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Translation

VIETNAM: THE ANTI-U.S. RESISTANCE WAR FOR
NATIONAL SALVATION 1954-1975: MILITARY EVENTS



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Publisher's Introduction

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of our Party (3 February), our country's 35th National Day (2 September), and the 90th birthday of our beloved President Ho Chi Minh (19 May), the People's Army Publishing House presents to readers the book "Cuoc Khanh Chien Chong My, Cuu Nuoc (1954-1975): Nhung Su Kien Quan Su" [The Anti-U.S. Resistance War for National Salvation (1954-1975): Military Events], prepared by the War Experiences Recapitulation Committee of the High-Level Military Institute.

The authors of this book did not attempt to present a complete history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, for that is a major undertaking which will require the contributions of many sectors and echelons over the course of many years. As its title implies, the book deals only with the major military events and a number of important events in other relevant spheres. It is intended to reflect in a concise manner the principal historical phases of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, with the goal of contributing to serving the three major anniversaries in 1980.

However, despite those modest requirements, the meticulously researched and selected events that are presented systematically in the book are quite useful to the readers, for they help us better understand, in a general way, the developments of the resistance war and our people's great victory, and especially the skilled, creative leadership of our Party -- the decisive factor leading to that great victory. The organs, schools, and institutes can also find here good materials which can be of help in their research, teaching, and study.

Because of the current limitations regarding sources of materials as well as our ability to evaluate those materials, deficiencies could not be avoided. We respectfully await the contribution of opinions by readers, in order to create favorable conditions for the compilation in future years of complete works regarding the history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

Quan Doi Nhan Dan
Publishing House

Chapter I

From July 1954 to the End of 1960

The Southern Revolution Changes Over From the Status of a Political Struggle Demanding That the Other Side Observe the Geneva Agreements to the Status of Con-Serving Forces, Then to an Offensive Status Leading to Local Armed Uprisings, Beginning With the "Simultaneous Uprisings" Movement

1954

15 to 18 July: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee Holds its 6th Plenum.

The Party Central Committee met at a time when the anti-French resistance war was drawing to a close. On the battlefield we were winning one victory after another, while at the talks in Geneva the day on which the Agreements would be signed was close at hand.

At the plenary conference, President Ho Chi Minh read a political report on the new situation and mission.

Analyzing the situation in our country and abroad, the conference concluded that "The U.S. imperialists are a principal obstacle to the restoration of peace in Indochina" and "is becoming the principal direct enemy of the Indochinese people."

The conference decided that the struggle motto and strategy of the Vietnamese revolution in the coming phase would be "Pointing the sharp point of struggle against the U.S. imperialists and the French warmongers; on the basis of the victories that have been won and efforts to achieve peace in Indochina, smashing the U.S. imperialists' plot to prolong and expand the war; and consolidating and developing the accomplishments that have been won in order to achieve unification, complete the attainment of independence, and achieve democracy throughout the nation."

Determining at an early date that the U.S. imperialists were an object of the Vietnamese revolution was a very basic part of the Party line. The resolution of the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee had an extremely importance significance and reflected the class stand and the political astuteness of our Party, in order to concentrate the revolutionary forces in correctly attacking the enemy and attaining the basic objectives of the revolution.

20 July: The Geneva Agreements on Indochina signed.

The Agreement and Joint Declaration of the nations participating in the conference acknowledged respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, and stipulated that the French army had to withdraw from the Indochinese countries and that each country in Indochina would hold free general elections to achieve national unification.

With regard to Vietnam, the Joint Declaration stated explicitly that "The military demarcation line is temporary in nature and cannot be regarded as a political or territorial border" and stipulated that the deadline for organizing the general election to unify Vietnam was July 1956.

The success of the Geneva Agreements was a great victory of our army and people after 9 years of a protracted, arduous, but extremely heroic resistance war under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh.

It was also a great success of the people of the three Indochinese countries and the people of the world who struggled for peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism.

The Geneva Agreements were a strong blow against the plot of the U.S. imperialists to expand and prolong the Indochinese war. Those leading imperialists regarded the Geneva Conference as "a disaster," as "a major forward stride of communism which could lead to the loss of all of Southeast Asia." (From a secret Department of Defense document.)

The U.S. imperialists, with extremely insidious intentions, were unwilling to sign the Joint Declaration of the Geneva Conference. On the same day, 20 July 1954, the U.S. President Eisenhower cynically announced that "The United States will not sign the Geneva Agreements and will therefore not be bound by them."

22 July: President Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal on the occasion of the success of the Geneva Conference.

President Ho Chi Minh spoke of the great victory of our people in the resistance war against the French colonialists: "For the first time in history a small, weak colony has defeated a powerful colonial country. That was a glorious victory of the Vietnamese people and was also a victory of the forces of peace, democracy, and socialism in the world."

He confirmed the great merit of our compatriots in the south, who "are the first to go and the last to return" in great enterprise of defending the homeland. He pointed out that "Our compatriots in the South were the first to begin the resistance war and have a very high degree of consciousness. I am certain that our compatriots will place the benefit of the nation as a whole above the benefit of the locality, place the long-range benefit before the short-range benefit, and join their compatriots all over the nation in striving to consolidate peace, achieve unification, and complete the attainment of independence and democracy throughout the nation. The Party, the government, and I continually monitor the all-out efforts of our compatriots and it is certain that they will be victorious."

President Ho Chi Minh set forth the mission and long-range, arduous nature of the succeeding revolutionary phase: "Struggling to consolidate peace, achieve unification, and complete independence and democracy is also a long-range, arduous struggle. In order to win victory, all of our people, soldiers, and cadres from north to south must closely unite: their thoughts must be unified and their acts must also be unanimous."

He appealed for the people of the entire nation to unite in struggle to unify the nation: "I ardently appeal for all people who sincerely love their country, regardless of social stratum, religion, or political views, and regardless of which side they stood on in the past, to sincerely cooperate and, for the sake of the country, endeavor to achieve peace, unification, independence, and democracy in our beloved Vietnam. If the entire country is united, with ten thousand people acting as one, we are certain to be victorious."

5 to 7 September: The Political Bureau issues a Resolution on "The New Situation, the New Missions, and the New Policy of the Party."

After the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met and determined that our people's struggle had entered a new phase with new characteristics:

-- The first characteristic was that we had shifted over from war to peace: "During the past 8 years, all sacrifices and efforts of the Vietnamese people have been intended to win victory for the national liberation movement. Now, with the cessation of hostilities, we are working and striving in peace. That is a great change which greatly affects all of our work."

-- The second characteristic is that the North and South were temporarily divided into two regions: the North belonged to us, while the South was temporarily controlled by the other side. We were no longer in a state of war. That was a great, complicated change.

-- The third characteristic was that both the rural areas and cities in the North had all necessary conditions for undergoing construction on a national scale. That was also a major change.

-- The fourth characteristic was that we changed over from dispersion to concentration. In the past we had been engaged in a guerrilla war, but now the situation had changed, which required us to concentrate our leadership on constructing the North and guiding the work in the South. "That is a great change, and is also an arduous struggle."

-- The fifth characteristic was that the relationship among Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea had also changed. The relationship among the three countries had to be placed on a new basis.

With regard to the revolutionary mission in the new phase, the Resolution affirmed that "Our people's mission of struggling for national salvation has not yet been fulfilled, and the patriotic struggle has not ended because of the cessation of

hostilities. That struggle is still continuing, but the mode of struggle must change. We must complete the enterprise of national liberation under a new form of struggle."

Therefore, from then on, for a certain period of time the common mission of our Party would be to "Unite and lead the people in struggling to implement the ceasefire in order to consolidate peace; endeavor to complete the land reform, recover and increase production, and build up the People's Army in order to consolidate the North; and maintain and promote the political struggle of the people of the South to consolidate peace, achieve unity, and complete independence and democracy throughout the country."

The Resolution also observed that "At present, although there has been a ceasefire peace has not been consolidated, there is still a threat of war, and half of our country -- the South -- is still controlled by our adversaries. Especially, the international reactionary powers, led by the U.S. aggressors, are feverishly organizing the SEATO aggressor bloc to sabotage the ceasefire treaty in Indochina, in hopes of starting a new war of aggression. Therefore, strengthening the People's Army is a very important mission of the Party, the government, and all our people."

As for our work in the South, the Resolution affirmed that "The Party's mission in the South during the present phase is to lead the people in the South in struggling to implement the ceasefire, consolidating peace, achieving freedom and democracy, improving the people's living standards, achieving unification, and striving to win independence. At the same time, we must lead the people in struggling to oppose activities intended to terrorize, suppress, and destroy our bases and the arrest of our cadres and the revolutionary masses, and oppose the enemy's attacks and preserve the rights the masses won during the resistance war period, especially in our former base areas and guerrilla areas."

"Our motto at the present time is engaging in legal and semi-legal activities, and combining legal work with illegal work. As regards the mass organizations and Party organizations, we must endeavor to allow them to exist legally and to engage in legal activities."

The Resolution of the Political Bureau Conference of September 1954 is an important document. Just after the Geneva Agreements were signed the Political Bureau promptly set forth the direction of the missions and specific tasks of the entire Party, the entire population, and the entire army in the new phase, and established a basis on which to finalize the Party's revolutionary line in the future.

