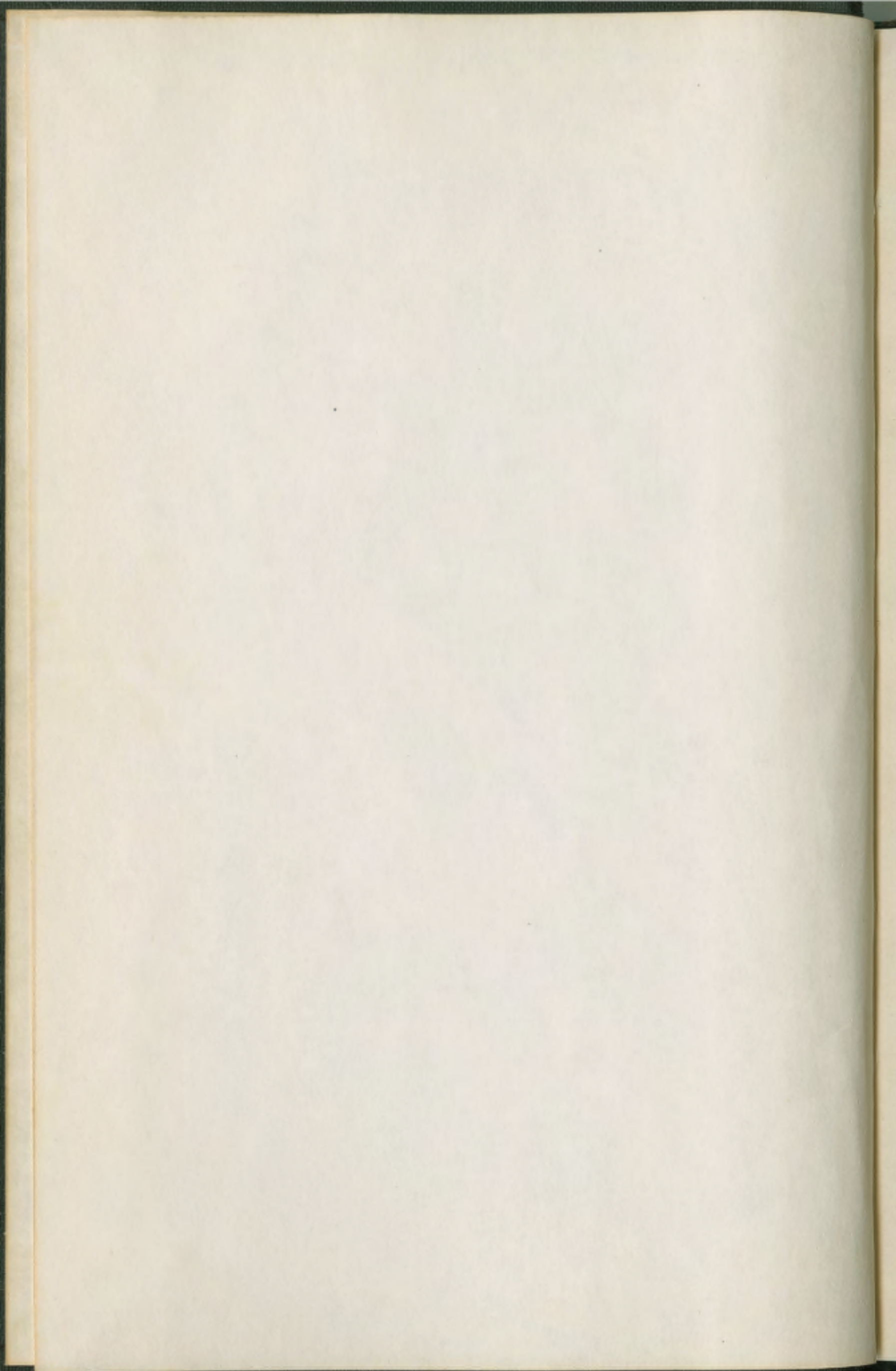


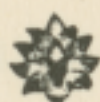
HO NGUYEN GIAP

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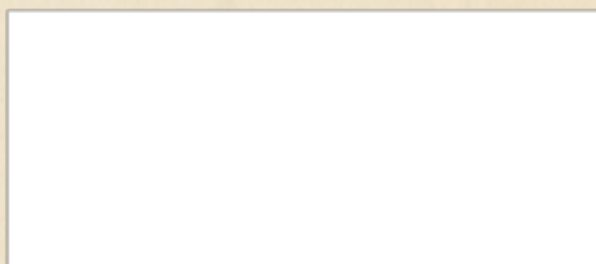
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NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR IN VIET NAM



