses left by them at Tot Dong for a thousand years would be reminders of their shame."

In the wake of this victory, the Vietnamese besieged Dong Quan and the other citadels where the enemy was entrenched. Combining military with political thrusts, they enticed seven out of 13 enemy citadels to surrender.

A new situation had arisen. In face of the threat of total defeat, the Ming dynasty obstinately mobilized 150,000 troops under the command of Lieu Thang and Moc Thanh to launch a two-pronged attack in an attempt to lift the siege of Dong Quan.

Le Loi and Nguyen Trai decided to muster forces to wipe out the enemy reinforcements. This was achieved in 27 days and nights of fighting which ended in the resounding Chi Lang-Xuong Giang victory.

The liberation war was nearing total victory. The Vietnamese forces were strong enough to launch an annihilation attack against the enemy besieged in Dong Quan citadel. But Le Loi and Nguyen Trai shifted to *political means and diplomatic efforts* to compel the enemy to surrender. In

defiance of danger, Nguyen Trai entered Dong Quan on five occasions to talk with Vuong Thong.

On December 10, 1427, at the Dong Quan swearing party, Vuong Thong pledged himself to withdraw his troops without waiting for an order of the "heavenly dynasty". The defeated Ming army, one hundred thousand strong, was supplied with boats, horses and food to pull out of Vietnam. That was indeed an unprecedented way of ending the war. Finally the Ming King had to proclaim a "pull-out" of the invading army.

The great liberation war of the Vietnamese nation had won total victory. Vietnam could again enjoy independence and peace. Formal relations were restored between Dai Viet and China.

The liberation war led by Le Loi and Nguyen Trai was a people's war developed to a fairly high degree for the time.

In that war, the most fundamental feature was that "the just cause" was on our side. Our people fought to regain independence for the nation and reconquer lands from the invaders. The enemy was the brutal Ming aggressors and the wicked Vietnamese puppets. *A just cause is bound to prevail over cruelty and an unjust cause.*

Our forces were *those of an entire people involved in the war*, of the national army and the masses of people's militia. In the whole process of resistance, the insurrectionists constantly increased their forces. Intensive efforts were made to build the regular army and the local armed forces. In particular, during more than two years of the drive to the plain, the insurrectionists expanded their forces while fighting. Their strength rose from several thousand to over 300,000 men. Meanwhile, they made the utmost efforts to *raise its quality*. To carry out education in moral virtues, to promote

determination to fight, one-mindedness, mutual affection, strict respect for the people's property. To carefully select commanders, to steel troops, to keep strict discipline. To stock food, to capture weapons from the enemy to fight him, to repair weapons, to build "various military formations".

"Warships' sails scrape the cloud,

Armours shine brilliantly,

Arrows and shells are heaped up,

Stores are full of gun-powder."

The line of building the armed forces of the national resistance war had a fairly comprehensive content, a correct and creative solution was given to the relationship between quality and quantity.

The military art of the liberation war was *the art of involving the whole people in the fight against the enemy.*

During the resistance war for national salvation, especially after its shift to the central plain, *the insurrectionists constantly kept the initiative.*

Nguyen Trai pointed out the need to maintain a position of strength and to adopt an offensive strategy to win ever greater successes. The victory of the Lam Son insurrectionists was a victory for the offensive strategy. Once they had launched attacks in selected directions, their position and their strength grew by bounds.

The whole people took part in the fight in original and creative ways. *The attacks of the national army started uprisings of all patriotic people.* That was a combination of attacks with uprisings which created a great strength making it possible to regain control over our beloved country.

In the historical conditions of that time, Nguyen Trai worked out the art of *"fighting a strong enemy with weaker forces through surprise attacks, opposing a numerically stronger forces with ambushes"*.

This was due to the balance of forces: at the beginning, the Ming troops were many times more numerous than our army. So if victory was to be gained, creative ways of fightings creative strategies and tactics had to be adopted.

The choice of correct directions and correct targets is of decisive significance; so is the creation of good opportunities it is necessary to use cavalry, to lay ambushes, to strike at the enemy's weak points, to take him by surprise. As a result, our position is consolidated, our forces increased, our troops constantly launch attacks with a crushing superiority so that the enemy is incapable of resisting and will be annihilated in the end.

Nguyen Trai used to say: "Opportunity! Opportunity! We should not miss any opportunity!" He also stressed the need for *resolute and rapid actions, initiative, flexibility.*

Nguyen Trai always emphasized a very important requirement, namely *effectiveness in fighting.* It is necessary to avoid strong points, and to strike at weak spots...

Nguyen Trai raised the work with enemy troops to the position of a strategic issue, he regarded *"persuasion of the minds"* as a major requirement. The "persuasion of the minds" which relied on the justness of our cause and the all-round strength of our people led to the surrender of dozens of enemy citadels including Dong Quan, the lair of scores of thousands of Ming troops. This tactics was effective enough to result in the surrender of one hundred thousand enemy troops without any attack.

In studying the realities of the Lam Son insurrection and the liberation war, we find that *a fundamental feature in the art of conducting war by Le Loi and Nguyen Trai was their skilful combination of various forms of struggle —political, military, diplomatic; striking with the forces of the whole people and with the national army; combination of the insurrectionists' attacks with the uprising of the masses and the drive to win the hearts of enemy troops.*

This combinations was achieved in each strategic stage and throughout the war.

The Lam Son insurrectionists' strategy of launching combined attacks in all fields, with all forms and all forces was the development to a new level of our nation's traditional way of fighting the aggressors. Our Party has inherited and brought this strategy to a new high, and generalized it into an "overall strategy" with an extremely great strength making it possible to defeat any enemy.

The advanced military thinking and outstanding military art of our nation in the great resistance for national salvation in the early XV century was given a profound summing up by Nguyen Trai who was the first man in our history to have expounded in a comprehensive and systematic way the original and creative Vietnamese military thinking.

Nguyen Trai was a strategist of genius, a prominent political figure and a talented diplomat.

III
A GREAT THINKER

In the history of the development of our nation's ideology up to the XV century, Nguyen Trai was a great thinker and a prominent political figure. He was a creative man and a man

of action whose soul and broad intelligence symbolized the feelings and thoughts of a historical epoch full of ordeals and also of glorious feats.

The thought which pervaded and governed all the activities of Nguyen Trai was in his own expression *"humanism"*, *"struggle for the great cause"*, *"benevolence"*. In his view, in the pursuit of great works, one must start from humanism, after achieving great deeds, one must give first place to humanism, only with humanism can success be achieved.

Nguyen Trai's humanism was the crystallization of the progressive thoughts, the spiritual and cultural values of our nation from its inception to the XV century. It was successfully applied and brilliantly developed in the liberation of the country and created a new step forward in the history of our nation's ideology.

The fundamental content of Nguyen Trai's humanism was *patriotism, love for the people, a sense of independence and sovereignty, benevolence, aspiration for peace, and friendly relations among nations.*

Nguyen Trai linked "humanism" to the "people" when he wrote in *Dai Cao Binh Ngo* (the Great Proclamation about defeating the Ngo): "Humanism aims at securing tranquillity for the people". He also linked "humanism" to the "country" when he wrote "Humanism secures tranquillity for the country" in his poem *Ha Quy Lam Son*. That is clear: with Nguyen Trai, humanism was closely linked to patriotism and love for the people.

By humanism, Nguyen Trai meant foremost on nation's pursuit of the great cause, the banner of national salvation and the struggle against cruelty and tyranny.

Through a long process of national construction and defence, Dai Viet under the Ly and Tran dynasty was already a unified State, a mature nation. In the XV century, our country was confronted with a threat to its independence. Nguyen Trai asserted that:

"Our country Dai Viet has long since been
A land of ancient culture,
With its own rivers and mountains, ways and customs,
Different from those of the north.
The Trieu, Dinh, Ly, Tran built up our independence
And stood as equal of the Han, Tang, Sung, Yuan
We had known both days of greatness and times of decline,
But never had we lacked heroes."

Nguyen Trai stated a fact: our Dai Viet is an entity which has an independent existence and has gone through a long process of development, our nation has a strong vitality and has been existing alongside other nations in the world.

It may be said that for the first time in the history of our country, *the notion of nation* was expounded in a systematic and comprehensive way: from the glorious history of struggle and long-standing civilization to territorial stability, a nation which rules over a part of the earth and has a culture with specific features.

Nguyen Trai was very proud of our beautiful country with its majestic mountains and rivers, its abundant resources, its long-standing culture, its specific way of life, its heroic history shining with its feats of arms in the fight against foreign invasion. He flatly rejected the Ming dynasty's idea of "pacifying the world", regarding the "Giao Chi district"[1] as

1. A name given to the then Vietnam by Ming invaders.

part of the land of the "Heavenly dynasty" and the "Giao Chi" as a barbarous, uncivilized people. He loudly stated: "Heaven has divided North and South with high mountains and big rivers; frontiers have been clearly delimited; our Dai Viet, although lying far from the Ngu Linh mountains, is known as a cultured country, at all times there have been capable men". It is not a fact that only big self-proclaimed "heavenly courts" possess "emperors" while smaller countries are regarded as vassals and only possess kings. Nguyen Trai showed *a high sense of independence, sovereignty, and equality among the various national States.*

In his views, *love for the country must be closely linked to love for the people* because country and people constitute a single entity.

When speaking of the people, his heart and mind were wholly turned to the poor labouring people, the poor peasants and serfs.

The people create all the wealth of society, including the incomes of the mandarins and the palaces of the kings. Therefore, Nguyen Trai thought that "when eating the buds, one must be grateful to the cultivators", and "the great, magnificent castles are the result of the work of the army and people". The people are also humanist-loving men; they can "carry the boat" or "capsize it".

History has repeatedly shown that any king, any historical personality who knew how to manage the people's forces and pursue a policy of keeping close to the people could achieve one-mindedness and great deeds. Inversely any king, any historical personality who acted counter to the people's minds was sooner or later to meet with defeat.

Thus Nguyen Trai was deeply aware of the *role of the people* in social life and in historical developments.

With such consciousness, Nguyen Trai believed that to save the country, it was necessary to save the people and only reliance on the people could ensure success for national salvation. That was the guiding thought behind the great strategy for pacifying the Ngo which led to the success of the national liberation cause.