10 October: Hanoi, the capital, liberated.

According to the terms of the Geneva Agreements on 10 October 1954 the Vietnam People's Army took over control of the capital. Hanoi was liberated in a festive atmosphere of celebrating victory after more than 7 years of life under the control of the French colonialists. The public welfare activities, such as electricity, sanitation, trains, electric trams, etc., went on as usual. The people's living conditions were rapidly stabilized. That was the result of a resolute struggle on the part of our military delegation to the Joint Commission and of the spirit of

resolute struggle against sabotage by the enemy on the part of the people of Hanoi, among whom the working class played a vanguard role.

Hanoi was liberated after the victory of a struggle lasting nearly 100 years and after nearly 20 years of our people's fierce resistance war against the French colonialist aggressors.

On 1 January 1955, on the occasion of the new year, the people of Hanoi held a rally to celebrate the return of the Party Central Committee, the government, and President Ho Chi Minh to Hanoi after 8 years in the Viet Bac base zone leading the resistance war against the French colonialists.

In his speech at the rally, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed that "The North and the South form a single family; they are kith-and-kin and are inseparable. We must tighten the close bond between the South and the North," and that "We must achieve broad, close solidarity from North to South and must support our compatriots in the South, who are struggling to win freedom and democracy in correct accordance with the Geneva Agreements."

With the return of the leadership organs of the Party and state to the capital, Hanoi again became the political, economic, and cultural center -- and the heart -- of the nation, with two strategic missions in the South and North.

6 August: Ceasefire in Laos.

According to the terms of the Geneva Agreements on Indochine, beginning on 6 August 1954 there would be a ceasefire in the Laos war theater.

At the end of August 1954 the Pathet Lao troops came from all over the country to assemble in the two provinces of Sam Nua and Phong Saly.

In mid-November 1954 the volunteer Vietnamese troops who had operated in Laos during the anti-French resistance war completed their withdrawal to Vietnam.

Beginning in the final days of November 1954, the Laotian reactionaries mobilized troops to attack the assembly areas of the Pathet Lao, beginning with the attack on Muong Pon in Sam Nua Province. The struggle between the revolutionary forces and counterrevolutionary forces in Laos was resumed under new circumstances and new forms. In the past the Laotian revolutionary forces only had small units stationed in small base areas scattered about in many places, but now had a completely liberated area consisting of two provinces which bordered on the socialist bloc and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In the liberated area there was a central organ which led the revolution all over Laos and a revolutionary administration extending from the provincial level down to the village level. The Pathet Lao troops advanced to the creation of concentrated units at the battalion level, thus creating conditions for the future victories the Laotian revolution.

From that time on, in the struggle to advance to the fulfillment of the difficult missions of the revolutions of each country, the Laotian revolution and the Vietnamese revolution supported each other more and more closely, helped each

other more and more closely, helped each other develop, and combined their efforts to defeat the common enemies -- the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

2 December: The U.S. imperialists oust the French and jump into South Vietnam.

After their defeat and their failure to sabotage the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina, the basic plot of the U.S. toward Vietnam was annihilating, by all means, our people's patriotic movement, annexing South Vietnam, permanently dividing our country, transforming South Vietnam into a U.S. neocolony and military base, and establishing a defense line to prevent socialism from spreading into Southeast Asia, while also using South Vietnam as a base from which to attack the North of our country, an outpost of the socialist system, in hopes of squashing and repulsing socialism in that region and surrounding and threatening the other socialist countries.

The specific plots of the U.S. in that phase were to:

-- Quickly throw out the French and exercise sole rule in South Vietnam and Indochina.

-- Suppressing the revolutionary movement and installing neocolonialism in South Vietnam and Indochina.

-- Sabotaging the Geneva Agreements, permanently dividing Vietnam, and transforming South Vietnam into U.S. bastion in Southeast Asia.

On 8 September 1954 the U.S. inveigled England, France, and a number of vassal states into setting up SEATO, and placed South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea in the area of protection of that bloc.

On 17 November 1954 General Collins, the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, arrived in Saigon with a six-point U.S. plan:

-- Supporting only Ngo Dinh Diem and aiding Diem directly, not via France.

-- Forming a 150,000-man "national" army for Diem trained and armed by the U.S.

-- Setting up a "National Assembly" and declaring "independence."

-- Carrying out a "land reform" and settling refugees from the North.

-- Changing the tax structure and giving priority to U.S. goods and capital.

-- Training administrative cadres for Diem.

Under pressure from the U.S., on 2 December 1954 France had to join the U.S. in signing a treaty calling for the withdrawal of French troops from South Vietnam and, on 10 December, to agree to a plan for the organization and training of a puppet army under the guidance of the U.S.

On 22 December 1954 Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Saigon and promised to provide Diem with \$300 million in direct aid in 1955.

1955

3 to 12 March: Party Central Committee Hold 7th Plenum.

With the situation in the South undergoing new transformations on the part of the enemy as well as in the mass revolutionary movement, while in the North there were very serious problems left behind by the enemy in the newly liberated areas, there was serious famine, and lackeys planted by the enemy were engaging in acts of opposition, our Party Central Committee held a plenary session to evaluate the situation and set forth new missions for the entire nation.

The conference concluded that "The U.S. imperialists are intervening more and more deeply in Vietnam and are gradually forcing the French colonialists into a secondary position. They are allying with the French colonialist faction that is opposed to the Agreements and is relying on the feudal landlords and our country's most reactionary comprador capitalists -- headed by Ngo Dinh Diem -- in hopes of sabotaging peace, unification, independence, and democracy in our country, specifically in hopes of sabotaging the results of the ceasefire agreement, sabotaging the unification of Vietnam, and preparing to rekindle the war in Indochina.

The conference confirmed that "Our people's concrete, direct enemies at present are the U.S. imperialists, the French colonialist faction that opposes the Agreements, and the Ngo Dinh Diem clique. The U.S. imperialists are the leading, most dangerous enemy."

"The immediate struggle objectives of our people in the present phase are peace, unification, independence, and democracy."

Therefore, we would fight the U.S. imperialists, "our direct, immediate enemy," and the "principal enemy of the world's people," by means of the combined strength of the two revolutions of the era: the people's democratic national revolution and the socialist revolution.

"The common slogan of our patriotic struggle at the present time is consolidating peace, achieving unification, and completing independence and democracy throughout the nation. Consolidating peace and achieving unification are the key slogan.

"Our struggle for peace, unification, independence, and democracy is long-range, arduous, and complicated in nature, but it is certain to be victorious."

The plenum also delineated our strategy of aiming the sharp point of the struggle toward the U.S. imperialists, fully exploiting the contradictions with the ranks of the enemy, and uniting with and winning over all forces that can be united with and won over.

With regard to the relationship between the North and the South, the Resolution of the plenum determined that "The North plays the most decisive role with regard to the over-all enterprise of liberating the South and unifying the nation, while the South plays a decisive, direct role in overthrowing the ruling yoke of the imperialists and their lackeys in order to liberate the South, unify the nation, and complete the people's national democratic revolution." At the plenum President Ho said, "The North is the pillar."

The plenum set forth the five immediate missions of the entire Party, population, and army:

1. Continuing the struggle to implement the ceasefire agreement, consolidate peace, and advance to unifying the nation.
2. Strengthening the North in all respects.
3. Maintaining and promoting the political struggle of the people in the South.
4. Expanding and consolidating the national united front throughout the nation.
5. Stepping up the diplomatic work, strengthening solidarity and friendship with friendly countries, and winning the sympathy and support of the world's people.

The important significance of the 7th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was that on the basis of the Political Bureau resolution of September 1954 it affirmed and declared that the U.S. imperialists had become the leading, most dangerous enemy of our people and set forth the line of our national revolution and the lines of each region, and the relationship between the two regions, while also setting forth the policies for resolving the urgent problems in the South and in the North. The plenum's resolution was a proper, creative development of the Party's revolutionary line in the new phase.

20 to 26 March: The Fourth Session of the First National Assembly.

That was the first session of the National Assembly held in the capital since the victory of the anti-French resistance war.

The National Assembly set fourth three missions for our people in the new phase:

1. Continuing the struggle to fully implement the ceasefire agreement, consolidate peace, and advance to national reunification by means of a general election.
2. Strengthening the North by promoting and completing the land reform, endeavoring to strengthen national defense and the people's governmental administration, and strengthening the diplomatic work.
3. Expanding and consolidating popular solidarity in our country and winning the sympathy and support of the people of the world.

The National Assembly resolution manifested the solidarity, unanimity, and iron determination of our people in, under the leadership of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party,

continuing the struggle to achieve peace, unification, independence, and democracy throughout our country.

April 1955: The U.S. and Diem annihilate the armed forces of the religions sects. Our Party adopts the policy of persuading the religions sects to oppose the U.S. and Diem.

Beginning in the first part of 1955, in addition to suppressing the revolutionary movement of the masses the U.S. and Diem, in order to eliminate the influence and power of France in the South, launched a series of campaigns to annihilate such pro-French religions sects as the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen.

