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To Arm the Revolutionary Masses To Build the People's Army

HANOI
1975

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THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES
TO BUILD THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

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General VO NGUYEN GIAP

TO ARM THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES TO BUILD THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

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A heroic people, the Vietnamese have a very glorious tradition of struggle against foreign invaders. Centuries ago, they had already gained a rich experience in nation-wide insurrection and people's war against much larger and stronger armies of aggression.

Since the birth of the Vietnamese working class, under the leadership of our Party and striving after the revolutionary goals of national independence, democracy and socialism, our people have further developed the nation's tradition of struggle against foreign aggression and brought nation-wide insurrection and people's war to a very high level. Our people have overcome the Japanese fascists and French colonialists ; they have defeated and are still defeating the US imperialists, enriching their history with more glorious pages and making worthy contributions to the revolutionary cause of the peoples in Indochina, Southeast Asia and the world.

In the victorious combat against imperialism and colonialism, the brutal aggressive forces of the twentieth century, Viet Nam has become the symbol of indomitable fighting spirit, of creative intelligence, of military skill in the struggle for national salvation, of the invincible power of people's war. The Vietnamese people's war has become a great event, a legend of the 20th century. The Vietnamese people have highlighted

this shining truth that *in our time, a people, even though small, without vast territory, large population or developed economy, but united and determined, having a correct revolutionary line, creatively applying the Marxist-Leninist principle of nation-wide uprising and people's war to their specific conditions and enjoying the assistance of the socialist camp and progressive mankind, are fully capable of overcoming much bigger and stronger aggressors, including the leading imperialist power, the United States.*

While mapping out a correct and creative line for the revolution and revolutionary war in Viet Nam, our Party soon discovered and mastered the laws governing the development of our society and of revolutionary war and revolutionary violence in our country. The essence of the *law of revolutionary violence* lies in the combination of political and armed forces, of political struggle and armed struggle, insurrection and revolutionary war. In the process of leading the nation-wide insurrection and people's war, our Party has built up a *bloc of national unity* based on the worker-peasant alliance and led by the working class ; it has organized the *political forces* of the broad masses, and built up powerful *armed forces* of the people, which include *the armed forces of the masses* and the *revolutionary army*. Our people have creatively made use of all forms of struggle, combining attacks and uprisings, applying a strategy of offensive in all three strategic areas, [1] with a view to destroying

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1. The highlands, the plains and the urban areas.

the enemy, seizing and maintaining power, overthrowing the rule of colonialism and its lackeys, defeating the aggressive war of imperialism.

This essay deals with the *problem of building up the armed forces of the people in insurrection and revolutionary war in our country*, one of the essential points of our Party's military line.

In the process of nation-wide insurrection, people's war and the building up of national defence by the entire people under the Party's leadership, our *people's armed forces* have come into being, rapidly matured and won glorious victories. Every Vietnamese patriot has risen up to fight the enemy to save the country. Our people have brought to a new level the old national tradition of "everyone a soldier", organizing both the people's army and the *armed forces of the broad masses* which fight everywhere in the country. Today there are millions of fighters in the armed organizations of the masses, hundreds of thousands of fighters in the people's army, equipped with various kinds of weapons, rudimentary, semi-modern, and modern, skilful combatants, courageous and intelligent, who are fighting selflessly day and night for the independence, freedom and reunification of the fatherland and for socialism, against the leading imperialism of our time, aggressive US imperialism.

Looking back over the rapid growth and the path strewn with glorious victories of our people in general and the people's armed forces in particular in the fight against the Japanese fascists, French colonialists and US imperialists, we can say that *the forces of nation-wide insurrection and people's war, including both*

the political and armed forces, are typical of our Party's success in organizing and building up the total combined forces of the revolutionary masses, of revolutionary violence. We can also say that *our people's armed forces, including the armed forces of the masses and the revolutionary army, organized and led by our Party, are typical of the success in organizing military forces by our people, a small people who in our time have successsively defeated three big imperialist powers.*

This success is possible because our Party has mastered the full theory of Marxism-Leninism on military organization in armed uprising and revolutionary war, because it has inherited and brought to a new level our people's tradition of nation-wide resistance and experience in organizing the armed forces during national insurrections and national wars in former times and because it has selectively learned from the experience of the world's people. Our Party has creatively applied such theory and experience to the practice of insurrection and war in our country, that is to the conditions of a small country facing the strong forces of aggression of imperialism and colonialism, with a view to achieving the goals of our revolution set forth by our Party.

Adhering to the viewpoint of revolutionary violence and people's war our Party advocates the *arming of the broad masses while building up a powerful people's army, regarding the armed forces of the masses as the foundation of the people's army, and the people's army as the core of the armed forces of the masses, in armed insurrection and revolutionary war as well as in*

national defence by the entire people, in the national liberation war as well as in the war to defend the Fatherland.

Viewing history in concrete development, our Party has, in the course of different periods of revolutionary struggle, successfully solved the problem of arming the masses and building up the people's army in accordance with the demands of the revolutionary tasks ,the kind of enemy it has to fight and the forms of revolutionary struggle in each period based on specific historical conditions in the political, social and economic fields.

At present the Nixon administration, though it has suffered heavy setbacks, is still stubbornly carrying on the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", intensifying and expanding the war all over Indochina. Our people in the South, mastering the law of revolutionary war in the new period, are intensifying the armed and political struggles, combining attacks and uprisings in all the three strategic areas and, together with the brotherly peoples of Cambodia and Laos, are determined to shatter the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", to shatter the Nixon doctrine over the whole Indochinese battlefield. More than ever before, while developing the political forces and carrying on the political struggle, our people must step up the building up of armed forces and the armed struggle in close combination with other forms of struggle, advancing forward to defeat completely the US aggressors and their stooges, liberating the South, defending the North, proceeding toward national reunification and fulfilling our internationalist duty.

In the course of the struggle to accomplish this primary task of our revolution, we must at the same time lay the basis and map out directions for the long-term building up of the people's armed forces and for national defence by the entire people, so as to defend our Fatherland firmly and defeat any war of aggression that may be unleashed by any enemy, however strong and well-equipped, who dares to encroach upon our people's beautiful land, or upon our independence and freedom.

We must find the best way to arm the revolutionary masses and build up the people's army in order to fulfil the above-mentioned immediate and long-term tasks of our people.

To do so, we must further study Marxist-Leninist principles regarding the military organization of the proletariat,analyse the experience and tradition of our people in organizing the armed forces in the past, and especially gradually sum up our Party's experience in building up the army and arming the masses during the past forty years or more.

The theory and practice of arming the masses and building up the army is a question of burning interest for the peoples of various nations who are today engaged in the struggle for national independence, democracy and socialism, in face of the policies of violence and brutal war followed by imperialism with US imperialism at its head and in face of the rapid development of ever more modern weapons and means of war in the world.

I

THESES OF MARXISM-LENINISM ON THE MILLITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

Marxism-Leninism studies the problem of the military organization of the proletariat in its organic relationship with the theory of class struggle and the State.

With the disintegration of primitive communal society, society became divided into classes and its history is the history of class struggle. Since the formation of nations, the question of national oppression and national enslavement has arisen and the history of class struggle has also taken the form of national struggle. Slave owners and slaves, landowners and peasants, bourgeois and proletariat, oppressor nations and oppressed, aggressor countries and their victims, antagonistic social groups, etc., have waged unceasing struggles under various forms, the most acute of which is armed conflict or war. Since time immemorial, countless wars have taken place in class societies. They have been estimated to number over 10,000 including only those of relatively large scale and occurring within the past 5,000 years.

The army is the main instrument for waging war. Its birth is closely connected with the appearance of the State when society split up into antagonistic classes. The army is a special organization of the State, an instrument of a given class which is used to carry out its political line by means of armed violence.

The class nature of the State determines the social nature of the army and its function. The army of all exploiting States has the following basic functions : internally, to keep down the exploited masses, forcing them to submit to the order of the ruling classes ; externally, to conquer other countries and to defend one's territory against foreign aggression.

Three types of exploiting State have appeared in the course of history. Therefore, corresponding to these three types, there have been three types of army : the army of the slave-owning State, the army of the feudal State, and the army of the bourgeois State.

In the course of history, those types of army have borne various names and had various forms of organization and recruitment in accordance with the specific conditions, but their nature has been the same : an army of an exploiting State has always been an instrument of the ruling class to repress the exploited masses in the country and to plunder and enslave other countries and peoples.

However, the armies of the ruling classes have not been the only ones in existence under exploiting regimes. To counter the armed violence, the exploited masses have also built up their own revolutionary armed organizations in the course of their revolutionary struggles. Even in antiquity, in Rome, the rebelling

slaves under the leadrship of Spartacus – whom Marx regarded as "the most splendid fellow in the whole of ancient history. Great general, noble character, real representative of the ancient proletariat."[1] – organized a large insurgent army hundreds of thousands strong and waged a persistent fight against the army of the slave-owning State.

In feudal times, in Europe, Asia and Africa, etc.; armed organizations of peasants often appeared during insurrections, peasant wars and liberation wars in various countries which were quite large in size and had very great combat power. During bourgeois revolutions against feudalism, during the rise of capitalism, there also existed armed formations of the peasants and even of the workers in the stage of spontaneous struggle, fighting under the banner of the bourgeoisie.

Yet those revolutionary armed formations of the exploited classes, on account of their historical limitations and their lack of a correct political, military and organizational line, were, in spite of valiant fighting and the very great victories won at times, eventually suppressed by the enemy and betrayed by their own allies.

This betrayal revealed itself most fully in the bourgeois revolution. As Engels pointed out, the workers in France were armed after every revolution; "therefore, the first thing done by the bourgeoisie in power was to disarm the workers. Thus after every revolution won with the blood of the workers, a new

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1. "Letter to Engels", February 27, 1861. Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 123.

struggle breaks out eventually leading to the workers' defeat." [1]

Only with the birth of Marxism and the appearance of the political parties of the proletariat, which became an independent political force passing from the stage of "spontaneity" to that of "consciousness" and bringing a qualitative leap forward to the whole of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle — only on that basis could the problem of the military organization of the exploited masses be completely solved in the military science of the proletariat. The appearance of political parties of the working class — Communist parties — on the political arena and their leading role in the revolution in various countries led to the birth of armed formations of a marked revolutionary and popular nature, born within proletarian revolution or bourgeois democratic, people's democratic or national liberation revolutions led by the working class. Especially, since the success of the Russian October Revolution and of the revolutions in a series of other socialist countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America, there has appeared for the first time in the world a *completely new type of armed forces.* These are the real armed forces of the people, of the State of proletarian dictatorship — the most progressive State in the history of mankind.

1. Theses by Marx and Engels

When they defined the historic mission of the international working class as the grave-digger of capital-

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1. F. Engels : Preface to the "Civil War in France", K. Marx-F. Engels, *Selected Works, Su That* Publishers, Hanoi 1962, Vol. I, pp. 756-757.

ism and builder of a Communist society, a society without classes and without exploitation of man by man, Marx and Engels at the same time showed the proletariat the most correct way to liberate itself : the working class, under the leadership of the Communist Party and in close alliance with the peasantry, should make use of revolutionary violence to shatter the State machinery of the bourgeoisie and establish the State of proletarian dictatorship, using it as a tool to safeguard the rule of the proletariat and transform society along the principles of communism.

The military organization of the proletariat is set up primarily in connection with this great cause of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle. Rising up to break their fetters and overthrow the whole of the old world, the proletariat and the revolutionary masses must, of necessity, proceed to build their own military organization in the course of the revolutionary process. This is necessary because a material force can only be overcome by a material force, and only violence can help carry out the great historic mission of overthrowing the rule of the capitalists and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. The ruling class never consent of their own accord to withdraw from the historical arena. The monarchic and bourgeois states always have large armed forces at their disposal, they ceaselessly see to the perfecting of those forces as an effective tool in repressing the toiling people in the country and carrying out plundering policies in the world. They always rely on this counter revolutionary military machinery to throttle all aspirations for freedom of the proletariat and the labouring masses and drown their revolutionary

struggles in blood. Engels already pointed out that "basic characteristic" of the bourgeoisie even when capitalism was rising : "...the bourgeoisie has demonstrated to us how cruelly they can retaliate once the proletariat dare to face them, as a separate class, with their own interests and their own demands."[1] The developments of capitalism and its deepening inner contradictions necessarily leads to growing militaristic tendencies to the expansion of the counter-revolutionary armed forces in the State machinery of the bourgeoisie. Engels wrote : "The army has become the main end of the State ; the army itself has become an end : the people are only there to supply men and feed them. Militarism rules and devours Europe."[2]

Such a situation forces the proletariat and the oppressed masses to have their own military organizations to counter armed repression by the bourgeois State, to smash their military machinery and overcome their resistance, to win and preserve revolutionary power.

Then, if the military organization is a necessity in the struggle of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie, in what form should it be built up ?

This is a question that has been fully solved by the masters of Marxism - Leninism. As founders of the military science of the proletariat, Marx and Engels were the first to lay the theoretical basis for the problem *of the form of the military organization of the proletariat* with their famous thesis : *to arm the working class, to*

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1. F. Engels : Preface to "The Civil War in France", op, cit, p. 7[1]8.
2. F. Engels : "Anti-Durhing", *Su That* Publishers, Hanoi 1959, p. 286.

replace the standing army by the armed people. "...The workers must be armed and organized. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, muskets, cannon and munitions must be put through at once... Any attempt at disarming must be frustrated, if necessary by force."[1] This burning appeal to arms was issued by Marx and Engels in the 1850s after the bloody experience of the first great battle of the French proletariat against the bourgeoisie in 1848, and was considered one of the main demands in the revolutionary programme of the proletariat, at a time when insurrections and civil wars had become immediate tasks of the revolution in some developed capitalist countries in Western Europe.

The history of European countries from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century was also that of bourgeois democratic revolutions. Under the prevailing circumstances, the proletariat had to ally itself with bourgeois democratic parties against the feudal rulers and reactionary bourgeois and more often than not they had provisionally to bring those parties to power once the revolution was successful. In such a situation, Marx and Engels regarded the arming of the proletariat as an indispensable condition not only in order to smash the State machinery of the feudal class and reactionary bourgeoisie and so ensure the victory of the insurrection, but also eventually to defeat the inevitable schemes of betrayal by the bourgeois democratic parties after they had come to power. It

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1. Marx-Engels : "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League", *Selected Works,* Vol. 1, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p. 113.

is also an indispensable condition of maintaining and strengthening the political independence of the working class, safeguarding the fruits of their struggles, and creating conditions for the advance to proletarian revolution by using their power to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Marx and Engels believed that once the proletariat was armed, it would have tremendous force. They themselves saw this force in the 1848 Revolution in Paris. Marx wrote : "It is well known how the workers, with unexampled bravery and ingenuity, without leaders, without a common plan, without means and, for the most part, lacking weapons, held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Paris National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed from the provinces."[1] And Engels eulogized the event as follows : "If 40,000 Paris workers were able to resist with such vigour a force four times as large as themselves, what great results could be achieved by all the Paris workers acting with discipline and as one man."[2]

Developing the above ideas, in 1871, after a profound analysis of the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels set forth the principle that the concern of any successful revolution is to shatter the old army, to disband it, to replace it by a new army and to substitute the armed people for the regular army. Marx wrote : "Paris, the central seat of the old governmental

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1. K. Marx : "The Class Struggle in France", Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p. 161.
2. K. Marx – F. Engels : *Selected Works*, German Edition, Book VII, part I, p. 134.

power, and, at the same time the social stronghold of the French working class... could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution."[1]

Marx and Engels pointed out that under capitalism the standing army is the main instrument through which the bourgeoisie maintains its domination over the working people. To smash that standing army means to eliminate the material tool of bourgeois power, to eradicate the danger of resistance and counter offensive on its part. Meanwhile, relying firmly on the forces of the revolutionary masses, the proletariat must speedily build up and develop its own military organization by arming the proletariat and the revolutionary masses, regarding them as the sole armed force that can safeguard the success of the insurrection and develop the revolution. The Paris Commune has taught the world proletariat that vital lesson. "The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."[2] Marx and Engels set great store by this experience : that it is the task of the working class to smash the bureaucratic and military machinery of the old State and replace it by a new form of State organization of the proletariat. They regarded it as a creation of great historic significance, so that later, in

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1. K. Marx, "The Civil War in France", K. Marx – F. Engels *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, p. 519.

2. K. Marx : "The Civil War in France" op. cit. p. 519.

their 1872 preface to the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels considered it as an amendment of the utmost importance to the programme set forth by the Manifesto.

Engels also foresaw that *arming the people was the form of military organization of the socialist State.*

This forecast proceeded primarily from Marx' and Engels' principle that the victory of socialism could only be achieved simultaneously in all or most of the developed capitalist countries. Moreover by its nature, the socialist regime does not launch aggression against anyone, therefore it would be unnecessary to have a standing army. As for internal security, it could be ensured by the armed people. Engels also based his analysis on the state of the existing armies and of military art and techniques in the second half of the 19th century. At that time France, Germany and Russia were the only developed capitalist countries with large military apparatuses, whereas other capitalist countries, including England and the United States, did not yet possess important armed forces. Therefore, once the proletarian revolution was successful in all or most of the developed capitalist countries, the armed forces of the remaining capitalist states would not be very strong. In such conditions, and basing himself upon the experience of the Paris Commune, Engels believed that under socialism, and with its superiority, the people, armed, organized and militarily trained, would be able to defeat aggressor armies in self-defence wars to safeguard the socialist State.

From this analysis, Marx and Engels believed that in the process of socialist revolution, the standing army of the bourgeoisie must be replaced by the armed people.

Marx and Engels dealt with the question of arming the masses not only in the armed insurrections of the proletariat and in the military organization of the socialist State but also in *national wars*. Marx and Engels drew a distinction between just wars and aggressive wars and always supported just wars, wars of liberation and self-defence waged by oppressed peoples and victims of aggression. Engels made a close study of contemporary events, summing up their experience so as to point out the way by which an oppressed people should wage a people's war and defeat the aggressors' professional armies. In many works dealing with the history of war, Engels dwelt on the *great role and effectiveness of the armed masses in just wars and self-defence wars*. This idea of Engels was closely connected with the new mode of waging a people's war advocated by him. Engels wrote : "A people who want to win back independence for themselves must not limit themselves to the *conventional* means of waging war. Mass uprisings, revolutionary wars, guerillas everywhere — that is the only way by which a small people can defeat a large one, a less strong army can oppose a stronger and better organized one." [1] It is the broad masses of the armed people who are the fundamental elements for such kinds of war.

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1. F. Engels "The Defeat of the Piedmontese", F. Engels, V. Lenin, J. Stalin : *On People's War, Su That* Publishers, Hanoi 1970, p. 27.

Engels praised the resistance wars waged by France (1793), by Spain (1807—1812) and Russia against Napoleon (1812), and by Hungary against Austria (1849), etc. , as resistance wars in which methods of people's war had been applied, operations by the standing army had been combined with combat activities by the armed masses, thereby bringing into full play the great forces of the nation and the country to defeat much stronger aggressor armies.

When analysing the failure of the Piedmontese in Northern Italy in their self-defence war against the Austrians, Engels pointd out, "The great error of the Piedmontese at the outset lay in the fact that they only used the standing army to oppose the Austrians, that they only wanted to wage the most conventional, the most bourgeois, the most regular war."[1] Engels showed that the Piedmontese defeat at Novara "would have had no significance at all, if after this defeat a *real revolutionary war* had broken out, if the remaining part of the Italian army had at once declared themselves the nucleus of a general, nation-wide insurrection, if the conventional strategic *war of armies* had been turned into a *people's war*, similar to that waged by the French in 1793," [2] and if the Turin government had had the courage to resort to revolutionary war. And Engels concluded that Italy's independence was lost because of the cowardice of

1. F. Engels : "The Defeat of the Piedmontese"; op. cit, p.27.
2. Ibid, p. 29.

the King's administration, not because of the invincibility of Austrian weapons.

Engels drew similar conclusions when he commented on the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. France, Engels held, was fully able to turn the tables, even after the Germans had occupied one-sixth of French territory and besieged the two fortresses of Metz and Paris. He pointed out that at the time when most of the German forces were tied down in the occupied territory, on the five-sixths of the land that remained, France was still everywhere able to set up a number of armed formations to harass the enemy, cut off communications, destroy logistic bases, attack isolated detachments and so on, and in this way, force the Germans to disperse their forces, and withdraw troops from the above-mentioned fortresses to cope with the situation, so that Baden might have tried to get out of Metz while the siege of Paris would have become a "phantom". "What," Engels asked, "would have been the Germans' fate, if the French people had had the same ardent patriotism as that of the Spaniards in 1808, if every city and almost every village had turned into a fortress, every peasant and every citizen a fighter ?"[1]

Engels also spoke of insurrection by the armed people and of the irregular units of Asian armed formations, with their multifarious methods of waging a people's war, as redoubtable adversaries of the European aggressor armies. He wrote : "They (the Chinese) poison the bread... wholesale, and with the coolest premeditation.... They go with hidden arms on

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1. F. Engels : "The Defeat of the Piedmontese", op. cit. p. 155.

board trading steamers, and, when on the journey, massacre the crew... and seize the boat.... The very coolies, emigrating to foreign countries, rise in mutiny... on board every emigrant ship, and fight for its possession, and, rather than surrender, go down to the bottom with it, or perish in its flames. Even out of China, the Chinese colonists... conspire and studdenly rise in mighty insurrections. What is an army to do against a people resorting to such means of warfare ?"[1]

We can see that the view of the founders of scientific communism with regard to the form of military organization of the proletariat and oppressed masses was *to arm the working class, to arm the people, to arm the revolutionary masses.*

Marx and Engels laid the theoretical basis for this question in the insurrection to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the war to defend the socialist State and even in liberation wars and self-defence wars waged by oppressed peoples and countries under bourgeois rule which had been victims of aggression.

This is obviously a *very fundamental view*. It is a splendid success of Marx and Engels in applying the viewpoints of historical materialism regarding the classes, the masses and revolutionary violence to the building of the military organization of the proletariat and oppressed masses. It is a model of the correct appraisal of the decisive role of the masses in armed insurrection and revolutionary war. The great value of this thesis lies in the fact that, for the first time in the world, it shows the proletariat and oppressed peoples

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1. F. Engels : "Persia and China" *Marx on China*, Lawrence and Wishard, London 1965, p. 48-49.

the direction and most correct way to create their own organization, of a completely new type, born of the proletariat and working people fighting for the people and for their class. With a correct revolutionary line, and when the revolutionary party firmly relies on the revolutionary masses, on the workers and peasants-to build up and develop its armed organization, it can create an invincible revolutionary armed force.

This view has become the *theoretical basis for building the armed forces in the military theory of Marxism – Leninism*. It is an extremely powerful weapon of the proletariat and all oppressed peoples in the world ; it gives them wings in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the old world and create a new one.

2. Lenin's Thesis

The Russian Marxists, headed by the great Lenin, applied these theses of Marx and Engels to the new historical conditions, when the socialist revolution and the bourgeois democratic revolution are carried out in the period of imperialism.

It was at a time when capitalism was passing into the stage of imperialism that Lenin set forth his famous new thesis that socialism cannot be simultaneously successful in all countries but it will first succeed in one or a certain number of countries. At the same time, with the new theory on the leadership of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic revolution and the transition from this revolution to the proletarian revolution, Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik Party worked

out the military programme of the bourgeois democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in Russia. Lenin underlined the necessity of building up the military organization of the proletariat in the new historical conditions :

"A bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society.... Our slogan must be : arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics possible for a revolutionary class, tactics that follow logically from and are dictated by, the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism." [1]

From the early years of the 20th century, while assuming the leadership of the 1905 Revolution and the Great October Revolution in application of Marx' and Engels' principle Lenin and the Russian Communist Party advocated *replacing the standing army by the armed people, by the militia force.* It was one of the main tasks of the programme of the bourgeois democratic revolution as well as of the socialist revolution.

Lenin pointed out that in Russia as well as in many countries in the world, the (bourgeois) standing army was used mainly not for combating foreign aggressors but for repressing the labouring people and waging aggressive wars to enslave other peoples. Lenin wrote : "Everywhere the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour, the executioner of the people's liberty".[2]

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1. "Military Programme of Proletarian Revolution", V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 23, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1964 pp. 80-81.
2. V.I. Lenin, "The Armed Forces and the Revolution", *Collected Works,* Vol. 10, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965, p. 56.

This army, by its nature, cannot be the mainstay of the people. To abolish it is a condition for the victory of the revolution, to save the revolution from all the schemes of restoration by the reactionary force, to save the colossal expenditures needed for its maintenance. And instead there shoud be *the arming of the people primarily of the workers and poor peasants.* Under the prevailing historical conditions Lenin affirmed : "No power on earth will dare to encroach upon free Russia, if the bulwark of her liberty is an armed people which has destroyed the military caste, which has made all soldiers citizens and all citizens capable of bearing arms, soldiers.... Military science has proved that a people's militia is quite practicable, that it can rise to the military tasks presented by a war both of defence and of attack."[1]

Under Lenin's leadership, during the time before the October Revolution, and together with the building up of the *political army of the revolution,* the Russian Communist Party and working class did their best to put this slogan into effect. They stepped up propaganda work among soldiers and set up Party organizations within the Tsarist army with a view to undermining its units and winning them over to the Revolution ; they promoted the study of military science in the Party and actively propagated military knowledge and military training among the masses ; they gave weapons to the workers and revolutionary masses ; they established and strengthened the leadership of the Communist Party in all military formations ; they organized

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1. V.I. Lenin : "The Armed Forces and the Revolution", op. cit., p.39.

workers' miiitia and fighting units to serve as nuclei for the revolutionary armed forces ; they built up a revolutionary armed force in which the workers and peasants would be united with revolutionary soldiers, *a revolutionary armed force made up of three components ;* a) the armed proletariat and peasantry ; b) the organized vanguard units made up of representatives of these classes ; c) army units which had rallied to the side of the people. Thanks to this, the revolution was able to build up an armed force made up mainly of the masses of armed workers and peasants fighting under Communist Party leadership as a shock force for the revolutionary onrush of the masses. It was this force that played a decisive role in the victory of the February Revolution and later the October Revolution.

The victory of the Russian October Revolution led to the birth of the first Socialist State in the world, one which was subjected to hostile encirclement by imperialism. This victory ushered in a new era in human history and shook the whole capitalist world. Therefore, just as Lenin had foreseen, imperialism was bent on smothering the proletarian State at birth. This danger of aggression immediately laid the Soviet State under the clear obligation of arming to defend the socialist Fatherland against imperialist aggression and reconsidering its form of military organization.

Lenin's great contribution lies in the fact that he not only confirmed Marx' and Engels' principle of arming the people but also developed their ideas by setting forth the principle of *the necessity of building a regular standing army of the Soviet State on the basis of arming*

the people, a new-type army of the working class and labouring people.

Lenin showed that in face of the extremely great danger of aggression, if the Soviet Republic did not want to fall an easy prey to imperialism, it needed a powerful regular standing army, well equipped and well trained, with strict discipline, centralized and unified command. Lenin pointed out that, in conditions when the capitalist countries had big armies with proper training and modern equipment, when the armed forces of the Soviet State were increasingly equipped with modern materials and the soldiers needed more training time to master the use of equipment along the rules of modern military art, when the imperialists were always in a position to launch surprise attacks, the armed forces of the Soviet State could not be maintained in the form of people's militia but had to become a regular standing army. Lenin affirmed *"Today the regular army must be put to the fore..."* [1] It was a regular army qualitatively different from the bourgeois army. It was a *new-type army, a people's army, a revolutionary army, a socialist army.*

Considering the requirements of modern warfare, the standing army has obvious advantages as compared with the militia system : it has greater mobility as it is not tied to any region ; it is equipped with modern weapons and technical materials ; it can undergo intensive training for a long period of time in a systematic way according to the requirements of continually developing military techniques and art ; it has well-trained

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1. V.I. Lenin : *Collected Works*, Russian text, 3rd edition, Vol. 24. p. 750.

and experienced professional officers ; on account of all this, it has great combat power and high combat readiness, etc.

Facing a completely new problem and in conditions of great difficulty, relying on the support and creativeness of the people, while disbanding the old army, Lenin and the Russian Communist Party gradually and successfully solved a series of problems regarding *the principles of building a new-type regular army of the proletarian State — the worker-peasant Red Army*. Lenin defined the function and tasks of the Red Army, the revolutionary and popular nature of the army of the proletarian State, the system of Party organization, political work and the close leadership of the Communist Party in the Army, the lines and policies regarding the training and forming of cadres, the principles of organization, equipment, education and training for the Soviet army, the Soviet military art, etc., as well as many other aspects of the Red Army's life.

In the course of building the Red Army, Lenin had to carry on a determined and persistent struggle against all erroneous tendencies. Lenin shattered the schemes of the Menshevik, social-revolutionary and anarchist elements who misused the slogan "arming the people" to launch a frantic opposition to the Party's policy and line of building the Red Army. At the Party's 8th Congress, Lenin and his comrades-in-arms also defeated the "military opposition group" within the Party who opposed the heightening of discipline, the centralized and unified command, etc., i.e. the very principles of building a regular Red Army.

After the end of the Civil War, once again the problem of the form of the Soviet State's military organization was put to discussion. The Communist Party headed by Lenin resolutely rejected the Trotskyist tendency which demanded that the Red Army be disbanded and wholly integrated with the system of people's militia.

Revolutionary practice has demonstrated that Lenin's thesis was extremely clearsighted and accurate. The victory of the Soviet State in defeating the armed intervention of the imperialist bloc in collusion with internal counter-revolutionaries in an attempt to smother the Soviet State at birth, the great victory of the Soviet Union in the patriotic war of 1941 — 1945 which defeated German fascism and Japanese militarism were indissolubly linked with that correct thesis of Lenin. It is known all over the world that, during the Second World War, it was the Soviet Red Army, the powerful regular army of the first Soviet State in the world that played the decisive and direct role in defeating the aggressor armies, over ten million strong and equipped with ultramodern weapons, of German fascism and Japanese militarism, driving the aggressors out of the Soviet Fatherland and making a direct contribution to the liberation of many countries in Europe and Asia ; it pursued the German Nazis and destroyed them in their very hideouts, saving mankind from the fascist peril.

The Red Army not only proved itself absolutely superior to the enemy in politics and morale, but also turned out, in the course of the war, to be superior to the enemy in both numerical strength and quality of men,

in quantity and quality of modern weapons and equipment, in combat techniques and the art of command. It was that powerful force that enabled the Red Army to launch counter-offensive and offensive operations on a very large scale, annihilating tens of enemy divisions in a single campaign, breaking through their defensive lines, liberating large areas of territory, creating decisive turning points in the war and eventually leading it to great victory.

Lenin's thesis on building the regular Soviet Red Army was a further development of Marx' and Engels' theory on the military organization of the socialist State under new historical conditions, when the socialist State was faced with a hostile encirclement by the capitalist world. The great value of this thesis lies in the fact that it has pointed out to the proletariat that in the imperialist period, when imperialism, with its extremely warlike nature, has under its command huge aggressive armies, equipped with ultra-modern weapons, it is essential that the socialist State, to safeguard its security, should have a powerful regular standing army and not only the armed people. Relying on the superiority of the new social system, on the ever developing material and technical basis of socialism, and using its State machinery, the proletariat in power is perfectly able to build such an army quickly, a new-type, modern regular army, as a firm mainstay for the national defence of the socialist State.