Nguyen Trai's thinking about the people also contained a *democratic spirit* to a definite extent. His love for the people was not detached from his *benevolence* and his great love for man and life.

His sentiments were broad and covered all the country from man to the vegetation and animals.

He was committed to love the population throughout his life. He catered first for the people's concern.

As he loved life and respected human dignity and personality, he felt even increased hatred to the ruthless Ming aggressors whose only concern was "to deceive the people and to mercilessly engage in killing". He was a humanist, a man of action with clear likes and dislikes, a staunch fighter.

Nguyen Trai's kindness also extended to other peoples and included tolerance and clemency towards the enemy. He made persevering efforts to persuade enemy's troops to observe the rules of human behaviour and to awaken their conscience and what remained of the human character in their ranks. He advocated a humane treatment of prisoners of war and of the enemy soldiers who surrendered themselves. At the end of the war, Le Loi and Nguyen Trai "set free about one hundred thousand enemy officers and men" and supplied them with food and transport to go home.

Xenophobia and national discrimination were quite alien to Nguyen Trai who clearly realized that the Mings' war of aggression not only brought sufferings and mourning to our people, but also calamities to the Chinese people themselves. In his view, the ending of this unjust war was to deliver the two countries from the danger of hostilities. His lofty dream was that all nations could live in independence and peace.

After the regaining of independence, Nguyen Trai's humanism continued to be applied in national construction.

His aspiration was to build a prosperous and strong State, a society ruled by an "enlightened King" reigning over "wise citizens" and in which all laws of the State "are in keeping with the people's hearts and minds" and "the will of one person was not imposed on thousands of others". Nguyen Trai condemned the corrupt mandarins who liked to impose heavy taxations on the population; he despised the dishonest rich people. He showed concern for the people's life, and wished that everybody could live in welfare through labour.

Objectively speaking, Nguyen Trai's ideal society could not exist under the Le dynasty which was becoming an increasingly despotic regime. Nguyen Trai was a knowledgeable scholar. He was versed in Chinese culture and the Confucian ideological system. In the context of the feudal regime of that time, it was not surprising to hear him say, "let our heart be with the Confucian doctrine". But at times, he also blamed himself for having been deceived by it; he also thought that "he had not seen anything although he had read all the books"

That is the reason why, despite some analogy in terminology, Nguyen Trai's humanism had nothing in common with the Confucian conception. As a matter of fact, at the time of the Warring States, Confucius and Mencius had never had

a Motherland. In its content, before being spread to the Oriental countries, Confucianism knew nothing about patriotism and nationalism. In its view, the labouring people were disregarded and utterly ill-treated.

The contradictions and limitations which existed to a definite extent in Nguyen Trai's thinking were due to the historical conditions of that period. They showed that Nguyen Trai had gone out of the bounds of Confucianism and over and above the limitations of his time. He had reached the height of the ideological history of the Dai Viet civilization in the XV century.

IV
AN OUTSTANDING MAN OF CULTURE.

Nguyen Trai was a brilliant star of patriotic literature of the early XV century. He left us very valuable works which reflect the progressive views of the whole literary and artistic trend of the epoch.

Inheriting the fine traditions of the nation's millenary history, especially the brilliant cultural achievements of the Ly-Tran period, Nguyen Trai made great contribution to the promotion of the Dai Viet culture.

That was a patriotic, progressive culture having a profound *national and popular character*, a great *realistic value* and high *combativeness*, and reflecting in the fullest and strongest way *Vietnamese patriotism* in the XV century.

Nguyen Trai was a prominent militant on the cultural front closely linking cultural activities to the national liberation cause, he used his writing brush as weapon, and the strength of literature to rally our force, strike at the enemies and cause

their disintegration, thereby making an important contribution to the great victory of the national liberation war.

His literary works were in the first place put in the service of our nation's lofty cause. Carrying aloft the banner of humanism and benevolence, Nguyen Trai linked his cultural activities to "the elimination of poison, corruption, and despotism"; he highlighted human dignity.

He also used literature to contribute to national construction, the promotion of human personality and the national character of Dai Viet culture.

With his love of the country, its people and his benevolence, he landed in his writings the love for his compatriots, the beautiful, peaceful life, opposed all unjust acts and the trampling upon human dignity. In his writing, he fought for the truth, for reason, for the people's welfare, for eternal peace and for cordial relations among nations. He sought his inspiration in nature, in social realities and the people's way of life. As a result, his literary works were "as strong as one hundred thousand warriors".

Dealing with music, Nguyen Trai held that "peace is the root of music", "sounds are the words of music", "without a root, it is not possible to stand". Its root can be preserved only by entering life and catering for the population in such a way that "no more complaint was heard in remotest villages and hamlets".

Through this comment, we can see Nguyen Trai's viewpoint with regard not only to music, but also to literature and art in general. By root, he meant the content of literature and art; by words he meant their form. That is the dialectic relationship between the content and the form

in literature and art, the content decides the form which in its turn has a reverse effect.

Nguyen Trai left many works in prose and poetry. As regards the works in prose, mention must be made in the first place of *Quan trung tu menh tap*, *Dai cao binh Ngo*, *Chi Linh son phu*, *Van bia Vinh Lang*. The poems include among others *Uc Trai thi tap* and *Quoc Am thi tap*.

During the fight against the Chinese invaders, Nguyen Trai's brush had the force of a sharp thrust of attack. The texts written in this period have been subsequently collected in the "*Quan trung tu menh tap*".

His appeals to the troops and the people, helped rally all patriots in a united fight against the brutal aggressors.

Nguyen Trai's *Dai cao binh Ngo* was written after the total victory of the Lam Son insurrection. It has the value of a *Declaration of Independence* of Dai Viet at the time, a *deep recapitulation* of the great patriotic war, an epic about our nation's victory. It is also a strong act of accusation against the "monstrous crimes" of the Ming invaders, of the Northern expansionists.

Dai cao binh Ngo eloquently and systematically reflected the patriotism of our nation. Through the historic test of strength with the aggressors, Nguyen Trai asserted the strong vitality of the Dai Viet civilization. He affirmed the independence and sovereignty of our country and the equality between nations.

It landed the resounding feats of arms of our people in the national liberation struggle. It highlighted the lofty humanism of our army and people, their love of peace and their wish to put out the flames of war and open the path to reconciliation and "eternal peace". In this sense, *Dai cao binh Ngo* is also *a declaration of humanism and peace* of the Dai Viet State.

Nguyen Trai was also the author of *Du dia chi*, a book describing our country with clearly delimited borders, beautiful mountains and rivers and diversified resources. He described the life of our people with different trades, a simple way of life, beautiful traditions and customs.

Further Nguyen Trai was author of many poems reflecting his lofty personality, the beauty of nature, and the life of the people. Noteworthy in the fact that his poems in *nom* (Vietnamese script) are more numerous than those in Chinese characters. With *Quoc am thi tap,* Nguyen Trai ranked among the people who laid the foundations of our national liberation. Furthermore, he raised the Vietnamese language to the rank of the official language in our country's literature.

Nguyen Trai's poems in *nom* script assimilated many achievements of Vietnamese folk culture and literature. Things once alien to literature were introduced in a very natural manner. Adages, proverbs, folk verses, characteristic tonalities of the Vietnamese language were skilfully exploited by Nguyen Trai who thus gave the images in his poems a particular national character. Nguyen Trai paid great attention to enriching the Vietnamese language and to preserving its purity.

Nguyen Trai took pride in his having travelled to the four corners of the country, and wherever he went he composed poems. He made skilful discoveries about folk songs and folk music.

"The fisherman sang three times and the foggy surface of the lake seemed broadened.

The guardian of buffalo blew a flute accent and the moon in the sky was seemingly pushed higher".

Space became broader and higher, and it was precisely the human soul which became broader and greater. Literature and arts can thus raise man to a higher level.

Nguyen Trai was very sensitive to all manifestations of life. He chanted a peach flower blossoming in the wind or a newly grown banana plant. He did not lose his optimism in difficult situations. He was landed by his companions from the Lam Son period: "He cares for the country's affairs and embellishes the country. Nobody can be compared to him."

With Nguyen Trai, the Dai Viet culture reached a new height...

HO CHI MINH - A NATIONAL LIBERATION HERO A GREAT MAN OF CULTURE

President Ho Chi Minh was born at a time when the Vietnamese nation was living in misery and humiliation under the domination of French imperialism. Successive generations of scholars and other patriots have stood up to fight for independence and freedom but all to no avail. History made it incumbent upon the Vietnamese nation, each Vietnamese patriot as well as oppressed nations of the world at the time to find a way to save the country and nation. Such was the great challenge of time.

Young Nguyen Sinh Cung grew up in a humble family of cholars who led a simple and frugal life. His father, a laureate of a mandarinal competition, rejected the prescription of loyalty to the kings as in his mind "patriotism means love of the people". From his childhood he had been impregnated with the millenary national tradition of resistance against foreign aggression, with the age-old Vietnamese culture and the quintessence of Eastern culture. His family also inculcated upon him patriotism and closeness to the people and he assimilated the culture as well as the tradition of undaunted struggle of the Lam Hong region. Endowed with intelligence and independence of mind, he harboured the great design of saving his country and people but resolved not to tread in the footsteps of predecessors. Driven by an extraordinary will power he decided to go to the West to see for himself the land of those

that had imposed their domination over the Vietnamese nation and to find the path towards national liberation.

Nguyen Ai Quoc went to France. He did not stay there but continued his long journey through many countries in Europe, Africa, America and Asia. And he found out the truth that to him was quite new, namely that on every continent, in rich and powerful countries just as in the destitute colonies, there are oppressed and exploited pariahs on the one hand, and ruling oligarchies living on exploitation and oppression on the other.

It was also during those years of ceaseless travels that Nguyen Ai Quoc enlarged his sum of knowledge. He studied with interest philosophical and political theories especially the French revolutionary ideology and the French culture. With his command of several languages he was able to assimilate spiritual values and humanistic ideas from different cultures, both ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. He read the New Books of China and Japan. He also explored the philosophy and literature of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. He studied the economic theories of Ricardo and Adam Smith. He engrossed himself in the works of Karl Marx. He read Victor Hugo, Shakespeare, Lu Hsun, Tolstoi in their original texts. He would at the same time study, write for the press and for the stage. In the eyes of his friends Nguyen Ai Quoc was "an outstanding person in many fields, in fact an erudite". At the time someone remarked that the person of Nguyen Ai Quoc evinced a culture of a new type, possibly "the culture of tomorrow".