In view of that situation, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee and the Regional Party Committee of Nam Bo adopted the policy of using and taking advantage of the religions sects to oppose the U.S. and Diem, win over and rally their forces, and build up our armed forces:

In October 1955 the Party Central Committee sent a directive to the South which stated that "We must clearly understand that the groups that are now opposing Diem, such as the Hoa Hao, the Binh Xuyen, and the Cao Dai in Nam Bo, the Dai Viet Party in Quang Tri, and the Nationalist Party [Quoc Dan Dang] in Quang Nam are doing so for their own benefit and status, but that they also oppose us and that all of them have committed cruel acts against the people. But they are now opposing Diem, so we must win them over by fully exploiting the contradictions. But in winning them over we must base ourselves on a certain standpoint, and our cooperation with them must be based on the most urgent requirements of our nation at the present time: peace and unification. Our cooperation must not be unprincipled and not in accordance with a standpoint. But because their nature is as described above, we must be very careful and clever in winning them over and cooperating with them. We must accurately evaluate the nature and contradictions with regard to Diem, and always remain vigilant in order to guard against all of their plots. In winning them over and cooperating with them we must principally endeavor to win over the infrastructure, while also establishing ties with and win over the upper-echelon groups that can be won over or with whom we can establish ties. We must not win over or establish ties with the chieftains, who have committed many crimes against the people."

The Nam Bo Regional Party Committee resolution of December 1956 stated:

"We must endeavor to reform and rally the religious sect forces smashed by the U.S. and Diem so that they can stand in the ranks of the people, and take advantage of the appellation of dissident religious sects to annihilate the bullies."

That timely policy brought about a number of results: the Hoa Hao troop remnants who came over to the revolution brought along nearly 1,000 weapons, a fully armed 200-man unit of the Binh Xuyen armed forces joined us in the Dong Thap Muoi area, and 500 Cao Dai troops entered the Duong Minh Chau war zone in Tay Ninh.

In 1956, the armed forces of the religious sects which fled to the revolutionary side, operating independently or in coordination with the revolutionary armed

forces, fought in such battles as those at Cai San and Ben Cui, and engaged in armed propaganda along routes 13 and 14 and in Dau Tieng.

However, due to their class nature and because of the surrender of the French colonialists, the resistance put up by the religious sects was weak and ultimately they rapidly fell apart. A small number came over to us but most surrendered to the Ngo Dinh Diem administration or were wiped out.

May 1955: The North is completely liberated.

On 13 May the French colonial army withdrew from Hai Phong and on 22 May it withdrew from Cat Ba Island. In half of our country -- north of the 17th Parallel -- there were no longer any aggressor troops.

We controlled the entire North, which had the scale of a nation and the strength of a people who had just won victory. It had rich natural resources and a plentiful labor force with which to develop its economy, overcome the aftereffects of war, begin the construction of socialism, promote the strengthening of national defense, maintain order and security, and develop culturally and economically, while at the same time bringing into play the North's role as "the pillar of the entire nation" in order to liberate the South and unify the nation.

Under the leadership of the Party, the people of the North endeavored to take advantage of their advantages and overcome their difficulties, especially the workers and laboring peasants, who came forth with innovations and achieved important accomplishments. The revolutionary ardor and vigor of the masses were brought into play to a high degree in developing the economy, overcoming hunger, wiping out the spies, commandos, and local bandits, and building a wholesome, healthy life for the people.

The diplomatic work was also stepped up. After exchanging diplomatic organs with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, and China in 1954, in 1955 we exchanged diplomatic organs with the other socialist countries and with the Republic of Indonesia, and obtained the positive assistance of the fraternal socialist countries with which to build our country.

July 1955: The struggle movement demanding a consultative conference to peacefully unify the homeland.

On 6 June 1955 the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declared its readiness to hold a consultative conference with the authorities in the South, beginning on 20 July 1955, to discuss the organization of a general election in July 1956 to peacefully unify the nation, as stipulated by the Geneva Agreements.

On 19 July 1955 our government sent a diplomatic note to the administration in the South recommending that it send a delegation to participate in a consultative conference, which would begin on 20 July 1955.

Even before the signatures to the Geneva Agreements had dried the U.S. and Diem many times announced that they did not recognize them. On 28 February 1955, Radio

Saigon declared that "In fact, there cannot be a general election in 1956." On 6 July 1955 Nixon, the U.S. Vice President, said that "The United States fully supports the refusal of the Diem government to participate in a general election to unify the country."

Encouraged by his U.S. masters, on 16 July 1955 Ngo Dinh Diem declared that "There will be no consultative conference regarding a general election. We did not sign the Geneva Agreements and are in no way bound by them."

On 20 July 1955 Diem had his lackeys gather together a gang of hooligans to demonstrate against the Geneva Agreements and wreck the headquarters of the International Commission in Saigon.

Under the leadership of the Party, on 3 July the industrial workers and laboring people in Saigon organized two large demonstrations to demand a consultative conference on a general election to unify the homeland and to demand freedom for the members of the "Committee to Aid War Victims."

The Diem administration mobilized its army and police to oppose the mass demonstrations. Despite all the opposition and suppression by the enemy, between 60 and 90 percent of the people all over the South participated in labor strikes and merchants' strikes. In Saigon, 80 percent of the people participated in a general strike which paralyzed the city's activities for 10 hours. In My Tho, on the same day -- 10 July -- the labor strikes and merchants' strikes forced the city to completely cease operations for a day.

In Da Nang, because of the enemy's terrorism the masses arose, burned the Vo Tanh post and destroyed the treasury.

The struggle movement to demand a consultative conference to achieve the peaceful unification of the homeland, which began in July 1955, lasted for months and spread to many localities, such as Sa Dec, Chau Doc, Vinh Long, Thua Thien, Hue, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, Phan Rang, Phan Thiet, Quang Nam, and Quang Tri.

13 to 20 August: The Party Central Committee holds 8th Plenum.

Since the 7th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in March 1955 there had been new developments in world situation and in the situation in our country. The world situation in general had improved somewhat but the Far Eastern situation was still tense. In our country, the period of regrouping and transferring troops and completing the liberation of the North had ended. In the South, the U.S. imperialists were stepping up their intervention and their opposition to the Geneva Agreements, had rejected the consultative conference, and had thrown out the French. The contradictions between the U.S. and France and between the pro-U.S. and pro-French factions became increasingly sharp.

The entire nation was confronted with two major missions: consolidating the North and resolutely struggling to keep the peace and advance to the unification of the country. In view of that situation, the Party Central Committee held its Eighth Plenum and set forth the mission: "Uniting the people all over the country to struggle to unify Vietnam on the basis of independence and democracy."

The conference continued to affirm that "Our specific, immediate enemies at the present time are the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys (including the pro-U.S. puppets and pro-U.S. French colonialists, who served as lackeys of the U.S. imperialists). The U.S. imperialists are the leading, most dangerous enemy."

The Resolution stated the immediate the immediate mission of the Party as being "endeavoring to assemble the forces of the entire population into a broad united front with an appropriate common program in order to struggle against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys and achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy and by peaceful means, while also struggling to consolidate peace and prevent war from returning to Indochina. If we are to win victory in that struggle, we must promote the task of consolidating the north, and in order to consolidate the North we must strengthen our guidance of the economic and financial work and endeavor to complete the land reform, strengthen national defense, strengthen the maintenance of security, etc."

With regard to the struggle to unify the nation, we advocated gradual, step-by-step reunification, but it was necessary to clearly realize that each step would be a process of difficult struggle. To win victory it would be necessary to expand the united front throughout the nation, rally all national, democratic, and peace forces in the North and in the South, win over anyone who could be won over, neutralize anyone we could neutralize, divide the U.S. and France, divide the pro-U.S. and pro-French factions, isolate the U.S. imperialists and the obstinate pro-U.S. clique, and overcome all obstacles in our country and abroad.

In order to achieve national unification, it would be necessary to expand the united national front. The conference approved the common program of the United National Front to serve as a basis on which to rally all national, democratic, and peace forces throughout the nation to struggle against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, win national unification, and construct a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam.

The conference stressed that "In order to unify the nation the essential matter is that we endeavor to consolidate the North, while also maintaining and promoting the struggle to of the people in the South."

"To consolidate the North is to strengthen our basic forces and create a firm basis of support on which the entire nation can win victory in the struggle to consolidate peace and achieve national unification.

Our line toward consolidating the North was to "consolidate and develop the people's democratic regime, and advance gradually and step-by-step to socialism."

The resolution stressed that "In the mission set forth by the Party, the class struggle and the national liberation movement have both entered a more difficult period, so it is necessary to strengthen our ideological leadership, consolidate the Party, positively perfect organization, and rectify the Party's work methods."

The Central Committee appealed for all cadres and Party members to heighten their struggle will, thoroughly understand the thoughts, lines, and policies of the Party, have confidence in that we would inevitably be victorious, unite closely

around President Ho Chi Minh and the Party Central Committee, be determined to overcome all difficulties, and endeavor to fulfill the difficult but extremely glorious missions of the Party.

10 September: Formation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

The Congress of the United National Front, which met from 5 September to 10 September in Hanoi, decided to form the Vietnam Fatherland Front to continue the Lien Viet Front undertaking of uniting the entire population.

The summary program of the Fatherland Front included 10 points:

1. Completing national independence.
2. Achieving national unification.
3. Building a democratic regime.
4. Developing the economy and increasing production.
5. Carrying out a land reform.
6. Implementing a rational social policy.
7. Developing culture and education.
8. Strengthening national defense and defending the homeland.
9. Implementing a foreign policy of peace and independence.
10. Uniting the nation's people.