The question then is : when the socialist State has built up such a powerful regular standing army, what about the problem of *arming the people ?*

Lenin held that it was necessary to *build the socialist Red Army on the basis of arming the people.* At the third Congress of the All Russian Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers, Lenin told the story of an old Finnish woman who met a Red Army soldier when she was gathering firewood. Instead of seizing the wood as the Tsarist soldiers would have done, the Red Army soldier helped her to gather more. From this Lenin concluded that the people had voiced a different view of the soldier, the Red Armyman : "...They are saying that from now on they should not fear a man with a rifle, for this man will defend the labouring people and relentlessly smash the exploiters' yoke..." [1] This was a real revolutionary army, a people's army. Lenin went on to deal with the relations between the Red Army and the armed people : "This is what the people have felt, and that is why when the ordinary people without education say that the Red Guards are doing their utmost to fight the exploiters, this propaganda is an invincible force. It will penetrate millions and tens of millions of people and lay a firm foundation for the work that the French Commune in the 19th century began to build, but only for a short period of time as it was defeated by the bourgeoisie. This propaganda will build up *the sosialist Red Army on the basis of arming the people,* a thing which all socialists have dreamt of."[2]

In the 8th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, when insisting on the necessity of concentrating efforts on

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1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* French text, les Editions Sociales, Paris and Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1958, Vol. 26, p. 484.

2. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* French text, op. cit., Vol,26 p.484

building up the Red Army, Lenin also pointed out that the Party continued to *maintain the system of people's militia*. The programme adopted at the Congress also set forth the task of giving military training to all labouring people and building close relations between reorganized troops and State enterprises, trade unions, organizations of poor peasants, etc.

In the Soviet Union, right after the victory of the October Revolution, the armed forces of the revolutionary masses, the guards, the guerilla detachments of workers and poor peasants already played a very important part in the struggle against the rebellions by counter-revolutionaries. When the Worker-Peasant Red Army was newly set up, it was the "red guards" that constituted its core.

Before the Red Army grew into a million-strong force, the guerilla detachments in the various regions of the country were one of the main forces in the people's fight against the foreign interventionists and white guards. During the civil war, hundreds of thousands of guerillas fought in the enemy's rear, in close coordination with the Red Army. Many units and columns of the regular army were built up from guerilla detachments in the civil war.

After the victory of the civil war, parallel with the reduction of the numerical strength and the heightening of the quality of the Red Army, the system of people's militia was maintained for many years under various forms suitable to the specific conditions of each period.

During the great patriotic war of 1941 — 1945, under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Stalin, the formations of guerillas,

militia and fighting workers, etc., also played a great role in defeating German fascism in their Fatherland, in coordination with the Red Army.

In areas temporarily held by the Germans, a million guerilla fighters organized by the Communist Party in the course of the war conducted a very heroic fight. They annihilated millions of enemy troops and immobilized one-tenth of the total strength of the German land forces. Even on the main fronts, the armed people fought side by side with the Red Army, defending every inch of the Soviet motherland. During large-scale campaigns, tens of militia divisions together with the people fought in co-ordination with the Red Army to achieve immortal exploits in combat and ancillary services.

The close fighting coordination of the standing army of the Soviet State and the armed people in the great patriotic war, with the Soviet Red Army playing the essential part, was a vivid picture of people's war in modern conditions.

The Soviet people and Red Army fighters are very proud of the tremendous power of the people's sacred war against German fascism in 1941 — 1945. This pride was reflected in these lines of a Soviet song, very popular among the people :

"People's war,
The sacred war".

It was a victory of Soviet military science, of the Marxist-Leninist line of people's war ; it was also the victory of the principle of building up military organizations worked out by Marx, Engels and Lenin which

the Communist Party of the Soviet Union applied in new conditions.

During and after the Second World War, the revolutionary movements of the people in various countries were developing tempestuously ; many insurrections and revolutionary wars broke out everywhere from Europe to Asia. The great victory of the Red Army over fascism, the great victory of the revolutionary struggles of the world people led to the birth of a series of socialist countries forming a world system. The struggles of the world people for socialism, national independence, democracy and peace have given rise to a revolutionary high tide which is continually attacking imperialism.

It was in the flames of the armed insurrections and revolutionary wars since the October Revolution, during and after the Second World War, that the birth and rapid development of the revolutionary armed forces of the people of the socialist countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America took place. Owing to different specific conditions and historical backgrounds, the revolutionary armed forces of the socialist countries have different histories and levels of development and different organizational structures, but most of them were born from the guerilla movements against internal reactionaries and against fascist aggressors ; they were organized into armies while including armed formations of the masses under various forms.

In Asia, in the process of long and arduous revolutionary armed struggles against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, the Chinese people organized the worker-peasant Red Army, carried out the

"mobilization of the whole people, arming the whole people", and achieved a great victory. The Vietnamese people successfully carried out armed insurrections and revolutionary wars ; the armed forces of our people are a typical example of success in the creative application of the Marxist-Leninist theses on arming the masses and building up the army ; we shall deal with that in later chapters.

By various forms of struggle, many colonies and dependent countries have also won independence to a varying degree.

Many have won independence through armed struggle. They have become nationalist countries. During the armed struggle as well as after victory, several of them, actively anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist, have striven to build up their armed forces by organizing the armies of the nationalist State power, while arming the people to some extent.

At present, the people in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who are conducting armed struggles to win power and national independence are applying these lessons of experience for the organization of the revolutionary armed forces in their own specific conditions.

Subjected to attacks from several directions and suffering defeat after defeat, imperialism, with US imperialism at its head, has resorted to very perfidious and cruel policies to oppose the revolutionary movements of the world people, in an attempt to maintain its privileges and interests. The imperialists strive to increase the defence budgets, intensify the arms race, develop weapons of mass destruction, build military bases

everywhere, set up military alliances, continually launch armed interventions, "special" and "limited" wars of aggression, and prepare for a new world war.

To defend the socialist fatherland, to defend world peace and to defeat the war schemes and manoeuvres of imperialism, the socialist countries are trying hard to strengthen their defence capacities at the same time as continuing the work of economic construction and scientific and technological development. Relying on the superiority of the socialist system and on the results achieved in the building of the material and technical foundation of socialism and communism, the socialist countries are concerned with building up the revolutionary armies along modern lines to a different degree according to their specific conditions. They unceasingly heighten the revolutionary nature of the socialist armies, and equip them with ever more modern weapons and means including both nuclear weapons, missiles and conventional arms.

While building up a modern army, many socialist countries pay great attention to arming the popular masses – workers, collective peasants – on a large scale with forms of organization and equipment suited to their needs, so as to develop to the maximum the force of the masses and of the socialist system in strengthening national defence and defending the country.

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From the theoretical and practical basis outlined above, what conclusions should be drawn? We may conclude that :

Arming the revolutionary masses in combination with building up the revolutionary army is the comprehensive principle of Marxism—Leninism regarding the form of military organization of the socialist countries' defence system, and of wars of liberation, national defence wars and revolutionary wars by the peoples in our time. This principle is developed from Marx' and Engels' thesis on arming the people to Lenin's thesis on building up the revolutionary army on the basis of arming the people.

Marx, Engels and Lenin thus brilliantly summed up the lessons of experience in building up the military organizations of the proletariat and oppressed peoples in the course of their protracted revolutionary struggle to seize power and defend it. To some extent, it is also a continuation and creative development of the experience of organizing the armed forces of the revolutionary classes and the victims of oppression and aggression in the historical periods before the appearance of Marxism.

Starting from scratch in their revolutions to overthrow the rule of the brourgeoisie, imperialists and feudalists, the proletariat, the labouring people and oppressed peoples could not, naturally, have an army at the outset. In the course of the revolution, when the question of armed struggle and armed insurrection arose, the proletariat, labouring people and oppressed peoples had, necessarily, to set up their own military organization. As a rule, its initial form was the armed masses, and the revolutionary army was gradually built up on the basis of arming the masses. In insurrections the armed masses usually played the main

role ; sometimes the role of a shock force was played by a revolutionary army. As the insurrections developed into revolutionary wars, the position of the army became increasingly more important and the revolutionary armed forces included both the army and the armed masses.

The question of building up a regular and standing revolutionary army in the strict sense could only be tackled when the proletariat and labouring people had seized power and had a state. *The form of military organization of the socialist State, the people's democratic State, which is able to develop to the maximum the combat power of the people and the new regime, consists in a combination of building up a regular modern revolutionary army with arming the revolutionary masses intensively and on a large scale.* The armed masses and the revolutionary army are two component parts of the armed forces of the State, in which the standing army is the core force and the armed masses the extensive force. That is why attention should be paid to building up the army while developing the forces of the armed masses.

The close combination of the above components in the armed forces of the socialist State is one reason for absolute superiority of the socialist regime over the exploiting regimes.

Under the State regimes of the exploiting classes, as the interests of the ruling classes and those of the labouring people are completely opposed, there is a fundamental opposition between the popular masses on the one side and the State and its standing army on the other. The ruling State regards the armed revolutionary

people as a danger to its existence. The reactionary rulers would often rather have the motherland lost to the enemy than arm the people. As Engels once observed they will compromise with their cruellest enemy who has the same origin as theirs rather than ally themselves with the people. There have been instances when the feudal and bourgeois classes, still playing a progressive role in history and still animated by nationalism, proceeded to arm the people so that the latter could fight the aggressors alongside the standing army. But even in those cases the arming was limited.

Under the socialist regime, the situation is quite different. The exploiting classes have been overthrown, the system of exploitation of man by man abolished, the system of national and collective ownership built up, and the collective mastery of the labouring people established. The function of the socialist armed forces—the main instrument of violence of the State of dictatorship of the proletariat—is to suppress internal and external enemies, to defend the new regime, to defend the interests of the labouring people. It is this high political and moral identity in the new society, together with the ever developing material and technical forces of socialism, that constitutes the most solid basis for building up the new-type modern revolutionary armed forces and for bringing to new heights the combined combat strength of the revolutionary army and the armed masses. *The armed forces of the socialist State are the first ones in history to include workers and peasants who are really masters of their own destinies, having high political consciousness and ready to sacrifice everything for the socialist and communist ideal. They are invincible armed forces.*

II

OUR PEOPLE'S TRADITION AND EXPERIENCE IN BUILDING THE ARMED FORCES

The Marxist-Leninist thesis on the military organization of the proletariat is primarily based on the practice and experience of proletarian revolutions and national wars in Europe in the time of capitalism and imperialism, and also on the practice and experience of military struggle and the military organization of various classes and peoples through different ages.

When we study the history of struggle against foreign aggression and the history of military organization of our people, we notice salient features which differ from those of the military struggles and military organization of many European countries. What Engels wished for with regard to nation-wide insurrections and people's war and with regard to the arming of the masses in Europe in the 19th century had occurred rather frequently in our country many centuries before, even under feudalism. The original, vivid and rich practice and experience of our people have further demonstrated the genius of Marx, Engels and Lenin in working out the principles of nation-wide insurrection and people's war as well as that of the military organization of the proletariat and nations struggling for liberation.

Unlike many Western countries, where the formation of nations was generally related to the disintegration of feudalism and the appearance of capitalism, our nation was formed and developed from the struggles in ancient times against the aggression and rule of foreign feudalism. *Many national uprisings and national wars occurred continually in the course of the many centuries of our history.*

Viet Nam was one of the cradles of mankind. From the time when the Hung kings founded the State of Van Lang, through the two thousand years or so before our era, in the struggles against nature and against other tribes to survive and grow, the Viet tribes had gradually built up fairly solid bases from which the nation was to take shape : they lived for a long time over a definite area of land ; they had their own language ; they set up an economy and a socio-political system with a certain level of development ; they created their own cultural and moral traditions. And so our people developed a national feeling and consciousness, a sense of being masters in their own land, at a very early date, and their vitality was very strong. In the course of struggles against powerful aggressors, the Vietnamese people succeeded in preserving their native land ; they fought heroically and intelligently and worked with diligence and tenacity so as to survive and develop.

Ours is a rich and beautiful land, with vast natural resources, located in a strategic position in Southeast Asia, at the crossroads of important land and sea routes

from north to south and from east to west, like a starting base from the mainland to the ocean, a bridgehead from the ocean to the mainland. That is why powerful aggressive forces always coveted and tried to attack our country with a view to exploiting and enslaving our people and using our land as a springboard to expand their influence to other directions. So, all through their long history, our people have had continually to face wars of aggression and to wage wars to defend the Fatherland and preserve national independence, continually to rise up in insurrections and fight wars of liberation to win back national independence. National feeling and national consciousness, the sense of being masters in their own land, a resolute determination to struggle to safeguard and win back national independence have developed through those insurrections and wars. *Our people have gradually built and vigorously enriched a precious tradition : a tradition of heroic struggle against foreign aggression, for independence and freedom.*

Ours is a small country, without a large area or population. At the beginning of the Christian era, our people lived mainly in the present area of Bac Bo and Northern Trung Bo. The population was about one milion in the time of the Trung sisters ; later on, our territory was extended and our population increased. But the aggressors usually commanded much greater forces. In circumstances when they had to *oppose a small force to greater forces,* in order to preserve the native land, and to defeat cruel enemies, our people had to bring into full play the strength of the whole people, of the whole nation, and could not rely on the army alone.

All of our people's struggles against foreign aggression were just ones. Our people were always animated by an ardent patriotism, a high sense of national cohesion and sovereignty, a resolute and undaunted will to fight against overwhelming numbers. That is why *in the national insurrections and national wars of our history, as regards the military organization the force usually consisted of the armed people organized into insurgent units, or the national army and generally, there was a combination between the armed people and the national army and vice versa.* Our people soon built up and developed the tradition of "the whole nation joining forces"[1] against foreign aggression. That was the key to victory which the national hero Tran Quoc Tuan[2] set forth as a principle as early as the 13th century, basing himself on the combat experience of our people thousands of years before. This principle has evolved into the line of *"unity of the whole people"* in our own time. It was under the Tran that the saying "everyone a soldier" became common.[3] And since time immemorial, there has been the popular saying : "When the enemy comes to your house, even the women should fight." That is an impressive practice but also a very familiar one in our nation's life and struggles.

The participation of the masses in the national uprisings and wars in our country, the tradition of "the whole nation joining forces" and of the whole people fighting the enemy, enable us to affirm that national

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1. Tran Quan Tuan "Testament" : *Quoc Gia Tinh Luc.*

2. A general under the Tran dynasty.

3. *Kham Dinh Viet Su Thong Giam Cuong Muc,* (Texts and Comments on the Viet National History by Imperial Order), Book 6.

uprisings and wars in our history have long been *people's uprisings* and *people's wars*. Those people's uprisings and people's wars, *led mainly by the feudal* class, occurred fairly frequently and attained a fairly high level of development, although there were limitations with regard to the leading class and other historical conditions. A further question arises : what about class struggles within our nation and the military organization in such struggles ?

Like all class societies and ones divided by class antagonism, our Vietnamese society also evolved and developed through fierce class struggles within the nation, mainly between the feudal class and the peasants. *The army of the feudal State in our country was also an instrument of the feudal class to maintain its rule, with an internal function of repressing the people, primarily the peasants, and an external function of fighting the aggressors and waging aggressive wars against other countries.* When the class antagonism within the nation became acute, usually when no foreign aggression was occurring, the Vietnamese peasants, who had a fairly high sense of revolution and democracy, often rose up in fierce struggles, organizing their own armed forces and waging peasant insurrections and peasant wars against feudalism in the country. This is an important problem but it falls outside the scope of this essay.

However, when facing the peril of foreign aggression or under a continuous threat from aggressive forces in peace time, when the contradictions between our nation and foreign feudalist aggressors came to the fore, the various classes within our nation rallied together

and temporarily set aside their contradictions to concentrate the forces of the whole nation against foreign aggression, except for a few cases when the feudalists betrayed the nation and surrendered to the aggressors. National struggle, in the view of Marxism, is also a form of class struggle ; in our country, during those times, it was the struggle between the alliance of feudalists and peasants to defend the country on one side, and the foreign feudal class which committed aggression on the other side. The feudal class in our country, in the early stages of their rise, also possessed a national spirit. They took certain democratic measures to encourage the people to fight against foreign aggression. Tran Quoc Tuan had the idea of "sparing the people's forces" to create "deep roots and solid bases" for the regime, considering it "the best policy for the defence of the country". That is why the national movement in our country was not separated from the feudal class in their organizing and leading activities at the time when this class still played a positive role in our history, above all, it could not be separated from the strong forces of the peasants, who were ardent patriots and then made up the vast majority of our people. Therefore, when the feudal class became decadent and betrayed the nation, our peasants rose up against feudalism. They seized the banner of national independence as happened during the Tay Son movement led by Nguyen Hue. The Tay Son peasant movement became a national movement and brought our national uprising and war to a very high level of development, overthrowing the counntry's feudalists, defeating foreign aggression, achieving great victories.

The birth and development of our nation, the tradition of the whole country fighting the enemy and the whole people becoming soldiers as exemplified in the national uprisings and wars are obviously original features and great realities in our history. They have dominated many aspects of our nation's social activities. They have had a profound effect on the insurrections and wars, on *the military organization of our nation during past national uprisings and wars.*

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The struggles against foreign aggression and the military organization of our people *during the centuries before our era* are to some extent reflected in legends, mythology and historical documents.

It was not without reason that, during the time of the *Hung kings and the State of Van Lang,* besides the myth of Son Tinh – Thuy Tinh (The Mountain Genie and the River Genie) referring to our people's arduous struggle against natural forces, there was also the *legend of Thanh Giong* praising our forefathers' heroic fight against foreign invaders. *The Legend of Thanh Giong* crystallizes the typical features of our nation's tradition of fighting foreign aggression : its indomitable fighting spirit, the invincible strength of the people in arms, etc. Thanh Giong magically grew up when he heard the call for national salvation. He used both an iron staff and bamboos to fight the enemy and was followed by peasants holding hoes, fishermen with their lines and little buffalo-tenders with their sticks... This pure and symbolic legend was the picture of "the whole

nation fighting the enemy" and "the whole people in arms" in the remote past.

Also there were, in very early times, *armed people* who spontaneously rose up against foreign aggression. In the third century B.C, the Au Lac people and other Viet tribes fought for dozens of years against the Chin aggressors, chose the cleverest men as generals, conducted surprise attacks at night, killed hundreds of thousands of enemy troops and eventually won victory. This way of fighting and organizing forces was characteristic of the popular masses who, prompted by hatred of the enemy rose up to annihilate them. This reminds us of the valiant and mobile way of fighting with scattered formations used by the American insurgents in the war of independence against British colonialist rule in the 18th century which Engels praised. The people in arms, fighting spontaneously in such a way, were really" guerilla fighters" in the case of our people in antiquity.

In our history, the *organization of a national army* to fight foreign invaders also appeared at a very early time. King *An Duong Vuong's* army included ground troops and naval troops, the Co Loa Citadel was both a land base and a naval base. That army had a very effective weapon, the "multiple-arrow crossbow" which could discharge several arrows at a time, using the famous bronze arrowheads, made in great quantities, thousands of which have recently been unearthed in the Co Loa area. All that speaks for the early development of military organization in our country. The appearance of the "multiple-arrow crossbow" and bronze arrowheads marked a big step forward in military techniques

at the time. Was this the origin of the myth of "the magic crossbow" ? But even with such "magic crossbows" King An Duong Vuong met with disaster as he did not rely on the people and slackened vigilance. He was defeated by Trieu Da.

Then began the period of domination by foreign feudalists. *For ten long centuries, our people continually rose up in struggle to liberate the country and win back national independence.* It was a period when *national uprisings* succeeded each other in every century, and several of them turned into *wars of liberation.* It began with the uprising of the Trung Sisters which defeated the enemy over the whole country, followed by insurrections led respectively by Chu Dat, Luong Long, Lady Trieu, Ly Bi, Ly Tu Tien and Dinh Kien, Mai Thuc Loan, Phung Hung, Duong Thanh and crowned by the uprising of Khuc Thua Du and the victory of Ngo Quyen on the Bach Dang River, which put an end to foreign domination and won back independence for the nation.

Generally speaking, during that period of foreign rule, our nation could not, naturally, have its own army. The people's armed forces consisted mainly of *insurgent troops* built up during the uprisings and led by the *lac hau* (civilian chiefs,) *lac tuong* (military chiefs) and patriotic notables, the representatives of the feudal class of that time. Those troops had the character of armed forces of the insurgent people, and to some extent they were more or less like an army. The insurgent forces were sometimes limited and sometimes large, but included elements from

various social strata – patriotic people, lowlanders and highlanders, patriotic notables, tribal chiefs and mandarins, etc.

After the victory of the insurrections or when they turned into wars of liberation, the leaders tried to organize a *national army* of a certain level to conduct the wars.

The people's movements of struggle and insurgents' uprisings had an effect on Vietnamese soldiers in the pay of the foreign administration : many *mutinies* broke out. In the mutiny of 803, the Vietnamese commander Vuong Quy Quyen joined his men in rising up and chasing out the foreign mandarins.

Our people's national consciousness and patriotism in this period revealed itself clearly in the many uprisings, the most typical of which was that of the Trung Sisters at the beginning of our era. Its originality lay in the fact that the uprising in Me Linh led by the two Sisters met with "simultaneous response"[1] from the people and civilian and military chiefs throughout the 65 districts and towns. i.e. the whole country at that time. That "simultaneous response" by the whole country to the Trung Sisters' call for national salvation was indeed a rare event in history. It could be said to be a "concerted uprising", a people's insurrection, reflecting the marked national consciousness of the chiefs and people in the various tribes that formed the old Kingdom of Au Lac.

The insurrection led by the Trung Sisters was successful. Our national independence was restored.

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1. *Hau Han thu* (History of the Late Han).

The Sisters founded a court, organized a State and an army of the nation. Three years later, the aggressors invaded our country once again. The Sisters' young army was defeated by the enemy.

Ly Bi's insurrection in the milddle of the 6th century was carried out on a very large scale as it succeeded in "rallying valiant fighters from various districts" in a simultaneous uprising, and overthrew foreign rule within three months. Ly Bi's insurgent troops immediately seized the city of Long Bien and successively defeated the two counter-offensives by the Luong aggressive army.

After victory, the State of Van Xuan and the army of the independent State were established. In the subsequent national war of resistance, Ly Bi's troops were defeated. But Trieu Quang Phuc reorganized the forces, withdrew to the Da Trach base and advocated a "protracted fighting strategy"[1] resorting to small attacks, isolated engagements surprise assaults and night raids to wear out the enemy, then taking advantage of great disorders under the Luong dynasty, he launched a counter-offensive to defeat the aggressors and win back independence. The Van Xuan independent State lasted over half a century. That was a great victory of our people at that time. The idea of protracted fighting thus appeared. The tactics of small attacks, isolated engagements, surprise assaults and night raids developed to a new level.

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1. *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu* (Complete History of Dai Viet) : the early Ly period.

After the defeat of the State of Van Xuan, during the next three centuries, our people never ceased to rise up in arms and launched many insurrections. Then in the 10th century the struggles gained impetus. Relying on this movement and while the Tang dynasty was weakened by successive peasant revolts, the Tang governor was dismissed and killed and *Khuc Thua Du* rose up with the support of the people and proclaimed himself governor, winning back national sovereignty. During the subsequent twenty years, this sovereignty underwent hard trials and was successively lost and recovered. It was only in 938 that *Ngo Quyen's army*, with the Bach Dang River victory, defeated the Nam Han aggressors and our nation really won back independence. This naval battle, using war vessels and iron-tipped wooden piles and fought in a valiant and resourceful manner, shows the level of fighting and development of our national army at the time. The historian Le Van Huu wrote, in praise of Ngo Quyen's exploit, that Ngo Quyen had "used the newly founded army of our Viet nation to defeat hundreds of thousands of Luu Hoang Thao's troops" ; he "made use of clever tactics and clever fighting", "founded a State and proclaimed himself king", thus preventing the aggressors from invading our country once again.

The Bach Dang victory marked a great turning point in our history. That was the beginning of a *period when our nation, having won complete independence and having built up and developed an ever more prosperous feudal State, consolidated and preserved this independence for many centuries.* Through

various dynasties, the centralized feudal State worked out ever more perfected ways by which to build up and consolidate the administrative machinery at the central and various local levels, to step up economic construction and cultural development, to consolidate and strengthen national defence. Our people, under the leadership of the feudal class – which was playing a positive role in national development – waged various *wars for the defence of the Fatherland,* to preserve national independence. When the land was temporarily lost to the enemy, our people rose up in armed *insurrections* and waged *wars of liberation* to win back independence.

The development of the armed forces of our nation in this period was closely related to these wars and insurrections. It reflected the all-round development of an independent State set up on the basis of a feudal regime which was gradually being consolidated in every field.

A striking difference in the building of the armed forces of the feudal State in our country and many feudal States in Europe is the system of *"everyone a soldier"* instead of that of "mercenaries". The system of "arming the whole people" in Europe referred to by Engels appeared only during the first years of the French bourgeois revolution.

The system of "everyone a soldier" was set up and gradually completed through various dynasties.

In the Dinh-Le period, after putting down the "rebellion of the twelve su quan" (feudal warlords), the centralized feudal State just founded, began a system of census of the population to recruit soldiers. The armed

forces were organized in such a way that "men were called up when needed, (...) and were sent back to farm work after their service."[1] That is why, with a not very large force in active service as the core, the feudal State at that time was able to form ten army corps totalling about one million men under the command of General Le Hoan. That figure must represent all able-bodied men in the population at the time. It really was a form of arming the whole people, a rare fact in feudal times, but quite necessary for such a small nation as ours to fight foreign aggression.

The many-sided development of the independent feudal State under the Ly could be clearly seen through the system and policies regarding the organization of the armed forces. There was the policy of *ngu binh u nong* (placing the military in farming) i.e. military service was brought to the countryside, the farmers being soldiers, and soldiers doing both military duty and farm work. The Ly divided the male population into *hoang nam* from 18 to 20 years of age and *dai hoang nam* from 20 to 60 years of age, all of whom had to enlist and take turns in serving in the army and they were all called up when there was a war. That was what is now usually called military service.

Under the Tran, the organization of the armed forces was based on the system of mobilizing the forces of the whole people, the whole nation, according to Tran Quoc Tuan's idea of "the whole nation joining forces", embodied in the concept "everyone a soldier" at that

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1. Phan Huy Chu : *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi.* Rules and Regulations of Different Dynasties Classified by Categories) *Binh Che Chi* (Military System).

time. The historian Phan Huy Chu remarked : "The military was very strong at that epoch. As a rule, the troops were stationed in convenient places in peace time, and were eager to fight when a war broke out. So under the Tran all the people were soldiers ; therefore they defeated cruel enemies and strengthened the position of the nation." The very well-defined system of organizing the army under the Tran reflected the obvious growth and consolidation of the feudal system in our country through three centuries of peaceful construction.

On the basis of "everyone a soldier", with respect *to concrete forms of organization,* the feudal State built up various kinds of troops : *national troops under the royal court ; regional troops under noblemen and tribal chiefs ; village troops, militia or local troops in every village or locality*. The national troops were called "king's troops" under the Dinh and Le dynasties, "foot guards" or "royal guards" under the Ly and the Tran. They were in active service, like the standing forces in our time. As for those who were placed in the countryside, "sent back to farm work in peace time, called up all together according to the list in war time", they were called "outside troops", similar to the reserve forces nowadays. The *huong binh* (village troops), *tho binh* (local troops) were organized by the feudal authorities to ensure feudal order in the villages in peace time ;when there was a war, they fought with the people against the aggressors, thus forming the armed forces of the broad masses.

While, during the ten centuries of struggle for independence, our people's armed forces had consisted

mainly of insurgent troops with wide participation from the masses in time of insurrection, during the epoch of building and strengthening national independence, the role of the *army* came to the fore for national defence in the wars to defend the Fatherland. That was the regular army of the independent feudal State in our country, the organization of which was gradually perfected. The Ly army included foot soldiers, cavalry, elephant troops and naval troops ; they were equipped not only with spears, lances, bows and crossbows, etc. but also with stone-throwing catapults. The Tran troops were already armed with cannon of an early type. Our people paid great attention to equipping the army, they knew how to make effective weapons and war material on the basis of the level of development of the forces of production. They also paid great attention to supplying the troops with adequate foods, considering that "the soldiers' lives depend on their being properly fed". The men in active service were not very numerous but were well trained, and when a war broke out this force could be expanded very rapidly. Great attention was paid to training the troops too. Tran Quoc Tuan wrote *Binh Thu Yeu Luoc* (a handbook on military art) and *Van Kiep Tong Bi Truyen Thu* (dealing with military strategy and tactics) to help train officers and men.

The rules for military organization of the feudal state were described by the historian Phan Huy Chu in his book *Binh Che Chi* (monograph on army organization), part of his great work *Lich Trieu Hien Chuong Loai Chi* under the following headings 1) Military ranks ;

2) Recruiting methods ; 3) Rules for supplies and allowances to the troops ; 4) Methods of training ; 5) Prohibitions ; 6) Methods of examination ; 7) Rules of ceremony. This testifies to the fairly high degree of perfection of the military organization in our country in former times and to the vigilance of our forefathers who, after long years of peace, took great care to build up the armed forces, encourage the people to take military training and consolidate national defence so as to defend national independence. Naturally, the army of the feudal state did not have only the function of "defending the country", it also had the function of "suppressing rebellions", i.e. putting down the struggles of the people in the country.

As our nation had recovered independence and built a well-structured State, the patriotism and indomitable fighting spirit of our people rose to new heights.Whereas during the period of foreign rule, it was embodied in the determination to persevere in the fight to win back independence, in the period of independence, it manifested itself in the self-reliance in building the country, the resolute determination to fight to safeguard the territory and preserve the beautiful land that their forefathers had won back at the cost of great sacrifices and developed by their skill and by the sweat of their brows. Through this patriotism and high spirit of the whole nation, with the armed forces built on the basis of an ever more prosperous feudal system, and thanks to the military genius of our national heroes, our people were able to win some of their most brilliant victories in defence of the country during that period. Our country, though built up and strengthened in every

field, remained a small one. Relying on the system of "everyone a soldier", with small but very well-trained armies, our people gloriously defeated many of the largest, most powerful and most ferocious armies of aggression in that epoch, safeguarding the Fatherland's independence and freedom.

General *Le Hoan* defeated the Sung aggressive army in the battles of Chi Lang and Bach Dang.

Ly Thuong Kiet took the initiative in preemptive attacks on the enemy territory, destroying the important starting bases of the aggressors. During the subsequent war or resistance in the country, the enemy was intercepted both by the *big army* of the Court which fought several battles along the river Nhu Nguyet defence lines, destroying over half of the enemy forces, and by tens of thousands of troops in various regions including the *tho binh* and the *huong binh* (local and village guards) in the enemy rear, who attacked small detachments of the enemy's combat and transport troops in coordination with the main army. In the area of Lang Son, the Tay people commanded by Than Canh Phuc withdrew into the jungle and made very effective use of the tactics of surprise and night raids, etc. Thus appeared the *fighting coordination between the main army and the regional forces, which gave rise to the strategic conjuncture of attacking the enemy both in front and in its rear.* This form of fighting combination was really an original feature in the military art of a small nation fighting against a stronger aggressor. The Sung war of aggression was defeated. The Sung had to recognize our country as an independent kingdom.

During the three resistance wars against the Yuan (Mongol) invaders in the 13th century, it was thanks to the existence of the army and the local village guards, organized on the basis of the system of "everyone a soldier", that *Tran Quoc Tuan* could cleverly combine the tactics of concentrated and big battles by the regular army with that of small attacks on the spot by the local and village guards and the armed people from the beginning to the end of the wars. The *army* obviously had a very important, direct and decisive role. Many outstanding battles of annihilation were successfully conducted in Dong Bo Dau, Ham Tu, Chuong Duong, Van Kiep, Bach Dang etc. But the *armed people* were in great numbers and played a very important role too. The people in mountainous areas intercepted, pinned down, wore out and annihilated many enemy forces. The militia in the delta areas fought the enemy on the spot, with their own villages as base camps. From early times, our people had the experience of fighting in the villages, which might be said to be "fighting villages" such as we have now. The people also tried to hide their supplies, leaving "empty gardens and deserted houses" to the enemy, thus causing many difficulties to the enemy's food supply. The two words *Sat that* (Kill the Tartars) tattooed on the arms of officers and men expressed the very high determination to resist and the readiness to fight and to sacrifice themselves displayed by our people at that time. That really was a war of the entire people, of the whole nation. That was a true people's war in feudal times. The Mongol Yuan troops of aggression who had sown devastation over Asia and Europe, who had conquered and erased many states

from the map of the world, attacked Viet Nam three times but were three times ignominiously defeated by the Vietnamese people. The great victory of the resistance war in the Tran epoch led by the national hero Tran Quoc Tuan, which was due basically to the "whole nation joining forces" as Tran Quoc Tuan summed up the experience, spoke for the fairly high level of development of the military organization at the time and the great efficiency of the army and the armed people in the war to defend the Fatherland. This was a very glorious victory in a patriotic war waged on the basis of the feudal system, in the conditions of a country that had been built up and strengthened in every field and actively prepared in national defence during several centuries of peace.