Through years of work, study and research and particularly of practical revolutionary struggle on several continents a master thesis was taking shape within Nguyen Ai Quoc, i.e. National Liberation must be closely linked with class

emancipation and with the emancipation of the individual person and of mankind.

In 1917 the October Revolution carried the day, heralding the dawn of a new era. In 1920 Lenin issued the rallying call "Workers and oppressed peoples of the world, Unite!" Nguyen Ai Quoc then adhered to Leninism. "The only correct path to save the country is that of proletarian revolution". He had found an ideal for himself and for the nation.

At the Tours Congress, a citizen from a colony became one of the founders of the French Communist Party in the mother country itself. With the setting up of the Association of Colonial Countries, the citizen of a spoliated country was not only striving to free his Homeland but also sharing the struggle of other colonized peoples for national liberation. This was indeed a rare occurrence!

Patriotism was being closely linked with genuine internationalism.

National liberation was closely connected with socialism.

Nguyen Ai Quoc - the Vietnamese patriot - became the first Vietnamese Communist and the first to propagate and apply creatively Marxism-Leninism on the Indochinese peninsula.

Finding the path of national salvation was the first major service rendered by President Ho Chi Minh in his revolutionary work.

It is laid down in the Bible: "In the beginning was the World". The great poet Goethe wrote: "First was the Act".

With President Ho Chi Minh deeds always matched words, practice went hand in hand with theory; if he spoke he meant to act. The world was not merely to be comprehended but furthermore to be transformed.

President Ho Chi Minh was not only a strategist of genius but also a remarkable organizer.

He was the first to write "Colonisation on Trial". And none other than himself together with his nation did in fact execute the verdict.

For the cause of the Vietnamese revolution President Ho Chi Minh was the man who made historic decisions at historic junctures.

He founded the Indochinese Communist Party, predecessor of the Communist Party of Vietnam and of the other revolutionary parties on the Indochinese peninsula. The Communist Party of Vietnam became the vanguard that took class and nation forward through all the victorious phases of the revolution.

Together with the Party Central Committee he decided to call the general armed insurrection that was to result in the victory of the August Revolution and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Together with the Party he took the decision to launch a nation-wide war of resistance, and led the anti-French resistance that resulted in the victory at Dien Bien Phu, totally liberating the North.

Together with the Party Central Committee he led the patriotic war of resistance against the U.S. "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom!" The anti-American resistance wrested final victory in the Ho Chi Minh campaign which freed the South and reunified the Homeland, paving the way for the countrywide construction of socialism.

The greatness of President Ho Chi Minh was in his perception that in the people resided the forces which determine the outcome of the revolution. He used to observe:

The nation is rooted in the people. The people (workers and peasants) are the roots of the revolution: If the people are with you, nothing is impossible. Once the revolutionary ideal has won the heart of the vast majority of the people it becomes a material force that no war machine can suppress.

The greatness of President Ho Chi Minh is that he has found the best ways of organizing the people. He set up the Front of National Unity to unite the whole people; he created the people's armed forces, drawn from the people and fighting for the people; and he formed the popular administration which, from the tumultuous early days of the resistance, was elected from the central to the grassroots level by the people to serve the people.

Guided by the conviction that to rely on the strength of the entire people makes it possible to defeat all enemies, President Ho Chi Minh led the whole Vietnamese armed forces and people in waging a people's war: fighting injustice with justice, fighting the large with the small, fighting large numbers with small numbers, so that a small country was able to defeat two major imperialisms, the French and the American.

While considering the entire people as the main source of strength one had to duly value the major strength of international sympathy and support extended by the whole progressive mankind, including the progressive French and American people.

It was necessary to unite all these forces into a powerful aggregate force to wage an all-round struggle, military, political, economic and diplomatic.

President Ho Chi Minh used to say: Unity makes strength.

Unity, unity, greater unity.

Success, success, greater success.

President Ho Chi Minh used to adopt an all-round approach. During the years of resistance he attached great importance to nation-building, to the shaping of a new life, a new culture.

To him, "the renewal and construction of the country was the responsibility of the people. The cause of national resistance and nation-building was the work of the people". "The democratic republic had to ensure that the people were truly the masters of their country, enjoyed all democratic freedom but had also to prohibit any abuse of democratic freedoms that infringes on the interests of the State and the people". "Citizens were to abide by the Constitution and the Law, to observe labour discipline, public order and rules of social conduct". Everything at that time, be it the work of resistance or of nation-building, was equally new. "We have to learn as we go and to act as we learn. We have bound to commit errors but we shall correct them, we shall have the courage to do so". The Party as well as the Government must regularly undertake criticism and self-criticism. From those days he advocated that one of the things that was urgently needed was to develop culture and raise the intellectual level of the people. One had to fight ignorance as well as hunger and foreign aggression, first and foremost one had to eradicate illiteracy, each and every Vietnamese had to know how to read and write. "Every Vietnamese has to know his rights, has to acquire new knowledge in order to take part in national contruction". He always appreciated the significance of socio-cultural problems which he looked upon as a most fundamental component of the strategy regarding man. "For the sake of ten years plant a tree. For the sake of a century plant a man."

The kind of cultural he was advocating combined the heightened and enhanced national cultural traditions with

mankind's cultural quintessence and was deeply impregnated with patriotism and genuine internationalism. One had to ensure that "culture reached deep into the national psyche" and the new life. "Culture has to counter and transform corruption, sloth, vanity, indulgence in luxury. It has to make every Vietnamese, old and young, men and women alike, understand his or her responsibility and know how to enjoy well-deserved happiness".

In his view, there was no limit to learning and ignorance was one of the enemies. Education had to developed in order to enable the shaping of the new man, the progression along the infinite road of science and technology, the building of socialism and for Vietnam to match other nations of the world. Learn in order to work. Learn so as to make a proper man. Learn and act.

President Ho Chi Minh would generally emphasize moral education and such qualities as "industry, thrift, integrity, righteousness, public dedication, disinterestedness". He would pronounce: "A nation that shows industry, thrift, intergrity and righteousness is a rich and strong nation both materially and morally, it is a civilized, progressive nation."

The most important cultural contribution of President Ho Chi Minh has been to lead the whole people in driving out foreign aggression in contemporary times, wresting back for the people the human right to life, to a life with culture. He contributed his share to mankind's endeavour to overcome a major impediment on the road towards a civilized world, thus removing a dirty stain in history, i.e colonialism.

We are all struck by the strange consistency in the personality of President Ho Chi Minh through innumerable changes and upheavals of history, by the harmonious combination of many quite different styles of behaviour in one

single person: both national and internationalist, very human, but at the same time radically revolutionary, most learned while also utterly modest, most principled on strategy but most flexible on tactics. A man of vision and insight but with a practical mind, both great and simple. A fighter and a poet.

We talk of the battle as the sampan drifts down the river.

Into the night flooded with the silver moonshine.

In the eye of the storm he would remain his serene self looking with quiet confidence to the future.

In the midst of hardship and danger he would show the same equanimity, always firm in the belief in the victory of the revolutionary cause.

In President Ho Chi Minh was crystallized the unity between country and people, between nation and class, between the national and the international, between the ideal of national independence and the socialist ideal.

He showed an immutable love for the people and for humanity. President Ho Chi Minh offered a lofty incarnation of the new man in the new era, a symbol of humanism in its fullest sence, an admirable example of what a communist ought to be.

From the very first days after the accession to power President Ho Chi Minh said: "I have but one desire, one supreme desire, that is to ensure that the country is totally independent, our people are wholly free and each of our compatriots has food to eat, clothes to wear, and a school to go to".

Later he stressed: "When a country is independent but its people do not enjoy happiness or freedom, then that independence becomes meaningless".

President Ho Chi Minh nurtured a vast dream, that of achieving independence and reunification for the Fatherland, from then to move on to building socialism and a new, better society wherein everyone would enjoy material well-being, happiness, freedom and equality. This was also the substance of his great thought, of the Ho Chi Minh thought.

This was to our people a major task, altogether new and extremely difficult, for which they would have to grope, explore and create. In this resided also for our nation a new challenge of the times.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam charted the line of renewal: renewal of our organization and cadres with a view to releasing the productive forces, setting the working people free, overcoming bureaucratic centralism and poor management which for a long time had been a cause of difficulty and stagnation.

Firmly holding to the double banner of national independence and socialism, the Vietnamese people under the leadership of their Communist Party are striving to develop creatively President Ho Chi Minh's thought in order to build a society of scientific socialism "for the people, by the people" that is adapted to the characteristics of Vietnamese society in all respects and to the trend of development of our time and can ensure wealth to the people and strength to the country.

Constant renewal and creation is in the nature of Marxism-Leninism. President Ho Chi Minh was an example of such constant renewal and creation. He used to say: "We need to show a creative spirit, we have to search for the new and put it into practice, then there is nothing we cannot do. "The Vietnamese people are inherently endowed with creative independence. We shall succeed in undertaking line of renewal in a judicious direction suited to the realities of our country,

without stereotyped imitation but by learning selectively from other country's experiences.

With the aim of carrying out successfully this vast task of renewal, the Communist Party of Vietnam advocates first of all a renewal in its leadership work so as to enhance its militant competence and vanguard role, to reinforce the ties between the Party and the masses and to ensure that the policies of the Party meet the deep aspirations of the people and the interests of the people and of the country.

President Ho Chi Minh said: "The fight against whatever is outdated or wrong in order to create something new and fine constitutes a gigantic struggle which requires the mobilization, organization and education of the whole people, reliance on the immense forces of the people".

In the present process of renewal, the front of national unity plays a major role which is to rally and mobilize every social class and popular stratum as well as overseas Vietnamese to develop the foundation of the Vietnamese national community in the new revolutionary phase as actors in that "gigantic struggle".

In order to bring out in the people their active dynamism and their eager initiative, we need to practise democracy, reinforce socialist legislation, ensure social equity and at the same time resolutely eradicate negative phenomena and other social ills. Very early, President Ho Chi Minh detected and fought mercilessly against bureaucratism, corruption, bribery, waste... which he looked upon to be as dangerous as "a foe within your own self", a kind of "domestic aggressor".