The Congress elected President Ho Chi Minh as Honorary Chairman of the Front, Ton Duc Thang as Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and 98 members of the Front Central Committee to represent all mass organizations of many different political tendencies, religions and class composition.

The formation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front signified a developmental step in national solidarity in the new revolutionary phase. It was intended to rally all national, democratic, and peace forces throughout the nation to struggle against the U.S. imperialists, consolidate peace, achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy, and advance to the construction of a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam.

1956

19 to 24 April: The Party Central Committee holds its 9th Plenum.

The conference listened to a report by the Vietnam Lao Dong Party which had participated in the 20th Congress of the Communists Party of the Soviet Union.

While studying the views regarding capabilities to prevent war, about peaceful coexistence, about the transition to peace, etc., of the Resolution of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, our Party Central Committee adopted a correct viewpoint: "While we believe that it is possible to prevent war, we do not forget that as long as imperialism exists there will still be an economic basis for war, so the people of the world must continually strengthen the struggle for peace and must be very diligent toward the plots of those who start wars. While we acknowledge that some nations are capable of advancing to socialism via the path of peace, we must remember that since the bourgeois class still possesses a strong military and police apparatus and resolutely uses weapons to suppress the revolutionary movement, a fierce armed struggle to win political power will be unavoidable, so the proletarian class must prepare in advance."

Therefore, with regard to our country's revolution: "Our Party is even more confident that its line of consolidating the North, paying attention to the South, and struggling to achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy and by peaceful means is very correct. However, the reactionary forces still exist in half of our country and are plotting to start a war, so we must continually remain vigilant, endeavor to strengthen national defense, and be prepared to cope with all eventualities."

Those correct viewpoints reflect our Party's loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, its independent spirit, and its creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the actualities of our country's revolution.

8 to 9 June: The Political Bureau meets and issues a resolution on "The situation and missions of the revolution in the South,"

Two years after the signing of the Geneva Agreements, the struggle of the people in the South to achieve the unification of Vietnam became increasingly fierce. The enemy were making increasingly greater efforts to sabotage the consultative conference on the general election, opposing the revolution with force of arms, and suppressing and terrorizing the political movement of the masses.

The revolutionary movement demanded guidance that was appropriate to a situation that was undergoing new development.

The Political Bureau issued a resolution on "The situation and missions of the revolution in the South" which declared that "The regime in the South is a dictatorial, fascist regime of the most reactionary pro-U.S. comprador capitalists and feudalists The South is becoming a U.S. colony and military base."

Therefore, "Our revolution in the South is national and democratic in nature. The mission of the revolution in the South is oppose imperialism and feudalism."

On the basis of the lines that had been affirmed in the Central Committee Resolution, the Political Bureau noted that "It is extremely important that we endeavor to build up the revolutionary forces." Although "the form of our struggle throughout the nation at present is political struggle and not armed struggle," "that does not preclude armed self-defense under certain circumstances." It stressed the necessity of "consolidating the existing armed and semi-armed forces

and creating bases to serve as sources of support. At the same time, we must build strong mass bases to create basic conditions for maintaining and developing armed forces."

The Political Bureau set forth that struggle mission in order to set up a broad united national front to oppose the U.S. and Diem and struggle to demand the formation of a national democratic Coalition Government in the South. The Political Bureau regarded the consolidation of the Party in the South as "a key, decisive task."

The resolution of the Political Bureau conference included new guidance. Most important, it dealt with the topics of armed struggle and the building up of armed forces and base areas. That was a reorientation which amounted to a new line with regard to revolutionary methods in the South. At the same time, on the basis of the actual situation of the revolution during the past 2 years, the Party explicitly stated its policy of forming a broad United Front to oppose the U.S. and Diem and setting up a national democratic Coalition Government in the South.

July 1956: Completion of the land reform in the North.

Following the land reform phases in the old free areas, in 1955 the third and fourth land reform phases were carried out and expanded to include the newly liberated localities.

The fifth phase of the land reform began in January 1956. That phase, the last and largest, was carried out in more than 1,600 villages with a total population of 6 million. Most of the villages were in areas that had been temporarily occupied by the enemy.

In the summer and fall of 1956 the land reform campaign was completed in the delta and midlands areas and in more than 200 mountain-region villages. In the remaining mountain-region villages there were carried out rent-reduction campaigns or other campaigns of a democratic nature, to differing degrees.

In mid-July the Central Land Reform Committee made a summary report of the final phase to the Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers.

The land reform and the democratic reforms achieved great results:

Politically, the peasants arose to struggle for the overthrow of the landlord class, a principal objective of the people's democratic national revolution. The laboring peasants completely escaped from the yoke of the feudal landlords, which had existed for thousands of years in our country, and truly became the masters in the countryside.

Economically, the land reform permanently eliminated the feudal land ownership system and land ownership by the country-stealing imperialists. Some 810,000 hectares which had been owned by the landlords and imperialists were divided up among 2,220,000 laboring peasant and poor households, totalling 9 million people, in the rural areas.

With regard to ideology and organization, the land reform clearly delineated the boundary between labor and exploitation and developed the forces of the Party and the mass organizations.

In the implementation process, in addition to the basic victories we made a number of mistakes with regard to the methods of struggling against class enemies and in rectifying organization. Those mistakes violated the Party's common line in the rural areas and the Party principles and statutes, and also violated the democratic legal system.

On 18 August 1956, President Ho Chi Minh sent a letter to the people in rural areas and to cadres which affirmed the accomplishments of the land reform and praised the cadres, the peasants, and the army for having contributed to the common victory, while also appealing for everyone to unite and resolutely correct mistakes.

With the victory of the land reform, the anti-feudal revolution was essentially completed in the North. That was an event of historical significance and opened the way for the rural areas in the North to gradually advance to socialism via the path of collectivization.

August 1956: Comrade Le Duan writes a document regarding the revolutionary line in the South.

During the past 2 years the revolutionary situation in the South had demonstrated that the fundamental path for winning victory was the path of violence: the legality of Geneva could not replace the legality of the people. "As long as the bourgeois class continues to control a strong military and police apparatus and is determined to use force to suppress the revolutionary movement, a fierce armed struggle to win political power will be unavoidable, so the proletarian class must prepare in advance." (Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee, April 1956.)

In August 1956 comrade Le Duan, a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee who was on assignment in the South, on the basis of scientifically analyzing the social situation, the enemy's situation, and our situation in the South, in the nation as a whole, and in the world, and on the basis of the laws of revolutionary struggle and the actual events in the South during the past 2 years, drafted the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South" to guide the revolutionary movement in the South at that time.

That important document clearly defined the nature of society in the South and set forth the revolutionary path as the only correct path along which our people in the South could advance to winning political power.

Actual events increasingly demonstrated that the puppet regime in the South was a lackey regime of the U.S. imperialists which was insantly suppressing, and attempting to eradicate, the revolution in the South and was implementing a neocolonial policy. Under that regime, our people in the South not only faced the situation of their country being divided and threatened by war but were increasingly repressed, exploited, and horribly killed by the U.S.-Diem fascist

dictatorship policies. That situation was certain to place the people in the South in a situation of having no other recourse than to arise and carry out a revolution to save the nation and themselves. Therefore, the objective of the revolution in the South was to overthrow the U.S.-Diem fascist dictatorship via the path of revolution.

That document contributed to illuminating the path on which the Party members, cadres, and people of the South were engaging in extremely fierce struggles, and was also an important contribution which posed basic viewpoints in order to draft our Party's revolutionary line in the South.

September 1956: The Party Central Committee holds 10th Plenum.

The North had completed the anti-feudal revolution and implemented a victorious land reform, but had committed mistakes in carrying them out. Therefore, the Party Central Committee held its 10th Plenum.

With regard to the land reform, the plenum affirmed that "the victory of the land reform was great and fundamental" and that "the basic completion of the anti-feudal revolution in the North is an event of historic significance," and set forth the mission of resolutely correcting the mistakes committed in the land reform, rectifying organization, and building on the results and victories that have been attained.

The 10th Plenum of the Party Central Committee manifested a sincere, serious attitude and expressed our Party's readiness to accept responsibility before history and the people and its determination to correct mistakes in order to advance the revolution.

The plenum severely criticized the incorrect viewpoints and standpoints, especially empiricism, dogmatism, and the lack of independence and creativity.

After severely criticizing and disciplining some members of the Party Central Committee, the plenum unanimously recommended that President Ho Chi Minh serve as Party Chairman and as General Secretary of the Party Central Committee.

The Resolution of the plenum brought about unity in thought and consciousness regarding the Party's line and organization. Therefore, despite the mistakes committed in carrying out the land reform and in rectifying organization, our Party overcame and rapidly consolidated its organization, and created solid confidence among the masses. The entire Party and the entire population united closely around the Party Central Committee and President Ho Chi Minh and were determined to pass through the rough, wisting segments of the revolutionary path. That was also a very great historical lesson learned by our Party in the process of leading the revolution.