By the middle of the 14th century, the Tran feudal group began to decline, and they intensified the oppression and exploitation of the people. Constant revolts of peasants and domestic serfs broke out during nearly half a century. Ho Quy Ly took advantage of that to usurp the throne and founded the Ho dynasty. The people were divided. The resistance organized by Ho Quy Ly against the Ming aggressors relied solely on the army, sophisticated weapons and fortresses and not on the people ; therefore it failed.

But the aggressors could not impose their rule on our people. Insurrections multiplied.

Le Loi began his uprising in Lam Son with some 2,000 insurgents. *The uprising developed into a war of liberation.* His force included both the *insurgent troops* and the *armed people* rising up at his call. As the uprising developed into a war of liberation, the insurgents

were organized into an *army*, and when victory was won this army numbered over two hundred thousand men, with an increasingly perfect organization as it was able to inherit and develop the experience of the previous Ly and Tran dynasties.

Nguyen Trai's celebrated line "raising the stick as banner, rallying the downtrodden from all parts"[1] reflected the broad mass character of the insurgent forces. The insurgent banner was a bamboo stick, the forces were made up of "farmhands and paupers". It might be said that these were made up of the large forces of labouring peasants in our country, who had fought without success against the Tran feudalists for nearly fifty years in the previous century, and who rallied around the national banner of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai. Moreover, the Lam Son uprising broke out in conditions different from those occurring during the ten centuries of foreign rule earlier. Our country lived under Ming rule for twenty years, but before that our people had built up an independent feudal State and consolidated and preserved its independence for nearly five centuries by successively defeating many wars of aggression by more powerful enemies. Therefore, though they met with difficulties in the early years when they had to withdraw more than once into the jungle and engaged only in small, isolated skirmishes to counter the enemy offensives, the insurgent forces developed very rapidly, especially after they had made a well-directed thrust by seizing Nghe An as a springboard and liberating Thanh Hoa, then Tan Binh and

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1. Nguyen Trai : *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* (Proclamation of Victory over the Ngo).

Thuan Hoa. The insurgent forces were followed everywhere by the people who rose up in support, giving them supplies, joining them, arming themselves to fight in coordination, besieging and annihilating the enemy, shattering the foreign administration in the districts and liberating large areas.

The Ming sent in reinforcements. However, with an *army* "of hundreds of thousands of men but of one mind", which was different from the Ho army "which numbered a million but of a million minds". Le Loi and Nguyen Trai and their outstanding generals conducted many great battles and won resounding victories in Tot Dong—Chuc Dong, Chi Lang—Xuong Giang, annihilating hundreds of thousands of enemy troops. The people in various regions rose up at their call. The insurgents were everywhere "followed by large crowds and offered wine along their way", they "won more successes as they fought on, they destroyed the enemy as they would rotten things or dead wood."[1] The people also took a direct part in fighting the enemy with various strategems. A woman innkeeper of the Luong family in the Co Long citadel devised a trick to kill the enemy and seize the citadel : she later received the title of "Builder of the Country" from Le Loi.

Nguyen Trai also conducted "attacks on the minds", i.e. propaganda work among the enemy, persuading and forcing the enemy to surrender in many cities : Nghe An, Dien Chau, Thi Cau, Dong Quan etc. One hundred thousand enemy troops surrendered and tens of

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1. Nguyen Trai : *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* (Proclamation of Victory over the Ngo).

thousands of locally recruited mercenaries crossed over to the people's side.

The victory of the resistance against the Ming was that of a people's war under the leadership of Le Loi and Nguyen Trai. But unlike the patriotic war under the Tran, this one was a national insurrection which developed into a war of liberation with *fighting by the insurgents who developed into an army, combined with widespread uprisings by the people*. "Once the insurgent banner war raised, people rose up like a beehive", and they had various ways of fighting, now "like thunder and lighting" now "like an ant hole undermining the dyke", destroying enemy forces and overthrowing foreign local authorities, liberating the whole country, winning back national independence. Without uprising by the people, it would not have been possible to overthrow foreign local authorities, to give the insurgents greater prestige and wider fields of operation. But without the insurgent troops which later developed into an army which could conduct big battles of annihilation, it would not have been possible to defeat the war of aggression and shatter the foreign administration. The combination of the national army and the armed people recorded a further development as compared with the national defence war under the Tran and was characterized by widespread uprising by the people.

After victory, Le Loi and Nguyen Trai speedily proceeded to rebuild the country, bringing the centralized feudal regime to a new stage of prosperity. The development of the military organization under the Le reflected this prosperity. Inheriting and develop-

ing the tradition of "everyone a soldier" and the Ly's and Tran's experience, the Le also organized royal troops at central level, regional troops in various districts and military areas, village guards and militia in every locality. Noblemen did not have their own troops. The army was reduced to about one hundred thousand men in active service, the rest being demobilized. There was also a system of registering for the purposes of recruitment and call-up in case of war. "The names were listed in civil registers, revised every three years so that there could be no mistakes. When necessary, soldiers and civilians were called up according to those registers and all the people became soldiers." That was also the experience in organizing the armed forces in peace time, in strengthening national defence in coordination with economic construction, preparing the country for a war to defend the fatherland in case of foreign aggression. Naturally, it was also aimed at consolidating the rule of the feudal State.

The feudal system in our country shifted from prosperity to a period of decadence in the 16th century. For several centuries the feudal troops were engaged in mutual destruction. The civil war between the Trinh and the Mac lasted for over half a century and was followed by another atrocious civil war of fifty years between the Trinh and the Nguyen, which led to the division of our country for over a century. The decadent feudalists intensified the oppression and exploitation of the peasants. For fear of popular uprisings, they ordered the seizure of firearms and restricted their manufacture by the people. They used their army to suppress the peasants' struggles mercilessly. A

succession of large-scale peasant uprisings and peasant wars broke out especially in the 18th century, and culminated in the *Tay Son insurrection* led by *Nguyen Hue.*

The Tay Son insurrection marked a further development of insurrection and war, of the *combination of the armed people and the army* in our country. It originated from the peasant movement which grew into a national movement and from the close combination of those two movements. While the decadent feudal class surrendered to the aggressors, the banner of national salvation was raised by the national hero Nguyen Hue, the outstanding leader of the peasant movement. Therefore, peasant insurrection and national war in those times had new and tremendous vigour in offensive.

At first, the insurgents' slogan "Take from the rich and give to the poor" encouraged the peasants and poor people to rise up. The insurrection spread far and wide, then developed into a peasant war to overthrow the feudal regime in the country and into a national war to defeat aggression by foreign feudalists.

The armed forces of the peasant insurrection developing into this national war were built up from the *insurgent forces,* then were gradually organized into an *army,* with the broad participation of the *peasants and other strata of the people.* This was a further development of the military organization of our nation as regards political objectives as well as in the size of its forces, the level of organization and military art. The first insurgent force in Tay Son was clearly an armed formation of the poor people : peasants,

artisans, etc., who equipped themselves with various weapons : bamboo staffs, lances, spears, swords and firearms. In the course of the insurrection, Nguyen Hue's troops were followed everywhere by peasants and other oppressed people who rose up in arms, joined the insurgents and smashed the power of the decadent feudal class. Nguyen Hue's prestige was very great. His troops grew up very quickly in numbers, and were gradually organized into the *Tay Son army*. It was *a peasant army* which later on became *a national army*. It had a high level of organization and equipment being made up of infantry, cavalry, elephant troops and naval troops and equipped with firearms and cannon of various calibers, with different kinds of war vessels the biggest of which could carry combat elephants, hundreds of troops and big guns. Nguyen Hue also made use of cannon mounted on boats or elephants as a kind of field artillery.

With its reliance on the insurrection of the people, mainly of the peasants and other strata of poor people, and its use of clever tactics and high mobility, the powerful Tay Son army commanded by Nguyen Hue recorded new feats of arms in our history.

After many famous battles — the storming of the Qui Nhon citadel, the seizure of Quang Ngai, the liberation of Phu Yen, the five successful attacks against the Gia Dinh citadel — the Tay Son overthrew the more than two hundred-year-old rule of the Nguyen feudal group. Then, with the resounding victory of Rach Gam — Xoai Mut, in which tens of thousands of Siamese troops were annihilated Nguyen Hue smashed this attack of aggression.

This was followed by lightning troop movements, during which the Tay Son seized the Phu Xuan citadel, marched to the river Gianh and, with the support of the spontaneous rising of the population, routed the Trinh troops there within ten days.

"The army at once sailed to the northern sea." [1] Nguyen Hue mounted a sudden attack on Vi Hoang, liberated Thang Long [2] and within less than one month, overthrew the rule of the Trinh feudal group which had lasted for almost three hundred years so laying the basis for national unification from Bac Ha to Gia Dinh.

The Le feudal group, trying to cling to their throne, invited in the Ching aggressors. Faced with the danger of foreign occupation, Nguyen Hue marched his army north. With a lightning troop movement, a fierce will to "win victory by a single battle", a firm determination to show the aggressors that "the heroic land of Viet Nam has its own masters", [3] the national hero "in coarse clothes and waving a red banner" Nguyen Hue — who had by then been made Emperor — managed to smash the 200,000 - strong Ching army, within only five days of the glorious Ngoc Hoi-Dong Da battle, thus shattering their scheme of aggression.

The Tay Son insurrection — a peasant movement developing into a national movement — based on a *widespread armed uprising by the people and a very powerful army*, overthrew three reactionary feudal groups in the country, smashed two foreign armies of aggression, completed the unification of the country

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1. Appeal of the Tay Son.
2. Old name for Hanoi.
3. Nguyen Hue : *Address to Officers and Men in Thanh Hoa.*

and safeguarded national independence. That was a glorious military exploit, a great success of our revolutionary peasants and our nation, unparalleled in the history of our nation and also rare in the history of peasant movements in other countries.

In the 19th century, our nation was faced with a very serious trial. The French imperialists began their aggression against our country. It was a new enemy, a Western capitalist power which had great economic and military potential, very different from the previous feudal aggressor. In the country, the feudal regime had declined long before, the feudal class had ceased playing the role of a progressive force in national history and its extremely reactionary policies had thrown Vietnamese society into utter disorder and decadence. The feudal State made constant use of its army to suppress peasant revolts, and its army became completely opposed to the people, thus losing any support from the people and the nation. Meanwhile the peasants rose up in arms and staged hundreds of insurrections, big and small, to oppose the severe rule and brutal repression by the feudal class.

Faced with aggression by the French imperialists, and the imminent danger of foreign occupation, the peasant masses rose up everywhere, but the Nguyen feudal group refused all reforms and continued to repress the people. Following the selfish interests of their class, they preferred to surrender to the aggressors rather than ally themselves with the people ; therefore our country was lost to the French imperialists. However, our people went on fighting in spite of the ignominious capitulation of the Nguyen rulers. Throughout the

nearly one hundred years of French rule, they continued to display the undaunted spirit of struggle of our nation and continuously rose up and organized *insurgent troops* to carry on various resistance movements, such as those of Truong Cong Dinh, Nguyen Trung Truc... in the South, of Phan Dinh Phung, Nguyen Thien Thuat, Hoang Hoa Tham, etc., in the North. Our people fought very bravely alongside the insurgents, others rose up to take the place of those who had fallen, but they could not achieve victory, because they lacked a correct line and a correct leadership adapted to the historical conditions of a new epoch. Only with the birth of the Vietnamese working class and our Party did our national history reach its great turning point.

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The history of insurrections and wars in our country, and that of the military organization of our nation have proved that our people have had a very glorious tradition of fighting against foreign aggression, a tradition of a small country closely united and joining its forces together to defeat much more powerful aggressors. Insurrections and national wars in our country have been people's insurrections and people's wars at a fairly high level of development.

To lead those insurrections and national wars to victory, as regards *military organization*, our people put into practice the motto "everyone a soldier", at a very early date, mobilizing the broad masses in various forms, the highest of which was the armed people fighting beside the army. Therefore, in *insurrections and*

national wars, except for a few instances when there were only either the armed people or the army, the *military organization of our nation was generally composed of the national army and the armed forces of the masses combined together, under various forms of* organization and at various levels of development, with varying positions and roles according to the specific historical conditions and contexts. Thanks to that, insurrections and national wars in our country were able to bring into full play the strength of the whole nation, of the whole people, creatively applying the traditional military art of opposing a small, less numerous force to a bigger, more numerous one ; of "using the small to fight the big", "using the weak to defeat the strong."

Obviously, *the combination of the armed people with the national army, and vice versa, has become a principle of military organization, and even of military art to achieve victory in national insurrections and national wars for the defence of the Fatherland as well as in the wars of liberation waged by our Vietnamese people in former times.*

The military organization primarily depends on the political system, the class nature of the State. It is constantly and closely linked with the character and aims of insurrections and wars. Thus, if the military organization of our nation was able to mobilize the broad masses and the whole people in the fight against the enemy, it was primarily because of the just character of those insurrections and national wars, their political aims being the recovery and defence of national independence.

In those insurrections and national wars, there was an identity of national interest and of objectives in the fight, between the insurgent troops organized by representatives of the feudal class or the army of the feudal State and the broad masses, although this identity was limited by the nature of the feudal class and historical conditions. That is why those insurgent forces and armies could rely on the ardent patriotism, national cohesion and the indomitable fighting spirit of the people. That is why the people actively joined the army, supported it and took a direct part in the fighting thus giving rise to the combination of the army and the armed people. The forces of *huong binh* and *tho binh* were also able to display their fighting strength. The armed forces of the people could sometimes be extended and closely combined with the national army in combat, thereby enhancing the strength of the whole country. The system of "everyone a soldier" enabled every patriotic citizen to take part in national salvation, to contribute to the cause of defending the Fatherland. The feudal class also promulgated certain forms of democracy to mobilize the people in the fight, as we have seen. The national heroes had progressive ideas in building up the army which reflected the just character of the insurrections and national wars. They taught their officers and men "to devote themselves to the nation", "to die gloriously rather than live in shame", "to unite like father and son", "to cherish solidarity rather than numbers", etc.

In cases when the feudal State made use of the army not to "defend the country", but to "suppress rebellions", that is to repress the people, or when, in face

of foreign aggression, the ruling feudal class placed its selfish interests above the national interests, using its army to oppose the peasant movement in the country instead of fighting the aggressors, the situation was quite different. This often happened when the feudal class was in decadence. The system of "everyone a soldier" was then abolished. The enlistment for the feudal army became a scourge. The antagonistic contradictions existing between the feudal class and the people become more acute. The people rose up against the feudal State and the reactionary army in various ways, including armed struggle, forming their own armed organizations to overthrow the feudal State and destroy its army.

The military organization built on the basis of the feudal system also depends on the material and technical conditions, on the level of the productive forces of that system. The development of technical equipment, from rudimentary bows to "multiple-arrow crossbows" and bronze-tipped arrows, to other weapons and catapults to cannon and then to large-size war vessels, cannon mounted on elephants, etc., has been one of the factors determining the specific forms of organization, methods of fighting and combat power of the armed forces of our nation in former times.

It should be stressed here that during the whole of this time, the aggressors, though more powerful, were still at the same feudal stage as our country. Therefore, though they had larger armies, their equipment and weapons were not necessarily more sophisticated and sometimes they were less so than ours. The problem that faced our nation and our military organization at

those times was how to oppose a small and less numerous force to a larger and more numerous one in conditions of usually equivalent equipment and weapons. Only in our time, when we have to fight the aggressive armies of imperialism, have we had to solve the problem of how to oppose a poorly-equipped armed force, built on the basis of a less developed economy than the enemy's, to aggressive armies that are not only numerically stronger but also better equipped with modern weapons.

The realities of insurrections and national wars in our country fought with the wide participation of the people have proved the correctness of historical materialism and proletarian military science on the role of the popular masses in history in general and in insurrections and wars in particular. They also have confirmed the brilliant Marxist — Leninist thesis on arming the masses and building up the army in insurrections and wars waged by revolutionary classes and oppressed peoples against the rule of exploiting classes and aggression by foreign powers.

If we compare this with the situation in European countries in the same historical periods, we can conclude that whereas the history of many wars in Europe in the Middle Ages was that of mutual massacre between various feudal groups, with mercenary troops, *the history of wars in our country in those times was primarily that of national insurrections and national wars, people's insurrections and people's wars.*

The tradition of "the whole nation joining forces" in the fight against foreign aggressors, the experience of people's insurrection and people's war, the experience

of military organization including both the national army and the armed forces of the people have been a very *valuable tradition and experience* of our people. They have also been quite original features rarely found in the military history of other nations.

When the Vietnamese working class emerged and our Party was born, in the light of Marxism — Leninism and our Party's political and military lines, this valuable tradition and experience was inherited and developed to new levels by our Party and people, in new historical conditions, in order to defeat the most brutal aggressors of our time.

III

THE CREATIVE WORK OF OUR PARTY AND PEOPLE IN ARMING THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES AND BUILDING UP THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

Since its birth, our Party has assumed the great historic mission of leading the national liberation movement in the new epoch and has ushered in the most glorious era in the history of our nation, *the era of independence, freedom and socialism.*

Over the last few thousand years, our people have waged many insurrections and national wars to win back and safeguard the independence of the country. And in the course of the past forty years, in the protracted struggle along the correct, independent, and creative lines of the Party, our people have again continuously waged heroic *nation-wide insurrections and people's wars* to win back and safeguard national independence and build up and defend the people's democratic system and socialism in our country.

Our people successfully carried out the general uprising in the August Revolution, overthrew the Franco-Japanese fascist rule and founded the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the first people's democratic State in Southeast Asia. Our people victoriously

waged the first sacred war of resistance, defeated the French colonialists' war of aggression, liberated half the country and took the North to socialsm. Our people have been successfully waging the second sacred war of resistance against US imperialism, the most glorious and greatest war against foreign aggression in our national history, in oder to liberate the South, defend the North, advance toward peaceful national reunification and contribute to the revolutionary cause of the peoples all over the world. Never in its history did our nation fight for such a long time, carrying out armed uprisings and revolutionary war during several decades as at this time. Neither did our nation ever before successively and successfully face such brutal aggressors as Japanese fascism, a powerful force in Asia, French colonialism, an old colonial power in Europe, and US imperialism, the leading imperialist power, the number one enemy of mankind.

Our people have displayed a heroic mettle, an iron-like determination and have won great victories. Those glorious victories are inseparable from the birth of the *Vietnamese working class,* the *leadership of our Party* and of *beloved and respected President Ho Chi Minh* and the historical conditions and contexts of *the new era* ushered in by the great Russian October Revolution.

In order to fulfil successfully the historic mission of defeating those brutal aggressors, for the sake of independence, freedom and socialism, our nation has *mobilized the force of the whole people* and, with superb heroism, carried out a just fight under the leadership of our Party. In conjunction with *organizing the political forces of the masses* and on the basis of this large

political army, our Party has successfully solved the problem of the *military organization* of the people, successfully built up the *people's armed forces.*

Our people's armed forces are one of the very important factors that determine the victory of revolutionary struggle in our country. Its development lies within that of an armed uprising and revolutionary war aimed at implementing the Party's lines. Therefore, the analysis of *new developments in armed uprisings and revolutionary war* in our country is just the basis for a clear understanding of the creativeness of our Party and our people in the building of the revolutionary armed forces.

Our Vietnamese people have already experienced in the past people's uprisings and people's wars led by the feudal class. They also experienced people's uprisings and people's wars growing out of peasant movements, a product of the combination of the peasant movement and the national movement.

Today, our nation has a *nation-wide uprising and people's war led by the working class,* a product of the combination of the great revolutionary trends in our country : the national liberation revolution and the socialist revolution.

Creatively applying Marxism—Leninism to the specific conditions of the revolutionary struggle in our country, inheriting and developing the national tradition of glorious struggle against foreign aggression, our Party and our people have brought armed uprising and revolutionary war to a new level of development, and have given it a *new content and a new quality,* as regards political aims, as regards the forces involved

and methods of struggle, and on account of its extremely great offensive power.

With regard to the *political aims* of uprising and war, the former uprisings and national wars in our history were aimed at winning back and preserving *national independence,* opposing the rule and aggressive wars of foreign feudalism and at the same time building, defending and developing the feudal system in the country. Through these uprisings and national wars, the peasants also won certain economic and political rights, but only within the framework of the feudal system, of the policy of "sparing the people's forces" advocated by the feudal class which was playing a positive role at the time.

The armed uprisings and revolutionary wars in our country in our time have other political aims. These are to overthrow the rule of imperialism, and its agents, defeat the aggressive war launched by imperialism, achieve *national independence, people's democracy and socialism* and build up, defend and develop the people's democratic and socialist system in our country. Those political aims are also the basic and immediate tasks of the Vietnamese revolution set forth by the Party. According to the Party's revolutionary line, the task of national liberation is closely linked with that of winning democratic rights, the road of national liberation is closely linked with that of socialist revolution, the revolutionary task of our country is closely linked with that of other countries in the world. Armed uprising and revolutionary war led by our Party are aimed at liberating the nation, bringing full independence to the Fatherland and also at class liberation,

bringing various rights and interest to the labouring people, primarily to the workers and peasants, while contributing to the revolutionary cause of the world people. These political aims of the uprising and wars are the very purpose of the fight, the source of strength of the revolutionary armed organization and of the people's armed forces.

With regard to the *forces* involved, the former uprisings and national wars in our history had the great strength of "the whole nation joining forces", thanks to our people's ardent patriotism and sense of national cohesion, and led by progressive feudal groups who promulgated certain forms of democracy to mobilize the people in the fight against aggression. Therefore, our nation was able to defeat many aggressors several times as strong. However, this strength of "the whole nation joining forces" still had some limitations due to historical conditions and the antagonism of class interests between the feudal class and the peasantry.

The armed uprisings and revolutionary wars in our country in our time have a new strength, that of the *unity of the whole people based on the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class.* It originates from the profound identity of interest between the working class and all labouring people and other strata of patriotic people, both in the task of winning back independence and freedom for the nation and in that of building the new social system. It is the strength of ardent patriotism combined with very high class consciousness, indomitable fighting spirit combined with creative intelligence of the broad masses of the people, primarily of the workers and peasants, in the

struggle for self-liberation, national liberation, class liberation to win and preserve national sovereignty, the right to be masters of their own destinies. This is the strength of the new social system, the people's democratic and socialist system, with its clear superiority in every field in comparison with any exploiting regime. The strength of the people's armed forces is based on the invincible force of the unity of the whole people with the worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the working class, and on the superiority of the new social system.

In the present fight, our people also enjoy the *assistance and support of the world revolution,* first of all of the brother countries in the socialist camp, whereas our forefathers in feudal times could only rely on their own forces. This international assistance has become a very important factor for the victory of armed uprisings and revolutionary war in our country and for creating the great strength of our nation.

With regard to *methods of struggle,* our people have mastered the Marxist-Leninist view on revolutionary violence, inherited and developed the experience of our nation in people's uprising and people's war in former times, and created new methods of struggle to win victory. Those varied methods of struggle reflect the law of revolutionary violence in our country, the offensiveness and attacking force of the revolutionary currents in our country within the common offensive position of the world revolution. They are the methods of struggle in uprising and war with the participation of the forces of *the whole people, the whole nation,*

the whole country, with both the political and armed forces, in both the rural and urban areas, with both the powerful people's army and the omnipresent armed forces of the masses, applying many forms of struggle on various fronts, primarily combining armed struggle with political struggle, thus creating the greatest possible aggregate strength to win victory. Those methods of struggle make up an original and creative mode of carrying out uprising and waging war, the original and creative military art of Vietnamese nation-wide uprising and people's war in the new times.

With its new content and new quality in regard to political aims as well as to the forces involved and methods of struggle, bringing into full play the strength of the four-thousand-year history of building and defending the country, the present day armed uprising and revolutionary war in our country are endowed with *completely new strength*. This strength has enabled our Party and our people to solve, successfully and brilliantly, a new and very important problem, which did not arise in our ancestors' struggles : *How a small nation, with a backward economy, can defeat aggressive wars waged by big imperialist powers, which not only have larger populations but also very developed economies, large economic and military potential, and armies that are numerically stronger and equipped with more modern weapons and technical materials.*

Both in the past and in the present epoch, our nation has had to oppose a smaller force to a larger one. Yet the situations are not the same. Aggressors in former

times were usually stronger than ourselves but were under the same feudal system ; they had larger armies, but their weapons and technology were not more sophisticated, and sometimes were less sophisticated than ours whereas present-day rulers and aggressors have been more powerful enemies for they are the big imperialist powers including the leading one, US imperialism. They wage unjust wars ; their social systems are reactionary ; but they have developed economies, modern industries, great economic and military potentials and their armies are many times as large and equipped with much more modern technical materials. Our country, in contrast, is small, our territory is not very vast, our population not very large. Our uprisings and wars are just ones ; after seizing power, our people have built up an advanced political regime, but the economy is still backward, an essentially agricultural one, and the material and technical basis is very limited. This is due to the thousand years of feudal stagnation plus the nearly one hundred years of French colonialist rule and exploitation ; then, since seizing power, our people have had to wage wars for several decades, without having much time for peaceful construction and economic development in the whole country. That is why, in spite of the considerable assistance from the brother countries in the socialist camp, our people's conditions are such that they have to rely mainly on their own economy to defeat aggressors who are much more powerful with regard to economic and military potential.

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In the process of leading the revolutionary struggle of our people, in order to successfully carry out armed uprisings and revolutionary war, our Party and President Ho Chi Minh have created, organized and trained the invincible and heroic *Viet Nam people's armed forces*. Closely linked to the development of nation-wide uprising and people's war the Viet Nam people's armed forces, the present military organization of our people, have undergone further development as regards their class nature, forms of organization, armament and equipment as well as their military art and combat power.

As regards the *class nature*, the former armed forces in our country involved in insurrections and national wars were mainly organized and led by the feudal class, and therefore had a feudal nature ; between the insurgent forces organized by representatives of the feudal class, the army of the feudal State, and the broad masses there was identity of national interests and combat purposes. That was the source of the great strength of the national armed forces in the victorious fights against the rule and aggression of foreign feudal groups. However, there was also opposition in class interests between the army of the feudal State and the broad masses in the country, for the army was the tool of the minority, i.e. the feudal class, to rule over and enslave the majority of the nation made up of peasants. Therefore, the identity of national interests and combat purposes in insurrections and national wars had certain limitations, which could not but affect the combat power of the national armies in those times.

Our people's present armed forces are *new-type armed forces, new-type military organizations,* organized and led by the Party of the working class, having a *working-class nature.* They are the people's military organization, primarily of the labouring people, above all the workers and peasants and of the various nationalities living on the Vietnamese land. Their combat aims are those revolutionary aims set forth by the Party. They are composed of cadres and fighters originating from the revolutionary classes, firstly and primarily from the workers and peasant masses. They are the tool of our Party and State — the people's democratic and socialist State — to carry out armed insurrection and revolutionary war under the leadership of our Party against the aggressors and their agents. Between the people's armed forces, the army of our State and the entire population, there is not only complete identity as regards national interests, and objectives in the uprisings and wars against foreign aggression, but also very high identity as regards class interests and combat purposes in the tasks of building the country, building and developing the new social system — the people's democratic and socialist system in our country.

This identity of objective between the armed forces and the people in both external and internal tasks, the consciousness of both national and class interests, patriotism, attachment to the new social system and proletarian internationalism are all at the root of the *very high fighting spirit, of the revolutionary heroism* of the people's armed forces. That is why the Viet Nam people's armed forces are really "faithful to the Party,

loyal to the people, ready to fight and to sacrifice themselves for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. They fulfil every task, overcome every difficulty and defeat every enemy."[1] The invincible strength of our people's armed forces has its primary source in the leadership of our Party, in the revolutionary nature of the armed forces, in the intimate relations between the army and the people. Therefore, the most fundamental guarantee for the strengthening of the combat power of our army lies in strengthening the Party leadership, building solid Party organizations and intensifying political work in the army, and building it up in every respect on the basis of political and ideological work.

With regard to the *forms of organization of the forces*, our Party has creatively applied the Marxist – Leninist thesis on the miliary organization of the proletariat and inherited and developed the national experience of the past in organizing the armed forces. On the basis of the political and social conditions and of the material and technical foundations, it has successfully realized the intensive and widespread *arming of the whole people, giving arms to the revolutionary masses*, while building *the people's army*, organizing *three kinds of troops* : the regular troops, the regional troops and the *militia and self-defence units*. Our Party also organized the *people's armed security forces*. The *people's armed forces* originate from the political forces of the masses, which were gradually turned into the armed forces of the masses and gradually organized into the

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1. President Ho Chi Minh.

people's army. The *armed forces of the masses* developed from small detachments of militia and self-defence groups into a large force, on a wide scale, with increasingly higher level of organization and better equipment. The *people's army* developed from the original platoons and companies into a powerful army, with an increasingly larger scale of organization and more modern technical equipment. At the beginning it consisted only of infantry but it soon became a regular, modern army made up of various arms and services. The armed forces of the masses and the people's army are constantly and closely combined on various occasions : in nation-wide insurrection, in people's war as well as in national defence, in the war of liberation as well as in the war to defend the Fatherland.

The most prominent feature here is the *very broad mass character* of the people's armed forces. Following the Party's line of "unity of the whole people" and relying on the strength of the whole people in the fight for the revolutionary goals, our people have played a larger part in the combat than they ever did at any previous period of our national history. This is a "leap" in the development of the "mass character" of the revolutionary military organization born in revolutionary struggles referred to by Engels. After our people won power and founded a new-type State, the people's democratic and socialist State led by the Party, the people's armed forces become an instrument of violence of our State to fight internal and external enemies, to defend the system, preserve the revolutionary power and safeguard the interests of the people. That is why

the people voluntarily take part in the fighting to defend the State and the regime and the State can arm the people on a large scale, and on this basis build up a powerful people's army. Just as the founders of the military science of the proletariat predicted, the liberation of the proletariat will also have an effect in the military field, and will produce new-type armed forces with greater mass participation than those produced by the bourgeois revolution.

Our Party always pays attention to the question of the *material and technical basis, the equipment and armament* of the armed forces. For men and weapons are the essential factors of the combat power of the armed forces, of which men constitute the most essential and decisive factor. Engels said that the revolutionary effect in military organization comes through the invention of better weapons and the changes in the soldier, in the forces of men taking part in the fighting. The people's armed forces are a *community of men* having revolutionary consciousness, high morale, conscious and strict discipline, grouped into appropriate *forms of organization,* making use of all *weapons and means* at their disposal, and having appropriate *methods of fighting* to defeat the enemy.

Through armed insurrections and revolutionary wars in our country, there has obviously been a qualitative change in the people's revolutionary consciousness which helps create *new men* in the Vietnamese nation, *Vietnamese fighters* in the new times. But on the other hand, great limitations remain with regard to material and technical means. A striking success of our Party lies

in the fact that it always keeps in view the dialectic relationship between men, equipment and armament and methods of fighting ; it can clearly see and analyse the mutual effects of those elements so as to build up the most appropriate military organization. In conditions of a backward economy, our Party knows how to rely on the revolutionary consciousness of the people, the revolutionary spirit of the fighters, the very high morale of the troops, the mass character of the armed forces, the varied methods of fighting, to make use of and bring into full play all weapons and means at its disposal – rudimentary or relatively modern ones at first, then gradually more modern ones – in face of enemies equipped with automatic rifles and tanks, having artillery, air force and navy. Thanks to their bravery, their intelligence and their creative way of fighting, the armed forces of our people have made use and increased the power and effectiveness of various kinds of weapons and means, from rudimentary arms and instruments like bamboo spikes, stone traps, sticks carrying poles, etc., to more or less modern ones, the products of the technological achievements in the 20th century such as artillery, tanks, aircraft, missiles, etc., in their fight against the enemy.