To make renewal possible we have to attach due importance to the strategy regarding man. Man is both the objective and the motive force of the revolution. We have to foster and train

talents and make use of them, "talens must not be wasted". Education, science and technology, the development of culture, the raising of the entire people's cultural level have to be accorded primary importance.

President Ho Chi Minh has striven by all means to enrich his sum of knowledge with the spiritual values of other countries in the world. The Vietnamese people are rethinking and readjusting Vietnam's foreign relations, broading Vietnam's relations of economic cultural, scientific and technological cooperation with other countries. The Vietnamese people will do their utmost to strengthen their solidarity with all peace- and justice-loving peoples and make a worthy contribution to the common struggle for a genuine peace, national independence, democracy and social progress...

THE MILITARY THOUGHT OF PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH*

In this article I would not attempt to sum up the military thought of President Ho Chi Minh. Here I wish only to bring out some prominent features of this thought which I have been able to perceive through many years living and working close to Him.

It may be said:

President Ho Chi Minh's analysis of people's war in Vietnam in the new era is the most essential point in his military thought, as well as in the military policy of our Party.

I

First, I would stress this point: our military thought always has a synthetic character. It is linked with politics, economy, culture, social conditions and science and technique...It has never had a purely military character.

A judicious and creative military strategy is always a comprehensive strategy. President Ho Chi Minh is a superb personification of that truth. That is why we would never be able to understand his military thought if we detach it from the whole of his revolutionary thought.

* Preface to *"People's War"* by President Ho Chi Minh

II

In the early years of the 20th century the colonial and feudal yoke weighed heavily on our country. The misery of our people, both physical and spiritual was beyond all description. Many insurrections broke out one after another but they were all drowned in a sea of blood.

No longer able to endure the sight of destitution and humiliation of our people and the brotherly peoples on the Indochinese peninsula. President Ho Chi Minh, then still a young man, decided to go in search of the way of saving the country and the nation. This young man soon became an experienced worker travelling around the globe. He worked, studied, researched and mingled with the struggle of friends in the same circumstances in the colonies and proletarians right in France. The suffering heart of a Vietnamese whose motherland was enslaved beats in unison with the other suffering hearts of the slaves in Asia and Africa and the proletarians in Europe and America. His ardent patriotism harmonized with his feelings of pure proletarian internationalism.

It was these noble revolutionary feelings that caused the young Nguyen Ai Quoc to welcome with so much joy the rumble of the guns of the great Russian October Revolution. He was overwhelmed with joy to the point of crying before Lenin's programme on the question of nationalities and colonies. Nguyen Ai Quoc had come to Leninism because he found in it "what we most needed": "To save the country and liberate the nation there is no other path than that of the proletarian revolution" because "the most genuine, surest doctrine and most revolutionary doctrine is Leninism".

From then on Marxism-Leninism became the theoretical foundation of the whole ideology and actions of President Ho Chi Minh, for the *"Path of Revolution"* of Vietnam written by himself.

III

President Ho Chi Minh, the strategist of genius, the great patriot is also the first Vietnamese communist to absorb the quintessence of Leninism. He *upheld two banners*: National Independence and Socialism. Since then national independence and socialism have become the *raison d'être* of our people and the strategy objective of the whole revolutionary struggle and of all the revolutionary wars, uprisings, liberation wars and national defence wars of our nation.

Applying Marxism-Leninism to the realities of the revolution in our country, our Party has set forth a judicious and creative line, that is the line of people's national democratic revolution advancing to the socialist revolution bypassing the capitalist period.

Applying Marxism-Leninism to the realities of the revolutionary wars in our country, our Party has put forth a judicious and creative military line, that is the line of people's war under the leadership of the working class.

There is a very close and lively organic relationship between the military line and the political line in the thought of President Ho Chi Minh and our Party. This organic relationship has created the great strength of all people's national defence and the people's war in the new era.

IV

President Ho Chi Minh is not only a strategist of genius but also a great organizer. He said "To survive we must carry out revolution. To liberate the nation and to make the revolution succeed we must have force. To have force we must organize, plan and be determined to act".

In the early days, President Ho realized that the potential for national salvation was power of the whole people, of the whole nation.

On the basis of his correct and profound perception of the strength of the people, of the nation, the strength of solidarity of the working class and of all the oppressed nations in the world, right from the outset he already attached great importance to the question of organizing. In France, he founded the Union of Patriotic Vietnamese. Then he founded the League of Oppressed Nations.

A citizen of a French colony, President Ho Chi Minh, however, was one of the founders of the French Communist Party. Very soon after the founding of the Third International he joined this vanguard organisation of the international communist movement.

When conditions were ripe, President Ho Chi Minh *founded the Communist Party of Vietnam*, the new-type party of the working class in a colonial and semifeudalist country. He pointed out that the Party is the vanguard of the working class and only when this vanguard is firm can the boat of revolution arrive at its destination.

President Ho always attached importance to mobilizing and organising the masses aimed at rallying the revolutionary forces and uniting the nation. Together with our Party he founded the National Front assuming different forms from the

Anti-Imperialist Front, the Viet Minh Front and the Lien Viet to the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and the present Vietnam Fatherland Front.

Applying Lenin's proposition, i.e. the fundamental issue of the revolution is the question of power, President Ho Chi Minh directed the setting up of the revolutionary power in the liberated zone. After the success of the August Revolution he founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the first people's democratic state in Southeast Asia.

President Ho Chi Minh always regarded the building of the revolutionary army as a problem of importance. He directly led the organization of civil safety and militia groups and founded the Vietnamese People's Army. President Ho Chi Minh is the dear father of all of the Vietnamese people's armed forces.

V

President Ho Chi Minh is deeply conscious that *the force of the masses if organised is the foundation for revolutionary violence*. Right from its onset the Communist Party of Vietnam has made painstaking efforts to mobilise, organise and lead the masses in their struggle. When new historic conditions emerged, the Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh called for preparations to launch an armed uprising and subsequently led the masses to rise up in the General Uprising to wrest back power, then again led the people into two wars of resistance to defeat two major imperialist powers, France and the United States.

In 1941, after his return to the country to directly lead the preparations for the armed uprising, some people asked him: "How should we prepare for an armed uprising now that we do not yet have guns and ammunition?" President replied: "We

must set to mobilize the masses and set up the Viet Minh League everywhere. When the masses have espoused the cause we shall have everything".

Obviously, revolution violence in our country has exerted an ever greater effect. Revolutionary violence is composed of two forces: the political force and the military force. It is exerted in two forms, political struggle combined with armed struggle and armed insurrection combined with revolutionary war.

VI

In the advance from political struggle to armed uprising and revolutionary war he, together with our Party, has taken crucial decisions on three occasions.

First, his decision to prepare for the armed uprising and calling on the whole country to rise up in insurrection. This decision led the August Revolution to victory and to the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Second, his call on the entire people to rise up to resist the French aggression. This decision led the protracted war of resistance against French aggression to victory and the liberation of half of the country and the embarkment of the North on the path of socialist construction.

Third, his call on the whole country to rise up against the US aggression. This decision led the anti-US resistance for national salvation to complete victory, the complete liberation of South Vietnam, the reunification of the North and the South under the same roof, and the emergence of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, fully independent and reunified.

VII

Revolution and resistance against foreign aggression is the work of the entire people. President Ho Chi Minh said: "The people are the master of their own destiny and the destiny of the country".

During the first days of the preparation for the armed uprising, when the opportunity had come, President Ho issued the appeal: "Let our compatriots in the whole country rise up and use our own force to liberate ourselves".

When the French imperialist sent their army to invade Vietnam again, in face of the danger to the Fatherland he appealed for nationwide resistance and urged the entire people to close their ranks to fight the enemy and save the country:

> "Every Vietnamese, men and women, old and young, irrespective of their religion, political party, nationality, must stand up to fight the French colonialists and save the country".

When the US imperialists brought their mighty troops and top-rate generals to invade our country, the resounding appeal of President Ho Chi Minh stimulated the people throughout the country to make a single-minded resolution to fight and defeat the US aggressors.

> "The thirty one million of our compatriots in the both parts of the country, whether they are old or young, men or women, must be thirty one million valiant combatants fighting against the US aggressors to save the country and win final victory"

The whole country of one mind and the entire people resisting the aggressors under the leadership of the working class, that is the *fundamental tenet, the development of his thought to a higher level. That is also the source of the invincible strength of the Vietnamese people's war in the new era.*

VIII

To seize our country and subjugate our people, the imperialists and colonialists have used every brutal and victorious method in the military, political, economic and cultural fields. They mobilised every possible potential in their total wars of aggression in an attempt to destroy our nation.

To defeat them we had to conduct a war in all fields, following the slogan:

"Carry out resistancee by all people

Carry out resistance in all fields".

Right after the success of the revolution, President Ho Chi Minh put forth three famous tasks for the fledgling republican state, namely:

- Wipe out famine,
- Wipe out illiteracy,
- Wipe out the aggressors.

Even in those early days the President already pointed to our people this inevitability: "Defending the country must always go with building the country, mobilizing the entire people to join the resistance must go with replenishing the force of the people.

In accordance with the principle of waging a war of resistance in all fields, "carrying out the war of resistance and build the country at the same time", President Ho Chi Minh and our Party *always combined military struggle with political and diplomatic struggle, considering the military struggle as the main one of direct and decisive importance.*

In the first days after the success of the August Revolution, thanks to the general combination of the struggle on all fronts and the extremely perspicacious and skilful strategic and

tactical direction of President Ho and the Party the revolution boat managed to pass so many dangers and trials while the fate of the country hung by a thread.

While the resistance was vigorously pushed forward in the South the Modus Vivendi was signed so that the revolution could gain time to strengthen its force. Following close on the heels of the military victory at Dien Bien Phu we won a diplomatic victory at the Geneva Conference. During the resistance against US aggression the resounding victories on the battlefront led to the great victory at the Paris Conference creating new favourable conditions for our people to advance to complete victory.

IX

The August General Uprising developed into nation-wide resistance. Our people's revolutionary war had the character of both a national liberation war and a national defence war. In such historic circumstances the rear assumed an increasingly importance role.

The Communist Party of Vietnam and President Ho Chi Minh detected at a very early date *the dialectical relationship between the front and the rear.* That is why, while putting forth the slogan, "All for the front, all for victory" they also set out the task of building a rear strong in all fields. President Ho Chi Minh launched the movement for patriotic emulation:

"Let the workers emulate one another to produce more weapons to supply our army to kill the enemy".