With regard to national unification, after evaluating the good points and deficiencies of the movement, the plenum concluded that "The enterprise of struggling for unification is a revolutionary mission. It is an enterprise of continuing and completing the people's democratic national revolution throughout the nation, a

revolutionary enterprise, and a long, arduous, and complicated struggle for unification, but it is certain to be victorious," with the motto "Continue to conserve and build up forces, struggle persistently and over a long period of time, and oppose adventuism while also opposing efforts to annihilate the struggle."

Those revolutionary viewpoints and methods, which were principled and flexible, served as correct guidelines for the advance of the revolutionary struggle movement in the south.

December 1956: Plenum of the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee.

Implementing the Resolution of the Political Bureau conference of June 1956, and on the basis of the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South," in December 1956 the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee met and concluded that "The regime in South Vietnam exists on the basis of violence and aid from the U.S. imperialists. They are determined to submerge the revolution in blood and fire. Due to the needs of the revolutionary movement in the South, to a certain extent it is necessary to have self-defense and armed propaganda forces in order to support the political struggle and eventually use those armed forces to carry out a revolution to overthrow U.S.-Diem" and "The path of advance of the revolution in the South is to use a violent general uprising to win political power."

The plenum set forth the following mission: "Positively build armed propaganda forces, set up secret armed units, create base areas in the jungle-and-mountain region, win over, proselytize, reform, and rally the religious sect forces routed by U.S.-Diem, bring them over to the side of the people, and take advantage of the appellation of dissident religious sects to kill tyrants."

1956: The Chinese rulers urge us to set a "protracted ambush" in the South.

After Geneva Conference on Indochina the strategic interests of China were to protect its security in the south, expand its influence in Asia, Africa, and especially in Southeast Asia, and create favorable conditions for fulfilling its first five-year plan and taking a "great leap forward" in strengthening its forces, in order to carry out its scheme of big-nation expansionism, first of all in Southeast Asia. China entered into a detente with the U.S. and began negotiations with the U.S. at Warsaw.

China wanted to control Vietnam, use it as a staging area from which to expand into Southeast Asia, and use North Vietnam and northern Laos as a buffer area to protect its security to the south.

In 1956, in a telegram sent to our Party, the Central Committee of the Chinese "Communist" party made the following recommendation to our Party's Central Committee: "... In the South, you should carry out a national democratic revolution. However, at the present time you cannot yet bring about a revolutionary change but can only use an appropriate motto: setting a protracted ambush, building up forces, forming ties with the masses, and awaiting the opportune moment, i.e. it is possible to carry out such struggles as protecting the lives and rights of the people, propagandizing peaceful unification, expanding normal relations, etc. The situation of a divided Vietnam may last a long time: only when the situation

in Asia and the world undergo great new transformations, or when Vietnam itself gives rise to certain fundamental changes, will the situation change"

Prior to that, in July 1955, the General Secretary of the Chinese "communist" party -- then Deng Xiaoping -- threatened Vietnam as follows: "The use of armed force to unify the country may result in two possibilities: one is victory and the other is the loss of the North itself."

In November Mao Zedong himself told the Vietnamese leaders: "The division of Vietnam cannot be resolved in a brief period of time, but only over a long period of time If 10 years are not enough, then it will take 100 years."

That line clearly exposed China's plot of wanting us to restrict our armed struggle and of maintaining the situation of a divided Vietnam for a long time. Fearing that the U.S. imperialist would expand the war, it wanted to use the North as a buffer zone for China. However, our Party resolutely refused to accept that malevolent advice. The great victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation exposed and smashed China's insidious plot. With the independent, autonomous line of our Party, our people heroically arose to defeat the enemy and did not passively "set a protracted ambush and await the opportune moment," as recommended by the Beijing rulers.

1957

March 1957: The Party Central Committee holds its 12th Plenum.

The plenum discussed and issued resolutions on two topics: the 1957 state plan and the building up of the army and consolidating national defense.

1. With regard to the 1957 state plan, the plenum set forth the objective of fulfilling the mission of restoring the economy (to the 1939 production level) in order to create a basis on which to change over to a new phase, the phase of economic development.

2. With regard to building up the army and consolidating national defense, the plenum discussed the mission and motto of developing the army, guidance of the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense during the coming period and the important tasks requiring immediate attention. It also discussed the matter of strengthening the Party's leadership in order to promote the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense.

The plenum stated that in view of the war-provoking plots of the imperialists, headed by the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, our people and army must always remain vigilant and always maintain and strengthen their will to fight. "We must positively build up the army and consolidate national defense: that is one of the key missions of our Party and people at the present time."

The plenum set forth our army-building mottoes: "Positively build a powerful people's army and gradually advance to professionalization and modernization" and "We must have not only strong regular forces but also strong reserve forces."

Our mission for the present and for a certain time in the future was: "Positively striving to continue to implement and victoriously fulfill the plan to build a People's Army and enable our army to become a professional, relatively modern revolutionary army, while also building a foundation for the other armed forces branches and combat arms."

In all aspects of the state's work, in the over-all state plan and in plans of individual sectors, it was necessary to manifest awareness of building up and consolidating the rear area, combine the economic and cultural needs with the national defense needs, and combine the peacetime needs with the wartime needs. The army itself had to participate positively in consolidating the rear area.

It was necessary to make the mission of building up the army and consolidating national defense a common undertaking of the Party and people. We had to strengthen the leadership of the Party, mobilize the entire army to positively study and work, and develop the capability of the people to participate in the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense.

The 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee had a very important significance with regard to the application of Marxism-Leninism to building up our people's armed forces and national defense under the actual conditions of our country. The resolution of the plenum a document with an important theoretical nature with regard to our Party's military line, delineated the direction of building a professional, modern army and a solid national defense on the basis of closely combining economic development and the consolidation of national defense, and relying principally on our own efforts while availing ourselves of the developed economies and modern scientific-technical accomplishments of the fraternal nations, in order to create conditions for the victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

October 1957: Formation of Unit 250, the first battalion-sized concentrated unit in Nam Bo.

Implementing the June 1956 resolution of the Political Bureau and the December 1956 resolution of the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee, in the latter part of 1956, from the cadres and men who remained behind, the armed masses in the self-defense struggle and armed propaganda units, and members of the forces of the dissident religious sects, we were able to organize 37 armed companies to engage in secret activities:

- Western Nam Bo: 30 companies.
- Central Nam Bo: 5 Companies.
- Eastern Nam Bo: 2 companies (in Tay Ninh and Thu Dau Mot).

In 1957 the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee adopted the policy of using the armed units to carry out propaganda and support the political struggle by campaigning for the masses to participate in the revolution, kill tgrants, and capture weapons and supplies for the troops. However, it was necessary to preserve the political bases.

With the adoption of that policy there were launched a number of appropriately scaled attacks, such as the following:

-- On 10 August 1957 the forces of Thu Dau Mot carried out armed propaganda in the town of Minh Thanh, killing 20 tyrant policemen and capturing 40 weapons and 10 vehicles.

-- On 18 September 1957, the forces of Bien Hoa Province infiltrated the Trai Be lumbering camp to propagandize among the workers. They killed tyrants and captured 30 weapons and a number of vehicles.

-- In October 1957 Unit 250, the first battalion-sized concentrated unit of the revolutionary armed forces of Eastern Nam Bo, was formed in the old War Zone D base area.

The maturation of the armed forces and the armed struggle signified an extremely important transformation in the development of our people's revolutionary struggle in the South.

31 October to 7 December: Our Party delegation, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, visits Moscow.

The delegation participated in the ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution and in the Congress of Delegates of Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries (14 to 16 November) and the Congress of Delegates of Communist and Workers' Parties of the World (16 to 19 November).

With regard to Vietnam, the documents of those conferences helped us further illuminate our country's revolutionary path. The special session of the Party Central Committee which met at the end of December 1957 decided that the entire Party had to study those documents. Loyal to Marxism-Leninism, our Party always manifested a spirit of creativity in its line of constructing socialism in the North and struggling to achieve national unification.

November 1957: Formation of the First Coalition Government in Laos.

Since the end of 1954, when the Pathet Lao armed forces regrouped in Sam Nua and Phong Saly provinces and set up a revolutionary administration in those two provinces, the rightist Laotian army launched many attacks on the Pathet Lao regroupment areas, but all of them were repulsed.

In December 1956 Prince Souvanna Phouma, Premier of the government of the Kingdom of Laos, and Prince Souphavoung, representative of the Pathet Lao Fighting Forces, signed a Joint Declaration stipulating the formation of a Coalition Government which included the participation of the Pathet Lao.

On 2 November 1957 the delegation of the government of the Kingdom of Laos and the delegation of the Pathet Lao Fighting Forces signed an agreement regarding the formation of a Coalition Government and the integration of the Pathet Lao Forces into the national army, and an agreement on the organization of the royal administration in the provinces of Sam Nua and Phong Saly.

On 19 November 1957, the National Assembly of Laos approved a list of members of the Coalition Government. Prince Sovanna Phouma was to serve as Premier and the Pathet Lao would head two ministries: Prince Souphanouvong was named Minister of Economics and Planning, and Phumi Vongvichit was named Minister of Rites.

On 8 December 1957 and 18 December 1957, in Sam Nua and Phong Saly the Pathet Lao held ceremonies to turn over those two provinces to the government of the Kingdom of Laos.

On 15 December 1957 two Pathet Lao battalions went to the Plaine des Jarres to be integrated into the army of the Kingdom of Laos.