General VO NGUYEN GIAP

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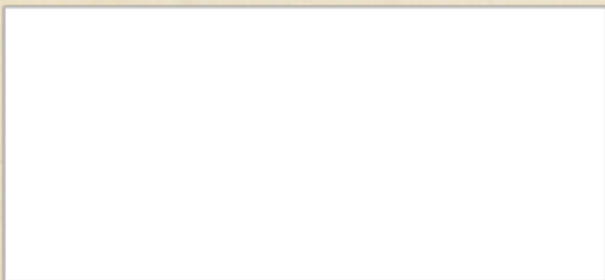
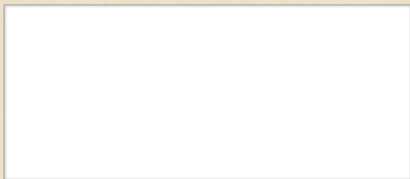
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General VO NGUYEN GIAP



NATIONAL LIBERATION WAR
IN VIET NAM

General line - Strategy - Tactics



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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

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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 and 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, 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.

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MASS UPRISING

AND PEOPLE'S WAR IN VIET NAM

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 continuously, and this uninterrupted struggle for the nation's survival has made our history an one replete with outstanding exploits. From the 1st to the 13th 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 sisters liberated the whole country; later other uprisings and national liberation wars broke out under the leadership of Lady Trieu, Ly Bon, Mai Thuc Loan. Finally, the brilliant victory won by Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang river in 938

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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 years¹, at the gate of the capital, Thang Long², 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 Insurrection 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

1. In 1258, 1285 and 1287.

2. Old name of Hanoi.

against the rotten feudal regime. Within a matter of days, a 200,000-strong army of the Ching was crushed. Thus 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, generally 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 economic 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*, 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. In 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 Viet Nam, 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 gradually 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 Viet Nam, plotted to turn that part of our country into a new-type colony and a military base for an eventual attack on

North Viet Nam 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 Viet Nam 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 sizeable 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 Viet Nam 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 Viet Nam, 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 self-defence in the socialist North with 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 construction, 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 front-line 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 colonialism and are now vigorously speeding up the collapse and bankruptcy of neo-colonialism in the world.

THE ENTIRE PEOPLE FIGHT THE ENEMY

Through the long struggle under the leadership of the Party, our people have accumulated rich experience in many fields. Experience has now become a part of our life. It is not only the Party but the entire people that have gained this experience. They have fought and liberated the entire people in the countries and in various parts of the world. They have waged protracted people's war, mainly using armed struggle to oppose the old-style colonial wars of the United States and other imperialist powers. We have investigated the international situation. We have investigated all forms of aggression: 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 of fascist troops and through the agency of puppet rulers to the "system of United War" and the "war of attrition" waged 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 liberated the entire people in the countries and in various parts of the world. They have waged protracted people's war, mainly using armed struggle to oppose the old-style colonial wars of the United States and other imperialist powers.

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 aggression: 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 democratic 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. They 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 the 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 liberation and for 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 struggle led by our 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 semi-feudal 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 numerous 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 take full advantage of 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 strength 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 oppressed 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 Viet Nam 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 American 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 contradictions in every respect; they are sustaining repeated setbacks 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 out 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, 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 power. 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, revolutionary 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 and organize 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 assume 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 scientific 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 rear-base while drawing support from the international rear-base: the socialist camp.

— Creative application of the mode of conduct and the military art of people's war, successfully opposing enemy troops more numerous and better equipped than 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 until 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 correct 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 conditions 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.