"Let our peasants emulate one another to increase crop productivity in order to produce much more food so that out army can eat their fill and fight victoriously".

He further wrote:

"The fields are our battlefields,

Hoes and plows are weapons,

Farmers are combatants,

Let the ear emulate the frontline."

In the resistance against US aggression for national salvation, the socialist North became the great rear of the great front which was the South. The question of building a strong and firm North Vietnam to serve as the basis for the whole country became extremely urgent. Historic realities have demonstrated the decisive role of the socialist North in the fight to liberate the South and reunite the country.

President Ho Chi Minh gave his constant attention to building the North, considering the North as the foundation and the root of the fight to achieve national liberation and reunification. He said: "Everything we are doing in the North is aimed at strengthening the force of both the North and the South". He pointed to the dialectical relations between the building of socialism in the North and the liberation fight in the South and the accomplishment of the national people's democratic revolution in the whole country.

President Ho Chi Minh called on the frontline to kill the enemy and make exploits and on the rear to emulate one another in increasing food production:

"Let everybody engage in emulation

Let every service engage in emulation

We'll certainly win

The enemy'll certainly lose."

The realities of more than 30 years of resistance have provided that the war broadened and the larger its scale and the more atrocious it became, the greater was the role of the

rear. After the country regained complete independence, and in the conditions of a national defence war, the stronger and firmer the rear became in every field the greater its role as the permanent factor to the determine victory in the war.

X

While leading the revolution and the resistance, President Ho Chi Minh constantly followed and analysed the situation in the country and in the world and weighed the balance of forced between us and the enemy during the insurrection as well as the war in order to set forth the correct strategies and tactics to direct the prolonged war of resistance, and seize upon the opportunities to win ever bigger successes.

Just as the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam set forth the policy of preparing for an armed insurrection to liberate the nation, the German and Japanese fascists launched their all-out offensive against the Soviet Union. President Ho affirmed that in the end the Soviet Union would win and the fascists would lose. Basing himself on historic experience he predicted that this would take four or five years. By that time, that is somewhere in 1945, a big opportunity would appear in our country, therefore, we had to get ready to seize upon that opportunity to regain national independence.

When opportunity came, he issued this appeal:

"All revolutionary combatants! The moment for liberation has come. Let us hold high the banner of independence and lead the entire people to smash the common enemy".

He closely followed the situation. The German fascists surrendered. He urgently called for promotion of the preparations for the armed uprising. By now the world

revolutionary movement was developing seethingly at the tempo of one day equal to twenty years. Having seen that the moment had come for the entire people to rise up in the General Insurrection he personally oversaw the monthly and daily preparations for the Tan Trao National Congress. He said "Time is very important... Only by gaining time can we assure victory against the enemy".

Right from the outset of the resistance against the French imperialists. President Ho and the Communist Party of Vietnam already affirmed our strategy of resistance was one of protracted resistance. This is because:

"The enemy wants to fight quickly and win quickly. They will fail if the war drags on and will lose more and more generals and troops. That is why, we must use the strategy of protracted resistance in order to develop our forces, enrich our experiences and have the necessary strength to oust them.

However, protracted resistance does not mean endless resistance but it must go together with victory. Victory and protraction must go together.

"Our protracted resistance will certainly win victory!"

He said:

"Our protracted war of resistance will have to go through many hardships but we are determined to make sacrifices and endure another five or ten years in order to shatter the fetters of slavery of the past 80 years and to wrest back the right to live in a reunified and independent country for all the generations to come".

President Ho Chi Minh always attached importance to winning successive victories however small, because this would, like "little strokes felling great oaks", take the resistance forward.

Such victories would also foster the revolutionary spirit and the persistence in fighting of the people and the army.

In the resistance against the US imperialists our Party again put forth the strategy of a protracted fight. President Ho Chi Minh issued the following appeal to the people and combatants through the country:

"The war may last five, ten, twenty years and even longer. Hanoi, Haiphong and some other cities may be devastated. But the Vietnamese people shall not be cowed. Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom".

XI

President Ho Chi Minh quickly found out the organic relationship between genuine patriotism and the noble proletarian internationalism, between the spirit of self-reliance of the nation and the winning of international sympathy and support.

In the manifesto of the League of Oppressed Peoples, President Ho wrote: "Referring to a proposition by Karl Marx. I wish to tell you brothers that we can win liberation only through our own efforts in struggle".

Later he said: "Only through our own efforts can we win independence, only through our own efforts can we win freedom".

He was most strongly opposed to any tendency to rely on others:

"A nation which does not exert its own efforts, but just sits idle and wait for another to come to help, such a nation is not worthy of independence".

He further said: "As the masters we must look after our own affairs and get them done by our own efforts, we must not rely on anybody else, not sit and wait[1]".

President Ho Chi Minh is the personification of the spirit of self-support and self-reliance of our Vietnamese nation, and at the same time personification of genuine proletarian internationalism.

The Vietnamese revolution is part of the world revolution. That is why, he said: "We must constantly uphold the spirit of proletarian internationalism, preserve and develop our friendship with the brotherly socialist countries, whole-heatedly support the national liberation movement in other countries, unite with the world working class and people in the fight against imperialism led by the United State, struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism".

With regard to the other people on the Indochinese peninsula President Ho Chi Minh attached special importance to the combative solidarity between our people and the fraternal peoples of Laos and Cambodia. He called for great unity among the Vietnamese nation, great unity among the Lao nation and great unity among the Khmer nation. He said: "If the peoples of the three countries on the Indochinese peninsula form a great bloc of unity then they will achieve complete victory".

With regard to the Soviet Union, the country of V.I.Lenin, President Ho Chi Minh taught us:

"We must consolidate by all means and in every hour and minute our own solidarity with the Soviet Union and the Soviet Community Party" just because the Soviet Union

1. Ho Chi Minh, *On the socialist revolution and the building of socialism*, Su That Publishing House, Hanoi 1976, p.126

is "the most solid fortification for the peace and the world-wide revolution".

XII

All of his life as a combatant President Ho Chi Minh always demonstrated the spirit of revolutionary offensive and he personifies the great strength of the offensive strategy.

"To take the revolution and the resistance to success there must be continuous and resolute offensive. "We must never relax in our offensive posture".

To develop the offensive posture is a science and also an art. We must know the enemy and know ourselves. "We shall win if we understand the enemy clearly, we shall fail if we let the enemy understand us". "It is necessary to grasp the law of development of events in all circumstances and on this basis to create the appropriate form of fighting and form of offensive. Now it is military attack, now it is political, now it is diplomatic offensive and at a certain point we have to combine all these forms of struggle".

President Ho Chi Minh further said:

"Developing on concrete situation we shall adopt appropriate forms of revolutionary struggle, correctly use and skilfully combine armed struggle with political struggle to win victory for the revolution".

On the military front, he advocated offensive by all means defeating the enemy in all circumstances. He said:

"Whoever has a rifle uses the rifle, whoever has a sword uses the sword, who has no rifle nor sword must use hoes, spades and sticks".

Now it is guerilla warfare, now it is pitch battle, now it is necessary to combine guerilla with regular warfare, combine small scale, medium and large scale fighting to deal the enemy decision blows.

The spirit of offensive is the fundamental line of action. But in different concrete conditions, he advised flexibility:

"To spring an offensive and to withdraw as quickly as lighting".

Military speaking, the main form of combat is to take the offensive but in concrete conditions defence is not ruled out. But defence is only temporary and is aimed at preparing for a new offensive. He said:

"Let's not make any mistake whether in attack or defence

That's what a great general should do to be worth his name."

In order to lead the revolution or to command an army, the leader and commander must have a firm grasp of the concrete situation and must know how to put forth correct and creative decisions to take the revolution and war forward to win victory step by step and eventually to complete victory. The essential here is to know how to be master of the situation in all circumstances.

President Ho Chi Minh stressed:

"Whether in peacetime or wartime we must take the initiative in our hands, must foresee and prepare. He added: *"We must always seize the initiative of action".*

While actions of offensive are the main measure to win the initiative, initiative is the highest reflection of the spirit of offensive strategy and control on the battlefield as well as in the whole of the revolutionary war.

XIII

Armed insurrection and revolutionary war is the continuation in a new form of the vast political struggle of our people under the leadership of the Party. The new form of struggle requires a new form of organisation.

For this reason the people's armed forces and the self-defence units of the masses have emerged from the process of the dialectical development from political struggle to armed struggle.

For this reason, President Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam have always taken care of the self-defence organisations of the masses and when conditions had matured they organized the revolutionary army, a new-type army of the people.

The instruction on the founding of the Vietnam Propaganda and Liberation Army set forth the fundamental principles of a revolutionary army. This instruction can be regarded as a military programme of the Party. On the organisational plane, the instruction pointed out:

"Since our war of resistance is an all people resistance, it is necessary to mobilize the entire people and arm the entire people. That is why, while concentration our force in founding the first army we must maintain the local armed forces".

As early as those days President Ho Chi Minh already drew up *a numerous People's Army Force composed of the regular army, the local army and the military and self-defence organisations.*

Throughout the period of preparation for the armed uprising and the war of resistance against the French colonialists and the US imperialists President Ho attached great importance to the strategic role of the militia and self-defence forces.

"The military and self-defence forces and guerrillas are a force of the entire nation. They are an invincible force, the iron fortress of the Fatherland against which an enemy, however brutal, will be crushed if they dare to break through".

At the same time President Ho quickly realised the strategic role of the regular army. When the situation of the revolution was evolving quickly in our favour, he ordered, "We must set up the liberation army".

"The liberation army must be a regular army. To set up such an army, it is necessary to select the elite officers and men from among the self-defence units. Because militarily speaking, the pivotal principle is the principle of force concentration"

He predicted:

"Although at first its size remains small, its future is very glorious. It is the starting point of the Liberation Army. It can go from South to North, all over our Vietnam".

Starting from the guerrilla teams in Bac Son, Nam Ky (South Vietnam), the National Salvation Army, the Vietnam Propaganda and Liberation Army, the Ba To guerilla and other guerrilla and self-defence organisations in various localities throughout the country, the revolutionary armed forces of our people developed quickly and were soon unified into the Vietnam Liberation Army and later the present-day Vietnam People's Army.