With an army which is numerically weaker than the enemy, but supported by the armed forces of the masses and the large political forces of the masses in combined fighting, our people have defeated aggressive armies several times as large. With weapons and war materials that are inferior both in quantity and modernity, our people have defeated aggressive armies equipped with much more modern weapons and war

materials. That is a remarkable achievement of the Viet Nam people's armed forces, of the heroic Vietnamese people. That is also a remarkable achievement of Viet Nam's military science.

However, we have always realized that an inferior material and technical basis is a very great deficiency which must be overcome. In the hands of the revolutionary armed forces, in the hands of cadres and fighters of the people's army, more modern weapons and equipment will greatly heighten the combat power of the people's armed forces.That is why,in the process of lead ing the heroic and long fight of our people, our Party always pays attention to improving the equipment of the armed forces, to *modernizing* the army. The way to solve the problem of equipping our armed forces is to rely on the masses, to fight with any weapons at one's disposal, to take arms from the enemy, to produce our own weapons when possible, while making most of the assistance of the brother countries in the socialist camp and gradually improving the equipment of our armed forces. Since our people seized power, our Party has relied on the new social system which has been gradually built up, on the developing economy in our country, and on the great international support for our country to renew the equipment of the people's armed forces on an ever larger scale and with more modern means. It might be said that the technical equipment of our armed forces reflects not only the economy and the level of development of the productive forces in our country but also to some extent, the economy and the level of development of the productive forces in the brother countries in the socialist camp. Therefore, the

technical equipment of our people's armed forces has been gradually modernized ; not only is the people's army further equipped with modern weapons and equipment, but the armed forces of the masses are also equipped with a number of relatively modern weapons adapted to their needs and means so as to heighten their combat power.

Our people's armed forces have undergone a process of development from a small and weak force to a large and strong one, during decades of fighting full of sacrifices, hardships and glorious exploits : from the Nghe Tinh Soviets to the general uprising in the August Revolution, from the anti-French resistance war to the years of peaceful construction in the North, through the fight against the air war of destruction and the present patriotic resistance war against US aggression in both zones of our country. In the long and fierce struggle of our people against the most cruel and strongest aggressors of our times, our Party has based itself on the revolutionary tasks of each period, and on the specific forms of struggle and fighting objective in those periods, and solved in a creative way the problem of arming the whole people, building the people's army and arming the revolutionary masses in accordance with specific historical conditions and context. Our people's armed forces have gained many valuable lessons of experience, at each stage of their development they have solved the key problems arising from the fight in order to build up and increase their forces, to develop continually, to defeat all enemies,

to perform glorious feats of arms and to fulfil all the tasks entrusted to them by the Party and the people.

Our Party affirmed its view on revolutionary violence upon its foundation in its Revolutionary Programme. It recognized that power must be seized through armed struggle and prescribed the way how revolutionary forces should be organized. In his *Summarized Party Political Programme* of February 1930, President Ho Chi Minh proposed the "organization of a worker-peasant army". Later on, *the Party Political Thesis* of October 1930 also clearly mentioned the "arming of workers and peasants", the "organization of a worker-peasant army" and of a "worker-peasant self-defence corps". Thus from the very first day our Party has advocated *the arming of the masses* and *building of an army*, at the same time pointing out the class character of the organization of revolutionary armed forces.

Very soon after the founding of our Party, the country was swept by a revolutionary tempest which culminated in the Nghe Tinh Soviets (1930 – 1931). For the first time in our country's history the worker and peasant masses under the leadership of the Party rose up and used revolutionary violence to overthrow the oppressive rule of colonialist, mandarins and local tyrants in a locality, and set up Soviet power, filling the colonialist and feudal rulers with dismay.

The Nghe Tinh Soviets lasted only a short time but their significance was very great. It may be said that this was a first step, and one which had a decisive influence on the whole development of our revolution. It affirmed the leadership of the working class of which

our Party was the vanguard, and showed its capacity for leadership. It demonstrated the might of the worker-peasant masses, of the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class. It pointed out the road of violent revolution and the way of using the masses' revolutionary violence to seize power. It was a general rehearsal by our people under the leadership of the Party, a forerunner of the successful general insurrection fifteen years later.

Our people's *armed forces* during the revolutionary period of the thirties were in the form of *self-defence organizations*. These were the *seeds of the extensive armed forces of the masses and* also of the *revolutionary army* later on. At the same time the self-defence organizations were workers' and peasants' organizations in the cities and the countryside, whose tasks and functions were indicated by their name : they were the masses' self-defence forces, with the task of protecting the masses during the various forms of struggle against the enemy.

The self-defence units played a great role. During the demonstrations and strikes by Phu Rieng rubber plantation workers in February 1930, the workers' self defence unit fought against enemy troops who were put to flight after a French sergeant had had his arm broken, and the demonstration went on as planned. The success of the meeting held at Nha Be late in 1930, followed by the strike of 700 to 800 workers was due to "the intervention of the Nha Be workers' self-defence unit who fractured the skull of a policeman and threw away his pistol, thus forcing him to free the

speaker who was able to finish his speech and continue the meeting till its end"[1]

In the Nghe Tinh Soviet movement, workers and peasants, armed with sticks, sickles, and pikes rose up to punish local tyrants, tear down offices of district chiefs and jails, lay siege to barracks and set up an administration... In many factories and villages, the best elements were selected from among members of workers' and peasants' associations, and the communist youth league to form worker-peasant self-defence units. The meeting of over twenty thousand people at Thanh Chuong (Nghe An) on September 18, 1930 to celebrate their victory was protected by more than 1,000 self-defence corps members.

Our Party fought against erroneous conceptions and mistaken actions as regards the organization of self-defence units. Some condemned organization of self-defence units as a rash act . In other places, temporary instead of permanent self-defence units were organized or, if permanent self-defence corps were organized, there was no political action among the masses or military training for them, etc.

About the arming of the masses, our Party pointed out, "When conditions are ripe, armed violence of the worker-peasant masses under the Party's command to seize power will necessarily break out" ; "if no preparation is promptly made to arm the masses, the revolution cannot succeed." "While giving military training to the masses and preparing to arm them, a vigorous

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1. Communique of the Party Central Committee of January 1931, Party Military Documents, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1969, p. 61

attack should be directed against the tendency to act rashly and concentrate on making rifles and handgrenades while neglecting daily political action among the labouring masses."

Regarding the forms of organization of the armed forces, the Party pointed out that "a worker-peasant self-defence corps is not like a guerilla force, neither is it a Red Army. While a Red Army or a guerilla force cannot be created immediately whenever we like, the self-defence corps can and must be organized without delay, however weak we are, as soon as there is any revolutionary agitation work carried out among the masses. No enterprise, no village with base organizations of the Party, Youth League and associations of the revolutionary masses should be allowed to remain without a self-defence force."

It is necessary to organize simultaneously permanent sefl-defence units and numerous self-defence forces of the masses.

About Party leadership and the class character of the self-defence corps, the Party pointed out : "The revolutionary worker-peasant self-defence force is to be put under the unified command of the Military Committee of the Communist Party Central Committee", "the revolutionary character of the self-defence corps should be carefully preserved". "The leadership of the Party in the permanent self-defence force must be maintained for this purpose, the most resolute party and youth league members should be brought into the self-defence force and put into the command of this force. The unit chiefs and Party representatives should

cooperate in the command. Daily action must be subjected to control by Party cadres of corresponding rank. General military activities must be subjected to the control of superior self-defence command levels and the corresponding Party Army Committee"[1]

It may be said that the above views were the *initial but fundamental thoughts of the Party regarding the building of our people's revolutionary armed forces.* These thoughts and the realities of the Nghe - Tinh Soviet movement prove that at an early stage our Party and our people were creatively applying Marxist-Leninist thought on revolutionary violence, the *arming of the revolutionary masses and the building of the worker-peasant Red Army* to the concrete conditions of our country.

During the years 1936 — 1939, in face of the danger from the German, Italian and Japanese fascists who were making active preparations to launch a world war, our Party changed the direction of the struggle, and decided to temporarily put aside the slogans "overthrow French imperialism" and "seize land from the landowners for distribution to the tillers." The *Indochina Democratic Front* was founded, directing its opposition to the reactionary colonialists and feudal clique of king and mandarins, demanding democratic freedoms and improvement of living conditions, struggling against the fascist aggressors and for the preservation of world peace. The Party also changed the forms of struggle, moving from underground

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1. *Party Military Documents 1930-1945*, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi 1969, p. 113-120

struggle to open struggle coordinated with underground activities, skilfully combining legal and semi-legal activities with illegal struggle. In this way, the Party succeeded in launching an unprecedentedly vigorous and widespread movement of struggle extending in both the towns and the countryside, enabling millions of people to be politically awakened, enhancing class consciousness among the worker-peasant masses and arousing the patriotism of the entire people. This was a rare situation in the conditions of a colonial country. Following the Nghe – Tinh Soviet movement of 1930 – 1931, the *building of political forces* and launching of a *political struggle movement* during the period of the Democratic Front of 1936 – 1939 was a further fundamental step in the preparation for our people's decisive struggle by political forces and armed forces, political struggle and armed struggle, during the next revolutionary period, *the period of preparation for an armed insurrection and the launching of a general insurrection to seize power.*

World War II broke out. While in Europe the French imperialists abjectly surrendered to the German fascists, and in Asia the French colonialists handed over Indochina to the Japanese militarists, the Vietnamese people heroically rose up and fought against both the Japanese and French fascists.

Three uprisings broke out at Bac Son, Nam ky, and Do Luong, heralding a new stage of struggle in our country.

In 1939, the 6th Congress and in 1940, the 7th session of the Party Central Committee judiciously

decided on a shift in strategic direction. National liberation was put forward as the foremost task and the slogan of agrarian revolution was temporarily put aside in order to concentrate on the struggle against the imperialists and their lackeys. In the spring of 1941, its 8th session, presided over by President Ho Chi Minh, completed the Party's strategic shift of direction in the new cirumstances. The Congress affirmed that the revolution in the immediate future should be a *national liberation revolution* and decided on the creation of the *Viet Minh Front* which would include patriotic associations from different sections of the population. It also decided to build up and develop *revolutionary armed forces,* to organize *self defence units,* small guerilla groups for national salvation and *permanent guerilla* detachments, to set up *revolutionary base areas,* to intensify activities in all fields, to move gradually from *political to armed struggle* and, while closely coordinating these forms of struggle, to actively prepare for *an armed uprising* to seize power.

The nation-wide revolutionary movement was in a state of ferment. The Viet Minh Front, the *political army* of the revolution, developed rapidly and very vigorously first of all in the countryside then, despite harsh repression by the French and Japanese fascists, in the towns. The *armed* forces of the masses backed by the political force of the masses also expanded rapidly especially after the Party Central Committee's appeal "to get weapons and drive out the common enemy".

A large number of permanent guerilla detachments were organized. The *Bac Son guerilla detachment*

created during the Bac Son uprising, was maintained and developed into a *National Salvation Army* by the end of 1940. With the creation of the Armed Propaganda Brigade for the Liberation of Viet Nam in December 1944, our Party line of *nation-wide war and arming of the entire people,* of building *the army,* and local *armed forces* was clearly set forth in President Ho Chi Minh's instructions : "Because our resistance war is the work of the entire people, the entire people must be mobilized and armed. And so, when we assemble our forces to create our first troops, we should maintain the regional armed forces so as to coordinate action with them and give them assistance in every field..."

On March 9, 1945, as foreseen by our Party, the French were overthrown by the Japanese. A vigorous patriotic movement against the Japanese fascists was growing throughout the country, the forerunner of the general uprising. The Vietnamese revolutionary tide reached a new height with partial uprisings and local guerilla wars in many places. The different armed forces were unified into the *Viet Nam Liberation Army.* The organizations of *ordinary self-defence forces* and *combat self-defence forces* were expanding. Then the *liberated zone* came into being, comprising the provinces of Viet Bac, which became the main revolutionary base for the whole country and was the seed of the future Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

Thus, from the Nam Ky guerillas, [1] from the National Salvation Army, from the Armed Propaganda Brigade for Liberation, the Ba To guerillas, etc., the *revolutionary*

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1. Created during the Nam Ky uprising of November 1940.

army was born while the armed forces of the masses continued to be simultaneously formed by patriotic associations. For the first time in our country, a *revolutionary armed force*, a *new-type army*, really one of the people, came into existence, organized and led by the Party.

The Second World War was drawing to a close. The German and Italian fascists had surrendered ; the Japanese fascists were approaching their end. On August 13, 1945, the 2nd National Congress of the Party, held at Tan Trao, decided on a general insurrection. The success of the insurrection on August 19, 1945 in the capital, Hanoi, had a decisive effect on the revolutionary situation in the whole country. The uprising spread rapidly to the towns and villages of all provinces from Bac Bo and Trung Bo to Nam Bo. The *general insurrection of August 1945* was a brilliant victory. The colonial rule which had lasted nearly one hundred years and the feudal rule of the past several thousand years collapsed within the space of some ten days. On September 2, 1945, in Hanoi, President Ho Chi Minh read *the Declaration of Independence* : the *Democratic Republic of Viet Nam came into existence*, opening up a new era in the history of the Vietnamese people.

The general insurrection of August 1945 was an *uprising of the entire people* under the leadership of the Party of the working class. Responding to the Party's appeal, our people rose up throughout the country, in the towns and the countryside, closely coordinating political and armed forces and seizing power by armed insurrection. "The August Revolution succeeded chiefly because the people's political forces had availed them-

selves of the most favourable occasion to stage an uprising and seize state power. But if, before that, our Party had not built up armed forces and created vast base areas to support the political forces and the movement of political struggle, and had failed to stage an **armed** uprising promptly when conditions were ripe, the revolution would not have been able to win victory as quickly as it did."[1]

The mighty *political army* of the revolution included millions of people throughout the country and, with its extensive armed forces, was the main force which had brought victory to the insurrection. In the action of the masses who took up arms to overthrow enemy power by a direct attack, it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the political and armed forces of the masses. It may be said that our people's *armed forces* during the August General Insurrection consisted of :

1. Units of the *Liberation Army ;*

2. *Self-defence forces* and a multitude of *small guerilla groups* which embraced hundreds of thousands of people from patriotic associations throughout the country. In addition there were the forces of the broad masses who, when the occasion arose, stood up with every available weapon – sticks, hatchets, hammers and sickles, pikes – to seize power.

In this earth-shaking offensive *of the entire people,* the armed forces of the masses took a great leap forward. Their number had grown, their morale

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1. "Political Report", Congress Documents, published by the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee, Hanoi, 1960, Vol. 1, pp. 145-146.

was high and they had a great offensive capacity. In these conditions our Liberation Army, though only a few thousand strong, enjoyed great prestige ; they had tremendous fighting capabilities, could easily demoralize the enemy, and provide a strong stimulus to the insurrectionary movement of the revolutionary masses.

The experience of the August Revolution shows that in the conditions of a colonial country, where every democratic freedom is denied and the smallest weapon forbidden, it is very difficult, in the early days, to create a large revolutionary army to defeat the well-organized, well-equipped army of the colonialist rulers. Therefore, once the political objective of the insurrection has been correctly determined, it is necessary, in order to bring the entire people's uprising to victory, to have a *strong political force, a powerful political army and on that base to build up extensive armed forces of the masses, and a revolutionary army of a certain level of organization.*

The masses' large political army and their extensive armed forces became the main forces which allowed the insurrection to be victorious. This was because the Party had been building up and training these forces continuously all through its leadership of the revolution, it had acted with foresight and known when to seize the opportunity for an insurrection. "The opportunity for dealing the decisive blow, for starting an insurrection... is the moment when the crisis has reached its peak, when the vanguard forces are ready to fight to the end ; when the reserve forces are ready to support the vanguard and when enemy ranks are ut-

terly dislocated."[1] In these circumstances, in face of the people's offensive power, the rulers have neither the will nor the capabilities to use their army to oppose the insurrection. To seize *the opportunity* is one of the key points in the art of staging an insurrection. In the August general insurrection, our Party had been able to foresee the opportunity for an uprising and had grasped it when it came ; it had made thorough preparations and launched the insurrection at the most favourable moment. It was when fascist Japan had surrendered and the Japanese troops in Indochina had lost all fighting spirit, when the Japanese militarists there no longer had the will to use their army to oppose the insurrection, that the masses' political army and their extensive armed forces rose up and, using their strength in a decisive manner, overthrew the enemy regime and seized power for the people.

However, without a revolutionary army of a certain level of organization to serve as a shock force to attack and annihilate part of the enemy army and enemy administration which were thus to be paralyzed or broken up wherever they opposed the insurrection, we could not have mobilized the masses for an uprising and created favourable conditions for bringing the uprising of the entire people to victory. During the August Revolution at the same time as the partial uprisings and local guerilla war to prepare for the general insurrection, many armed clashes broke out between the revolutionary army and the reactionary army. Even at

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1. J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism, Su That* Publishing House, Hanoi 1959, p. 88.

the time when the general uprising was breaking out, at the height of the masses' insurrectionary movement, many armed clashes between the revolutionary army and the reactionary army occurred in a number of localities. Therefore, the main force in an uprising is constituted by the political force of the armed masses ; but with the support of a revolutionary army, the insurrection movement of the masses receives effective assistance and encouragement and the uprising has more chance of succeeding. The use of a Liberation Army – though of small size – as a support was a good experience, a positive success, of the August Revolution.

To ensure success for the insurrection, it is also necessary to carry out propaganda work among enemy troops, to win them over to our cause, to paralyse and dislocate their ranks, demoralize them, and to reduce them to a passive, wavering mood, so as to prevent them from intervening against the masses' uprising, or to rally them to our own side. Lenin said : "Only when the worker-peasant masses and the best elements in the army (the enemy army — Author's note) coordinate their attacks, are favourable conditions created to stage a *successful insurrection*, that is to start an insurrection at the right moment."[1] *Propaganda work among enemy troops* is in agreement with the slogan of "worker-peasant-soldier alliance" ; it is of strategic significance in an insurrection.

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1. "Insurrection in the Army and the Navy." K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin, J. Stalin : *Military Essay*, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi 1964, p. 72.

In a war when two armies are fighting against each other the situation is different. Though it is still necessary to do agitation work among enemy troops, the main task is to annihilate, to defeat the enemy. "A real victory of an insurrection over the military, (i.e. the enemy army)... in street fighting, a victory as between two armies, is one of the rarest exceptions... But in all cases, the fight was won because the troops failed to respond, because the commanding officers lost the faculty to decide or because their hands were tied."[1] This work of agitation is mainly carried out by the masses' political forces and their armed forces, with some support from the revolutionary army. The fact is that in the August Revolution, the insurgent masses relied on their overwhelming strength and the propaganda and persuasion work among enemy troops which almost paralysed the Japanese troops and their Vietnamese mercenaries by reducing them to a passive attitude before the masses and discouraging them from opposing the uprising. In a number of localities, Vietnamese soldiers serving in the enemy ranks joined the revolution. Agitation work among enemy troops must always be carried out. However, if those in power still have the ability and the will to use their troops to oppose the insurrection we must resolutely push forward our revolutionary offensive, we must intensify armed struggle and enlarge and strengthen the revolutionary army in order to defeat the reactionary troops, develop the

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1. F. Engels : "Introduction" of "The Class Struggles in France", Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1958, pp. 130-131.

armed insurrection into a revolutionary war and win victory for the people.

To speak briefly, in the August Revolution our Party led our people to victory in the struggle to seize power in the whole country because of its correct political line and its correct line in the organization of forces, because it seized the right moment for an insurrection and mobilized the entire people, using the might of the masses' large political army and their extensive armed forces.

The August Revolution was the first victory of Marxism – Leninism in a colonial, semi-feudal country. It proves that in the *favourable international situation in our era, a small, oppressed and dominated people is quite capable of rising up and using the form of armed insurrection, to seize power and overthrow the regime of oppression and exploitation of the colonialist imperialists with their imposing administrative machine and their professional army equipped with modern weapons.*

Shortly after our people had seized control over the whole country, when the new regime had hardly consolidated its power, the French colonialists returned to launch an aggressive war against our country.

Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's appeal, "Rather sacrifice everything than lose national independence and be reduced to slavery", our entire people stood up as one man, valiantly fought a resistance war to annihilate the enemy, save the country, preserve national independence, safeguard the newly-established people's power. The insurrection of the entire people

in the August Revolution developed into a people's war, *a liberation war and at the same time a war to defend the Fatherland.*

The war of resistance against the French colonialists was a "protracted war launched on every front by the entire people relying on their own strength".[1]

The war broke out first in Nam Bo. The armed forces and people of Nam Bo, with unparallelled heroism, used rudimentary weapons such as sharpened sticks to fight against French colonialist troops equipped with heavy guns, tanks, planes, and supported by British and Japanese troops,

On December 19, 1946, the nation-wide resistance war broke out. Together with the population of towns and cities, our *people's armed forces,* poorly equipped and lacking experience but animated with a great spirit of sacrifice, waged an unequal but victorious fight to immobilize, decimate and annihilate the enemy.

The resistance war gradually shifted from the towns to the countryside. We tried to make vigorous attacks on the enemy, at the same time taking care to preserve our main force for a long resistance. Everywhere they went, the enemy met with strong opposition from *militiamen and guerillas.* With the population's assistance, they destroyed bridges and roads, harassed and decimated the enemy and evacuated the inhabitants from their homes at the enemy's approach.

Late in 1947, the French colonialists launched a large-scale attack against the Viet Bac region in an

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1. Party Central Committee's Directives on the Entire People's Participation in the Resistance War, December 22, 1946.

attempt to wipe out the main force and the leadership organs of the resistance, to destroy the resistance base of the whole country in order to end the war quickly. With major attacks by the main force and numerous minor attacks by regional troops, militiamen and guerillas all along the enemy lines, the armed forces and people of Viet Bac, acting in close coordination with the battlefronts throughout the country, had by and large defeated the French colonialists' offensive in the winter of 1947.

The war took a turn favourable to us. The enemy who had hoped to win a quick victory by rapid attacks now found themselves forced to wage a long war, so as to consolidate their rear on all three battlefronts in North, Central and South Viet Nam. They put into action schemes for sustaining the war by the war and using Vietnamese to fight against Vietnamese. On our part, we penetrated deep into the enemy's rear and waged vigorous and extensive *guerilla warfare.* By dispersing one part of the main force as *independent companies and battalion-size groups* we were able to give a strong impulse to *the militia and guerilla forces* and the *regional forces* in the enemy's rear. At the same time, we endeavoured to build up *mobile units,* and to push forward with mobile warfare. The people's armed forces with its *three categories of armed forces* had definitely taken shape.

The victory won in the battle for the frontier zone of autumn and winter 1950 was a mark of the great progress of the three categories of armed forces, especially the regular army. Organized on a larger scale, with improved equipment and armaments, our army

had, for the first time, launched a major offensive, annihilating an important part of the enemy's crack mobile forces, breaking up their frontier defence line and liberating a vast territory. The people's war had evolved from guerilla warfare into *conventional warfare*. With the founding of the People's Republic of China, our victory in the battle for the frontier zone had put an end to the imperialist encirclement of the Vietnamese revolution. Our communication lines with the socialist countries were open.

The *Second Party Congress* early in 1951 took many decisions on fundamental questions of the Vietnamese revolution and of the long drawn-out resistance. The Party's correct policies, which were applied following the Congress, and particularly its policy on agrarian reform, stimulated the labouring peasant masses to stand up with an enhanced revolutionary spirit so as to defeat the imperialists and the feudal clique. An added vigour was given to the mobilization of manpower and resources for the resistance and for the building of the armed forces. The people's war had gained a renewed force enabling it to completely defeat the French aggressors, even though these had received important aid from the US imperialists since 1950.

Large-scale offensives and counter-offensives were repeatedly launched by the regular army, especially in Bac Bo, the principal battlefront. Guerilla war was also intensified on all battlefronts. The population in many places in the enemy's rear, with the militia, guerilla and regional forces as its core, closely combined *political struggle* with *armed struggle* and staged *armed uprisings* to liquidate the puppet village administration,

wipe out enemy posts, set up people's power and so turn the enemy's rear into our front lines. Guerilla war went through a new stage of development, in close coordination with conventional war, especially in the major campaigns. While the revolutionary movement in the countryside was intensified, the movement of struggle in the urban areas continued to develop.

By the end of 1953 and the beginning of 1954, a great strategic counter-offensive was launched throughout the country, in several strategically important directions. *Both conventional war and guerilla war were intensified and waged in close coordination. Our army* and people won great victories on all battlefronts. At Dien Bien Phu especially, we annihilated an important part of the enemy's crack mobile force in Indochina. The resounding victory at Dien Bien Phu, a historic battle of decisive strategic importance, together with the victories won on other battlefronts, dealt a finishing blow to the enemy's will to continue their aggressive war. It changed the whole character of the war and brought the resistance war against French aggression to glorious victory.

The experience of the August Revolution and the resistance war against French aggression allow us to draw the following conclusions as regards the *forces* used in an insurrection and a revolutionary war. The principal force used in the August insurrection was the political army of the masses and their extensive armed forces, but in the people's war against French imperialist aggression, the principal force was the *people's armed forces based on the political forces of the great union of the people and coordinating its action with*

these political forces. This is because in general an insurrection is an uprising of the masses, while a war opposes two armies. Evidently, in a people's war there are also uprisings of the masses and in an insurrection of the entire people battles between the armies of the two sides also take place. In the resistance war against the French colonialists, our people skilfully combined armed forces with political forces. The political forces were the base of the *armed forces and the three categories of armed forces constituted the backbone of the resistance in a war by the entire people.* Our people skilfully combined armed struggle with political struggle, military operations with uprising, with *armed struggle as the essential form of struggle.*

During the years of resistance, our Party worked hard to build up the *people's armed forces.* On the basis of the people's political forces with the worker – peasant alliance as their foundation, under the leadership of the working class, our people's armed forces, created during the days of preparation for an armed insurrection to seize power, made a big leap forwards in the first years of the people's power, and were tempered and rapidly developed during the long resistance war. The Liberation Army became the *Viet Nam People's Army,* the regular army of our State. The *self-defence units and the militia and guerilla forces were* growing continuously. *The three categories of people's armed forces,* the main force, the regional forces and the militia and guerilla forces became increasingly strong.

The regular army is the essential force, it is the mobile force used on the important battlefronts over the

whole country. It has the task of annihilating the enemy's regular army, especially their strategic mobile force, dealing staggering blows at their armed forces, liberating territory, and uniting with the guerilla forces so as to change the situation of the war. These actions have a strategic importance as a means to smash the enemy's will to wage a war of aggression and win complete victory for the resistance. The regular forces and conventional warfare also created conditions for a vigorous development of guerilla warfare and stimulated the masses' political struggle and armed uprisings as well as the work of agitation among enemy troops and enemy administration.

In the resistance against French aggression, our main force grew from small units in the beginning to a strategic mobile force composed of battle-hardened mobile combat groups with continuously improving equipment, good training, high morale and great fighting power, capable of annihilating several enemy battalions or regiments in a battle. Our mobile combat groups which engaged the enemy for the first time in the frontier campaign (1950) and then in other major campaigns such as Hoa Binh, Tay Bac, etc., acting in close coordination with the regional armed forces and the three categories of armed forces, proved to be extremely effective, and greatly contributed to the progress of the resistance war. The Dien Bien Phu battle showed the very advanced stage of development reached by our strategic mobile forces in the resistance war against French aggression. While our army and people were winning great victories in many aspects, our crack mobile combat groups on the Dien Bien Phu battlefront,

reinforced by technical units and with the strong support of the entire people, wiped out the biggest enemy stronghold in Indochina.

The regional forces built up in accordance with concrete conditions and concrete tasks on each battlefront, in each region, constitute the backbone of the *armed struggle in the regions*. Organized into strong units, the regional forces operate inside the region, now concentrating their forces, now scattering, acting in close coordination with the militia and guerilla units and the main force to annihilate the enemy and sustain and develop guerilla war, and coordinating action with the masses' movements of political struggle and insurrection to foil enemy attempts to pen up the population and pressgang the youth. They protect the people and safeguard the people's power, preserving manpower and resources to serve the resistance.

From the armed propaganda groups, independent companies and battalion-size groups of the first years of the resistance the regional forces in provinces and districts had shown a steady development. Their equipment and armaments were continuously improving, chiefly by means of captured enemy weapons.

The regional forces had annihilated many enemy platoons and companies, taken many enemy posts and, in the last phase of the resistance war, they were even wiping out whole enemy battalions.

Militia and guerilla forces are the extensive armed forces of the people. They coordinated with the regional forces to wage *guerilla war* and cooperated with the masses' political forces in operations to liquidate the puppet village administrations and traitors and organize *uprisings* to seize local power. The militiamen and

guerillas did not leave production work, they made use of all kinds of weapons, and varied forms of combat to launch well-timed attacks against the enemy troops in their localities, decimating or annihilating the enemy in the villages and the streets wherever and whenever they showed themselves, and even in their supposedly safe rear. The local militia and guerilla forces are also bases for building the people's army and developing regular warfare.

During the resistance against French aggression the militia and guerilla forces greatly increased in number and improved their fighting capabilities. Based in the increasingly numerous combat villages, skilfully using rudimentary weapons which were gradually improved, they annihilated many enemy sections and platoons and by the end of the resistance war, whole companies in some places. In cooperation with the regional troops, they became more and more effective. They built up, maintained and expanded guerilla zones and guerilla bases. They defended the liberated zone, defeated enemy sweeps and attempts to seize territory and intensified the people's war in the regions. The militia and guerilla forces and the regional forces played a very important role during the long resistance war, especially in crucial periods such as 1948—1949, when the Party decided to launch a guerilla war in the enemy rear, and later behind the enemy line during the campaigns of Hoa Binh, Dien Bien Phu, etc.

The development of the people's armed forces into three categories of forces, the *regular forces and regional forces* forming the *people's army*, the *militia* and *guerilla forces* being the *armed forces of the mas-*

ses, show that our military organization during the people's war against French colonialist aggression was an organization of the entire people.

In that war, the organizational relations between the regular forces, regional forces and militia and guerilla forces during the development of the revolutionary armed forces, as well as the coordination between the three categories of forces, that is between the people's army and the armed forces of the masses, are linked with the process of the development of the resistance from a guerilla war to a regular war, and the close coordination between the two in order to defeat the enemy.

The experience of the resistance war against French aggression shows that the *coordination between the regular forces, the regional forces and the militia and guerilla forces, between regular war and guerilla war* is an outstanding feature of a people's war making it possible to mobilize the entire people against the enemy, and to use the added power of fighting a just war, the liberation war, on one's own territory. It prevented a professional army with a large number of troops and modern equipment from waging a classical war and making the most of its strength and capabilities. The aggressors had to deal not only with the revolutionary army but also with an entire people who had risen up to join their revolutionary armed forces in a resolute resistance in all fields. The aggressor troops were submerged in the ocean of the people's war. They faced a war without front line and without rear, with a battlefront which was nowhere and everywhere. The inherent contraditions of all aggressive wars, between

dispersal and concentration, occupation and mobility, further deepened. The large aggressive army, well-equipped with modern arms, became ineffective. Not only were they unable to destroy the people's armed forces, but in addition they were increasingly decimated and were finally defeated by the three categories of the people's armed forces supported by the entire people.

Thus, with a people's army numerically inferior to that of the enemy but supported by the masses' extensive armed forces, our people waged an *all-embracing resistance war by the entire people*, with a close coordination between guerilla war and regular war, and defeated the French colonialist army, nearly half a million strong and equipped with the most modern means of warfare.

This was the first victory for a national liberation war in a colonial country. It proves that in our era, *a small nation with no vast territory and no large population and no developed economy, is quite capable of waging a revolutionary war to defeat an old-type colonialist war of aggression.*

Following the great victory of the resistance war against French aggression, the North was entirely liberated, with the complete structure of an independent State and moved to *the stage of socialist revolution and socialist construction in conditions of peace.* Meanwhile our people were continuing their efforts to complete the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country, as the South still remained under the rule of the US imperialists and their agents.