In the supplementary general election held in May 1958 the Pathet Lao won nine seats in the Laotian National Assembly.

The revolutionary situation continued to undergo complicated changes because of the plots and strategy of the U.S. imperialists in Southeast Asia and the Indochinese Peninsula.

As in South Vietnam, the U.S. and their lackeys endeavored to sabotage the Geneva Agreements, observing only the articles advantageous to them and giving in only when confronted by the strength of the mass struggle.

1958

Mid-1958: Formation of the Eastern Nam Bo Command.

Building on the results attained in 1957, in mid-1958 the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee decided to form an Eastern Nam Bo Command (later changed to the Regional Military Committee) and to concentrate some of the forces of the eastern Nam Bo provinces and organize them into four companies directly under the Eastern Nam Bo Command (three infantry companies, each with 75 to 100 men, and a sapper company with 65 men).

In Tay Ninh Province, the base of the Interzone Party Committee, there was formed and enlarged company which was designated C.1000.

The Interzone Party Committee decided to create two revolutionary base areas: a base northwest of Saigon -- Zone B -- in Duong Minh Chau District, Tay Ninh Province, and a base northeast of Saigon -- Zone A -- extending from Ma Da to Bu Champ, Thu Dau Mot Province.

The formation of the Eastern Nam Bo Command had an important significance in that it helped the Interzone Party Committee unify and centralize its leadership and guidance of the armed forces of Nam Bo and prepare to advance to armed struggle.

At the end of 1958 the Regional Military Committee restored an arsenal to produce mines.

Operationally, attacks were launched on enemy outposts, combined with large-scale ambushes of reinforcements. For example:

-- On 10 August 1958 the enlarged company of Tay Ninh Province attacked the Dau Tien district capital, killing 200, capturing 30, and capturing more than 200 automatic weapons. It then repulsed an enemy battalion sent to reinforce Dau Tieng.

-- On 20 October 1958 the sapper company attacked the U.S. MAAG headquarters at Bien Hoa, killing or wounding 19.

Summer of 1958: Interzone Party Committee of Interzone 5 issues resolution on the creation of revolutionary base areas and the initial building up of armed forces.

Since the beginning of 1956 the Interzone Party Committee, taking advantage of the enemy's preoccupation with attacking the lowland areas and building on the spirit of Vietnamese-Montagnard solidarity during the anti-French resistance war period, had pursued the policy of campaigning for the masses to oppose the enemy's setting up of puppet villages and to maintain mastership in the mountain region.

In the summer of 1958, assimilating the experiences of Nam Bo and fully understanding the resolutions of the Party Central Committee and the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South" by comrade Le Duan, the Interzone Party Committee set forth the missions of developing the western parts of the lowland provinces in Interzone 5 and the Central Highlands into a revolutionary base area and beginning to build up armed and semi-armed forces in the mountain region, with the missions of self-defense, protection of the bases, and protection of the cadres.

"It is necessary to consolidate the existing armed and semi-armed forces and create base area to serve as sources of support, while also creating strong mass bases in order to fulfill the fundamental conditions for maintaining and developing the armed forces. The organization of self-defense forces among the masses is intended to protect the mass struggles and rescue cadres when necessary."

"Having reviewed the situation in the Interzone and recently gained experience in Nam Bo, we can combine limited armed struggle with political struggle We must know how to combine self-defense armed struggle or limited armed struggle under certain circumstances and to a certain degree, with the objectives of restricting fascism and expanding our political base

"At present, the enemy are far along the path of fascism. We cannot rely solely on political struggle but must use limited armed struggle coordinated with political struggle in order to annihilate the Americans, give rise to a spirit of nationalism and an anti-U.S. movement, and wipe out the reactionaries, in order to win over the fence-sitters, wipe out the big shots to shake up the underlings, and wipe out the commandoes to expand our activity. In general, our goals are to restrict fascism, lessen the enemy's prestige increase the prestige of the movement, and expand our political base.

"In the jungle-and-mountain areas, where the terrain is favorable and there are conditions for creating bases, we can engage in guerrilla activities combined with the expansion of activities in the midlands and in cooperation with armed activities in Nam Bo in order to destabilize the enemy's situation, exert a very great

effect on the common movement, and cause the political situation to develop in our favor."

The summer-fall 1958 resolution of the Interzone Party Committee of Interzone 5 created an important transformation in the Interzone's mountain region. Starting with miscellaneous self-defense activities of a spontaneous nature on the part of the masses, we began to form armed forces organizations to fulfill the mission of supporting the political struggle and self-defense armed struggle under the centralized leadership of the Party.

Therefore, after the issuance of the Resolution of the 15th Central Committee Plenum, the mass uprising and armed uprising in the Central Highlands and in a number of places in the lowlands spread rapidly and attacks were launched against the enemy all over the South.

1958: Uprising of the people in Bac Ai District, Ninh Thuan Province.

Bac Ai, a district in the mountain region of Ninh Thuan Province, was the home area of the hero Bi Nang Tac and an old base area during the anti-French resistance war. Therefore, in the "denounce communism" campaign and the campaign to herd the people into resettlement areas it was one of the enemy's main targets in the southernmost part of Trung Bo.

In October 1957 the enemy moved 2,500 people from 7 villages in eastern Bac Ai to the Bo Rao resettlement area, and moved 2,000 people from western Bac Ai to the Tam Ngan resettlement area. When the people resisted, the enemy had to carry out sweeping operations and set up outposts to control the population.

But in 1958 during two nights the people in the Bo Rao resettlement area abandoned it and returned to their old villages, and at the end of 1958 the people in the Tam Ngan resettlement area, unable to live in the resettlement area, also returned to their old villages.

The disintegration of the Bo Rao and Tam Ngan resettlement areas in Bac Ai District resulted from a fierce mass uprising against enemy control, from a combination of politics and military proselytizing, under the leadership of revolutionary cadres.

The struggle of the masses to destroy the resettlement areas lasted throughout 1959 and 1960. In 1959 the enemy mobilized six battalions to quell it, but they were defeated. In October 1960 those two resettlement areas were completely destroyed in a region-wide uprising in which the armed forces coordinated with the people to destroy outposts, annihilate the enemy, force the enemy to withdraw from many outposts, and liberate the mountain region.

The popular uprising in Bac Ai was in fact a local uprising to destroy the enemy's control and maintain mastership by means of the political strength of the masses and their self-defense armed struggle. It had the significance of stimulating abroad uprising movement of the masses in Interzone 5 and the simultaneous uprising movement in the future.

19 April: Formation of the chemical arm of the Vietnam People's Army.

Implementing the Resolution of the 12th Central Committee Plenum on building a professional, modern army with many combat arms and armed forces branches, the formation of the chemical arm of the Vietnam People's Army was an inevitable development.

In the phase of preparing to form the combat arm -- in 1956 -- we set up a team at the Vietnam Infantry Officers School to study combat under the conditions of nuclear and chemical weapons, and in March 1956 the first chemical officers training course was begun at the Infantry Officers School.

On 19 April 1958 the Ministry of National Defense issued Resolution No. 098, which set up the Chemical Bureau of the Combat Training Department of the Military Training General Department, the principal mission of which was to help the Military Training General Department guide the prevention of, and opposition to, chemical and nuclear warfare and build up the chemical arm. April 19, 1958 is regarded as the date of the founding of our army's chemical arm. Later the Chemical Bureau developed into the Chemical Department, directly under the General Staff. Chemical staff organs and chemical detachments were gradually organized throughout the army and were equipped with increasingly advanced modern equipment.

During the fight against the war of destruction waged by the air force of the U.S. imperialists, the chemical troops cleverly used smokescreens to camouflage and protect the important targets, and effectively opposed the enemy's insidious plots to attack us with many modern weapons.

On the southern battlefields, the chemical troops cooperated closely with the infantry and the other combat arms to defeat the enemy's scheme to attack us with chemical weapons, increased their offensive strength, and ensured the safety of our combat and transportation troops.

December 1958: Our people all over the country protest the U.S.-Diem massacre at Phu Loi.

In the South, the U.S. and Diem endeavored to maintain an extremely cruel fascist dictatorship. In addition to the very violent "denounce communists" campaigns in the rural areas and cities, they mobilized divisions of regular troops to carry out large-scale, long-term clearing operations in many places, especially in the old resistance war base areas, which wrecked houses, burned rice and other crops, raped women, and tortured and killed people in a very barbarous manner. All over the South, the U.S.-Diem lackeys insanely sought revenge, robbed, extorted money, and arrested people without having to bring them to trial and without due process, and killed people haphazardly in the "it's better to kill innocent people than to overlook someone" manner.

At large system of concentration camps at the hamlet, village, province, and central levels were packed with cadres, Party members, revolutionary masses, and people of good will.

The Phu Loi prison in Thu Dau Mot Province, 33 kilometers from Saigon, had an extremely cruel prison regime intended to cause the cadres, Party members, and revolutionary masses there to die a slow death. The prisoners there, however, continued to resolutely maintain their indomitable will and always manifested a spirit of solidarity in struggle. Realizing that they could not weaken the will of patriots, the U.S.-Diem gang plotted to kill large numbers of them.

On 1 December 1958 they poisoned the food of 6,000 political prisoners in the camp. That day, more than 1,000 people who had been poisoned died a very horrible death. They fired into or sprayed with water survivors who sought help.