Under the leadership of the Party, this army together with the entire people took the August General Uprising to success and the anti-French resistance to great victory culminating in the resounding Dien Bien Phu victory. It was also this army which led the anti-US resistance for national salvation to

complete victory culminating in the historic Ho Chi Minh military campaign.

His instructions which were usually very short but very concise and had profound implications have pointed to the line of organisation of the revolutionary armed forces, that is, it is necessary to concentrate efforts on building a regular and modern army on the basis of the development of a strongly and widely developing armed forces of the masses everywhere.

XIV

President Ho Chi Minh stressed: "Our army is people's army, born from the people and fighting for the people". This is why, everywhere it goes receives the confidence, admiration and love of the people.

He said:

"Loyal to the country and the people is a sacred duty and a heavy responsibility but also an honour of the combatants in the first national army of our country"[1]. He also said: "Our army is loyal to the Party and the people, is ready to fight and make sacrifices for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. It is ready to accomplish any mission, overcome any difficulty and defeat any enemy".

Independence and freedom of the Fatherland and the socialist ideal is the objective for which our army has fought and is fighting. This objective completely conforms with the objective of the revolution undertaken by our entire Party and people.

1. Decree N°71, making the Brigade of National Salvation the national army of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, signed by President Ho Chi Minh on May 22, 1946.

The nature of our army is the spirit of thorough-going revolution of the working class. At the same time it carries in its blood the tradition of the nation of resolute and unyielding resistance to foreign aggression.

XV

Right after the founding of our army, President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "Our army must discharge its duty to the nation. At the same time it has to fulfil its internationalist duty. First of all it has to fulfil its task of wiping out the aggressors and saving the country and together with the people's armed security force preserving political security and social order. At the same time it must take part in production activities, must know how to carry out education and mobilisation among the people".

Dealing with the concrete task of the army after the restoration of peace in North Vietnam while the country remained partitioned President Ho Chi Minh said:

"What are the immediate tasks of our army?"

First, we must build *an ever bigger and stronger army which is ready to fight* to defend peace, the country and build socialist construction in the North to back up the struggle to reunify the country

Second, our army must *take an active part in production activities*, contributing to economic construction and the building and consolidation of the rear.

Both these tasks are very important. They coincide and are closely related because both aim to make our army stronger and stronger and the North firmer and firmer".

XVI

The army is an instrument of the State of proletarian dictatorship. That is why, President Ho constantly attached importance to developing the revolutionary nature and strengthening the fighting capacity of our army and to constantly improving the quality of the army.

While taking leadership in the war, President Ho and the Central Committee of our Party, depending on the requirements of the tasks and the capabilities of the country, undertook to constantly mobilize manpower and material to develop the quality of all the three kind of armed forces. Thus, the regular army grew from a few hundred and a few thousand member in the first days to thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands in the war of resistance against the French colonialists and thousands of thousands in the anti-US resistance.

Both quantity and quality count in the building of the fighting capacity. However, in the course of numerical development of the army President Ho Chi Minh and our Party gave special attention to raising the quality of the army in all respects. The quality of the army is a strategic question of decisive importance.

That is why, in the process of building up the armed forces our Party on many occasions launched campaigns to raise the quality and fighting capacity of the army.

President Ho Chi Minh constantly reminded our Party and people: "The army must be well trained and its fighting capacity must be high".

He said:

"We must build up a very effective force with really high quality".

The fighting quality of the army derives from many factors: political, military, equipment, organisation and command. President Ho Chi Minh laid down the following concrete tasks:

" - To strengthen the Party leadership of the army;

- To increase political education in order to heighten the socialist awareness of the entire army;

- To enhance military and training and technical equipment;

- To seriously observe the regimes and discipline;

- To implement well the production plans".

President Ho laid particular stress on the important role of *Party work and political work in the army.*

XVII

Man and technique are the two fundamental factors making up the fighting capacity of the armed forces. Man is the decisive factor. Technique is a factor of utmost importance.

On the road toward building a regular and modern army, our army has been equipped with more and more arms and equipment which are also more and more modern. The material and technical basis of our army also keep increasing.

President Ho Chi Minh constantly reminded our officers and men to attach importance to technique and to intensifying their efforts to learn and master technique. He said:

"Political awareness is a matter of course... but our army also needs the necessary cultural and technical standard to use more and more sophisticated machinery".

Congratulating a number of army units which had made noticeable achievements in technical improvement, he said:

"That is the first steps on the long road of the technical revolution".

The larger our army grew, the more President Ho Chi Minh and Party Central Committee upheld the necessity of industriousness and economisation in building up the army.

He recommended Party officials to "make thrifty use of manpower and material wealth". He said: "Food and weapons are the sweat and tears of our people. Therefore we must prize them, and make economical and rational use of them".

The army must maintain well their weapons, must use ammunition sparingly and must make the best use of all technical equipment in their hands.

He further said: "The armymen must prize public property and military clothes and equipment..."

"We must love the trucks like our own sons and prize petrol like our own blood".

XVIII

Self-imposed and strict discipline is another decisive factor of the fighting capacity of our army. President Ho Chi Minh said:

"An army owes its strength to its strict discipline."

"An army is strong thanks to a good education, correct policies and strict discipline".

That is why, we must maintain strict discipline, in the enforcement of discipline, we must pay attention to both commendation and sanction"..

He further said:

"Our army must be armed with an iron discipline, a bronze like spirit and a grim determination to fight and win".

On another occasion, he said:

"Everyone must observe discipline, from the lowest to the highest echelons".

A revolutionary army must achieve by all means the following criteria:

"High democracy,

Strict discipline,

Close internal unity,

Unity between the army and the people".

"We must maintain strict discipline in order to be worthy of a revolutionary army".

XIX

As a great organizer, President Ho Chi Minh has clearly seen the role of cadres. He said:

"Cadres decide everything".

During the years in the Viet Bac revolutionary base where he directed the preparations for the armed uprising, President Ho many times reminded his entourage: "If we want to develop strongly and firmly we must detect the firm, resolute and loyal elements and train them into the hard-core cadres for the various national salvation organisations."

That is why, when taking the decision to found the liberation army, President Ho Chi Minh personally chose the first commanders and asked them to recruit combatants "who have a high combat spirit and had been trained in the practice of the revolutionary struggle".

The more the army grew, the greater emphasis he laid on the question of training, fostering and tempering cadres of all echelons of the army. He instructed that cadres must exert themselves to improve and heighten their revolutionary virtues and ethics, heighten their leading and commanding capacity in order to enable them to grow constantly and win ever bigger victories in one battle after another.

On discipline in the army, the commander must see to it that the order reach through the line to each combatant and the reports from the lower echelons to the higher echelons must be truthful and expeditious. Rewards and sanctions must be guided by the principle of objectivity and fairness. "We should not reward only those who are of our liking and punish only those whom we dislike, should not use anyone who supports us and dismiss anyone who criticizes us directly".

Cadres must love their combatants because without combatants a cadre can't do anything just as a leader without his following. President Ho recommended all cadres, from squad leader upward and the commander-in-chief downward, to care for the material and spiritual life of the combatants.

"Each cadre, each Party member must be really imbued with revolutionary ethics, really practise industriousness, thrift, integrity, uprightness, and public-mindedness".

He urged cadres to be exemplary, to be loyal servants of the people. "So long as the soldiers have not eaten their meal, the cadre must not say that he is hungry. So long as the soldiers do not have enough warm clothes, the cadre must not say that he feels cold. So long as the soldiers are not yet adequately lodged, the cadre must not complain that he is tired".

XX

President Ho Chi Minh is the great leader of our Party, an eminent activist of the international communist movement and the national liberation movement.

He is a marvelous model of the Vietnamese in the new era, of the new-type, socialist people.

For President Ho Chi Minh, the ultimate goal of national and social liberation *is to liberate humankind* from all oppression, exploitation and injustices so as to develop to the highest level their creative enemy. This ideal stems from his immense humanism and his boundless love for and confidence in the people and mankind.

Ho Chi Minh's humanism is directed first of all to his suffering and martyrised compatriots. His humanism does not differentiate races and the colours of skin. However, Ho Chi Minh's humanism absolutely has nothing to do with altruism or compassion. His love for human mankind is closely associated with his boundless confidence in the creative power of man and human conscience. It constantly arouses in the people their latent capabilities and exhort them to consciously rise up to fight for self-liberation, regard independence and freedom for their nation and the dignity of each person.

Ho Chi Minh's humanism is full of optimism in the future of mankind, in the good nature of mankind and the capacity of each to rise above himself, even among those who have committed mistakes or errors.

His revolutionary virtues are the crystallization of the best qualities of his nation and the best achievements of the era.

The most fundamental point in his virtues consists in his determination to fight all his life for the independence and

freedom of his Fatherland, for the happiness of his people, for the socialist and communist ideal. He said:

"I have only one desire, an utmost desire, that is to see that our country becomes fully independent, our nation regains complete freedom and everyone of our people has enough food and clothes and can afford schooling".

He is a brilliant example of revolutionary heroism, of the determination to fight and to win, of simplicity, modesty, industriousness, thrift, integrity, uprightness and public-mindedness.

President Ho Chi Minh is the symbol of the solidarity and unity of mind of our entire Party, people and army, of the militant solidarity of our people and the whole of progressive mankind.

He said:

"Unity is an invaluable tradition of our Party and people".

He asked our comrades:

"To preserve the solidarity and unity of the Party like the apple of our eyes".

Within the Party, "we must observe broad democracy, regularly and seriously carry out self-criticism and criticism... in order to strengthen the solidarity and unity of the Party".

The solidarity and unity of mind of the entire Party is the nucleus of the solidarity of the entire people. And solidarity is the root of strength.

In him the tradition of indomitableness and heroism of the nation is inextricably combined with the spirit of thorough-going resolution of the working class; in him genuine patriotism is combined with proletarian internationalism; in him the humanism of the Vietnamese merges with the pure and noble international sentiments.

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* *

Over the past half century President Ho Chi Minh has together with the Communist Party of Vietnam organised all the victories of the Vietnam revolution, led our people and army to defeat brutal enemies and wrote the most glorious pages ever seen in the history of our nation's resistance to foreign aggression. These extraordinary exploits are enough vindication of the correctness of his military thought which is also the essential of the military line of our Party. It is an extremely important part in the invaluable legacy President Ho has bequeathed to us and all the future generations.