After completing agrarian reform and the restoration of national economy, our people in the North began

socialist transformation and socialist construction, carrying out the most profound and thorough revolution in our history. With agrarian reform essentially complete, the exploitation of man by man was fundamentally eliminated, new relations of production were established and the socialist ownership of the means of production was achieved. The material and technical bases of socialism were gradually built up. In the North, our people's political and moral unity was stronger than ever. Patriotism, the love of socialism, and the new socialist man's consciousness of being collective master, were continuously enhanced. In their construction work and their combat, our people enjoyed increasing aid from fraternal countries in the socialist camp.

The new progress of the people's armed forces is related to the development of society in the North in the historical conditions described above. They are *the military organization for national defence of the entire people of an independent state engaged in socialist construction in conditions of peace.* Their function is to serve as the tool of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat to defend the socialist North and to work toward revolution in the whole country, ready to foil all the schemes of US imperialism.

To build up the army, to consolidate national defence in conditions of peace and under a socialist regime, was a new experience for our Party and our people. In the past, our people had for many centuries, gained experience in building an army and consolidating national defence in peace time in an independent country, but that was under a feudal regime. Since our Party came into being, our people have been fighting

continuously for several decades. We have gained most precious experience in building armed forces to stage an insurrection and seize power, in the conditions of a country still under colonial and feudal rule and afterwards in waging a long liberation war, in the conditions of an increasingly consolidated people's democratic regime.

At present, our Party and people have successfully solved a new problem.

In conditions of peace, our people's foremost task is to concentrate on building up the country and building a socialist economy. That is why a most fundamental question in building the army and consolidating national defence in this period is to find a *correct solution to the question of relations between the economy and national defence.* Only with a strong economy can we have a strong national defence. Conversely, only with a strong national defence can we protect our people's peaceful labour, build up the country and ensure the security of the Fatherland. The relations between the economy and national defence must be established in accordance with the situation of a temporarily divided country, the South still being subjected to foreign aggression and the North having to be rapidly built up into a strong base for revolution in the whole country, in the conditions of a small country which must be ready to fight against US imperialism, a powerful aggressor, and to win victory. Therefore, while building the economy, we have to take into consideration the needs of national defence, with regard not only to the direction and tasks of the general economic plan, and the division into major economic regions,.. but

also to the different branches – industry, agriculture, communications and transport and cultural and social activities.

At the same time, we have to prepare, in the organizational field, to move from a peace-time economy to a war-time economy

With respect to the building of the army and the consolidation of national defence, our Party holds firmly to the idea of a *people's war and national defence by the entire people.* It has *armed the entire people in the new conditions,* at the same time *building up a powerful people's army* and *arming the revolutionary masses,* strengthening the *three categories of people's armed forces,* in keeping with the new situation and new tasks. With the extensive armed forces of the entire people whose members continue their production work, and a well-trained army with a strong combative spirit, we can have a strong national defence force at the same time as keeping sufficient manpower for production work, building and developing the economy. This is the only correct national defence policy for a small country like ours, which in peace-time must strive to develop the economy and in time of war must wage a victorious opposition to strong imperialist enemies.

We must have a thorough grasp of the necessity of closely coordinating the economy with national defence in the present situation, when peace has been restored in the North but our country is still partitioned and the aggressors remain in South Viet Nam. This thorough grasp is indicative of the high vigilance of our people who are well aware that they have to

safeguard the independence and sovereignty of the socialist North, to be ready, even in peace time, to smash all enemy schemes, and at the same time, to be fully prepared and determined to liberate the country.

In accordance with this policy, our Party decided on the *building up of a powerful people's army which should develop into a regular, modern army, the organization of extensive militia and self-defence forces, and the building up of strong reserve forces.*

A number of men were demobilized to take part in production in the rear ; meanwhile we have been working to consolidate a *standing army of adequate size and high morale.* Many army units combine military preparedness with the task of taking part in building the economy. In place of voluntary recruitment, our State has instituted *compulsory military service* — the duty of every citizen to defend the Fatherland — so as to build a powerful *reserve force.* Soldiers who have been demobilized or transferred to civilian service are registered and classified, according to their qualifications, as reserve officers or soldiers. We have reorganized and consolidated the *militia and self-defence forces,* speeded up the organization of combat communes, villages and town districts, and strengthened the maintenance of security and order. Our young men are given basic military training, and sports and physical education with a bearing on national defence are encouraged. *The people's armed security force* is being organized.

Regarding the strengthening of the people's armed forces in the North and the role of the people's army, the Resolution of the *Third Party Congress in 1960*

specified : *"The people's army* is the State's main force to safeguard national independence and protect the peaceful labour of the people in the North, and it also provides a strong support to the struggle for reunifying the country. We have to further consolidate national defence, make the standing army into a regular, modern army, consolidate the people's armed police forces and at the same time consolidate and develop the militia and self-defence forces and build up reserve forces."[1]

On the basis of the achievements of the socialist revolution and socialist construction in every field, the people's armed forces in the North were rapidly developed.

The formation of a *modern regular people's army* marks a new progress for the people's armed forces in this period. Our army, the revolutionary army of a socialist state, has become a modern army with several services and arms, with an army, air force and navy ; the army includes infantry, artillery, armour engineering corps, signal corps, anti-chemical units, transport corps... Regulations have been laid down concerning the organization of the various services ; the troops' fighting spirit and discipline have been heightened. The *regular army* is thus organized into powerful army corps with increasingly modern armaments and equipment, growing mobility, better and better coordination between different services and great fighting power. The *regional troops,* consolidated and better equipped, are raising their fighting capacity. Supported

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1.. Congress Documents published by the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee, Hanoi 1960, Vol. I, p. 190.

by the people's patriotism and love of socialism, with the institution of military service, the powerful reserve forces and the extensive militia and self-defence forces, the people's army has a vast source of manpower and can rapidly expand its forces.

The militia and self-defence forces also developed vigorously following the establishment of new relations of production in the countryside and the towns. They are the *armed forces of the masses* in the conditions of socialism extensively organized among the labouring people. The *militia and guerilla forces* are the armed organizations of the collectivized peasants. The *self-defence and combat self-defence forces* are the armed forces of the workers in factories, enterprises, mines, construction sites, State farms, of cadres and workers, employed in government organs and of the labouring people in the towns. The members of militia and self-defence organizations and of reserve forces have a high political consciousness and a relatively advanced cultural level. They are well organized and well trained, armed with different kinds of weapons including modern ones, and have developed suitable methods of fighting. Thus, they have great capabilities for fighting in their own localities or reinforcing the permanent forces.

In 1965, when the "special war" was threatened with total failure in South Viet Nam, the US imperialists brazenly used their air force to attack the North and sent an expeditionary corps to invade the South. So began the fight of our people in the North against the US imperialists' war of destruction. This was part of the nation-wide resistance war against US aggression,

and at the same time it was a war to defend the socialist Fatherland against the enemy air force.

In the war of destruction against the northern part of our country, the US aggressors have mobilized an important part of their modern air force and navy. They have dropped on the North millions of tons of bombs, committing unpardonable crimes against our people. In a continuous escalation of the war, they attacked different regions and then the capital itself, the heart of the whole country. The US aggressors imagined they could subdue our people with their great military power.

They were grossly mistaken. The Vietnamese people, with their tradition of heroic struggle against foreign aggressors, have never submitted to any invader. Our army and people in the socialist North, responding to the call of President Ho Chi Minh that "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom", resolutely rose up and waged a *land-against-air people's war.*

That was for us an entirely new form of people's war. *The whole people fight against the enemy air force and navy, the whole people carry out defence and participate in efforts to maintain communication and transport, they are working and fighting at the same time, protecting the rear and serving the front.* That was a new development of the people's war in our country. In the anti-French resistance, we fought a people's war in the conditions of a newly-established people's democratic regime, when people's power had just been conquered but not yet consolidated, and our country was surrounded by the imperialists. In the present time, we are

waging a people's war in the conditions of a newly-established socialist regime, when our completely independent state has been consolidated and developed through ten years of peace, and is receiving important aid from fraternal countries of the socialist camp. During the resistance against French aggression, when we had to fight chiefly against the enemy land forces, our entire people participated in the war and we defeated the French imperialist army of aggression equipped with more modern weapons. In the present time, our entire people are fighting chiefly against the enemy air force, and we have to deal with one of the most modern arms of the US imperialist armed forces.

Our Party decided to *mobilize the forces of the entire people and to move the country into a state of war so as to intensify the people's war*. We rapidly expanded *the people's armed forces* to meet the urgent requirements of the resistance. We *changed the direction of the economy*, dispersing national industry and developing regional industry. We evacuated the inhabitants from populated areas and priority target areas of enemy attacks and we *coordinated fighting with production*, increasing production even while we were waging war. Our Party pointed out that, whatever the circumstance, *we must continue to lead the North toward socialism*, in order to strengthen the resistance in all spheres, allow the North to play its part in the nation-wide revolution, and at the same time, prepare for the long-term building of the country. The three revolutions were pushed forward. Socialist relations of production were increasingly consolidated ; the people's political and moral unity was continuously enhanced ; the mate-

rial and technical base of socialism was gradually strengthened. Our Party and people have striven to make good use of the superiority of the socialist regime in all aspects, so as to fulfil all the tasks of the people's war against the US war of destruction.

The development of the forces of the entire people at war, of the *military organization,* of the role of the people's army and of the masses' armed forces during this period was related to the characteristics of land-against-air people's war in the conditions of the socialist regime, to the characteristic of the resistance war against US aggression for national salvation carried out by our entire people throughout the land.

In the first place, there has been an outstanding development, in a short time, of the *people's army air defence forces and air force,* the anti-aircraft units in the regular army and regional forces. This force was the backbone of the land-against-air people's war supported by the extensive militia and self-defence forces. Our air defence force and air force equipped with anti-aircraft guns of various calibers, modern missiles, jet planes and many modern technical means, form mobile and fixed units to shoot down enemy aircraft and to protect the chief targets of enemy attacks. Many major battles were fought by mixed combat groups including several branches of our air-defence service and our air force, with the support of infantry troops belonging to the regular army, the regional forces, and the population to defend important points of communication lines, industrial centres and big cities. Our young air-defence force and air force have won great victories. That was a new form of regular warfare by our army in the "land-against-air" people's war.

While our air-defence force was maturing rapidly, our *military transport force* was also passing through a vigorous development. The army transport force included several modern branches : transport, engineering, air defence, infantry... Subjected to violent attacks by enemy planes, the military transport force, together with the people's communication and transport forces, have fought with great heroism and intelligence to maintain communications in all circumstances, fulfilling their duties on communication lines throughout the country, from the rear to the front.

The *regular army corps,* with several technical branches, have made marked progress in building up a modernized force with greater fighting power, ready to fight against the enemy anywhere and to smash all enemy military ventures. The *regional forces* have shown a rapid expansion, and improved their organization, equipment and fighting capabilities. Many provinces have their own anti-aircraft units which have shot down many enemy planes, land-based batteries which have sunk enemy warships and engineering units which greatly contributed to maintaining communication and transport lines.

With the people's patriotism and love of socialism, with the newly-established system of military service, we have satisfactorily carried out *war-time mobilization,* rapidly expanding the people's armed forces on the basis of the large reserve forces set up in peace time. Responding to the sacred call of the Fatherland, in order to defend the socialist North and fulfil their duty toward the nation's holy resistance war, the flower of our youth, in large numbers from the countryside

to the towns, from cooperatives and enterprises, government organs, schools... have left for the front, to serve in army units or shock youth groups ; they have been fighting valiantly, working with self-sacrifice on every battlefront and accomplishing brilliant military exploits.

Organized and well prepared in peace time, the *masses' armed forces* developed very rapidly in war time both quantatively and qualitatively. Their equipment was markedly increased and improved. In many communes firepower teams and groups have been organized by the militia force, equipped with rifles, machine-guns, small-caliber anti-aircraft guns, ground artillery... there were also specialized teams and groups for engineering, reconnaissance, first aid... In many places, there are mobile forces, each operating on the area of a commune. In many factories and enterprises strong self-defence forces organized in a rational manner engage in production work and fighting at the same time, making effective use of a number of modern weapons.

The militia and self-defence forces played a great role during the war. In the "plough in one hand rifle in the other", "hammer in one hand and rifle in the other" movements, young and old people, men and women in the countryside and the towns, from the plains to the mountain regions, actively participated in shooting down enemy planes. They formed a low-altitude anti-aircraft fire network which covered the whole country and protected the population and production ; they also closely cooperated with the air defence force and the air force in forming a fire network for different altitudes and directions, one which was mobile and

able to fight in different conditions, covering large areas but concentrating on the defence of a number of objectives to shoot down US planes flying at different altitudes, over all areas, in all circumstances. Using infantry weapons, militiamen and guerillas have shot down many modern US jet planes and captured a large number of pilots. The shooting at enemy planes flying at low altitude was clearly a new form of guerilla warfare in the land-against-air people's war. Militiamen and guerillas have also captured or annihiliated many enemy commando groups and defused tens of thousands of tons of US bombs and mines, of the latest types. In the context of a socialist regime the masses' armed forces have greatly increased their fighting capabilities.

It may be said that the very fact that militiamen and guerillas using machine guns and rifles have brought down modern US jet planes over North Viet Nam also explains why a small, underdeveloped country whose army is not so well equipped has been able to defeat the aggression of a big imperialist power with a large army equipped with modern weapons.

The militia and self-defence forces took part not only in the fighting but also in other tasks on other fronts of the people's war ; ensuring communications and transport ; organizing people's air defence ; maintaining law and order, together with the people's armed police ; building combat communes and villages, protecting local production and the population's lives and properties ; playing a crucial role in production etc., so contributing a very important part to the defeating of all enemy schemes in the war of destruction.

The people's armed police force created in peace time rapidly developed and played an important role during the war. With increasing vigilance, it has fulfilled its tasks of guarding the provisional military demarcation line, the frontier and islands, maintaining order and security, fighting valiantly and working with self-sacrifice, bringing down enemy planes, capturing pilots, annihilating or capturing groups of bandits and commandos...

Our people enthusiastically participated in fighting and serving the front, contributing millions of work days to build roads, build earthworks, transport supplies, give first aid and offer every possible assistance to the troops. They worked hard to increase production and develop the economy, culture, education, the medical service, maintaining normal living conditions even as the war was raging. Our army and people have demonstrated revolutionary heroism in fighting and serving the front, ensuring communications and transport, organizing people's air defence and also in production work and the building of a new life.

The US war of destruction was a severe test for the socialist regime and the military organization built up in the North in peace time. Coordinating our war effort with that of our fellow-countrymen and the Liberation Army in South Viet Nam, receiving important aid from the fraternal countries in the socialist camp, our army and people in the North have won great victories. The US aggressors have suffered an ignominious defeat in their criminal war of destruction. Their dark schemes were smashed. Over 3,000 modern aircraft of more than 40 different types, including the latest models in

use for the first time, were shot down over North Viet Nam. A large number of first-rate pilots from the US air force were killed or captured. The socialist North remained as strong as a steel wall, its economy and defence were further consolidated. As a powerful base for the revolution in the whole country, it carried on its glorious task of serving the great battle front, and with the participation of the army and people in the entire country, has brought ever greater victories to the resistance war.

The victory of our people's war against the war of destruction in the socialist North was a victory of our people in the whole country. It was of great significance not only to our people but also to the world. It was a victory of our Party's political and military line, its line of resistance against US aggression for national salvation and of socialist construction, and its correct independent, creative foreign policy.

Unlike the August Insurrection and the resistance war against the French, this was the first time when our Party *led to victory a land-against-air people's war* on the basis of the socialist system.*On the strenght of the militant solidarity of the entire people, with, as the backbone, the modern regular people's army consisting of regular and regional forces acting in coordination with militia and self-defence forces, these extensive and mighty armed forces of the masses with the use of weapons of all kinds, modern and relatively modern, have defeated the US air war of aggression.* Our army and people have made a new development, in new conditions and circumstances of the art of using

a small force to attack a large one, using few to oppose more and using less modern weapons to defeat more modern weapons.

The first task in a war to defend the Fatherland is clearly to *shift the whole country from peace-time conditions to war-time ones.* The most important tasks are the *mobilization of the entire people* with a view to expanding the people's armed forces, and the *reorientation of the economy,* the organization of a *war-time economy* in order to meet all the needs of the war and of the people's life in war time. The success of the shift of the country to war-time conditions depends firstly on a correct solution of the relations between the economy and national defence and secondly on the comprehensive preparations made, even in peace time, on a national and regional scale. The strengthening of the rear in its economic, political, material and moral aspects is a sure guarantee of supply of men and material to the front. A strong rear is undoubtedly one of the most important factors of victory in any war, especially in a patriotic war.

In the aspect of military organization, the people's armed forces reached a fairly high level, because unlike the armed forces in the general insurrection and the liberation war, they had been organized, built up and prepared in peace time, taking advantage of the favourable conditions of an independent, sovereign State and of a gradually built and consolidated socialist regime.

In the insurrection and the liberation war, our people rose up and fought with bare hands. For that

reason, in the beginning we had to enlighten and mobilize the masses, organize a political force and, on that basis, build up revolutionary armed forces, in the first place the armed forces of the masses, from which the revolutionary army was gradually formed. In the wake of the victorious insurrection and the revolutionary war, we gradually raised the level of the armed forces in every field. Thus a political struggle generally develops into an armed struggle and a combination of the two, and a guerilla war generally develops into a regular war and a combination of the two. In the insurrection and during the liberation war, the armed struggle was always closely combined with the political struggle, uprisings with combats and annihilation of enemy forces with seizing power for the people, etc.

In the war for the defence of the socialist North against the enemy air force, we had from the *beginning a modern regular army* which was fairly strong, consisting of regular forces and regional forces, built up in peace time and rapidly expanded after the war broke out. We also had extensive armed forces of the masses made up of millions of militiamen and self-defence units in all towns and villages, who had also been organized, built, equipped and trained in peace time. The building of revolutionary armed forces is based on our people's patriotism and love of socialism and on the concrete policies and regulations decreed by the people's power.

Because we had a modern regular people's army and extensive armed forces of the masses, *regular warfare* and guerilla warfare were from the beginning waged *simultaneously and in close coordination.* The people's

war against the war of destruction has shown the *importance of the role played by the people's army* and regular warfare. Air defence and air force units of the main force have fought many major battles, destroying a large number of enemy aircraft and defeating their successive escalations. The expanded regional forces with new fighting capabilities, were the core of the people's war in the regions. *The militia and self-defence forces also played a crucial role in combat* in communications and transport and in people's air defence and service of the front.

It is certain that in a land combat against an enemy army, all arms and services of the people's army, together with the armed forces of the masses, will fight with all their might and coordinate action in an effective manner to defeat the enemy and defend the Fatherland.

Naturally, in the war for the defence of the Fatherland, in order to make the most of the power of the entire people, the entire country, and build up the greatest possible combined forces, we are able to apply the experience gained during the insurrection and the liberation war. For the war for national defence in our country *like the liberation war,* is a people's war fought by the entire people in every field. On the other hand when, during the liberation war, we had a revolutionary base, a liberated area developing into an increasingly vast free zone, the characteristics of a war for the defence of the Fatherland also appeared and developed.

The great victory of our army and people in the socialist North proves that *a small country with an*

under-developed economy,. whose army has little modern equipment and technique, but which has a correct revolutionary line, and is determined to fight for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, relying on the power of the entire people with the people's army and the armed forces of the masses as backbone, and enjoying international sympathy and support, is quite capable of waging a people's war to defeat a war of destruction by the modern air force of US imperialism. Our people's victory in the North and that of our fellow-countrymen and combatants in the South have shown the great potential of the people's war which can defeat any aggressor.

Our people's nation-wide resistance against US aggression took the form of a national liberation war in South Viet Nam and a war for the defence of the socialist regime in the North. The realities of this resistance war and the extremely rich experience gained have helped us solve correctly the question of building up the people's armed forces and consolidating national defence with the participation of the entire people : in the short term to protect the North and bring the war of resistance to *total victory* and in the long term, to provide a strong defence for the independence of the Vietnamese Fatherland.

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Our people's *revolutionary war in South Viet Nam* was started over ten years ago. It is a *liberation war* against the US imperialists' neo-colonialist war of aggression, waged in order to liberate the South, fulfil the tasks of the people's national democratic revolution

in the whole country, and by contributing to the defence the socialist North, to advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country.

The war in South Viet Nam was waged by our fellow-countrymen and combatants against a new enemy, the US imperialists, and a new form of aggressive war, the neo-colonialist war of aggression. It was waged in the new conditions, when our people had successfully carried out the August Revolution in the whole country won victory in the resistance against the French and liberated half of the country. The North was carrying out a socialist revolution and was building socialism, becoming a powerful revolution base for the whole country and a member of the socialist camp. Our revolution was receiving increasingly important aid from the fraternal socialist countries. The international situation was favourable for the revolutionary forces in the world had become far stronger than the counter-revolutionary forces and were launching a continuous offensive against imperialism, with the US imperialists at its head.

For these reasons, the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam has made great strides forwards and gained immensely in strength. The growth of *South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces* is linked with the conditions of the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam in the different periods outlined above : simultaneous uprisings, people's war against "special war", people's war against "limited war", people's war against "Vietnamized war".

In the years 1959 — 1960, our people in South Viet Nam rose up in arms, staging simultaneous uprisings

in many places all over the countryside. The force which carried out these uprisings was the *political army of the masses supported* by small *armed self-defence units*. This political army which had been painstakingly built up during the revolutionary movement preceding the 1945 general insurrection and had rapidly developed during the August Revolution and the resistance against the French colonialists, was further tempered during the first years of the fierce struggles against the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. It had high morale, great fighting spirit, and a rich experience of struggle. The population in the different regions took advantage of the moment when the weaknesses of the puppet regime, with its deep internal contradictions, were openly displayed and valiantly rose up and staged local uprisings, coordinating the political forces with armed forces, with the *political forces playing the main role*. The powerful movement of simultaneous uprisings overthrew the local puppet administration in several regions although the central government still had hundreds of thousands of troops and a ruthless organization of fascist repression at its disposal. The policy of domination by means of classical neo-colonialist methods had failed miserably.

When the US imperialists launched a *"special war"* to carry on the aggression against South Viet Nam, the simultaneous uprisings of our people there developed into a *liberation war*. Fully grasping the laws of development of the revolution and the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam and having carefully studied the US imperialists' neo-colonialist war of aggression our people, under the leadership of the National Front for

Liberation, intensified the offensive which they had started with the simultaneous uprisings. *They greatly increased the combined political and armed forces, intensified both the political struggle and the armed struggle, and attacked the enemy with armed action and political action, while carrying on agitation work among enemy troops in all three strategic areas :* highlands, plain, and urban areas.

With the existence of a large and strong political army of the revolutionary masses, the South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces grew up rapidly. Units of the *Liberation Army* in different localities, and units of the main force for all South Viet Nam were built up. *Guerilla, militia and self-defence forces* were organized everywhere. The *three categories* of the liberation armed forces gradually came into shape. The weapons used by these people's armed forces were of poor quality, most of them captured from the enemy or home-made

The people's war was intensified in many places all over the countryside. The army and people in South Viet Nam closely combined political with armed struggle, they staged attacks and uprisings and intensified *guerilla warfare* and *partial uprisings*. They decimated or annihilated the puppet forces, defeated the "heliborne" and "armoured troop-carrier" tactics, won control over the base levels, broke up two-thirds of the "strategic hamlets" and shook the puppet central government to its foundation. The movement of struggle in the urban areas including the big cities was intensified, in coordination with the revolutionary movement in the countryside. *The large political army* and *the extensive armed*

forces of the masses were playing a most important role. Even the enemy had to admit that the "Viet Cong" were "past masters in the art of guerilla warfare."

The character of the war was moving continuously in our favour. Torn apart by more and more acute internal contradictions the enemy increasingly found itself in an impasse. The US imperialists were forced to "change horses in mid-stream", and liquidated their henchman Ngo Dinh Diem.

The people's war further developed with the appearance of *mobile regular forces* of the Liberation Army. Battles involving large concentrations of troops were fought at Binh Gia, Dong Xoai, Ba Gia, during which whole units of the enemy regular forces were wiped out. The revolutionary war gained new offensive power.

The close combination of the political and armed forces, of the armed forces of the masses and the Liberation troops brought about a new situation. The whole puppet army and the whole puppet administration were threatened with total collapse, although the number of their troops had increased to 550,000 and the Liberation forces had not much increased numerically and were only beginning to engage in major battles involving large numbers of troops. This was because our people's local political and armed forces were then very powerful, the masses' movement of political struggle and insurrection was mounting, and guerilla warfare was highly developed. At the same time the regular troops which had just appeared on the scene already had a high prestige, great offensive power, great capabilities in threatening, overwhelming and annihilating

the enemy, and they had been making continuous attacks and winning victories.

Faced with the brankruptcy of the "special war" strategy, the US imperialists were forced to dispatch a huge expeditionary corps to South Viet Nam in an attempt to save the situation.

Thus, in the new conditions and circumstances of the years 1960 — 1965, the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam developed from a political struggle into an armed struggle and a combination of armed and political struggle, from an armed insurrection into a liberation war and a combination of liberation war and armed insurrection, from guerilla warfare to pitched battles and a combination of pitched battles and guerilla attacks. The South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces were also created from political forces ; during the war the armed self-defence units of the insurrection days grew into three *categories of forces. The regular forces and the regional forces* formed the *South Viet Nam Liberation Army ;* the *militia, guerilla and self-defence organizations* formed the *armed forces of the masses.* With the support of the political forces and in combination with them, the South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces played an important strategic role in the masses' *partial uprisings* to overthrow the puppet administration at the base levels and seize power for the people, as well as in the *military offensives* to defeat various categories of puppet forces under the command of US "advisers".

When the US aggressors were forced to introduce US troops en masse into South Viet Nam, and use their

air force to attack the North, launching the biggest and most brutal "limited war" in their history of aggression, our people and their revolutionary armed forces throughout the country had to face an unprecedentedly serious challenge. The US imperialists are the strongest of all the imperialists with the greatest economic and military potential in the capitalist world, with a large army equipped with most modern weapons. They gradually mobilized a total of one million US, puppet and satellite troops including 500,000 US troops, for the aggression against South Viet Nam. For this war, they spent hundreds of billions of dollars, and used tens of millions of tons of bombs and shells and all the most sophisticated types of weapons and means of warfare, except nuclear weapons.

Responding to President Ho Chi Minh's sacred appeal to fight against US aggression, for national salvation, faithful to their traditions of indomitable courage, our entire people from North to South rose up in close unity, determined to fight to save their country and homes, to fulfil their sacred national duty and their lofty internationalist obligations.

Our army and people have made a correct evaluation of the US imperialists' schemes and the balance of forces. We have assessed the enemy's strong and weak points, their difficulties and contradictions, and we know our own advantages and difficulties, our strengths and our strong position. On that basis, our army and people are united in their determination to completely defeat the US aggressors by continuing their offensive strategy and fighting against the enemy's large and well-equipped army.

The Vietnamese people's patriotic resistance war against US aggression became the front line of the struggle of the people of the world against the US imperialits aggressors. The peoples of the socialist countries and progressive peoples the world over were closely united with our people in the struggle against the common enemy. The strong sympathy, support and assistance from progressive mankind was a decisive factor which helped us win victory in the patriotic resistance war against US aggression.

On the South Viet Nam battlefield, relying on their two strategic forces, the US expeditionary force and the puppet troops, with the US troops as the main force, the US aggressors launched a violent counter-offensive in an attempt to annihilate the revolutionary forces, especially the regular units of the Liberation Army. At the same time they continued the perfidious "pacification programme" in order to enslave our people by keeping them under tight control. They carried out a so-called "war on the military and political fronts", an "all-out war", combining ruthless military operations with deceitful economic and political schemes and perfidious psywar tricks.

The people and army of South Viet Nam, pushing forward their offensive, used their victorious position *to intensify their political struggle and armed struggle* to defeat all schemes and manœuvres of the US imperialists. The South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces stepped up *major engagements involving large numbers of troops and guerilla warfare.* They attacked US, puppet and satellite troops and combined

big, average and small operations. They annihilated large numbers of enemy troops and destroyed a great quantity of war material, giving strong support to the movement of political struggle and the uprisings to seize power for the people. Less numerous than the enemy and not so well equipped, the South Viet Nam liberation forces dealt the US expeditionary corps stunning blows at Van Tuong in Central Trung Bo, on the Tay Nguyen highlands, in Eastern Nam Bo and in the Quang Tri – Thua Thien region... The increasingly extensive campaigns of the Liberation main force and the guerilla activities of the regional forces took place in all theatres of operations. A vigorous movement of political struggle had been launched in the cities, especially Da Nang and Hue. The US expeditionary corps soon lost their initial aggressiveness ; they received unexpected blows and suffered defeat after defeat. The 1965-1966 dry-season counter-offensive by 200,000 US troops was smashed, the"search and destroy" strategy was a failure, like the "break the Viet Cong backbone" strategy and the "pacification program". The liberation forces opened the Tri – Thien front and continued vigorous attacks on all fronts. The 1966-1967 dry-season counter-offensive by 400,000 US troops, was again smashed, the "pincers", "search and destroy" and "pacification" strategic operations failed completely.

Just when the escalation of the US war of aggression, at its highest point in both North and South Viet Nam, had met with failure, the *general offensive in the spring of 1968* by the South Viet Nam army and people broke out like a thunderbolt, rocking South Viet Nam and the United States. This unique, creative and

perfectly mounted strategic attack by the South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces, in coordination with mass insurrections, dealt decisive blows at the "limited war" strategy and brought a historic turning point to the course of the war.

In the people's war against the "limited war", the task was to intensify the military struggle and closely coordinate the military struggle with the political struggle so as to inflict a military defeat on the US imperialists. To achieve this, the *South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces* further developed their forces in both quantity and quality, in organization and equipment and in the art of warfare.

The *regular forces* of the Liberation Army were given new services and were organized into increasingly powerful mobile army corps. The *regional forces* were expanded and strengthened. The *militia, guerilla and self-defence forces* saw a vigorous and extensive development on all fronts. Elite units made their appearance. The armament and equipment of the armed forces were markedly improved. As a result, all the *three categories of armed forces*, to varying degrees, were able not only to annihilate enemy infantry troops but also to destroy tanks and armoured vehicles and shoot down enemy planes. The experience gained at each stage of the combat was studied. The determination and confidence of the cadres and combatants were continuously strengthened in the fighting against the US aggressors. The cadres' capacity for organization and command was steadily improving. The entire army and people, with all the three categories of the liberation armed forces, were galvanized by an emulation

movement to attack the US aggressors, annihilate puppet troops, to become valiant anti-US combatants.

The South Viet Nam Liberation Army benefited from the favourable strategic situation inherent in the fighting of a people's war, and benefited also from the immense force resulting from a combination of armed struggle and political truggle. With great fighting spirit and using sufficiently large number of troops supported by the extensive armed forces of the masses and the people's large and powerful *political army*, it dealt the US expeditionary corps, the puppet and satellite troops heavy blows, and gradually brought them to defeat.

On the battlefields, the regular forces of the Liberation Army could concentrate their forces in a rational manner, and frequently used a small force to attack a larger one in order to decimate the enemy, it could use the combined forces of different services or the forces of a single service operating independently. The regional forces developed their combat methods so as to win great victories. By using small, well-tried units the South Viet Nam Liberation Army has dealt the enemy painful and dangerous blows. They have annihilated a large number of US troops and destroyed a large quantity of modern war material, inflicting severe losses, particularly on US command organs, US officers and technical personnel, US aircraft and technical equipment of the latest type. With the regional forces as mainstay, the militia, guerrilla and self-defence forces gave a new impulse to guerilla warfare, making the most of rudimentary, relatively modern and modern weapons and developing most varied methods of annihilating

the enemy. Many creative, effective methods of people's warfare were applied and developed : attacks with concentrated forces, guerilla raids, attacks against the enemy rear, communication lines and towns, a combination of fighting with agitation work within the enemy ranks.