When they learned of that, our people all over the country were very moved and were seething with anger.

The Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front set up a Committee to Struggle Against the Phu Loi Massacre. In the North between 20 and 23 January 1959 nearly 500,000 people participated in demonstrations protesting the U.S.-Diem massacre. In Hanoi, 297,000 people participated in 412 protest rallies.

The people in the south, including some soldiers in Diem's army, were extremely angry over the insane act of the U.S.-Diem gang in Phu Loi. People went to the Phu Loi prison camp demanding to save the victims. The relatives of the survivors in the prison camp went on a hunger strike to protest the Ngo Dinh Diem gang and demand that the survivors be given emergency treatment.

In the southern provinces, especially in Nam Bo, there broke out many struggles to expose the U.S.-Diem crime at Phu Loi. All pagodas and churches in Ben Tre held services to pray for the revolutionary warriors killed at Phu Loi.

The nationwide struggle to protest the Phu Loi massacre and expose the U.S.-Diem crimes lasted until March 1959.

1959

March 1959: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee issues a directive on the mission of creating a revolutionary base in the Central Highlands.

The Political Bureau determined that the Central Highlands (including the mountainous areas of Interzone 5 and the jungle-and mountains area of northeast Nam Bo) occupied a very important strategic position with regard to both the enemy and ourselves.

The U.S. and Diem were endeavoring to develop the Central Highlands into a mobile military base center in the South. Faced with the world revolutionary movement, the growing strength of the North, and the revolutionary movement in the South, they were increasingly determined to hold onto the Central Highlands but had many major weaknesses. The most basic weakness was the contradiction between the U.S.-Diem gang and the ethnic minority peoples. The local reactionary forces -- the source of support of the U.S.-Diem gang -- were still weak and small in numbers, so it would be difficult for them to control the people.

The ethnic consciousness of the ethnic minority groups became stronger and progress was made in achieving solidarity among them. The revolutionary bases and the struggle movement developed relatively uniformly. The governmental administration belonged largely to the enemy, but we were endeavoring to win control of most of the hamlets and villages. Many places had double administrations (in form they belonged to the enemy but with regard to content they belonged to us). In places which did not yet have enemy administrations the people governed themselves in accordance with their customs. The people had a tradition of armed self-defense and took advantage of the rough terrain. Economically, the Central Highlands had latent capabilities and the people were experienced in self-sufficiency production. The influence of the Party and of President Ho Chi Minh was relatively deep and broad among the people. The Party exercised continuous leadership and the cadres sacrificed devotedly and remained close to the people. Those were basic advantages and were also the main conditions for building a revolutionary base. But we also had difficulties and weaknesses with regard to the level of understanding and the revolutionary experience of the people, with regard to economics, with regard to the number and quality of cadres, etc.

The Political Bureau set forth the mission of "endeavoring to develop the Central Highlands into the main revolutionary base in the South," while also positively defeating the U.S.-Diem plan to construct a base complex and create a strong position in the South, advancing to attacking the enemy, and contributing positively to defending the North.

The Political Bureau directive stressed the contents of base development included many aspects: politics (civilian many proselyting, ethnic solidarity, and the construction of our political administration base), self-sufficiency economics, the building up of revolutionary armed forces, and campaigning among enemy soldiers. All tasks would be led by the Party, so it would be necessary to step up the Party building work and oppose purely military thoughts while also being on guard against the style of spreading out guidance evenly without focusing on the key tasks in each period of time, in order to promote the building and consolidation of bases.

The Political Bureau pointed out that the present goals of the development and use of armed forces were to help the political struggle advance to the carrying out of limited guerrilla warfare, threatening the enemy, and expanding our status of initiative. The long-range goals were to strengthen the revolutionary forces and prepare objective conditions for advancing to the overthrow of the U.S.-Diem clique, and become the main force in defending the revolutionary administration in the future. Therefore, in providing guidance it was necessary to stress the development of armed forces, for only with strong armed forces could we defend the bases and advance the revolution.

May 1959: The Party Central Committee holds its 15th Plenum.

The plenum reviewed the situation in our country since the signing of the Geneva Agreements and set forth the revolutionary lines of the nation as a whole and for the South.

The plenum analyzed the characteristics of the situation and determined that the basic missions of the revolution in the South were to "Liberate the South from the ruling yoke of the imperialists and feudalists, achieve national independence and land reform, complete the people's democratic national revolution in the South, and build a Vietnam that is peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong."

The resolution affirmed that "The basic path of development of the revolution in the South is to use violence, and that according to the specific situation and present requirements of the revolution the line of using violence is using the strength of the masses and relying principally on the political forces of the masses, in combination with armed forces to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the situation, in order to overthrow the rule of the imperialists and colonialists and set up a revolutionary regime of the people.

"In order to attain those objectives it is necessary to have a long, arduous, and heroic struggle process and positively consolidate and meticulously develop forces, for only then could there be conditions for taking advantage of favorable opportunities and winning ultimate victory."

With regard to the form of struggle, the resolution presented the following analysis: "In that process of difficult, arduous, and complicated struggle the political struggle form is the principal form, but because the enemy forces are determined to submerge the revolution in blood and flames, and due to the needs of the revolutionary movement in the South, to a certain extent there will be formed self-defense and armed propaganda forces in order to support the political struggle. However, when using self-defense forces and armed propaganda forces it is necessary to thoroughly understand the principle of serving the political struggle and obeying the political struggle.

"But because the U.S. imperialists are the most belligerent imperialists, under such conditions the uprising of the people in the south is capable of becoming a protracted armed struggle."

The 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was an extremely important milestone in the development of the situation and met the ardent aspirations of the revolutionary masses. The plenum not only set forth the principle-like line of the revolution in the South but also established a basis on which to advance to setting forth accurate and comprehensive strategic missions.

The Resolution of the plenum strongly mobilized the revolutionary spirit of the people, further strengthened unanimity in the Party toward the revolutionary line in the South and created a fundamental transformation and great leap forward in the revolutionary movement in the South in 1959 and 1960, the high point of which was the simultaneous uprising movement.

May 1959: Formation of Group 559.

At the end of May 1959, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee issued a Resolution officially setting up Group 559, which had the missions of, along with the liaison route of the Unification Committee, creating the first foot-travel route connecting the North and South, and organizing the sending of people,

weapons, and supplies to the revolution in the South, first of all to Interzone 5.

During 16 years of operation Group 559, which at first had only a few hundred people who primarily used cargo bicycles on narrow trails, became a force with many components: transportation troops, military engineers, infantry, anti-aircraft artillery, POL troops, communications units, etc., totalling tens of thousands of people and thousands of cargo trucks organized into many divisions, regiments, troop encampments, workshops, stations, etc. There was created a strategic route bearing the name of the great Uncle Ho which crossed the Truong Son mountains, connected the battlefields, and amounted to a relatively complete land route, pipeline, and river route network.

Group 559 personnel, also called the Truong Son troops, primarily used mechanized transportation facilities supplemented by nonmechanized transportation facilities and effectively served the sending of supplies to many battlefields and to many large campaigns of the armed forces, transported hundreds of thousands of people south and north, and transported millions of tons of cargo despite fierce bombing and land attacks by the enemy troops.

During the General Offensive and Uprising of the spring of 1975, Group 559 rapidly organized the transporting of large corps, transported a large volume of material-technical supplies to the battlefield and, especially, ensured that the strategic corps moved with marvellous rapidity and promptly participated in the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign.

During a conference held to recapitulate the Group's work in 1966 and 1967, Senior General Vo Nguyen Giap sent a letter of commendation to the Group's cadres and men and encouraged them to endeavor to become:

- A very skilled strategic rear services army.
- A very skilled fighting army.
- A very skilled production army.
- An international army very skilled at helping our friends.

Of those missions, the strategic rear services mission was the most important.

Comrade Le Duan, when visiting Group 559, said: "The Truong Son route is a brilliant feat of arms in the history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war.

"The Truong Son route is also a route which expresses determination to win, bravery, and a heroic spirit. It is a route which connects North and South, unifies the nation, and is a route to our homeland's rich future.

The heroic Truong Son troops fought and won on the route bearing the name of the great Uncle Ho."

Group 559 brilliantly fulfilled the missions assigned to it by the upper echelon. On 31 May 1976 the Group was awarded the Hero of the People's Armed Forces designation by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Fifty-five units and 34 cadres and men of the Group were awarded the glorious Hero of the People's Armed Forces designation.

July 1959: Formation of Group 759.

In order to positively aid the struggle in the South, in addition to organizing Group 559 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee concluded that it was necessary to organize a maritime route to transport weapons, ammunition, and equipment to the South.

In July 1959 the Ministry of National Defense decided to set up Group 759, which at first was only a group of cadres directly under the General Staff who were assigned the mission of studying that matter.

At the beginning of 1961 the Political Bureau directed that the Nam Bo coastal provinces send boat units to the North to obtain weapons and exchange experiences regarding the sea route to the South.

In June 1961 a motorized four-ton-capacity boat from Ben Tre Province was the first boat to arrive in the North. It was followed by boats from Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, and other province.

On 14 September 1962, Group 759's ship Phuong Dong 1 set out on the first trip to Ca Mau and reached its destination safely.