Today, President Ho's military thought the essential of which is the line of Vietnam people's war in the new era still retains all its value and is leading our people and army forward on the road of national renewal.

THE WORLD HAS STILL BEEN CHANGING, BUT THE HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT WILL LIVE FOR EVER*

It is with the greatest emotion that, on behalf of the Vietnamese Government and people and the Vietnamese scientists, I would like to express here, at this solemn forum, the most profound and sincere gratitude to the Indian Government and people, the Government and people of West Bengal, His Excellency the Mayor and the population of Calcutta for their ebullient and continuous activities over the past year or so, which, under the guidance of the National Council headed by the Indian Prime Minister, aim to solemnly commemorate the centenary of the birth of the President Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam's national liberation hero and outstanding personality of culture.

On this occasion, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the scholars, learned people of Indian and other country who, over the past years, have set their hearts on conducting research work on President Ho Chi Minh. Their in-depth studies, which are the fruits of scientific work, have contributed to affirming and widely propagating Ho Chi Minh's thought, a lofty job that has given a boost to cultural exchanges among nations, for the sake of humanity, peace and social progress in our times.

* Speech made at the International Symposium on "Ho Chi Minh - Vietnam - World Peace" held in Calcutta (India) on January 14, 1991.

I would like also to express here my most sincere thanks for the thoughtful reception and warm hospitality the leaders and population of Calcutta have given to me and to Vietnamese scientists here.

I should think that the choice of Calcutta by the Indian Government and people as the venue for this solemn international Symposium is of great significance. In this lifetime, President Ho Chi Minh twice set foot in your historic and heroic city. Calcutta is the hometown of Rabindranad Tagore, the great poet and philosopher, the celebrated social activist of India. Calcutta is also the city which as early as 1946, before India won back independence, took the lead in the movement for solidarity with and support for the Vietnamese people's valiant and indomitable war of resistance for national independence and reunification.

THE NUCLEUS OF THE HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT

This international Symposium together with the erection of President Ho Chi Minh's statue constitute a major event which adds to the diversity in the fine annals of Vietnam-India friendship.

Like other symposium on President Ho Chi Minh, held on the recommendation of UNESCO to its member countries, this one takes place against an international background full of upheavals. Many major changes have come to pass, many new concepts have emerged, many old values have been re-examined. However, as far as President Ho Chi Minh is concerned, scientists belonging to different countries and affiliations have through the symposiums, come to a common assessment: *the world has changed and will change, but Ho Chi Minh's thought will live for ever in mankind's cultural treasure.*

So what has made Ho Chi Minh's thought perpetuate with mankind? One cannot explain clearly Ho Chi Minh's thought if one fails to place Ho Chi Minh in his relationship with his time. President Ho Chi Minh was born and grew up at a time when colonial occupation by capitalism had been completed. Hundreds of independent and sovereign countries had lost their independence and become enslaved. Inheriting the nation's tradition of undaunted struggle and craving for national liberation, Ho Chi Minh made up his mind to leave his country in search of the road to national salvation. After nearly ten years his survey of the imperialist power and their colonial system, he came to this conclusion: "Everywhere capitalism and imperialism are cruel and ruthless; everywhere the working people are exploited, tortured and have no right to life".

Imbued with deep feelings for his country and people, with his profound sympathy for the plight of millions of wretched people, Nguyen Ai Quoc came to Leninism in 1920. The road to national salvation is that of proletarian revolution. Patriotism is closely linked with genuine internationalism. National independence is linked with liberation of society, of mankind. That is the kernel of Ho Chi Minh's thought.

In the subsequent decades of study and struggle Ho Chi Minh's thought was brought to perfection.

Ho Chi Minh's thought is the imaginative and successful application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the specific realities of Vietnamese society, of Eastern societies which used to be colonial and semi-feudal. That thought blazed the path to national liberation for colonial and semi-colonial countries, and set an orientation for those societies to advance

from national-liberation revolution and people's national democratic revolution to socialism.

Meanwhile some revolutionaries of that time held that only when the proletarian revolution of the mother country came to a successful end could the liberation of the colonial countries be achieved. But Nguyen Ai Quoc realized that the cause of national liberation of the colonial countries might be based mainly on its own strength to gain victories; more than that, victories could be achieved earlier and were of great help to their mother countries as well.

Apart from its three sources namely French utopian socialism, English political economy and German philosophy and Marxist dialectics, Marxism was enriched by Ho Chi Minh who brought new elements to its content: the Vietnamese people's patriotism, the oppressed peoples' thirst for national liberation, the community tradition and the quintessence of oriental philosophy. Dialectics has also been applied with imagination on the basis of inheriting and developing the dialectical elements in the thinking of the Vietnamese nation and Asia's time-honored civilizations.

If the goal of Marxism is not only to recognize the world but also to transform it, then Ho Chi Minh is a vivid model of that goal. In Ho Chi Minh, theory and practice are one, words and deeds are one. Just as one scholar has said, "Ho Chi Minh's thought and words cannot be evaluated only though his writings and words, but also through his actions, and what is more, through his work, studies and struggle, and his flawless, simple and great life".

Ho Chi Minh's thought is a new development of Marxism-Leninism in its application to the practice of the cause of national liberation and building a new society in Vietnam, and can therefore contribute to the development

of Eastern countries and, to a large extent, to other countries as well.

As far as Vietnamese is concerned, Ho Chi Minh's thought not only took the national liberation struggle to complete victory, through thirty years of fighting without respite. But today, under the leadership of the Communist Party, it also continues to develop with imagination in finding the road of transition to socialism, the renewed road of building a peaceful, civilized and happy life for the whole people of Vietnam, for every Vietnamese citizen.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

First of all, I would like to deal with the question of national independence in President Ho Chi Minh's thought.

Mankind, throughout its history of evolution, has engendered so many civilizations, and not a few shameful things. Colonialism is one of the most shameful things suffered by mankind. It has burdened the fates of small and weak nations with fetters and oppression, famine and poverty, illiteracy and diseases, etc. Winning back independence and freedom is therefore the burning craving of the exploited nations in the 20th century. And Ho Chi Minh was one of those symbolizing that will and craving. Ho Chi Minh put up the celebrated watchword: *"Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom"*. He was regarded as the vanguard fighter in arousing his nation and other exploited nations to rise up to struggle for freedom, independence, and human values.

In the process of leading the national liberation struggle as well as in the process of leading the Vietnamese revolution, President Ho Chi Minh highly valued the

forces of the people and the nation, and regarded them as the *decisive forces for the victory of the revolution.* His strategy consist in uniting the whole people and the whole nation in the common struggle for national independence and freedom.

He said, *"Unity is strength".*

"Unity, unity, great unity

Success, success, great success!"

The Vietnamese national community has over fifty ethnicities, whom the enemy constantly tried to "divide and rule". President Ho Chi Minh appealed to all ethnicities to unite and consider themselves to be brothers of the same family.

Vietnamese society consists of many classes having different interests, but sharing the same fate of being enslaved by colonialism. President Ho Chi Minh appealed to all classes, all strata of the people - workers, peasants, brain workers, patriotic personalities and overseas Vietnamese - to close their ranks in the fight to save the nation and their families, and to resolve all problems arising from the relationship between classes and the nation.

People of different religions and beliefs are living on Vietnam's soil. The enemy always tried to provoke and divide them. That's why President Ho Chi Minh mapped out a policy of uniting different religious, uniting religious and non-religious people, with a view to joining efforts to fight the aggressors and build the country.

President Ho Chi Minh set great store by unity between the Vietnamese people and fraternal peoples and progressive forces in the world, including the French and American peoples. He found a correct solution to the *problems arising from the relationship between Vietnam and foreign countries, between the Vietnamese nation and others.*

The National United Front, which rallies everybody into a monolithic block, is regarded as a tremendously great force, not only in the national-liberation revolution but also in the socialist revolution.

It is on the basis of that solid and broad national unity that the whole Vietnamese people, regardless of their age and sex, from the mountain areas to the plains, rose up millions as one man to put up a fight, thus creating the invincible force of the Vietnam people's war which defeated all aggressors.

It is on the basis of that international solidarity that the strength of the Vietnamese people has been multiplied, creating the aggregate strength that led the two wars of resistance to complete victory.

Ho Chi Minh's thought and the example set by Vietnam have become a source of inspiration and a guide for all the peoples in their struggle for national liberation. Many independent countries have acknowledged the impact, direct and indirect, exerted by the Vietnamese revolution and Ho Chi Minh's thought.

To day, the thinking that "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom" still retains its vitality. Having gained political independence, the developing countries still have to struggle against all neo-colonialist forces which are making use of their financial, technical, and technological power to plunder them and to keep them in a state of backwardness and dependence, in other words, they are, in fact, carrying out "re-colonization".

At this time of restoration of nationalism from Asia to Europe, one is deeply moved by the following verses by Ho Chi Minh:

"There are thousands of bitter things in the world

But no bitterness can compare with loss of freedom".

In short, freedom for everybody, every nation and every State in the choice of their path of development - that is the ever-lasting aspiration of mankind. That is also the essence of Ho Chi Minh's thought.

THE NEW REGIME

For President Ho Chi Minh, national independence is always linked to the people's freedom and happiness. He said, "The country may be independent, but if the people do not enjoy freedom and happiness, that independence has no meaning". He also said, "I have only one desire, the strongest one, that is to see to it that our country is total independence and that all our countrymen are well-fed, well-dressed and have opportunities to learn". This reminds us of Mahatma Gandhi, who also said that he would endeavour for an India where there would be no nobles and no pariahs, an India where all communities would live in harmony.

Ever since the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh had set forth three big and urgent tasks: "To get rid famine, to annihilate ignorance and to wipe out foreign invaders". He advanced the slogan: "To carry out simultaneously resistance and national edification". He devoted great efforts to painstakingly *build up a new society* and new life; he called on the people to do everything possible "to increase production and practise thrift", to develop the economy and culture, to organize general elections, draw up a new Constitution and set up the State of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, a people's State, by the people and for the people.