In each region and in the whole of South Viet Nam, there was coordination between *mobile forces* and local forces, so that they could be advantageously deployed, a *strategic posture* which should combine solidity and mobility on all fronts, especially over the most important sectors in all three strategic zones. The local armed forces consisting of strong units of the regional forces, extensive militia, guerilla and self-defence organizations with the firm support of the political forces and in close coordination with the local political forces, from the mountains to the plain and from the countryside to the towns, brilliantly succeeded in dispersing US, puppet and satellite forces over a wide area, immobilizing them in all places, encircling attacking, decimating, annihilating them and destroying a large quantity of war material. At the same time, the Liberation Army mobile forces, using increasingly big concentrations of troops at different battlefronts, dealt the enemy heavy blows, annihilating great sections of the enemy forces.

In the people's war in South Viet Nam, the enemy were relentlessly beaten, encircled and cut up, they were continuously attacked and decimated. The US expeditionary corps, the puppet and satellite troops, totalling over one million, with most modern equipment, could not fight as effectively as they wished. They were in a situation when their immense army

proved to be insufficienly large, when apparent strength proved to be weakness. They attacked but could not hit the right target and were increasingly decimated by the South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces. Their forces were dispersed, their offensive power continously decreased, and they were forced to return gradually to the defensive. They wanted to end the war quickly but were compelled to prolong it. Their large and modern army was reduced to a more and more passive posture. It was suffering increasingly heavy losses and was gradually being put to defeat by a highly developed people's revolutionary war. At the same time, their modern air force and navy were dealt deadly blows in our people's land-against-air war in the North. Our army and people won glorious victories in the fight against the huge military machine of the US imperialists. Our people defeated the biggest US "limited war" of aggression at the stage of its highest escalation in both parts of our country.

The "limited war" strategy was defeated. The Johnson administration had to deescalate the war, unconditionally end the bombing of the North, return to a defensive posture in South Viet Nam and carry out a "de-Americanization" of the war in an attempt to find a way out of the impasse.

Nixon, an unscrupulous and obstinate politician, on coming to power in the United States shifted to a "Vietnamization" of the war hoping to prolong the war of aggression and continue the enslavement of our people in South Viet Nam by maintaining the US neo-colonialist rule.

The "Vietnamization of the war" strategy was but a continuation of the neo-colonialist war of aggression

with new methods, the application of the so-called Nixon doctrine to the US imperialist war of aggression against South Viet Nam. That most reactionary doctrine was the US imperialists' new global strategy for the seventies, appearing at a time when they were suffering repeated defeats in their aggression against Viet Nam, and when the changing balance of forces in the world was more and more unfavourable to them. The objective of the Nixon doctrine was to maintain the US imperialists' role of world gendarme and enable them to continue to implant their neo-colonialism in the world with new methods and manoeuvres : to rely on US might and at the same time to make satellite countries contribute more men and material.

To carry out the "Vietnamization" of the war, the US imperialists and their henchmen concentrated forces for the realization of their ruthless pacification programme, which was regarded as the main strategic measure to enslave our people in South Viet Nam. The US imperialists' perfidious scheme was to make Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese, to feed the war by the war, to use the blood of their lackeys together with US dollars, bombs and shells to serve their dirty interests. They endeavoured to build the Saigon puppet army into a modern army to be used as the main strategic force in South Viet Nam, a shock force in Indochina which should gradually replace US troops in land combat. The Nixon administration also brazenly ordered an invasion of neutralist Cambodia, an intensification of the war in Laos, and the extension of the aggressive war to the whole of Indochina. The United States endeavoured to "Khmerize", "Laotianize"

these wars and, encouraging the collusion between the Saigon puppet and Cambodian puppet forces, and between the Thai reactionaries and the Lao and Cambodian puppets, organized a kind of regional alliance among the puppet forces, using Indochinese against Indochinese, Asians against Asians.

In the wake of their victories, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, well aware of the characteristics and laws of development of the war in the new stage, the army and people of South Viet Nam further intensified the strategic posture of offensive of the people's war in order to defeat the enemy's "Vietnamization" strategy. *In all three strategic zones,* our army and people in South Viet Nam *greatly intensified and closely combined armed struggle and political struggle ; they carried out attacks accompanied with uprisings and uprisings accompanied with attacks while at the same time stepping up agitation work among enemy troops,* with a view to annihilating and disintegrating the enemy forces, winning power for the people, expanding the liberated zone, and defeating the enemy.

Our army and people closely coordinated their resistance war with the revolutionary struggle of the armies and peoples of fraternal Laos and Cambodia, in oder to defeat the Nixon doctrine as applied in Indochina. The offensive of the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam developed into that of the people of the three Indochinese countries who shoulder to shoulder fought against the common enemy. The Lao people's patriotic

war won new and brilliant victories. The Cambodian revolution had made a big leap forward.

In the process of defeating the enemy plan to "Vietnamize" the war, the *South Viet Nam Liberation Army*, with a sufficient number of troops and great fighting capabilities, greatly increased their fighting power to meet the new requirements of the revolutionary war : the weapons used were more and more modern, the technical branches developed vigorously, the capacity to mount concentrated attacks with coordination between different arms was enhanced. The victories won by the South Viet Nam Liberation Army in early 1969 caused a large number of US casualties and dealt the aggressors a heavy blow in the first days of the Nixon administration. From 1970, after Nixon sent US troops to Cambodia and Laos, the revolutionary armies of all three Indochinese countries, used powerful regular army units to launch repeated attacks against the enemy and won resounding victories. Despite strong US air and logistic support, despite their increased US-supplied equipment, the puppet forces suffered defeat after defeat. Not only the Vientiane and Phnom Penh puppet troops suffered heavy losses, but the Saigon puppet troops, the backbone of the "Vietnamization" strategy, the shock force of the Nixon doctrine in Indochina, were severely defeated. The great victories of the peoples of the three countries, especially the resounding victory on Highway 9 in Southern Laos, had a great strategic significance opening the prospect of defeating the "Vietnamization" strategy and the Nixon doctrine in Indochina by military means.

While the enemy were making strenuous efforts to enlarge their reactionary armies and other forces of répression to build a thick network of military posts to control the population and carry out their ruthless pacification programme in the countryside, the role of the *people's war* in individual regions of the country and that of the *regional armed forces* became more and more important. In many vast areas of the South Vietnamese countryside, our army and people closely combined armed with political struggle and pushed forwards the three converging prongs of the offensive in order to smash the "pacification programme". Greatly encouraged by the victories of the main force, the militiamen and guerillas, more and more strongly supported by the regional forces, carried out the slogan "the cadres stick to the people, the people stick to the land, the guerillas stick to the enemy." They raised the guerilla war, the people's war at the base level to a higher stage of development, annihilating and decimating important regional reactionary forces, and taking many enemy posts. They coordinated their action with the movement of political struggle and insurrection to win power for the people, eliminate wicked elements, break the enemy's grip, disintegrate enemy civilian defence forces and overthrow the puppet administration at the base level. The revolutionary forces of the masses were firmly maintained, consolidated and developed: The regional people's war checked the enemy pacification programme. Severely defeated, the enemy were forced to draw back. While the regular forces of the Liberation Army were winning

great victories and the regional people's war was increasingly intensified, the *movement of political struggle* of the urban population in South Viet Nam underwent a remarkable development both in scope and in depth, with new and varied forms of struggle.

During the past three years, since Nixon came to power and carried out the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, our army and people in South Viet Nam have won great victories. In 1971, when they hoped to have fundamentally completed their "Vietnamization" plan, the US imperialists and their lackeys, suffered the most severe defeats, despite the great efforts, made by the Nixon administration on all fronts. Our people won tremendous victories, and the "Vietnamization of the war" suffered a severe setback. This proves that the strategy of "Vietnamization" and the Nixon doctrine contain many insoluble contradictions and insuperable weaknesses. Nixon's strategy of "Vietnamization" was nothing but an illusion. *In the political field,* he hoped to be able to use the neo-colonialist bait of independence and freedom to camouflage the fundamental contradictions between our people and the US aggressors. At the very moment when our entire people were closely united in their patriotic fight against US aggression and when the above contradictions were most acute, he hoped to use lackeys without any national feeling to carry out the policy of "making Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", to serve the interests of the US aggressors. In *the military field,* when the United States with over one million US and puppet troops had been defeated, and had to gradually withdraw US troops, Nixon hoped to turn weakness into strength, defeat into

victory, to put puppet troops back on their feet and use them to replace US troops. Countered by the heroic struggle of our people, a people with a long tradition of national unity and unshakable determination to oppose foreign aggression, who in the wake of their victories were in a position of strength and constantly on the offensive, the "Vietnamization" strategy, the main test of the Nixon doctrine, was bound to fail miserably Our people in the whole country, in close unity with the brother peoples of Laos and Cambodia, persevered in their resistance and intensified the war, determined to defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and the Nixon doctrine in Indochina and to win complete victory.

Looking back, we can say that in the revolutionary war in the South our people have synthesized the experience gained over the past decades in military and political struggle, in armed insurrection and revolutionary war and in military organization. Well aware of the laws of revolutionary development and revolutionary methods of action in South Viet Nam, and the laws of development of US neo-colonialism and of the US neo-colonialist war of aggression, the people and army of South Viet Nam have brought all this experience to a higher level, in a new situation. In the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam, our people have increased their great total force derived from the *close combination of political forces with armed forces, waging simultaneously an armed struggle and a political struggle, combining insurrection with war and war with insurrection in oder to win victory*. In accordance with the concrete situation at each stage of development of

the war, the army and people of South Viet Nam combined the armed forces with the political forces in a flexible and creative manner and repeatedly defeated all forms of neo-colonialist war of aggression, even at the peak of the US aggressive war.

The resistance war for national salvation against US aggression achieved a high degree of mobilization and arming of the entire people. Relying on the great power given by the correct line followed by the people's democratic national revolution in South Viet Nam, and the superiority of the socialist system in the North, our people have built up *political forces* tested by many years of struggle, increasingly better organized and developing with ever greater vigour ; on that basis we have built ever more powerful *people's armed forces* consisting of the well-organized extensive *armed forces of the masses* and a continually modernized regular *revolutionary army*. Those forces played different roles, on different battlefields at different stages of development of the resistance war. But generally speaking, in *the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam both the armed forces and the political forces have played a fundamental and decisive strategic role ;* in the South Viet Nam people's liberation armed forces, the *Liberation Army composed of the regular army and the regional forces and the armed forces of the masses made up of militia, guerilla and self-defence forces have played a great strategic role and are becoming more and more important as the war develops.*

Their defeat in the war of aggression against Viet Nam and Indochina is the worst defeat the US imperialists have met with in their history of aggression.

Our people's great victory in the struggle against US aggression, for national salvation proves that *in our era, a small nation is quite capable of mobilizing the forces of the entire people, the entire nation, closely combining the political and armed forces, the revolutionary army and the masses' armed forces, carrying out a political struggle and an armed struggle, armed insurrection and revolutionary war, in oder to defeat the neo-colonialist war of aggression by the great imperialist powers including the biggest one, the United States.*

*

Looking back at the process of revolutionary struggle, the process of development of armed insurrection and revolutionary war and of the people's armed forces in our country during the last forty years, we feel extremely pround of our Party and of venerated President Ho Chi Minh, of our people and our nation. As I said above, never before in their 4000-year history of building and defending the country, has our nation been so continuously engaged in insurrection over so long a period. We can say that never before in our history had our nation successively defeated in the space of a few decades three most brutal aggressors, including US imperialism, that cruel and unscrupulous world gendarme, a country which possesses the greatest economic and military potential on earth.

In order to win victory in the nation-wide insurrection and people's war, our Party has combined its work of propaganda, education and organization with the

building up of the *political forces* of the masses – regarding these as a fundamental necessity in all stages of the revolutionary struggle – and of the *people's armed forces.* It has solved the question of *military organization,* considered as another essential factor.

Our ancestors used to say that "the whole nation joining forces" led to "everyone a soldier". So today our Party is carrying out the line of "unity of the entire people", organizing *"the entire people to fight against the aggressors"*, making *"each village, each commune a fortress", "each street a front line", "our 31 million fellow-countrymen 31 million valiant combatants".*

Our Party has extensively carried out *the arming of the entire people,* building up the *people's army* and at the same time, *arming the revolutionary masses.* This has been done in different circumstances and conditions of struggle, different with regard to the enemy and the form of aggression used by them, with regard to our way of using revolutionary violence, the situation in our country and in the world, and the balance of forces between us and the enemy. Originating from the political organizations of the masses, starting from small self-defence units and from secret armed organizations at the base level, our people's armed forces have developed into a mighty revolutionary armed force with a most brilliant fighting record, a glorious tradition of loyalty to the Party and the people, and of invincibility. These armed forces are made up of a well-tried *people's army* consisting of an army, air force and navy which are more and more modernized and the *extensive and powerful armed forces of the*

masses, which are organized everywhere and use varied types of weapons including a number of modern ones.

In their growth and in their fighting record in different conditions and circumstances of struggle, our people's armed forces have adopted different concrete forms of organization and varied positions and roles. Each day they have attained a higher and higher level but they have always been made up of a *union between two fundamental parts :*

First, the *people's army* consisting of the regular army and the regional forces.

Second, the *armed forces of the masses* consisting of the extensive militia and self-defence organizations.

The realities of insurrection and war in our country show that *arming the entire people* means arming the broad masses and building up a people's army. The *people's army* has many advantages over the masses' armed forces : strong organization, high discipline, careful training, relatively advanced technical equipment, unified command and leadership, great fighting capabilities and high combat-readiness. On the other hand, the *armed forces of the masses* have advantages over the army as a result of their close coordination with the masses whose power is their direct support, and their use of the most varied weapons and a multitude of fighting methods anywhere and at any time.

To build the people's army and at the same time to arm the masses is to simultaneously build up the *backbone force* and *the extensive forces, the mobile force* and the *stationary forces* in order to defeat large armies of aggression possessed of modern equipment,

high mobility and great firepower. We must build a force to serve as backbone and a mobile force for the whole country and also a backbone and mobile force for each region. We must build stationary forces everywhere in all three strategic areas, in the highlands and the plain, in the countryside and the urban areas. The mobile force to serve as backbone for the whole country is *the regular army*. The mobile backbone force for each region is the *regional force*. Thus the people's armed forces consist of *three categories of forces* : the regular army, the regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces. The regular army and the regional forces form the *People's Army*. The militia and self-defence forces are the *armed forces of the masses*. On the national scale, the regular army is the mobile force while the regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces are the stationary forces. The regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces form the *regional people's armed forces*. On the regional scale, the regional forces are the mobile forces, while the militia and self-defence forces are the stationary forces. The relation between the regional force and the militia and self-defence force in a region reflects the relation between the people's army and the masses' armed forces on the national scale.

The combination of the people's army with the masses' armed forces and vice versa is clearly the form of military organization most suited to the full realization of the power of the *entire people, the entire country*, the *entire nation*. As the combination of political forces with armed forces, of political struggle

with armed struggle and of armed insurrection with revolutionary war is the fundamental form of revolutionary violence in our country, so the combination of the revolutionary army with the masses' armed forces is the military organization best suited for uniting the armed forces with the political forces, armed struggle with political struggle and applying the methods of insurrection and war as well as the military art of the entire people's insurrection and people's war.

The above-mentioned realities and experience bring us to this conclusion : *the combination of the revolutionary army with the masses' armed forces and vice versa, the building of the three categories of the people's armed forces, these are laws of organization and employment of the people's armed forces which will allow the full realization of the force of the entire people, the entire nation, the entire country in an insurrection of the entire people, in a people's war as well as in national defence by the entire people, in the liberation war as in the war for the defence of the Fatherland by our nation, a small nation which has had to struggle against domination and wars of aggression by big imperialist powers.*

The creativeness of our Party and people with respect to the arming of the revolutionary masses and building of the people's army springs from the Marxist — Leninist thesis on military organization by the proletariat and the continuation and development of our ancestors' experience on building armed forces. Our Party has closely combined modern proletarian military science with our own original national tradition, correctly applied this science and this experience to

the realities of our people's struggle in the new circumstances and historical conditions of our era. That is why the very high development of armed insurrection and revolutionary war and of the present military organization in our country, under the leadership of the Party, is a necessary and logical development of our people's history and tradition of struggle in an era when the Vietnamese working class has become the authentic representative of the nation. Under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, our people have maintained and gloriously developed their heroic tradition of struggle against foreign aggression. The insurrection of the entire Vietnamese people and the people's war under the leadership of the Party of the working class are the culminating point of armed insurrection and revolutionary war in our country. *They are the insurrection of the entire Vietnamese people and the people's war in the new era, the Ho Chi Minh era.*

Our people's repeated victories in the fight against three imperialist powers testify to the *great might of the people's war* under the leadership of the working class and their Marxist—Leninist party in this new era of the history of mankind and to the *invincible power of the people's armed forces,* the new-type military organization of the working class, the labouring people and the oppressed peoples who have taken up arms and fought to liberate themselves and build a new society.

With the great power of insurrection and national war of the national army and the armed masses, our ancestors gloriously succeeded in reconquering and

preserving national independence. They defeated enemies who were much stronger, but who like us, were also under a feudal regime and whose forces of production and technical base were at the same stage of development. Nowadays, with the new power of the insurrection of the entire people and the people's war under the leadership of the working class, the new power of the entire people united under the Party banner, the new power of the people's army and the masses' armed forces, our Party and people have gloriously succeeded in the great mission entrusted to them by history. Relying on the force of the entire people of a small nation whose economic potential, material and technical base were inferior to the enemy's, taking advantage of the superiority of the new regime, our Party and people have defeated aggressive armies of big imperialist powers, armies which are superior in number and are equipped with more modern weapons and means of warfare.

In order to solve this most important strategic problem, our Party has *thoroughly grasped and correctly solved the dialectical relationship between the organization of forces and the material-technical base, between men and weapons,* as has been analysed above. In war, victory is generally won by armies which fight for a just cause, and besides are greater in number, armed with more sophisticated weapons and supported by a more highly-developed economy. But a main characteristic of our country has been the fact that in our insurrections and wars, our nation has won victories fighting against an enemy superior in number and equipment. Today we are winning victory even though

we are poorly equipped, or not so well equipped as the enemy who has up-to-date weapons and is supported by a more highly developed economy. The secret of that brilliant success lies in the fact that our Party has known how to relate men to weapons, and has realized that, although weapons constitute a very important factor, men are the determining factor. The Vietnamese man, the Vietnamese combatant in the new era, has a new political consciousness and a high fighting spirit. The new social system, the people's democratic regime and the socialist regime have great vitality and superiority in all aspects. The new-type military organization allows the mobilization of more people than ever before in our history to fight against the aggressors. The combination of the army with the masses' armed forces has further developed the military art of the people's armed forces and has a radically revolutionary content, an intense spirit of offensive, creative and original fighting methods. These new acquisitions formed the basis on which the power of the entire nation, of the people's armed forces could be developed even when we were still poorly armed and equipped. As a result, when the entire nation has risen up, the entire people's armed forces have a tremendous power and can defeat an enemy like the US imperialists, who are superior in number and equipped with most modern weapons. Never before in our history had we faced a one-million strong army of aggression equipped with the most modern weapons like the US expeditionary corps and the puppet troops. Never had our people confronted an

enemy with so great an economic and military potential as the US imperialists. But our army and people have won increasingly great victories, and will certainly win complete victory.

The military victory of our people, of the people's armed forces has shattered bourgeois military thinking according to which weapons and technique play a decisive role in war, and it proves the correctness of proletarian military thinking which holds that it is men who play a decisive role. It shows the superiority of proletarian military science over bourgeois military science. The era when big imperialist powers could use their military might to do as they pleased, to dominate and enslave the smaller nations, is definitely over.

The great victory of the Vietnamese nation, a small nation with not very large territory and population and with an underdeveloped economy, in its resistance against imperialist powers with great economic and military potential, with large and well equipped armies, is an eloquent proof of the might of nations, including the smaller ones, in their just wars, and it has exposed the limited capabilities of big imperialist powers in their unjust wars of aggression. It is clear that *in our era, even a small nation, if it is united and determined, follows a correct revolutionary line, and is able to mobilize the entire people to rise up and wage war, to build and consolidate national defence, and to gain international support and assistance, such a nation is quite capable of overthrowing colonialist rule and defeating the aggressive war of big imperialist powers including the leading imperialist power, the United States.*

IV

TO ARM THE REVOLUTIONARY MASSES STRONGLY AND EXTENSIVELY TO BUILD A MODERN REGULAR PEOPLE'S ARMY

The resistance war against US aggression, for the national salvation of our people in both parts of the country has won great victories and is entering a decisive stage.

On the South Viet Nam battlefield, although it has suffered a serious setback during the past years in both the military and political fields, the Nixon administration is still obdurately carrying out the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy. While withdrawing a large part of the US combat troops, the US imperialists are feverishly strengthening the puppet army in order to use it in place of the US troops in South Viet Nam and as an additional force under US management and command on the Indochinese battlefield. They have stepped up the "pacification" programme, carrying out sweeps, penning up the population, building a thick network of military posts, and turning South Viet Nam into a giant concentration camp, in order to keep a tight control over the population, destroy revolutionary bases and grab manpower and resources for their neo-colonialist war of aggression. They are endeavouring to maintain

the Nguyen Van Thieu fascist clique in power by ruthlessly repressing all the tendencies and aspirations of different strata of the population in South Viet Nam for peace, independence, neutrality, national concord, democratic freedom and improvement of living conditions.

In the North, they are obdurately continuing acts of war, their aircraft are continuously carrying out reconnaissance flights, bombing populated areas and committing untold crimes against our people. Nixon and Laird are again threatening to resume the air and naval war of destruction with a view to preventing the great rear's assistance to the great front line, destroying the economic and military potential of the socialist North and shaking our people's determination to fight.

In Laos, they are intensifying the "special war", using their planes for extermination bombing of the Lao liberated zone, stepping up the "Laotianization of the war" and bringing in a large number of Thai troops to save the severely beaten Vientiane troops and Vang Pao bandits. With these puppet and bandits they are launching counter-attacks in an attempt to stem the offensive of the Lao revolution.

In Cambodia, they are pushing forward with the "Khmerization of the war", giving the Phnom Penh puppet regime a shot in the arm, strengthening the puppet army, carrying out the "pacification programme", concentrating the population, using Phnom Penh puppet troops with US air support to launch criminal military operations against the people. The Nixon administration is also forcing the reactionary Thai authorities to send Thai troops to Cambodia to fight against the people of that country.

It is clear that even while they are heading for defeat, the US imperialists have not given up their schemes of aggression against our country, they are obdurately prolonging and extending the war with a view to maintaining their neo-colonialist rule over South Viet Nam and their role of world gendarme in Southeast Asia. For this purpose they are speaking of "sharing responsibilities" in accordance with the "Nixon dictrine" which only means to use other people's blood together with US money and weapons to defend the dirty interests of the American monopoly capitalist groups. Therefore, the aggressor is still US imperialism, but the concrete hostile forces on the battlefields in our people's war and that of all three Indochinese countries have undergone some changes. In the present stage of the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, *the puppet troops at the service of the United States*, organized, equipped and trained by the Americans, provided with US-supplied modern weapons and means of warfare, including modern services and arms and enjoying US air, naval and logistics support are *gradually becoming the main strategic force* in the war of aggression and the *main hostile force on the battlefield* in the revolutionary war, The US imperialists are also striving to strengthen their modern air force and navy to attack the North of our country.[1]

Having recognized this main objective on the battlefield, our people throughout the country are determined to defeat the aggressive war of the US imperialists and their lackeys. The *South Viet Nam people's*

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1. This article was written in March 1972 (Ed.)

liberation armed forces in coordination with the political forces of the masses have annihilated or broken up the Saigon puppet troops, the "backbone" of the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, at the same time smashing the "pacification programme" the source of manpower and resources for that strategy. Our *people's armed forces* in the North must defeat the attacks by the US air force and navy, repulse all rash military ventures of the US imperialists, strongly defend the socialist North and contribute to fulfilling the obligations of the great rear toward the great frontline. Our people have the duty to coordinate action closely with the people of fraternal Laos and Cambodia in order to defeat the Nixon doctrine formula for the Indochina battlefronts, "reactionary puppet forces + US air force".

In their tasks of continuing the socialist revolution and socialist construction in the North, completing the people's democratic national revolution in South Viet Nam and proceeding to peaceful national reunification, our people will meet with many difficulties, but we will certainly win victory. *Our people's military organization must be equal not only to the urgent, immediate tasks, but also to any tasks in all circumstances,* in the progress of the revolution, even after the US imperialists and their lackeys have been defeated. The people's armed forces in the North must be strong enough to defend the socialist North, smash all acts of aggression and sabotage by the imperialists and their lackeys, serve as an effective tool of proletarian dictatorship and strengthen the North in all aspects so as to make it a powerful base for the struggle to reunify the

country. The liberation armed forces in South Viet Nam must be strong enough to safeguard the gains of the revolution, preserve the independence and neutrality of South Viet Nam, defeat all schemes of the imperialists and the reactionary clique, contribute to the progress of the revolution and build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam.

Because our country has a very important strategic position in Southeast Asia, as has been said in the first part of this essay, Viet Nam has for centuries been the objective of cruel aggressors. Within a few decades, our country has been successively attacked by three imperialist powers. Even when US imperialism has been defeated, international imperialism will not give up its schemes against our country. Our nation cherishes independence and freedom, we also love peace and wish to have peace to build our country and improve our people's living conditions in all aspects. But we must remain very vigilant. *We must be strong in the fields of politics, economics and national defence — there must be a close union between economic construction and the strengthening of national defence.* Whatever happens we must have a *strong national defence, with powerful armed forces made up of a strong standing army and extensive armed forces of the masses,* in order to protect the people's peaceful labour, to be ready to wage a victorious war for the defence of the Fatherland against any aggressor and to protect State power against sabotaging elements from within.

In the long term, after our country has been unified, the *situation will undergo great changes.* Viet Nam will

become a strong and prosperous country with a modern agriculture, a modern industry and advanced culture and science, with a population of from fifty to seventy million within a few decades... Our people have the necessary basis for building a strong national defence. We are capable of raising the people's army and the arming of the revolutionary masses to a higher level in order to ensure the defeat of any imperialist aggressor.

The war for the defence of the Fatherland in our country at present, or in the future if it breaks out again, is always a *just war for self-defence, taking place on our own soil.* Consequently, it can make the most of the force of the entire people, the entire country, the entire nation in order to defeat the enemy. A number of conditions and circumstances of a future war for the defence of the Fatherland may be similar to those of the present war, for example the geographical conditions, the need to fight against a greater force. As an enemy who launches aggression against our country will necessarily be stronger than we, the need to use a smaller force to fight against a greater force will arise as it does today, although the balance of forces between us and the enemy may be different. As for the geographical conditions, they will remain basically the same for a long time, despite continuous transformations due to our people's industrious labour. If another war for the defence of the Fatherland broke out, it would take place in the geographical conditions of our country, a small country with a narrow and long territory, mostly mountainous, partitioned by a large number of rivers, with some thousand kilometres of coast line, a tropical climate...

For these reasons, we may conclude that *we have inherited much experience in waging wars for the defence of the Fatherland, in insurrection and liberation war, and also in military organization in the present time and in the past. This experience we are capable of using and developing in the new conditions and circumstances* to build national defence by the entire people and the people's armed forces of the socialist North, of independent and neutral South Viet Nam and of reunified Viet Nam in future. A future war for the defence of the Fatherland in our country would be a highly-developed people's war ; our people's armed forces will have made outstanding progress in all aspects : numerical strength, the level of cadres and soldiers of all ranks and in every field of activity, equipment and technique, organizational capabilities, fighting method, fighting power.

At present, to fulfil our historic mission of completely defeating the US aggressors our people must have *powerful political forces and also powerful armed forces,* on the basis of a general strengthening in the political, economic and national defence fields. We must thoroughly grasp the Party line of arming the entire people, *strive to develop very strong and extensive armed forces of the masses and at the same time, an outstandingly powerful people's army,* and mobilize and develop to the greatest extent our people's forces on the military front in order to join hands with the entire people in defeating the enemy in all circumstances.

In South Viet Nam, the army and people, carrying out a simultaneous armed struggle and political struggle

to defeat the US "Vietnamization of the war" strategy, are steadily pushing forward the revolutionary war in every field, closely combining armed struggle with political struggle, military offensive with uprisings, concentrated attacks with guerilla attacks, annihilation of enemy troops with extending the people's power in all three strategic zones. At the same time as they are waging war they are developing the military and political forces and actively expanding and consolidating the liberated zone, becoming stronger while fighting.

As the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the High Command of the South Viet Nam Liberation Armed Forces have pointed out, to *develop vigorously and extensively the masses' armed forces at the same time as building the Liberation Army into an outstandingly powerful army* and strengthening the three categories of liberation armed forces—such is the fundamental content of the strengthening of the armed forces of South Viet Nam in the present time.

On the battlefield, the US and puppet forces are falling back on a strategic defensive. With a ruthless oppression and control machinery extending from the central level to the base level, they are carrying out a barbarous fascist policy toward our people. In these conditions, with the *political army which they are continuing to build and expand,* the South Vietnamese people *are striving to bring about a rapid growth of the masses' armed forces, actively building up militia, guerilla and self-defence forces in all three strategic zones.*

The necessity for a *vigorous, extensive development of guerilla and self-defence forces goes hand in hand with the need to bring guerilla warfare to a higher level* in order to join efforts in launching concentrated attacks to militarily defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy ; it is also linked with the need to intensify *the masses' movement of offensive and insurrection*, and, by attacking with three converging prongs, to smash the "pacification" programme. The armed forces of the masses and the guerillas with the regional forces as backbone must coordinate closely with the political forces to cling to the land, using creative, flexible methods, to attack the enemy on the spot. They will decimate and annihilate the enemy in as many places as possible, disperse him, immobilize him, encircle him, and divide his forces, launch surprise attacks on key points, destroy logistics bases, cut off water and land communication lines and so contribute to defeat enemy military operations. They will check sweeps aimed at penning up the population, protect our political bases, break up or wipe out the puppet coercive apparatus in the countryside and the local reactionary armed forces and shatter the network of enemy military posts. They will preserve and increase the potential of the resistance war in all aspects, defeat the US imperialists' wicked scheme of "making Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", "feeding the war with the war".

In our people's long revolutionary war in South Viet Nam, the armed forces of the masses play an unceasingly important role as the revolution progresses. Whenever there are political bases of the people, there

are armed forces of the masses. With the revolutionary political army which is continuously expanding on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, the South Vietnamese people are striving to strengthen the masses' armed forces numerically and qualitatively and to give them forms of organization appropriate to their needs, so that everywhere in South Viet Nam, from the mountains to the plain, from the countryside to the towns, in the liberated zone and in the temporarily occupied zone, there are armed forces to fight against the enemy, armed forces which, together with the masses' political forces, constitute a great force in each region and over the whole battlefield.

With the support of the people's political forces and the masses' armed forces, the South Vietnamese army and people are striving to *build a large and powerful Liberation Army*. The necessity to build a Liberation Army composed of the regular army and the regional forces is linked with the need to intensify the military struggle *to develop regular warfare hand in hand with guerilla warfare,* to defeat the enemy militarily and, in combination with the political struggle, to bring the resistance war to final victory.

The *regular units of the Liberation Army* are being developed numerically and, above all, in quality and equipment. They include the necessary services and possess a strong, highly mobile reserve force with good logistics, and a sound material and technical base, more and more skilful in carrying out operations using combined units from different services, on a varying scale and on different grounds. On the southern battlefield, regular warfare is developing steadily, with

increasing force and effectiveness on a larger and larger scale, the regular troops of the Liberation Army have annihilated an important part of the Saigon armed forces. They have wiped out big enemy units, smashed the enemy's defence lines, checked their combat methods, expanded the liberated zone and won increasingly great victories. The great victories of Liberation Army regular forces over the puppet armed forces have had a serious effect on the morale and organization of the entire structure of the puppet army and the puppet administration, dealing a heavy blow at the US imperialists' will to wage a war of aggression, giving strong support to the political struggle and the insurrection movement of the masses, and opening great possibilities for persuasion work within the ranks of the enemy. In this way they have played an important part in changing the balance of forces, and making the trend of the war more and more favourable to our side.