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 forms, organizing the immense political 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 a 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"...

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 pursuant 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 underground 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

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.

guerilla war, intensified political and armed struggle, quickly developed the masses' political forces and revolutionary armed forces, thus bringing 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. Pursuant to 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 mobilization 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 political 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 (1930-31), through the detachments of the Army for National Salvation, the Propaganda Brigade of the Viet Nam Liberation Army, the Ba To guerillas, the thousands of self-defence squads and shock teams 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 prestigious development at the great moments of the revolution and the decisive turning points 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* — in both war and, especially, insurrection — by joint action with the armed forces in the most varied and effective forms.

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 Viet Nam, 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 great 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 Viet Nam at present. It is organized on the basis of powerful mass political 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 Viet Nam.

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 nation's 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 Viet Nam. 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 and now fulfils the historical mission of the 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 correctly apply 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 socialism"; 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 co-ordination should be achieved between the building of regular forces and regional forces, of forces "on the spot" and mobile forces. This is a new development of our ancestral traditions in the organization of the nation's armed forces.

The people's militia — guerillas and self-defence squads — makes up the large forces of the toiling people at the grass-roots. 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 co-ordination 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-colonialist 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 regions, so as to 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 an 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 lies *the source of our equipment*? 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 brother 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 clearsightedly 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 quickly expand 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 elite 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 high-quality 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 elite 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 efficacy, 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 build 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 prestigious 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 entrusted with tasks in a rational and scientific way and displaying great combativeness in attacking and defeating all armies of aggression, however ferocious, numerous 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".

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PROBLEM OF BASES AND REAR AREA

The rear area is a very important 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 faces 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. It has gradually built up political foundations and proceeded 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

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PROBLEM OF BASES AND REAR AREA

“To wage the war *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 faces 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. 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

1. V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol. 27, p. 76.

forefathers 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.

At its very 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 multiform 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 to 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 Viet Nam.

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 to ceaselessly 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 with complete State structures. 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 coordinate 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 countryside 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 loopholes. 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, "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 squarely lean 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 coordinate 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 ever-widening 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 strategy of protracted warfare during the first war of resistance, in which we relied on rural bases while intensifying struggle in the towns. The same coordination 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 the 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 and 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 to fully 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, that 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 constantly consolidate 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 the building from scratch of the bases and rear area of 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 attack 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 Viet Nam. 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 where we have been able to successfully build socialism, the most advanced social regime in our millenia-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 liberation 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 proletarian dictatorship State, 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 army-men, 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 war-time needs, short-term requirements with long-range ones. Such coordination 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, so 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 readjustment 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 all acts or schemes of aggression of the imperialists. It is also necessary 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 requirements are met; the national defence forces have been consolidated and have shown considerable growth. The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam 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. At the beginning encircled by the imperialists, we have succeeded in solidly leaning on the socialist camp.

At present we are carrying on 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 peoples fighting against imperialism headed by American imperialism. A member of the socialist camp, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is also its forward post in Southeast 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 is 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.

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 for a long period in staging armed uprising and waging revolutionary war, 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 force. 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 unmaskes the enemy and foils his political machinations, disperses and weakens his armed forces, upsets his rear area, protects the life and work of the people, 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 parallelly and simultaneously, armed action is associated 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

1. Political report of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party at the Third National Congress (September 5, 1960).

masses in the enemy's rear area. The revolutionary masses, both rural and urban, 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 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 to 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 against 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 uprising" which broke out in the South in 1959-60 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 colonialists. 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 neo-colonialist domination, the revolution started the offensive with the chain uprisings of 1959-60. 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 Viet Nam.* 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 and 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 victorious 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, the unity of the entire people and the leadership 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 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 confrontations, 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 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 aim at creating 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 was 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-occupied 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, our field of action widens, our manifold offensive capabilities in revolutionary war expand, eventually to defeat the enemy's forces and foil his military 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 revolution 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. US-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.

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 relations 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 creates 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 who 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, 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 fortes 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 air force 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 operational 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 but 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 start, 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, co-operate 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 vigorous 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 closely and appropriately co-ordinate them in each period and on each battlefield so as to enable them to develop unceasingly and increase their strategic efficacy.