Ho Chi Minh discovered the value of independence, freedom and happiness in the objectives and ideals of *scientific*

socialism - of Marxism-Leninism. For President Ho Chi Minh, socialism is not a set of rigid dogmas, alien to the material and intellectual interests of man. He set a very concrete and practical objective for the period of transition from the people's democracy to socialism: "To ensure everybody is well-fed, well-dresses and feel happy and free", "to liberate the working people from poverty, to provide everybody with employment, welfare and a happy life". This objective is indicative of the consistency of Ho Chi Minh's thought in people's democratic revolution as well as in socialist revolution: always taking into the highest consideration the interests of the country and the people. One can call this socialism a socialism that makes the people rich and the country strong - a kind of socialism consistent with the country's peculiarities and the common trend of mankind.

In the process of leading Vietnam's revolution and in his creative search for the road to progress of the country, President Ho Chi Minh highlighted the main content of the new society:

- In economy: to gradually build up the material and technical foundation of socialism, to provide everybody with employment; to institute democratic management and a system of distribution according to labour; to unceasingly increase labour productivity and raise the people's material and intellectual living standards; to advance to the liquidation of the regime of exploitation of men by men.

- In politics: to set up an order where the working people are masters, taking the alliance between workers, peasants and intellectuals as the foundation; to establish a people's State, for the people and by the people, where all power belongs to the people, the people are masters while the government and officials are only public servants, etc.

. - In cultural and social affairs: to bring into shape a just and democratic society, where men are friends and brothers to one another, a society endowed with fine traditions and habits, where traditional values are given prominence in combination with a selective acceptance of the cultural essence of mankind; where science and technology are developed, the people's cultural standard is raised, talented people are trained and used, and a new man is given conditions to gradually come into shape and develop his existing creativeness.

According to President Ho Chi Minh, socialism in Vietnam does not evolve along the path of natural development in history, from capitalism to socialism, as Karl Marx said, but from a backward agricultural economy with an under-developed production force to socialism. This advance is still full of hardships and of long duration, and one cannot have a high material standard of living overnight; however, right now there should be a struggle to build up a democratic and just society, with a healthy life style and a fine relationship between men.

In short, President Ho Chi Minh's concept of socialism is a creative application of Marxism-Leninism combined with the traditions of community culture of the Vietnamese nation and the aspirations to justice and fraternity in the philosophical ideologies of the East. Therefore, other nations, while refusing to engage in the tormenting road of capitalism, may study and find in Ho Chi Minh's socialist thoughts an orientation fitting their choice.

THE HO CHI MINH'S HUMANISM

For President Ho Chi Minh, national and social liberation should eventually lead to the *liberation of man* from all kinds of

oppression, exploitation and injustice, this ideal springs from his boundless humaneness and love for the people and mankind.

Ho Chi Minh's humanism is first of all directed to suffering and persecuted compatriots, but his love and affection know no limit in terms of races or skin colours. Ho Chi Minh's humanism, however, is absolutely not compassion. His love for man is closely linked to his boundless trust in the creative energy and common sense of man, and his constant awakening of the potential capabilities of man to rise up consciously and fight for his own emancipation, wrest back independence and freedom for the nation and dignity for himself.

Ho Chi Minh's humanism is full for optimism for man and of trust in the fine nature and possibilities to strive to go forward, even though he may have once committed errors. He said that we should use tolerance and generosity to treat the children that have been led astray due to some circumstances. The duty of a revolutionary is to see to it that "the fine parts of every man blossom like flowers in spring while the ugly ones wither gradually."

In the work of socialist construction, President Ho Chi Minh paid a special attention to building *"the new man"*, for this is the motive force determining the future advance of Vietnamese society. He demanded that there be a strategy "to grow men". The new man should be both the cause and the result of the process of fighting to build a new society. According to him, the new, socialist Vietnamese man should have the spirit of being master of the society. "If you are masters, you should know how to bear your responsibilities and not to rely on others or simply to wait", he said. The new man should have cultural and scientific knowledge and some professional level. The new man should possess revolutionary

virtues: "industriousness, thrift, integrity and righteousness", "devotion to public interests and selflessness". He should oppose individualism, but opposing individualism does not mean negating the legitimate interests of the individual. He also said, "Everyone has his own character, his own strong point and his own life and the life of his family. If personal interests do not clash with collective interests, that is not bad." In his opinion, the new Vietnamese man is a man imbued with national traditions and with socialist internationalism.

Ho Chi Minh is the symbol of noble values in human relationships: veneration for the elder, affection for children and young people, and respect to women. He did not miss anyone in the attention he paid to other people, made sacrifices for all of them, and was not concerned with fame and advantages for himself. In his lifetime, he led a humble, simple, pure, upright and refined life.

Ho Chi Minh's humanism is the crystallization of Vietnamese traditional values and at the same time the product of mankind's quintessence. It can be said that Ho Chi Minh's humanism is the humanism of the new times.

FACING A NEW CONJUNCTURE

The world today is experiencing a psychological crisis, once said the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. He said that what is needed now is an approach to peace, friendship and amity, and he affirmed that Dr Ho Chi Minh was the expression of such an approach. This assessment of Ho Chi Minh by Nehru is still valid.

President Ho Chi Minh was a man of boundless love and friendship. More than anyone, he was committed to *peace - a peace linked to independence and national integrity*. Steadfast

in strategy, he proved to be extremely flexible in tactics, and many times tried to make concessions, sometimes important ones, to preserve peace for his nation. But the greater the concessions he made, the more the enemy encroached. When there was no other alternative to select, he was compelled to mobilize all the Vietnamese people to undertake to the end the longest and most arduous war in their history in order to wrest back independence and unity for the country. This was a typical example of the dialectical relationship between war and peace.

Only recently, we have had a peace that the President had dreamt of all his lifetime. We are doing our best to fulfil his last wish, that is, to build up a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, strong and prosperous Vietnam in new favourable conditions, but also in immense difficulties. Those difficulties arise from our backward economy and many decades of war to which should be added the economic encirclement and embargo by imperialist forces, the influence of the changes in Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union and a very complicated situation in the world.

These days while we are holding this Symposium in India, a land of peace and friendship, we are also witnessing the continuation of the profound changes in the international conjuncture with the appearance of the multi-polar situation, the détente of the great powers, mainly the transformation of fighting from politico-military to politico-economic tendencies. Meanwhile in the USSR as well as in Eastern European countries a serious and many-sided crisis is taking place, leading to an imbalance in strength. Although peace and cooperation tend to develop favourably, the struggle between forces is by no means less intense and the danger of war has not yet been ruled out. Nobody can predict what

is going to happen in the Persian Gulf tomorrow and beyond it in the future.

At this juncture, on a par with the fast growth of the technological revolution is the widening of the gap between the developed and developing countries. With their subtle ruses, the developed countries have been taking advantage of their technological, commercial and financial strength and the most powerful mass media to control the political situation, infiltrate into poor countries by economic, cultural and ideological means with a view to creating an ever-widening inequality in the North-South relationship, putting on the shoulders of the developing countries the enormous debt, preventing the creation of a new world economic order with equality that India together with others, initiated a long time ago.

As a part of the world community, Vietnam has been trying to make contributions to creating peace and stability in the region and in the world as well, promote international exchanges, normalize and promote relationships, take part in work distribution and cooperate with other countries with different political tendencies, enlist the support from them in many fields: economic management, scientific and technological. Meanwhile the Vietnamese people will heighten their self-sufficiency, independent creativeness, overcome difficulties and obstacles to tide them over the severe problems of the time.

In order to solve these problems we keep on following the goals of our revolution: *national independence and socialism* that our late President aimed at. The Vietnamese people are stepping up *an all-sided renovation across the country*. We all the more understand clearly the statement of President Ho Chi Minh: "This is a grim struggle against what is old-fashioned and useless to create what is new and full of vitality; this struggle cannot come to a successful end without relying on

the strength of the entire people." This cause of renovation had gained initial results of significance. Our Party is carrying out the line of broadening democracy, encouraging the whole nation to take part in the Platform and strategy for the development of the economy and society which is to be presented at the coming 7th Party Congress.

We think that in face of the present situation in the world the Vietnamese people as well as the peoples of other countries, while promoting international cooperation and applying the cultural and scientific achievements of the civilization of our creative minds, all the more affirm their national rights, keep the identity and fine traditions of their nation. The desire for independence, freedom and real happiness of each nation is a condition for the unity among the nations in the world.

In this spirit, we expect from the forum commemorating President Ho Chi Minh's birth centenary, all those who love peace and justice and strive for a real independence, democracy and freedom for social equality and progress should promote their relations of solidarity, increase mutual understanding and assistance and join their efforts for a *new world order* in which equality must be carried out in all respects: political, economic, cultural, social, industrial and informatique, etc, for peace, happiness and a bright future of mankind.

Esteemed participants,

Ho Chi Minh, a hero of the Vietnamese people, a loyal friend of all nations and of the progressive people all over the world, was a thinker, a sage, a social activist whose theory always matched reality. Ho Chi Minh's thought is a set of tenets that can be summarized as follows: *independence and*

reunification for the homeland, freedom and democracy for the people, equality and happiness for everybody, peace and friendship for every nation and the development of cultural and humanitarian relationships for the time.

The scientific Symposium held in Calcutta at this time is a new advance in the approach to the great content of Ho Chi Minh's thought. In this work, the Indian scholars will make a significant contribution.

President Ho Chi Minh set great store by India. "India is a powerful and independent country", he said, "which has made precious contributions to peace in Asia and has been playing an important role in the international arena. Moreover she has made valuable efforts to the bringing of peace to Vietnam. The basis and tradition of Indian philosophy lie in the ideal of peace and fraternity. For successive centuries the Buddhist ideology, the arts and science of India have spread all over the world."(1)

Referring to this matter, we would like to say further that in the oriental origin of Ho Chi Minh's thought there is something stemming from the philosophy of your country. Between Vietnam and India there are many similarities in terms of history and culture. We both have a common goal, interest with a tradition of solidarity, mutual assistance both in the past and at present for the sake of peace, security and cooperation in the regions of Southeast Asia and Southern Asia, in Asia, in the Pacific region and in other areas across the world. Following the path blazed by Ho Chi Minh's thought the Vietnamese people for ever respectfully treasure and promote the warm friendship between the two countries whose foundation was laid by the late President Ho Chi Minh

(1) Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Works* (in Vietnamese), Vol.8, pp. 38-47

and the late Prime Minister P.J. Nehru, the elite sons of the two nations, the two great personalities of culture.

May the friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and India be active and firm for ever,

May our Symposium achieve a fruitful end.

Once again, thank you all for listening.

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