The units of the Liberation Army *regional forces* are being strengthened so that they, together with the militia and guerilla forces, can serve as a backbone for the people's war in the regions, increasingly raise the level of guerilla warfare and the masses' insurrectionary movement, smash the US puppet "pacification programme", and at the same time, effectively cooperate with the regular forces in launching concentrated attacks to defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy by military means. The regional forces are being built up, so that each district, each province or town will have a good organization and an adequate number of units, together with the necessary technical

units, all well trained in different methods of fighting. The regional forces must be very strong and well trained, they must fight well, and also know how to win support of the population. Now concentrating, now dispersing their forces, they are the iron fist of the people's war in the regions. In close coordination with the militia and guerilla forces, many units of the regional forces in South Viet Nam have annihilated enemy *bao an* (security) and *dan ve* (militia) forces, wiped out chains of military posts and broken up a large number of strategic hamlets and population concentration areas. They have given strong support to the political struggle and the uprisings of the masses and at the same time have effectively coordinated action with the Liberation Army main force operating in a region.

At present, on the South Vietnam battlefield, many regions and provinces have fully grasped the line of people's war and arming the entire people, and resolutely and creatively applied it. These have succeeded in building not only extensive and strong political forces but also strong regional armed forces including large and strong militia and guerilla forces and strong regional troops with a great fighting spirit capable of waging a brilliant fight against the enemy operating in a region. As a result, the people's war in the regions and the offensive and insurrection movement have made further progress, gradually defeating the enemy's "pacification" programme and their schemes to concentrate the population and force young men into the army. They have preserved and developed in all aspects the force of the revolution.

The realities of the revolutionary war in South Viet Nam prove that the *masses constitute the strong base of the revolution in all its tasks : the political forces of the masses are the strong foundation of the armed forces, the armed forces of the masses are the strong base of the revolutionary army.* Therefore, to ensure considerable forces for the revolutionary war, to use to the full the great power of the people's war, it is necessary to *strive to build the political army of the revolution and, on that basis, to build the people's armed forces composed of the armed forces of the masses and the revolutionary army, to sufficiently develop the three categories of armed forces and deploy them for a strategic offensive on all battle-fields, to closely combine concentrated operations with guerilla warfare and armed struggle with political struggle and agitation work among enemy troops.* Only by so doing can we have the greatest possible combination of forces to annihilate or break up the puppet army, smash the "pacification" programme, check the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and eventually completely defeat the US imperialists' war of aggression.

Especially now, when the US imperialists have shifted to the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", carrying out their machiavellian design to "make Vietnamese fight against Vietnamese", striving to build up a puppet army with a main force and regional forces to be used as a tool to continue the war of aggression, the need to fully master the law of organizing the people's armed forces takes on an extremely great importance.

We must have a great political force and powerful armed forces ; strong and extensive armed forces of the masses and a Liberation Army of high quality and sufficient size ; strong and large militia and self-defence forces, powerful regional forces to form strong and extensive local forces, and at the same time a very powerful and mobile regular army. With two forces and three categories of armed forces closely coordinating action and brilliantly playing their strategic role in the revolutionary war, unceasingly developing to a high level the armed struggle and the political struggle, regular warfare and guerilla warfare, our fellow-countrymen and combatants in the South will certainly defeat the puppet army, overthrow the puppet administration, completely defeat the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy and bring the struggle against US aggression for national salvation to final victory.

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While further prolonging the war of aggression in South Viet Nam and extending the war to the whole of Indochina, the Nixon administration has unceasingly intensified its acts of war against North Viet Nam. The US imperialists nurture many wicked designs for the present and the future against the socialist North, the great rear supporting the great front, the strong base of the revolution in the whole country. Therefore we have to make continuous efforts to *build up the people's armed forces in the North* which, together with the entire people, will completely defeat the US

aggressors and strongly defend the socialist North both now and in the times to come.

The North must be very *strong in the political and economic fields and in the field of national defence.* Therefore, we must endeavour to push forward the socialist revolution and socialist construction, continually increase the people's political and moral unity, build and develop the economy and culture and, on that basis, *consolidate and strengthen national defence by the entire people, closely coordinating economic development with national defence.* Only with a strong economy consisting of a central economy and a regional economy can we have strong national defence, and wage a people's war on a national and regional scale. We must be always ready to combat and prepare the country in all aspects so as to give ourselves freedom of movement whatever happens.

Whatever the circumstances, we must always bear in mind the following law for the military organization of our people : *to arm the entire people, to arm the revolutionary masses and at the same time to build the people's army, to combine the people's army with the armed forces of the masses and vice versa.*

We have *to make great efforts to build up a modern regular people's army and, at the same time, develop strong and extensive armed forces of the masses and strengthen all the three categories of the people's armed forces : the regular force, the regional forces and the militia and self-defence forces.* We must further consolidate *the people's armed police forces.* We must have a *powerful standing army* and, at the same time, a *very strong reserve force.*

We must continue our strict application of the defence. We must gradually strengthen the *material policy and regulations promulgated* by the State concerning the building of the people's armed forces and the consolidation of national defence by the entire people, and amend the existing policy and regulations in the light of future developments in our country. Great importance should be attached to the *training of cadres* for they will play a crucial role in the building of the armed forces and strengthening of national defence. We must gradually strengthen the *material and technical bases, the logistics base,* of the armed forces in the whole of North Viet Nam and in each region.

In the first place, it is necessary to *step up the building of our army into a people's revolutionary army of a really new type, a modern regular army adapted to the conditions of our country,* which should serve as the backbone of the people's military organization, in order to give strong protection to the achievements of the revolution and to our beloved Fatherland, defeat any aggressor in the present and the future and fulfil all tasks of combat, production or anything else entrusted by the Party and the people.

At present and in the near future, we must *continue to build the Viet Nam People's Army into a modern, regular socialist army, composed of a regular force and regional forces, with a standing force of adequate size and high fighting capabilities and a large, well-organized, well-trained reserve force.*

Our army must be a really revolutionary, really popular army, and also a highly modern force with a modern army, air force and navy.

Our land army must have all necessary services, with a structure and a size adequate for its increasingly important combat tasks, with great fire-power and a strong assault force possessing high mobility in every kind of terrain and in all the climatic conditions of our country, capable of playing a decisive role in winning victory on the battlefield.

Our air force must be further strengthened so that it will have an adequate size and high fighting capabilities combined with creative fighting methods, in order to defend the Fatherland's sky against the air force of any aggressor, and closely coordinate action with the army and the navy in combined operations.

Our navy must be strengthened so that it will have an adequate size and very high fighting capabilities, a continuously improving organization, increasingly modern equipment, appropriate methods of fighting on our waterways and sea, to defend our long coast-line and the abundant waterways of our country.

Firstly and for all time our army must be a *truly revolutionary popular army*. This is a principle of key importance in our Party's theory on the building of the army, one that we must constantly bear in mind under all circumstances.

The fighting strength of a revolutionary army is the combined strength of the following factors : its revolutionary consciousness, the fighting spirit of the officers and men, the rational organization and the level of technical equipment of the army, the technical and tactical level of the men, the level of scientific and military art, the leadership of its officers... This strength results from the dialectical combination of

men and weapons, politics and technique, military science and war means, ideology and organization.

Both theory and practice have shown that the factors making up the army's fighting strength play an extremely important role and are very closely interrelated. Only when each factor is comprehensively developed and closely combined with the others can the army have a maximum fighting strength.

Without a fighting spirit – with poor morale – there cannot be creative revolutionary energy, active fighting, or any base to promote the strength of the material, technical and operational factors... A well-organized, equipped and trained army with a poor fighting spirit is easily defeated. High morale alone, however, cannot bring victory. If it is handicapped by poor technical equipment, an irrational military organization, and incorrect operational methods it cannot create a great fighting force, because the factor of morale has not been comprehensively developed and cannot be transformed into a huge material force capable of crushing the enemy on the battlefield.

Stressing the great impact of the factor of morale in a war, Lenin said : "In the final analysis, victory in any war depends on the spirit animating the masses that spill their own blood on the field of battle." [1] Further he said : "Even the best of armies, even people most sincerely devoted to the revolutionary cause will be immediately exterminated by the enemy, if they are

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

not adequately armed, supplied with food and trained." [1]

Therefore, when dealing with the fighting strength of our army, one has to grasp the dialectical unity between the above-mentioned factors. To stress only the material, technical factor as the decisive one, and to underestimate the political, morale factor is evidently an error. Inversely, to stress only the morale factor, detached from the material base, is also incorrect. While defining the importance of the factors making up the fighting strength of a revolutionary army, we consider that *the most fundamental factor is the political-morale factor, that is the consciousness of the army with regard to the revolutionary ideal, the goal of the fighting and the political aim of the war, and the fighting spirit of the officers and men.* In a war, "the realization by the masses of the causes and aims of the war is of tremendous importance and ensures victory." [2] Once they are deeply conscious of their class and national interests, ready to sacrifice themselves in the struggle for independence, freedom and socialism, and go to war with the sole aspiration and determination to triumph over the enemy, the officers and men of a revolutionary army will have tremendous energy and strength. The history of our army's struggle and development – how, starting from nothing it grew so strong that it could defeat the cruellest imperialist aggressors of our time – bears eloquent proof of Lenin's assertion.

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

2. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31 Progress Publishers, Moscow 1966, p. 137.

Armed struggle is the most violent form of class struggle, of national struggle. A characteristic of armed struggle is that it entails bloody sacrifices. Hence, a revolutionary army must have an unshakable determination to fight and a very high spirit of self-denial. Then it can withstand all trials, overcome all difficulties and ordeals of a war, use weapons to the best, creatively apply operational methods and promote military organization so as to vanquish the enemy.

Thanks to the Party's correct leadership and the difficulties and combats endured in the course of a protracted, arduous and violent revolutionary struggle, our army has acquired a very strong *revolutionary nature and political virtue, a very high fighting spirit,* which faithfully reflects the thinking, feeling and spirit of the Vietnamese working class and nation and of our present time. It consists in an absolute loyalty to the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people ; an unshakable determination to fight for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, "rather sacrifice all than lose the country and be enslaved", an ardent love for the country and for socialism, a spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism. It consists in a determination to fight and to win, a will to attack and annihilate the enemy, a valiant fighting spirit, creative mind and marvellous resourcefulness, a spirit of union and coordination, a spirit of strict organization and discipline. It consists in an ardent love for one's fellow-countrymen and comrades, a deep hatred of the imperialists and their henchmen and of oppression and exploitation. This is the high spirit of revolutionary vigilance, always on the watch for the designs and

manoeuvres of all the enemies of the class and the nation under any circumstance. This political virtue and this brilliant spirit have been assessed by President Ho Chi Minh as follows : "Our army is faithful to the Party, devoted to the people, ready to fight selflessly for the independence and freedom of the Fatherland, for socialism. It fulfils any mission, overcomes any difficulty and defeats any enemy." Here lies the overwhelming strength of our army, the source of its fighting power. This is an extremely precious asset of our army in its building and fighting at present as well as in the future. In building our army into a regular and modern one, *we are determined constantly to maintain and develop this precious asset, to turn these virtues into deeply rooted qualities, into fine traditions of the Viet Nam People's Army for all generations to come.*

Now more than ever, confronted with the US imperialists' obstinate intention to prolong their aggressive war in Viet Nam and extend it throughout Indochina, our army must consequently heighten its spirit of self-denial, its fearlessness of difficulties and sacrifices, persevere in and intensify its patriotic resistance to US aggression, and promote to the full the role, impact and function of the people's army.

To continuously strengthen the revolutionary nature of the army, we have constantly to bear in mind and *strictly apply the Leninist principles on the political building of the army*. This has become a fine tradition of our army. These principles are :

Ensure absolute, direct and overall leadership of the Party over the army – the most fundamental principle ;

Consolidate the Party's organization and system of political work ; constantly strengthen political work within the army ;

Pay great attention to the propagation of the Party's line, its revolutionary tasks, directives and policies. Heighten the army's political awareness, its national and class consciousness and determination to fight and to win ;

Attach great importance to the army's full understanding of the Party's military line and thinking, military science and military art of people's war ;

Train an army of cadres absolutely loyal to the Party's revolutionary cause, with capacities for leadership, command and organization ;

Broaden democracy, strengthen self-imposed discipline, the iron discipline of a revolutionary army ;

Establish good relations between the army and the Party, the army and the revolutionary power, the army and the people, good relations inside the army as well as between our army and the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries.

With regard to the Party, our army always displays an absolute confidence in the Party's line and leadership, freely submits to the Party's leadership, strictly implements all Party lines, directives and policies, resolutely struggles to defend all its lines, principles and viewpoints, and successfully fulfils all tasks entrusted by it.

With regard to the revolutionary power, our army always shows a high spirit of respect and a determination to defend the revolutionary power, it works closely

with the State organs and strictly implements all State lines, directives, policies and laws.

With regard to the people, our officers and men serve, respect and help them with devotion, fight selflessly to defend the people's interests, and strictly respect the discipline of the masses.

In their internal relations, our officers and men show a high spirit of unity, singlemindedness, perfect cohesion, mutual affection, common share of good times and bad, sincere mutual aid. At the same time, they show a high spirit of obedience to the organization, strictly implement all commands, instructions and decisions of their superiors, carry out all statutes, regulations and orders of the army.

With regard to the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries, our army constantly shows a high spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism, accepts all sacrifices and difficulties, sincerely unites with the armies and peoples of the fraternal countries in the fight against the common enemy, and always considers the revolutionary cause of the fraternal countries as its own.

To promote the strength and the efficiency of the Party leadership, *one must raise the level of understanding of the Party's political and military line, raise the capacity for practical organization of the Party's organs, cadres and Party members in the army* and meet the requirement to build the people's army into a regular and modern one so as to fulfil all the political and military tasks entrusted to it by the Party. Our Party has gathered much experience in the political and ideological building of an army, and in the building

of an army essentially made up of infantry and a limited number of other services. Our Party is well on the road to solving the problems of building a regular and modern people's army consisting of many arms and services for both the present and the future, according to the specific conditions of our country. Therefore, one of the important tasks at present is to study further so as to *have a firm understanding of the laws on the building and operation of a regular and modern people's army* in our country, and to apply them correctly in working out an advanced Vietnamese military science in order to defeat the US aggressors at present and to defend the Fatherland in the future. From this basis we will perfect, develop and concretize the Party's military line and its line on the building of a regular and modern revolutionary army.

On the basis of strengthening the revolutionary nature of our army, we must intensify *its transformation into an army which is regular and modern.* An army which has attained some degree of perfection and organization has a natural tendency to become a regular army. Even in the past, in our country as in many others, the problem of building a regular army has been put and solved. The more modern an army, the more imperious the need for centralization and the more urgent the problem of regularization.

As Lenin said, in fighting with a strong enemy, one must be prepared for bold actions at any time. Now that an army uses an ever more sophisticated range of modern equipment and techniques, while modern operations require extremely close and flexible coordination, unity of mind and action is impossible to realize with-

out high centralization. Without such centralization tens of thousands or millions of men operating over a vast area cannot effect a rapid change in their combat methods, following a single will according to the developments on the battlefields, and so solve the fighting tasks in a modern war.

To make an army regular means to provide it with a homogeneous organization through statutes, regulations and orders so as to give it a uniform activity, to strengthen its organized, centralized, scientific character, to get resolute and single-minded action and close coordination between the various parts of an army in a war. Regularization goes along with the working out of statutes, regulations and orders, and their implementation.

The revolutionary army, like the armies of the exploiting classes, must be made into a regular army. However, owing to their diametrically opposed political nature, this process is completely different in *its goal, content and methods.* For the armies of the exploiting classes, the goal is to serve their reactionary political designs ; all their statutes and regulations reflect the anti-revolutionary nature and the unequal internal relations in these armies. They are based on an enforced and rigid discipline, orders must be blindly obeyed. It is quite the opoposite with the building of a regular revolutionary army. Its goal is to serve the lofty political ends of the revolution ; all its statutes and regulations reflect the revolutionary nature of the army, the finest principles of building a new-type army. They are based on the political consciousness, the self-imposed discipline, the initiative and creative spirit of

the officers and men for their implementation. It is this fine political base which enables a regular revolutionary army to surpass an army of the exploiting classes.

In the past years, the promulgation, revision and perfection of rules and regulations have had a great impact on the building of our army. The regulation of military service, commissioned and non-commissioned officers' service and military grades, rules concerning internal organization, military formation, military police, military discipline, fighting regulations, the work of the general staff, political work and logistics.. .have contributed to reinforce centralization, intensify the army's regular character and raise its fighting strength. In the main, these rules and regulations have become a more and more faithful reflection of the revolutionary nature of our army ; they embody our Party's military thinking, its military line and art, and its principles for the building of the army in conformity with the specific conditions of our army and our country. The realities of the war have helped us make the necessary additions and corrections and have provided us with rich experience in working out rules and regulations. Basing ourselves on the constantly evolving situation and our army's task of building and fighting we must *go on studying and improving these rules and regulations so that they are a better instrument* for the task of building a regular army at present and in future. This system must encompass all the activities of our army, namely :

— Important regulations reflecting the general policies and directives of the Party and Government on the task of building the army and consolidating national

defence, which should have the force of law with regard to our army and entire people.

– Rules on the establishment and equipment of the army, of its arms and services, serving as bases by which the organization of the army may be unified.

– Regulations on internal affairs, military formation, military police, military discipline, serving as bases for the organization of the regular army.

– Fighting regulations of the army, its arms and services aimed at defining the basic operational methods of the men, the sections and army corps.

– Orders on staff work, political work, logistics, education and the work of various branches.

According to our view, no amount of rules and regulations however elaborate, can encompass all the requirements of practice. The regulations only give a basic orientation for the activities of the army, they do not solve all the problems, in any place, at any time. Therefore, while stressing the strict implementation of regulation, we must constantly *promote the creative* spirit and resourcefulness of officers and men and avoid stereotyped answers and mechanistic thinking.

The content of the regulations reflects experience and the fighting and building needs of the army at a given time and in given conditions. Our army's practice of building and fighting, its own capacities in various fields, as well as those of the enemy and military science and art are constantly evolving. Therefore, *regulations must be continually amended and developed* to give a new vitality and to be a more effective guide for the army in all its practical activities.

On the basis of drafting and gradually perfecting these rules and regulations we must continue to *push ahead with the work of education within the army for their strict implementation.* The implementation of rules and regulations must first of all rely on the officers' and men's spirit of organization and discipline, then it must be gradually built into routine and behaviour to become a new habit, the habits of the working class engaged in modern production, and not the habits of small producers engaged in scattered, unregulated handicraft production.

A problem of utmost importance for the rapid building of a regular army is to heighten the *spirit of organization and discipline* of the army. Lenin stressed that the building of a *strict military discipline and a thorough implementation of all orders and decisions* is of the utmost importance to heighten the regular character and the fighting strength of the Red Army. As Lenin pointed out : "The army must have a most vigorous discipline."[1] "We must turn the commanding organs from top to bottom into steel arms which will execute combat orders at any cost."[2]

The discipline of our army is the *strict self-imposed discipline* of a revolutionary army. This discipline reflects the revolutionary nature and the principles of ideological and organizational building for an army of the working class. It is a genuine iron discipline, a new-

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1. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Russian edition, Political Literature State Publishing House, Fourth edition, 1950-Vol. 29, p.226.

2. Lenin, *Military Correspondence* (1917-1920) Military Publishing House, Soviet Defence Ministry, 1956, p. 30.

type discipline, a truly firm discipline unknown to any army of the exploiting classes.

Under the Party's leadership and during the long process of building and fighting, our army has acquired a fine tradition of revolutionary discipline. This tradition of discipline has always been an important factor for all the victories of our army.

However, there are not only strong points in this discipline. Our army was born and has grown up in an backward agricultural country in the first steps of socialist building, in which the attitudes of small-scale production are still strong in all fields of social and human life. Moreover, it has matured in the fire of a protracted revolutionary war. Starting from scratch, it has developed while waging guerilla warfare and then regular warfare, operating on many battlefields and fighting for decades under the hardest, most exacting conditions... Therefore, besides their good points which are fundamental, our officers and men also have thoughts, habits and ways of living unsuited to the high spirit of organization of a modern army. We do not have as yet a very high level of military discipline conforming to the new developments in organization and equipment, and thoroughly adapted to the increasingly heavy and complex tasks of fighting and building our army.

Hence, we must continue to inculcate in our army *the role and requirement of discipline* for a regular and modern army ; we must bring about a *drastic change in the spirit of organization and discipline as well as in the administration of the army,* so that the entire army strictly implements all the rules and regulations

and thoroughly carries out all commands and instructions from superior authorities.

The problem we are facing is how to turn a people's army, a revolutionary army into a regular army. That is why in the course of this process, we must satisfactorily solve the relations between concentration and democracy, between the leadership of the Party committee and the role of the commander, the solidarity between the officers and the men, between the higher and the lower echelons. We must closely combine ideological work with organizational work, closely link education and persuasion to serious training and administration, combine voluntariness with imperative duty ; and distribute just rewards and punishments. We must promote the spirit of responsibility, of collective mastery among all officers and men as regards the administration of discipline and the implementation of rules and regulations. In this matter, the example given by the officers and their level of organization and administration bear a very high significance.

Along with regularization we must continue to concern ourselves with *the modernization of our army*. This is one requirement which has the character of a law as regards the raising of our army's fighting strength at a time when our people have begun to build socialism and the material-technical base of large-scale socialist production, especially now when world science and technique has reached a very high level bringing great and rapid changes in the equipment and technique of armies. Thanks to modernization, our army will have

an increasingly high equipment and technique to hold its own against any aggressor.

Modernization implies continual change of *equipment and technique for the army, development of technical arms and services, better use of new weapons and war means by officers and men.* It also implies the *building of a modern national defence industry and the expansion of a modern system of communications* for the army to operate in conditions of modern warfare. When modern equipment and technique are added to a sound political nature and good scientific organization, the fighting strength of our army will develop in leaps and bounds. The new man in the people's army must have ardent patriotism, thorough socialist consciousness, high spirit of organization and discipline, and modern military knowledge.

Relying on the achievements of the technical revolution in the socialist building of the North over the past years, and on the help of the fraternal socialist countries, our army has got a material and technical base stronger than ever before. Our infantry has been equipped with very modern weapons. The arms and services of our army — ground forces, air force, navy, artillery, anti-aircraft defence, armoured units, engineering units, chemical units, signal service, transport service, have been equipped with modern weapons and war means. Along with the development of arms and services, a system of technical bases has come into being. Our officers and men have made notable progress in the use of modern weapons and war means in the specific conditions of the Vietnamese

battlefield. It is clear that since the later stages of the resistance against French aggression our army has made great strides ahead as regards modernization. The great victories of our army in the patriotic resistance against US aggression cannot be separated from these new developments in equipment and technique.

However, these are only first steps. Compared with the armies of many countries in our camp and in the world, the level of modernization of our army is still low. Between our army and the enemy there still exists a discrepancy in equipment and technique. Our present patriotic resistance against US aggression as well as the defence of our country in the future require still greater efforts in modernization. This is the task and also the aspiration of our army and our people.

We must build a *modern army suited to the specific conditions and perfectly adapted to the national defence requirements of our country*. Therefore, we must hold firm to the Party's political economic and military lines, and, through an understanding of the resources and specific conditions of our country, the characteristics of our enemy and the balance of forces between him and us, the military art of people's war and the direction of development of military science and technique in the world, work out a creative solution of the problems involved in the modernization of our army.

We must keep on making improvements in the equipment and technique of our army to make it modern or relatively modern, so as to increase its firepower, impact and mobility. To this end, we must have a firm base in the development of our economy

and make the most of the help of the fraternal socialist countries so as to speed up our army's modernization.

A modern army in our times must include many arms and services. Therefore, we must *establish a well balanced range of arms and services suitable for our needs.* At present and for a relatively long period in the future, the ground forces will still remain the main arm of the Viet Nam People's Army ; in the ground forces, the infantry is the main service, while artillery is the main firepower. We will continue to strengthen our air force, anti-aircraft defence, navy, armoured units, engineering units, signal units, chemical units, and transport units, to establish fighting services as well as support services in a rational way so that the technical arms and services make up an increasing proportion of our army's administrative structure. and improve their impact in the coordinated operations of modern warfare. Our army must be ready to defeat the enemy both while he uses conventional weapons and if he recklessly uses nuclear weapons.

To make its full impact in a war, a modern army must have good technique and good communications. Therefore, on the basis of a close coordination between the needs of national defence and those of the economy and between the building of a rear for the State and a rear for the army, we must speed up the building of a national defence industry and a system of communications adapted to the fighting requirement of our army and the specific conditions of our country.

This national defence industry must be able to make all sorts of repairs, turn out spare parts and additional

parts to improve equipment and war material according to the tactical requirements ; at the same time, it must strive to turn out certain categories of weapons and war material according to our means. We must continually expand the system of communications including roads, railways, waterways and airways, closely combine militarily important communication lines with economically important ones, and central communications with local ones to contribute to the mobility of a modern army under all circumstances.

The modernization of an army is a long process. It depends on the development of the building of the material and technical bases for socialism. Hence, on the basis of a close coordination with the economic and cultural development plans we must have *a long-term plan for the modernization of the army,* so as to define the orientation and the great objectives underlying the training of cadres, scientific and technical research, basic construction, etc. At the same time, we must have short-term plans to deal with specific objectives, thus advancing our army step by step.

A people's army includes a regular army and regional forces. The latter have a very important strategic role in a people's war. Therefore, while building our people's army, we pay equally *great attention to both.*

Owing to the Party's correct policy, in the patriotic resistance against US aggression the regional forces have undergone new developments in organization, equipment, level of fighting and command... especially in the case of the forces which have had to deal with the enemy's war of destruction like the air-defence forces, artillery, engineering units... Many provinces, towns,

districts and industrial zones have anti-aircraft units which shot down many US planes, artillery units which set fire to US vessels, sapper units which kept the traffic open, infantry units which rapidly disposed of enemy commando groups and satisfactorily fulfilled their fighting tasks. With a new fighting strength, the regional forces are making themselves ready, together with the other armed forces, to thwart all military adventures by the US imperialists and defend the land. It is clear that, compared with the regular army in the later stage of the resistance against French aggression, the regional forces are now more developed in certain fields. This has helped increase the power of people's war in the regions. This fact shows the correctness of the decision to strengthen the regional forces, provide them with necessary services, and equip them with a number of modern weapons and war means, thus *gradually making them regular and modern.*

The building of regional forces must be carried out according to the principles and orientations defined above as regards the building of the people's army. However, as their fighting task, the character of their action, their operational methods are somewhat different from those of the regular army, and as their action is linked to the locality, we must *apply the principles and orientations for the building of the people's army in a way suitable to their needs.* The building of regional forces must be based on the characteristics of each locality, its military position, its fighting task, its capacities in manpower and economy, its topography, the situation of the enemy in the region... For each province, town, district, industrial zone... the size,

composition, equipment, fighting method of its regional forces cannot be patterned after those of the regular army, nor can they be the same with all localities.

Even in the case of the regular army, when we carry out its regularization and modernization, we must pay enough attention to the characteristics of the fighting tasks and the operational methods of different forces acting on different battlefields to define the most suitable composition, organization, equipment and way of life of the troops avoiding all mechanical attemps at uniformity.

For the regularization of the regional forces, we must *pay even more attention to the specific conditions and characteristics of the locality*. Regularization must be concrete and reflect the necessity of unity and centralization at the same time as the unavoidable differences between the various regions. It is gross error to rely on the characteristics of the locality and disregard the requirements of unity and centralization, the spirit of organization and discipline, to neglect the implementation of the rules and regulations in the regional forces ; inversely, it is incorrect to carry out unity and centralization in a uniform and mechanical way. On our road to modernization, we must also define its concrete requirements, ably use appropriate weapons and war means, and closely combine modern weapons and war means with relatively modern and rudimentary ones. Experience shows that up-to-date weapons unsuited to the locality are inefficient ; appropriate weapons. though less modern may have a great effect. *To defeat the enemy to fulfil the role of the regional forces as the backbone, the strike force of the armed struggle in*

the regions, and to successfully implement all tasks, these are our aims in the implementation of the principles for the buiding of the regional army.

At present, the provinces, cities and industrial zones in the North have a fairly large area with a population reaching 1—2 million for some. Together with the development of the centrally-run economy, our Party has advocated the development of regional economies, the building of provinces, cities and industrial zones into increasingly strong economic units. We must closely combine economy with national defence in each locality, build provinces, cities and industrial zones strong in all fields to serve as basic strategic units of people's war in the region. The victory of the socialist revolution and building of socialism in each region as well as in the whole North has been creating increasingly great possibilities in all fields for the building and development of the regional forces.

Confronted with the need to intensify military work in the regions so as to contribute a worthy share to frustrating all military adventures of the US imperialists, defending the socialist North and fulfilling the duty of the great rear to the great front, we must *actively advance the building of regional forces.* The regional forces must *include not only a sizable permanent force but also strong, well-organized, and well-trained reserves* ready to make a rapid development of their forces when need be. We must have strong infantry units ; moreover, there must be necessary services equipped with modern and relatively modern weapons and war means, well trained and having a creative

fighting method, a high mobility, and a prodigious fighting strength. The regional forces must excel in regular warfare and in guerilla warfare, closely coordinate with the militia and self-defence units, while standing ready to coordinate with the regular army to exterminate the enemy and defend the localities.

With strong regional forces adapted to the conditions and fighting requirements of each locality, with strong and ubiquitous militia and self-defence units closely combined with the people's armed security units, the *people's regional armed forces* in the socialist North will acquire a new and mighty fighting strength, and people's war in the localities will take on new and tremendous possibilities.

To make a success of building regional armed forces in particular and regional military work in general, we must pay attention to *strengthening the leadership of Party committees at all levels over regional military work, consolidating regional military organs, and forming a contingent of regional military cadres.* Regional military organs must be strengthened to fulfil the military tasks of each locality and to serve as general staff for the local Party committees in intensifying military work in the regions ; they must guide and command the regional forces in their building and fighting ; and they must guide the people's armed forces in the regions.

We must raise the level of leadership over regional military work, keep abreast of the present and future requirements of national defence in the regions and of

the increasingly great capacities of regional economic construction and development.

For the army to master modern equipment and technique, to have a full understanding and a skilful application of the principles of military art, and possess a high fighting capability, due attention must be paid to *military training*. This is a very important routine work in the building of an army in peace time as well as in war time, one of the decisive problems to raise the fighting quality and military preparedness of an army.

As training is aimed at defeating the enemy, it must *be adapted to the military task and line, to the requirement of militay art, and to the real situation of the enemy and ourselves in each period*. We must be imbued with these principles : to educate the army in everything required by the war, to give comprehensive training to the army in fighting will, spirit of organization and discipline, fighting behaviour, technique, tactics, physical strength... ; to raise the level of this overall training and relate it to real fighting conditions, to promote a spirit of offensive, determination and courage and the resourcefulness of officers and men in all their fighting actions.

To adapt ourselves to the requirements of modern warfare, by gaining a complete mastery over the operational thought and the military art of our army, we must *train our officers and men to understand and make perfect use of all modern equipment and techniques ; to understand and skilfully apply operational and tactical principles and the principles of organization and command in the coordinated operations of various*

arms and services. We must train our army in *many fighting methods :* it must be good in offensive as well as in defensive action, in mobile as in siege warfare, in coordinated as in isolated operations ; in fighting on various scales, terrains and in different climates and circumstances. Our army must be ready to defeat the enemy whether they use conventional weapons or recklessly resort to nuclear or chemical weapons.

To win coordinated operations, our army must be strong in its *entire structure,* from top to bottom, from commanding organs to basic units, at all levels, in all branches and sections. Therefore, we must satisfactorily train each man, section and army corps ; each commanding organ, fighting unit and support unit. We must take great care of the *training of officers and commanding organs,* and build strong and seasoned basic units.