Should the enemy venture to invade North Viet Nam, 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 extent, 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 people's war, the enemy gets his ears stopped and his eyes blindfolded, hits only vacuums and cannot 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 co-ordinate 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. Thanks 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 groups, 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 Viet Nam, 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, there is an adequate organization and use of forces.

In North Viet Nam, 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 these 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 satisfactorily settle 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 ever-growing 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.

* * *

Those are the main content, the leading thought 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 of forces in presence 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 fortes and our weaknesses, but also all our fortes and all his weak points.*

The appraisal of the fighting capacity of the two parties must be based not only on the forces in presence, but also on their respective strategic postures, not only on each side's strength and posture, but also on its combat efficiency; not only on the forces in presence 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 Viet Nam but also in the world. Only an appraisal made on all planes 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 our 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 view-point 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 fortes 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 imbricate. 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 are wiped out. He wants to destroy our potential by force, 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.

US 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 US army.

With an appropriate mode of conduct of the war and military art, the Vietnamese people have won great victories, brilliantly materializing this genial 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 one."¹

1. Engels: *Setbacks of the Piedmontese people*, Neue Rheinische Zeitung, 1849.

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY, THE ESSENTIAL FACTOR OF VICTORY

At the age of twelve, it organized the guerrilla 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 against 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 struggle for liberation waged by our people over a century shows that in our epoch only under the leadership of the party of the workers and peasants a national-liberation war, a revolutionary war, can be truly popular, characteristically 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. At the time the war began to open the way to socialism and beyond its achievement, the party of the workers and peasants is a new type party of the Vietnamese working class, a party which

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 against 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 Viet Nam, 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 US 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 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 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 politico-moral 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 people's 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 continually carry out a political mobilization of the masses and to reinforce the politico-moral factor of the revolutionary war.

The politico-moral strength 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 revolutionary war. In the course 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

1. V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 137.

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 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 struggled against deviations first of all 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 people, 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 strength of our people, of our nation, of the Vietnamese living in a new era and under a new social 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, strengthen the factors of victory in order to bring the war to final victory.

Lenin said :

“Victory in war goes to the side whose people has greater reserves, greater sources of strength 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 strength 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*,

1. V.I. Lenin *Collected Works*, Vol: 30 Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 74.

strengthen the *Party* and its leadership in all fields.” In the present war of resistance against American aggression, he again said: “Our Party’s line and policy are judicious. 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 strength possible and to win broad and active support 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 right in the course of the war.*

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

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.

lackeys, can the fundamental objectives of the 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 the 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 fighting 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 strength 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 correct 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 Viet Nam, 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 strength, cement the worker-peasant alliance (between the working class and the toiling peasants in the national-democratic revolution, between the working class and the co-operator 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 strengthening 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, co-ordination 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 front-line 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 strengthened 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.

* * *

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 training and fostering 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 training and fostering 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 patriotism, 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 train-

ing 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 members to follow military training. When the war of resistance against the French colonialists 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 all-sided, 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 membership, 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 locality, each army unit, to fight victoriously and fulfil all other tasks. The cell must carry out its task of leadership in war-time 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 patrio-

tism with lofty proletarian internationalism, continue our glorious millenary 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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Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom!

Let us hold aloft the glorious banner of President Ho Chi Minh and valiantly march forward to completely defeat the US aggressors!

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 clear-sighted 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 genial strategist, 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.

1. Last tribute of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party at the solemn obsequies of President Ho Chi Minh.

2. "The Path Which Led Me to Leninism".

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 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”.

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 Viet Nam and their odious role as international gendarme.

1. President Ho Chi Minh’s Testament.

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 Viet Nam. 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 Viet Nam 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 dribblets 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 Viet Nam, are determined more than ever to thwart all their bellicose designs

so as to gain independence and freedom and advance towards the peaceful reunification of the country.

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 Viet Nam.

We will win!

Hanoi, December 1969

1. Last tribute of the Central Committee, of the Viet Nam Workers' Party at the solemn obsequies of President Ho Chi Minh.

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