We must continually make our army aware of the evolution of the enemy's overall situation and ready to frustrate all his new operational schemes. We must pay particular attention to studying and creatively developing the rich fighting experiences of our army while selectively learning from the experience of the armies of the fraternal socialist countries.

In war time or in peace time, it is very dangerous to be complacent over one's victories and neglect one's military art. Hence, we must closely combine training with the *study of military science, ceaselessly develop* and perfect our military art, pay utmost attention to summing up our training experience and improving its content and methods, thus enabling our army to make continuous improvements in its excellent military art and great fighting strength to defeat the enemy.

To fulfil the task of building a regular and modern people's army, a key problem is to form an *officers' corps which is capable and strong in every field.*

This officers' corps must have a high quality and sufficient numbers, it must meet the increasingly great requirements of the revolutionary task and reflect the constant growth of our army, making up a solid nucleus with abundant reserves and replacements. This officers' corps must have a comprehensive and well-balanced composition including leading and command cadres, professional and technical cadres, cadres in the general staff and at the level of the base, cadres in the regular and regional army and cadres for the permanent army and for the reserve force ; it must meet the peace time as well as the war-time needs, at present and in the future, of our army's various arms and services.

To form such an officers' corps, we must first of all master and strictly implement the *Party's line on cadres.* This is the line on cadres of the working class. The working class nature of the officers' corps is one of the fundamental contents of this line. The degree to which this problem is solved or not has a great bearing on the maintenance and development of our army's revolutionary nature, on its firmness and constancy in all situations, on the raising of its spirit of revolutionary offensive and heroism. Whatever the situation we must grasp the Party's line on cadres and strictly implement the class orientation and political criterion set by the Party in each stage of development of the revolution. We must constantly master the principle that, so long as there are classes, wars and armies, the problem

of the class character of the officers' corps of the armed forces must not be neglected at any price.

As cadres of a revolutionary, regular and modern army, our officers must have a *firm political standpoint, a high political, military, professional and technical level, and an increasingly high cultural level. The quality of the officers must be achieved in their ability to fulfil all fighting and other tasks entrusted by the Party.*

First and foremost, our officers must be absolutely loyal to the Party, to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat and to the communist ideal, imbued with ardent patriotism, and devoted to the people and the Fatherland. They must have pure revolutionary feeling, a strong spirit of revolutionary offensive with determination to fight and to win and deep hatred of the enemy. They must fight valiantly, work tirelessly, possess a high spirit of organization and discipline, a good fighting and work style, self-denial in face of hardships and sacrifices, courage and stubbornness, resourcefulness and creative spirit to fulfil all tasks under any circumstances.

Our officers must strive to have a deep knowledge in political, military, scientific, technical and economic matters with an ability to lead and command, to organize and act. They must diligently study to master the Marxist — Leninist principles on war and the army, the Party's political and military line and its military science, and our nation's tradition and experiences of fighting. They must try to have a deeper understanding of their enemy, selectively and creatively learn from the experiences of the fraternal socialist

countries, and at the same time follow the new achievements of military science in the world. They must perseveringly strive to raise their cultural, scientific and technical level, their ability to administer and train their men, to lead and command and to organize coordinated operations of various arms and services.

The task of building a regular and modern people's army requires of our army a *corps of technically proficient and politically reliable cadres* to serve as the core in the use, management, improvement and invention of modern equipment and technique. This corps of technical cadres must include all necessary branches and varied professional qualifications : middle-level and high-level cadres, engineers-in-chief and research workers ; they must master modern science and technique and creatively apply them to find a satisfactory solution to the technical problems of our army while contributing to build our country's science and technique.

We must also have a *contingent of research workers* with a good knowledge of Marxism – Leninism, military science and the practice of the revolution and revolutionary war in our country, in order to serve as the nucleus for research work into the development of military theory and science.

We cannot speak of the cadres of the people's army without mentioning the contingent of *reserve officers,* whose important role is directly related to the position of the reserve force of the army in the war. That is why, at the same time as paying attention to the building of the contingent of cadres of the regular force, we must attach importance to building up the

force of reserve cadres. These must constitute a strong force with a high quality and sufficient quantity, a comprehensive and balanced structure capable at any time of meeting the need to broaden the army or any of its branches and services. It is necessary to take pains over the organization of demobilized armymen or armymen who have been transferred to civil services and, at the same time, to adopt a consistent training program for the reserve cadres, keep an efficient system of registration, census and mobilization in the various branches and services of the State, in the factories, in schools, and in the people's armed forces.

The law of development of the revolution as well as of the revolutionary armed forces requires that our Party *closely combine veteran officers with young officers*. While we must actively work to perfect the veteran and experienced officers we must make great efforts to train, perfect and boldly promote young cadres who have been steeled by combat and work, those who possess high revolutionary virtues and solid capabilities with the promise of a distinguished and long career in the army.

We must combine many measures in the building of a contingent of army cadres : training in combat and work, training and developing at school and in their existing job. At present, and in the future too, the *system of army schools* will play a very important role. We must strengthen, expand and consolidate the schools of the army which consist of the institutes, military colleges and full time and complementary schools of the various arms and services and military zones.

Along with the building of the regular, modern people's army, we must *endeavour to develop the armed forces of the masses as a numerous and powerful force.* We must expand the *militia and self-defence forces throughout the countryside* and the towns, making them into a very big force with continuously improved quality and combat strength, suited to the all-round development of our country in the building of socialism and to the ever higher combat requirement of the people's war, a war to defend our socialist fatherland in the conditions of the present time.

This force must be strong enough to serve as backbone for the entire people in the fight to defend the regions. It must give full scope to its role of a shock force in the economic development of the area and serve as a mighty reserve force for the people's army. This force must become a really steady and powerful basis for the national defence of the entire people and for the people's war. In combination with the people's army it must form a mighty armed force for the socialist State, capable of defeating the US imperialist aggressors at present as well as any eventual aggressor in the future and fulfilling any tasks entrusted by the Party and the people so as to firmly preserve the revolutionary gains and defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the fatherland.

To intensify the building of the armed forces of the masses in all circumstances, in time of war as well as in time of peace, is a *concentrated expression of the high revolutionary vigilance of our people.* In the present patriotic resistance against US aggression, this

task is necessary in order to contribute to the defence and building of the socialist North, defeating all war schemes and acts of the US imperialists. In the future, too, when the protracted and arduous resistance against the US aggressors has come to a victorious conclusion, when our people have regained complete independence and freedom and embark on national construction in peaceful conditions, and when the regular armed forces may be reduced, we will have to pay still greater attention to building up the armed forces of the masses in order to be ready to cope with all eventualities. We must closely combine economic construction with national defence, national construction with preparation to defend the fatherland.

As everyone of us knows, the armed forces of the masses are one of the two basic components of the military apparatus of our State. The militia and self-defence forces are one of the three categories of the people's armed forces. As a revolutionary armed organization of the Party, the militia and self-defence forces must be built along the same lines, viewpoints and general principle as the revolutionary armed forces. This is a question of position and principle which must be strictly observed. As an armed organization linked with production, being at the same time the army and the people, the militia and self-defence forces are not a regular armed force and, as such, are to be distinguished from the main force and the regional army which are regular armed forces. Only by firmly grasping the differences between the militia and self-defence forces and the people's army can we push forward the building of the armed forces of the masses and

give full scope to the important strategic role of the militia and self-defence forces.

The militia and self-defence forces are the broad armed forces of the masses giving a most concentrated and direct expression to the mass character of the military organization of the proletarian State, a character growing out of the emancipation of the working class, as Engels predicted. This is the armed force with the closest and most direct link with the political forces. Its combat strength directly stems from the force of the masses in the locality where it operates. That is why, in the building of the militia and self-defence forces, it is very important to broaden its numerical strength and mobilize to the highest extent the participation of the political force of its locality.

The militia and self-defence forces are an armed force not detached from production. They take a direct part in production as well as in combat to defend production and defend the lives and property of the local population. All military activities of the militia and self-defence forces are closely linked with the productive, economic and cultural activities in the locality. They draw their strength from the comprehensive strength of productive organization. In the countryside, the strength of the militia and self-defence forces is closely associated with the strength of the cooperatives. In the towns and industrial centres, their strength cannot be dissociated from the all-round strength of the factories, enterprises, construction sites, etc. That is why, in the building of the militia and self-defence force, we must always *closely combine the requirements of production with those of combat, and economic with national defence requirements.* Any departure

from this principle would make it impossible to build efficient militia and self-defence forces and would deprive the latter of their combat strength.

The militia and self-defence forces is the armed force most closely and directly linked with the base and locality. They are the main instrument of violence of the people's administration at the grassroots level, organized, led and built up by the local Party organization in the specific conditions and circumstances of each locality and each base area, and growing and fighting on the spot. The fighting capacity of any militia or self-defence force is reflected in its capacity to fulfil its combat and production tasks right in its base area and its own locality. In the building of the militia and self-defence forces it is necessary to proceed from the requirements and tasks of combat and production in each locality and each base area and from the practice of the locality and base area in its political, economic, military and geographical conditions in order to work out appropriate directives and measures and avoid uniformity and mechanical attitudes.

The chief combat method of the militia and self-defence forces consists of scattered, small, guerilla-type actions, clinging to the people and sticking to the land, fighting the enemy right in their productive base and living area. They decimate the enemy force unceasingly by attacking and wiping out small enemy units, directly protecting and defending the lives and property of the local population. That is why the building of the militia and self-defence forces cannot be a simple carbon copy of the method of building the main force and regional army which are concentrated armed forces

operating according to a concentrated and regular combat method, though to different degrees.

The militia and self-defence forces in North Viet Nam at present are built on the basis of a socialist system which is continuously being strengthened and developed. Therefore, we must have a firm understanding of the characteristics of the socialist system in terms of the production relations, class structure, etc., in order to give full play to the superiority of the new system on the politico-moral and organizational fields, and make full use of the new capacities offered by the material and technical bases, as well as by the all-round development of the new man among the working class and collective farmers in order to push forward vigorously with the building of the militia and self-defence forces.

First of all, it is necessary to expand to the fullest extent the *numerical strength* of the militia and self-defence force. This is a permanent requirement of the task of building the armed forces of the masses. Lenin has pointed out : "The victory of the revolution depends on the number of the proletarian masses and the peasants standing up to defend the revolution."[1]

Relying on the superiority of the socialist system, we have the full capacity to organize the broadest masses of the people into local combat or combat service organizations and raise still higher the proportion of the population who are members of the militia and self-defence forces making the militia and self-defence

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1. Lenin, *Articles and Speeches on Military Problems*, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, Vol. I, p. 351

forces really become the broad military organization of the labouring people. It is our policy to give general military education to the people with a view to preparing militarily, to a necessary and appropriate level, all our people, young and old, men and women, so that they may realize their desire of participating in the fight against the aggressors to defend the country. We shall see to it that the aggressors, if they are reckless enough to launch an all-out war of aggression against our country, will meet the riposte of not only a few hundreds of thousands or some millions but of tens of millions of people, of our entire people, from the mountains to the plains, from the midlands to the coastal areas, from the countryside to the towns, who will, like one man, stand firmly at their posts closely coordinating with the people's army to hit back at the adversary anywhere, using whatever means and weapons available.

But the strength of the armed forces of the masses in the socialist system consists not only in their numerical strength but also in their quality. That is their organizational spirit, the level of their equipment and their operational methods and, in the first place, their *political and moral strength*. That is why it is necessary to firmly grasp the principle of the Party concerning the building of the revolutionary armed forces and apply it to the building of the militia and self-defence forces. We must unceasingly strengthen and intensify the Party leadership of the militia and self-defence forces, attach special importance to political work and firmly master the class line and political criteria as regards the organization of the militia and

self-defence force in order to keep it as efficient and reliable instrument of proletarian dictatorship at the base level. The level of political consciousness of the militia and self-defence forces is in direct proportion to that of the labouring people. The political and ideological education of the militia and self-defence forces is inseparably linked with the political and ideological education of the entire labouring people in the locality and in the base and must be jointly carried out by the Party organization, the various mass organizations and State offices, production bases and military organs in the locality. As far as the content of this education is concerned, apart from the common requirements for every citizen, it is necessary to teach the militia and self-defence forces the task of the revolutionary armed forces in general and the militia and self-defence forces in particular. They should have a clear understanding of the military task of the locality, heighten their revolutionary vigilance, their determination to defend the country and their readiness to fight and endure sacrifices to protect the lives and property of the people right in the villages and hamlets, in the streets, in the cooperatives and factories so as to defend the people's power, defend the locality and develop their sense of being the collective masters in the defence and building of the country.

In the *organizational sphere*, we must pay attention to building the militia and guerillas in the countryside and in the cooperatives as well as to building the self-defence forces and combat self-defence units in the towns and industrial centres, on the construction sites,

in State farms, public offices and schools. As the development of socialist construction advances, the industrial centres and new economic centres are becoming more and more important and accordingly the percentage of workers, cadres, public servants and urban workers among the population is rising unceasingly. At the same time, profound changes are also taking place in the countryside, with the agricultural cooperatives becoming more and more consolidated with regard to the production relations and strengthened in their material and technical bases and the class of collective farmers growing and maturing more and more. This situation determines the ever more important role of the self-defence forces and the militia. At the same time, it gives importance to the need to *build the self-defence forces along with the building of the militia*. The self-defence forces must correctly reflect the general development and fighting strength of the working class and working people in the towns, just as the militia must correctly reflect the general development and fighting strength of the class of collective farmers, of the socialist countryside in North Viet Nam.

Our country is endowed with mountainous regions, the midlands and the plains and coastal areas. We have a vast countryside and also towns and industrial centres. Each area has its own important position in the political, economic and national defence spheres, its peculiarities in the fields of geography, population, customs and habits and also its own potential different from the other areas. We must base ourselves on the regional peculiarities to work out the *appropriate tasks*

and orientation of the building of the armed forces of the masses. Different policies and orientations must be applied to the mountainous region and the plains, to the coastal areas and the hinterland, to the countryside and the towns and industrial centres or along the strategic communication lines.

Only in this way can the militia and self-defence forces in any locality make full use of the specific potentialities of its area in manpower, equipment, weapons and supply, in order to build *seasoned local units, skilled in fighting and serving the fight in the special conditions of each locality.* These will serve as a spearhead for a vigorous development of the people's war at the grassroots level and as the shock force in the building and development of the local economy.

The militia and self-defence forces are charged with military duty as well as productive tasks or any other task in every aspect of the activity of the State machine. That is why, in building the militia and self-defence forces, we must take into full account the specific conditions of the production activity, work, study and life of the people and rely on the production bases : production brigades, cooperatives, factories, construction sites, State farms, public offices, schools, communes, villages, and street quarters. Only so can we ensure that the activities of the militia and self-defence forces are *closely combined with combat, production and work* in all circumstances, in time of war as well as in time of peace.

We must exploit to the fullest extent the existing and ever increasing capacities of the various sectors of

the national economy and other branches of social life, and we must *make a rational organization and use of the militia and self-defence forces* in these branches in order to raise its combat capacity and ensure its readiness to fight and give combat support. During the war of resistance to the US war of destruction, there have taken shape in a number of towns and industrial centres various self-defence organizations in different branches such as the engineering service, building, land and river communication, postal and medical services and the other branches of activity both on land and on water. Experience has shown that if we know how to make the best use of the existing technical and specialized capacities of each branch, we will be able to *divide the militia and self-defence forces into different categories with different tasks and on this basis to lay down the direction for their correct building and use and the correct organization and rational distribution* of work among them. In this way, the armed forces of the masses will be provided with a new, very great, potential, able to meet the new requirements of modern war, to achieve effective combination with the regional army and the regular army and to replenish the various services and arms of the people's army.

With regard to the *equipment*, proceeding from the requirements of combat and the different types of terrain, we are resolved to gradually *equip the guerilla and combat self-defence forces with a number of appropriate relatively modern weapons and war means while not losing sight of the necessity to develop the primitive and improved weapons*. The goal of the

technical revolution in the North is to build a new material and technical basis of socialism and turn handicraft work into mechanized labour. At present the watchword "equip ourselves with whatever we have" no longer has the same content as it had in the past. If, in the past, for the militia and self-defence forces, this slogan chiefly meant the equipment of this force with primitive weapons, today it is more and more associated with the adoption of modern technique. With the new capabilities of the localities, we must pay due attention to making the fullest use of the existing relatively modern or modern weapons in the localities to equip the core of the militia and self-defence forces. However, we should in no way slight primitive or improved weapons and means. As has been clearly demonstrated by the long practice of war in our country, the primitive and improved weapons and equipment have proved very effective and created a very big force enabling them to take part in the destruction of the enemy by multiform and imaginative ways, creating a self-defence war carried out in our own land. Moreover, no country, however advanced its industrial development, can arm the whole of its people. That is why, while the core of the people's armed forces is equipped with new and relatively more modern weapons and war means, the majority of the people still need to be equipped with primitive or improved weapons and means to fight against the enemy. Otherwise, the question of arming the entire people or arming the broad masses of the people will suffer.

It is necessary to continue stepping up the *building and development of technical teams, groups or units*

forming special branches in the militia and self-defence forces. This is a logical step of development in the raising of the combat capacity of the militia and self-defence forces in the conditions of modern warfare when the equipment of these forces is being unceasingly improved and strengthened and when our people are pushing forward with socialist industrialization and building the material and technical basis of socialism.

As a result of the correct policy of our Party, during the years of resistance against the US war of destruction there have appeared in the militia and self-defence forces many units of anti-aircraft machineguns and artillery, ground artillery, engineering, communications and anti-chemical warfare while many combat units have been equipped with mortars and some other modern weapons. The combat efficiency of the militia and self-defence forces as well as their capacity to serve the fight has been markedly improved. In many places, the militia and self-defence forces have by themselves shot down US aircraft, set fire to US warships, quickly annihilated commando groups of the enemy and expertly manned many modern or relatively modern weapons and war means, making important contributions to the detection and deactivation of modern US bombs and land or water mines. They have repaired and built roads, bridges, air bases, and other military projects and even produced some modern technical means for the anti-aircraft, missile, communication, engineering and naval units of the army. That reality allows us to affirm that the militia and self-defence forces in socialist North Viet Nam have the full capacity to make good use of the various types of

modern weapons and war means to fight the enemy and serve the fight. This capacity will increase in proportion to the ever rising cultural, technical and organizational level of our people, and is helped by the fact that we have a very big force of armymen who have been demobilized or transferred to civilian services. These are becoming the backbone of the armed forces of the masses in all parts of the country and include officers and men who have served in various arms and services of the people's army.

We must pay great attention to the *military training* of the militia and self-defence forces and the entire people. Proceeding from our methods of conducting war and our military art, from the combat requirements of the localities in different conditions of the war, from our enemies in the field, from the reality of the organization, equipment and the productive activities and work of the militia and self-defence forces, it is necessary to make elaborate studies in order to *determine the most appropriate content of the training programme and the method of training for the militia and self-defence forces.* The training programme must ensure that the militia and self-defence forces have a spirit of offensive, firmly grasp the guidelines for combat as well as the combat methods of guerilla warfare in modern conditions, and possess a high technical and tactical level commensurate with the combat requirements in each locality. We must ensure that the militia and self-defence forces have a perfect knowledge of their locality, a high capacity for independent fighting and also the capacity to achieve close coordination with

the other armed forces operating in the locality. The military training programme for the militia and self-defence forces must be linked to their production activities. Whenever possible, we should combine the raising of the combat capabilities of the militia and self-defence forces and their capacity to serve the fight with the raising of their production technique. We must seriously regard the way in which the militia and self-defence forces fight the enemy as an art and an important content of our military science, and hence pay due attention to summing up the combat experiences of the armed forces of the masses in both zones of the country. We should carry out studies in order to build and develop unceasingly the art of fighting the enemy practised by the masses' armed forces in our country.

Hand in hand with training the militia and self-defence forces, and the reserve force, we must give *importance to military education in the Party and step up popular military education among the people.* To foster the military traditions of the nation for the defence of the country over many centuries of independence, our forefathers made use of many different competitions to encourage the people to improve their military art such as contests in military arts, wrestling contests, archery competitions, etc. Today we must continue this tradition. In the years to come we shall promulgate general military education among the people in order to raise their sense of national defence, improve the military standard and develop the military traditions among the entire people. We must vigorously

develop *the movement of military sports and physical culture*, and endow it with an ever richer content commensurate with the requirements of the people's war in our country in present-day conditions. *It is necessary to have a wide dissemination of military knowledge* among the people in varied forms appropriate to different age groups most of all for the young men and women. At the same time we must gradually develop mass organizations for military study and research, such as aviation, communication, chemical clubs, etc., while stepping up the *movement to establish sworn-brotherhood relations* between mass organizations and army units.

A modern regular army must necessarily have a well-organized and strong reserve force. The armed forces of the masses form an inexhaustible reserve of the people's army. *The building and administration of the reserve force is of* paramount importance in time of war because this is the force of replenishment for the army, and in time of peace because it will prepare the country to cope with all contingencies. The reserve force must be well organized both numerically and qualitatively in order to meet the need to expand the force and replenish the infantry and the other services and arms of the people's army. We must work out sound policies, systems and plans for the building and administration of the reserve force regarding the registration and administration of the demobilized armymen and those who have been transferred to civilian services

but are still able to serve in the reserve force. We must work out plans for military exercise and mobilization so that when necessary we can quickly restore and expand our armed forces. It is necessary to have an *appropriate training programme* to keep the officers and men of the reserve force always abreast with the development of a modern army and modern military science and help them give full scope to their role of core of the regional armed forces and to serve in the army when necessity arises. We must pay particular attention to the management and training of a reserve force among state employees and college students. We must see to it that in the future we can determine which reserve force in what branch and locality will best replenish such and such military branch and service and such and such armed force in a given locality. For instance, reserve military engineering units should be formed within the building service, signal units within the posts and telecommunications service, medical units within the public health service, naval units within the economic branches operating on the river, in the sea and among the population of coastal or riverine areas... In this way, the officers and men newly assigned to a unit can quickly receive and master the techniques and speciality of the military arm or service to which they are detailed. Later on after a reservist is demobilized and returns to his former civil occupation he would become the nucleus of the popular armed forces at his workplace and be able to give full scope to his technical abilities and his special

knowledge to boost production and raise his work efficiency. This will be very beneficial to both fighting and construction, to both national defence and economy, in time of war and in time of peace alike.

To arm the masses, in the view of our Party, does not only mean to organize, educate, train and equip the broad masses of the people but also to actively *build the rear in all aspects – political, economic and national defence – to build solid platform for the people's war at the base and in the localities.*

The strength of the rear of the people's war throughout North Viet Nam as well as in each locality depends on the successes of our people in socialist construction. That is why, in order to build a strong rear, we must strive our hardest to implement the triple revolution[1], carry out an active consolidation of the regions politically, make them prosperous economically and strong militarily. While promoting the building of the regional economy, we must have *plans to have a close coordination between the need for economic construction and the need for strengthening national defence in all branches* : agriculture, industry, communications and transport, posts and telecommunications, health and cultural services, building service...

It is necessary to speed up the building of *fighting villages, fighting street quarters and fighting areas,*

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1. The revolution in relations of production, the technical revolution, and the cultural and ideological revolution. (Ed.)

forming them into a comprehensive system in order to stand prepared to meet all contingencies of war while ensuring facilities for normal production activities and the people's life in peace time. These must be solid offensive and defensive positions for our three categories of armed forces and steady bases from which the people will fight the enemy and carry on production at the same time in the conditions of a fierce war.

Preparations must be made to provide against the worst should the enemy use nuclear weapons. The building of fighting communes, fighting villages and fighting street quarters must be made on a *comprehensive basis*. We must have a strong Party organization, a mighty political force of the masses, a powerful militia and self-defence forces. We must have plans to improve the terrains of battle, and work out operational plans and training programmes for regional armed forces as well as the entire population. We must make effective preparations to turn each hamlet, each village and each street quarter into a really strong bastion of the people's war at the grassroots level and turn each province into a strategic unit of the national defence of the entire people.

In the building of the armed forces of the masses, along with the strengthening of the Party leadership at local level, and the guidance of the regional military organism, one question of prime importance is to build a strong and reliable *contingent of cadres for the masses' armed forces and the militia and self-defence forces.* This contingent must respond to the constant growth of the masses' armed forces in quantity and quality,

in organization and equipment, in combat methods... and respond to the ever bigger and more complicated task of consolidating national defence and conducting a people's war at the base level.

The cadres of the militia and self-defence force are military cadres not detached from production, doing their production task and military task at the same time, working and fighting in close connection with production activity and the people's life at the base level. We must pay special attention to their quality and have a firm understanding of the importance of *class orientation and political criteria* in the building of the contingent of cadres for the militia and self-defence forces. In addition to the common requirement in political standards for all cadres of the revolutionary armed forces, the cadres of the militia and self-defence forces must also have assimilated the political lines and tasks of the Party, the political economic and military task of the locality, and be strong in their determination to abide by all resolutions of the Party Committee and the instructions of the local administration as well as all instructions and orders of the superior military organs. They must have a necessary level of military knowledge, a comprehensive understanding of the political, economic and cultural situation in the locality and a thorough knowledge of the situation at the base, able to skilfully coordinate military with economic and other tasks. They must have the ability to help the local Party Committee in directing military affairs and to assume leading and commanding roles as well as to organize the fulfilment of the tasks of building, fighting, serving the fight, supplying the front, disseminating a

basic knowledge of military science among the population, building up the reserve force, carrying out the policy concerning the rear as well as all other activities for consolidating national defence in their localities.

It is through the revolutionary movements in the localities and through the practice of fighting and work that we shall choose the best men and women for the contingent of cadres. This selection should also be combined with the building of the Party and the mass organizations in the localities. It is necessary to make a rational division of work among the cadres, and actively create conditions for them to improve their standard in their respective areas of responsibility, accumulate experiences and develop to the fullest their abilities in the fulfilment of all tasks within the localities.

By firmly grasping and satisfactorily carrying out the above tasks, from the quick expansion of the militia and self-defence forces to the continuous raising of their quality in all fields – politics and ideology, organization, equipment, training, building the rear base, training the cadres – we will effectively carry out the teaching of venerated President Ho Chi Minh : *"Each citizen must be a valiant fighter, each commune, village or street quarter must be a bastion, each cooperative and enterprise must be a supply base for the people's war and, in this way, we will turn the whole of our country into a single battleground to wipe out any aggressor."*

By their victorious, heroic and imaginative fight against the most brutal aggressive forces – those of US imperialism – by their creative labour in building a new social system, our people are living the most exalting

days of their national history in the era of independence, freedom and socialism for the Vietnamese fatherland.

The present resistance against US aggression for national salvation makes us recall with justified pride and a high sense of responsibility the whole history of the glorious resistance of our nation against foreign aggressors, in particular the great and victorious resistance under the Tran dynasty. At that time, our people had to confront the Yuan Mongol aggressors, the most brutal enemy of our people in ancient times, the most ruthless aggressor of mankind in the Medieval period, who had trampled upon Asia and Europe, conquered an wiped out the names of many nations from the world map. Our people, fulfilling with flying colours their sacred national task, ushered in the period of the collapse of the Yuan Mongol Empire, making a worthy contribution to the fight of the other countries and nations at that time against foreign aggression.

Today, in the new era of human history inaugurated by the Great Russian October Revolution, in the Ho Chi Minh era in our country, our people, under the leadership of our Party, have again waged and are waging a glorious and victorious resistance, this time against US imperialism, the most brutal and strongest aggressor of our nation in modern history and also the enemy number one of the whole mankind. The anti-US war of resistance for national salvation is the most glorious and greatest of all resistance wars ever conducted by the heroic Vietnamese nation against foreign aggression. This resistance is being looked upon as the

focus, the front line of the world people's movement against US imperialist aggression.

Our people are clearly and fully conscious of our sacred national task and our noble international obligation. We have the necessary determination and strength to completely defeat the US aggressors, liberate the South, defend the North and proceed to the peaceful reunification of the country. This will mark a turning point in the historical process of the collapse of the US imperialist neo-colonialism, making a worthy contribution to the revolutionary struggle of the people all over the world.

The secret of our people's success in the 13th century, in the 20th century, as well as in the whole historical process of our victorious fight against aggressive forces much bigger and stronger than ourselves to survive and develop, lies actually in the fact that we have relied on the *patriotism of the entire people. We have given full play to the strength of the whole country, and mobilized the entire nation to rise up, to combine efforts of the whole country and the entire people in the resistance and wage an insurrection of the entire people and a people's war with the army and the armed forces of the masses as the core.*

General Tran Quoc Tuan's thought of "the whole nation joining forces" and his policy of "everyone a soldier" which dates back to the 13th century has not ceased to develop and to acquire an ever richer content, an ever higher quality and a growing strength. Today it reaches its peak with the great military thought of President Ho Chi Minh which consists in "uniting

the entire people", "the whole country fighting the aggressors" and "the 31 million of our compatriots being 31 million valiant fighters against the US aggressors".

Nowadays, our people are guided by the political, military and international line of our Party which is a judicious, independent, sovereign and creative line. We have a vanguard social system and an ever increasing politico-moral and technico-material force. Moreover, we enjoy the active assistance of the other countries in the socialist camp and the sympathy and support of the whole of progressive mankind. In the new era, we have the *invincible strength of the militant solidarity of the entire people, of the whole country, of the entire nation based on the worker-peasant alliance and placed under the leadership of the working class.* We have mighty political forces and armed forces. Our people's armed forces are composed of a regular and modern people's army and strong extensive armed forces of the masses. We are sure to accomplish our sacred national task and our noble international obligation.

The thought of "the whole nation joining forces", "everyone a soldier", "the whole people uniting", "the whole country fihgting against the aggressors", the organization of the army along the lines of "arming the entire people, combining the army with the popular armed forces" is an original feature of *Vietnamese military thought,* the military thought by which a small country can defeat bigger aggressors in its just fight for independence and freedom.

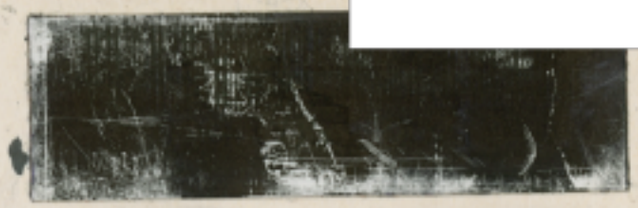
The principle of "arming the entire people, combining the people's army with the armed forces of the

masses and vice versa, making the armed forces of the masses the base of the people's army and making the people's army the core of the armed forces of the masses and building up the three categories of the people's armed forces" is a very important part of the policy of building the people's armed forces in particu lar and the military line of our Party in general, a very important part of Vietnamese military science in the present era. The determination of this organizational principle is a great and original work, a major success of our Party and people. Experience has shown that in the revolutionary struggle in general and in the armed struggle in particular, once we have a correct line, a correct resolution of the organizational problem is of primary importance for winning victory.

This principle of military organization is a precious weapon in the storehouse of national experience, especially for small nations subjected to aggression and enslavement who rise up and fight victoriously against imperialism and colonialism, for national independence, democracy and social progress. Whatever the circumstances this principle must be firmly grasped. We should closely follow the realities of society, war and the development of production, science and technology. We should learn actively but selectively from the experiences of the fraternal socialist countries and other nations in the world. In the process of the bitter struggle between us and the enemy we should always base ourselves on the concrete historical conditions and circumstances of each period to put into practice the Party military line and principles of military organization,

without ceasing to promote creativeness and development, without indulging in conservatism and self-complacency, while avoiding uniformity and mechanical attitudes in order to increase the fighting strength of our entire people, vigorously develop the Vietnamese people's war, steadily consolidate the national defence of the Vietnamese fatherland, and build ever mightier armed forces of the Vietnamese people.

Our people, our nation are resolved to forge ahead and win complete victory for the patriotic anti-US resistance in order to build a peaceful, reunified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam.

Our people, our nation will forever defend the beautiful land bequeathed by our forefathers and will forever safeguard the independence of our beloved Vietnamese motherland.

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