During the first 10 months, five ships with capacities of 50 to 60 tons made 21 trips to the coastal provinces of the South.

By the end of 1964, Group 759 had dozens of steel ships with capacities of 50 to 100 tons and relatively modern equipment. The Ministry of National Defense decided to place Group 759 under the direct control of the Naval Command and change its designation to Group 125. The Group not only transported cargo to Nam Bo but even transported weapons to the coastal provinces of southern Trung Bo.

In February 1965 the enemy discovered us at Vung Ro in Phu Yen Province. By that time we had transported nearly 5,000 tons of weapons to the South, mostly to Nam Bo.

The U.S. and its puppets strengthened their naval forces and air forces in order to tightly patrol the southern coast, after which the transporting of cargo became very arduous and fierce. However, Group 125 continued to come up with innovations, overcame difficulties, and continued to do its work. At times it had to take a very round-about way, following international shipping routes to Indonesia or Singapore and then heading toward the South.

During its 13 years of operations, (1962-1975), the maritime transportation unit contributed importantly to the development, combat, and victory of our soldiers

and people in the South. Its prompt service to the Binh Gia campaign at the end of 1964 had a very important significance.

20 July 1959: "Vietnam Day," a strong manifestation of the spirit of Asian-African solidarity in opposing the U.S.

The Asian-African People's Solidarity Council, meeting in Cairo, appealed for the Asian-African Solidarity Committee and all peace-loving people of the world to make 20 July 1959 "Vietnam Day," to demand that the U.S. withdraw from South Vietnam, that it abandon its military bases in South Vietnam, that negotiations be held between North and South Vietnam to organize free nationwide elections, that the regime in the South immediately end all acts which harmed the people and abolish all fascist laws, etc.

On 20 July 1959 the first "Vietnam Day" was solemnly observed by organizations in more than 20 countries. For many years thereafter "Vietnam Day" was observed in many countries on 20 July to support our people's resistance to aggression by the U.S. imperialists.

"Vietnam Day" had a fine, important significance. It was a manifestation of the sincere solidarity and ardent support of the Asian-African people for our people, who were struggling to achieve national unification. It increasingly demonstrated that the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence and unification was integrally related to the national independence and peace preservation movement of the people of Asia, Africa, and the world. It also caused our people to be increasingly confident in the inevitable success of their revolutionary undertaking.

September 1959: Formation of Group 959.

In 1959, because of the revolutionary situation and missions in Laos, the Central Committee of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party and the Central Committee of the Laotian People's Revolutionary Party, on the basis of close, loyal cooperation and solidarity in combat against the common enemy and aggression, for the independence and freedom of the Vietnamese and Laotian people, and combining true patriotism with pure proletarian internationalism, agreed to organize a delegation of Vietnamese military specialists to work side-by-side with the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army.

In September 1959, Group 959 was set up and was assigned the mission of serving as specialists for the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army, and organizing the supplying of Vietnamese material to the Laotian revolution and directly commanding the Vietnamese volunteer units operating in the Sam Nua, Xieng Kheang, and Vientiane.

After 14 years of activity, following the Vientiane Agreement in 1973, Group 959 terminated its mission. Group 959, which had the confidence of the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army, and the heartfelt support of the cadres and men of the Laotian revolutionary armed forces, fulfilled its mission well. The Vietnamese military specialists and volunteer troops, along with the fraternal Laotian revolutionary armed forces, defeated the

counterrevolutionary armed forces, advanced to liberating all of Laos, contributed positively to consolidating the rare exemplary solidarity between the people and armed forces of Vietnam and Laos, and contributed to furthering the favorable development of the revolutionary war in our country.

1959: The Tra Bong uprising and our people's uprising movement in the South at the end of 1959.

Although the resolution of the 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was not disseminated to the provinces in Nam Bo and Interzone 5 until December 1959, our Party organizations and people in the South quickly and skilfully accepted, and transformed into revolutionary activity, the spirit of changing the status of the revolution step-by-step on the part of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau.

Many localities in the South armed themselves for self-defense, organized defenses, combined political struggle with military struggle, broke up the population concentration zones, and opposed the enemy's sweeping and population resettlement operations. Most outstanding among them was the uprising in Tra Bong, a mountain-region district in the western part of Quang Ngai Province, during the last months of 1959.

By mid-1959, Tra Bong had Party organizations at the base and district levels, had strong political power, had extensive self-defense and guerrilla forces, had local troops, was experienced in legal and illegal political struggle, and had readied a plan for the uprising.

On 28 August 1959, 16,000 ethnic minority people in Tra Bong District, taking advantage of the boycott of the puppet National Assembly elections of the U.S.-Diem clique, under the timely leadership of the District Party Committee and the Provincial Party Committee, and with the support of the province's 339th Platoon, arose and eliminated the puppet administrations in 16 villages, forced the abandonment of 7 posts, killed 161 of the enemy, punished 61 puppet tyrants and bullies, set up revolutionary administrations in the hamlets and villages, and eliminated the tyrants in all 6 lowland villages. In the entire district, there remained only one post in the district seat, which was surrounded, and the district chief and his deputy fled to the provincial capital.

The popular uprising, with its strong spirit, quickly spread to a number of neighboring villages in the district of Son Tra, Ba To, and Minh Long.

The enemy resisted fiercely by launching sweeping operations combined with an economic blockade. But under the close guidance of the Interzone Party Committee and the Provincial Party Committee, and with the aid of the surrounding districts in Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces and the provincial and interzone armed forces, Tra Bong continued to hold and expand a base area connecting with the nearby districts.

The Tra Bong uprising was regarded as one of the first local uprisings in the transition phase of the revolution in the south in late 1959. It had the effect of furthering the strong advance of the common movement.

There were uprisings in other localities during that period, such as the following:

-- The people of the villages of Ta Loc, Ta Let, and Ha Ri in Vinh Thach District (western Binh Dinh Province), led by Party cadres, struggled against the enemy's population resettlement activities. In February 1959 they entered the jungle to openly oppose the enemy, organized self-defense forces, many times defeated enemy sweeping operations, and maintained the movement. In 1960 the movement spread throughout the district. Building on the victory in Vinh Thach, the people expanded the base area to four districts in the province and organized many guerrilla units.

-- The people in the Tho Lo area of Van Canh District in western Phu Yen Province opposed the enemy continuously throughout 1957 and prevented them from concentrating the people and setting up hamlets. In May 1959 our people openly killed tyrants and bullies. In September 1959 we organized a local platoon, created a liberated area connecting seven villages in Tuy Hoa 1 District, often attacked the enemy when they were setting up posts or conducting sweeping operations, and maintained and expanded the movement until in 1961, the entire mountain area of Phu Yen Province was liberated.

-- The base area in the Central Highlands was maintained. Gia Lai, Cong Tum, and Dac Lac provinces each had one or two dissident platoons which openly opposed the enemy. For example, in November 1959 the people of Ta Booc Village in Dac Pet District, Cong Tum Province, killed a First Lieutenant and four soldiers who entered the village to conscript laborers, then burned down their village and went to live in the jungle. The guerrillas of village A3 in District 7, Gia Lai Province, wiped out an enemy reconnaissance squad disguised as a team spraying DDT to eliminate malaria, killing 7 and capturing 7 weapons.

In Nam Bo, since October 1959 the people in a number of old resistance war areas put up armed resistance against sweeping operations, arose to destroy the "agrovilles" destroyed the enemy's control, and disintegrated the enemy's base-level administration. Especially, the uprising of the people in the districts of Chon Thanh, Duong Minh Chau, and Ben Cau killed tyrants and destroyed the enemy's control between August and October 1959. The provinces of Kien Tuong and Kien Phong built up rather strong armed forces and in October 1959 repulsed a sweeping operation launched by a division in the Quang Cung area, killing many of the enemy and capturing more than 100 weapons. The echo of that battle reverberated all over the Nam Bo province.

5 October 1959: Formation of the armored arm of the Vietnam People's Army.

Implementing the Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee regarding the gradual development of the People's Army to a professional, modern status with a full complement of armed forces branches and combat arms, the armored arm was formed and became one of our army's modern technical combat arms.

October 5th, 1959, the day on which the first tank regiment was formed, is the combat arm's anniversary date.

On 24 January 1968, Battalion 198 of the 203d Regiment, representing the entire combat arm, participated in combat for the first time in a battle to wipe out the Ta May strongpoint on Route 9. In that battle, which opened the way to the Lang Vay strong point, the unit outstandingly fulfilled its mission. With a spirit of "we must win a victory in the very first battle; even if there is only one tank left we must be determined to fight; even if there is only one person left we must be determined to fight; fight even in daytime; fight until we win victory," under very difficult circumstances during the assault, one of the battalion's companies bravely passed through the breach and wrought havoc inside the camp, thus creating favorable conditions for the infantry to fulfill their mission in the battle. Soon thereafter, on 7 February 1968, Battalion 198 won a resounding victory in the battle to wipe out the Lang Vay strongpoint.

During following years, in the Route 9-Southern Laos campaign in 1971 and in the strategic offensive of 1972, on the battlefields of the South as well as on the battlefields of Laos and Kampuchea, the armor combat arm continually developed its combat tradition and fulfilled all missions assigned to it by the upper echelon.

During the General Offensive and Uprising of 1975 the armored units continued importantly to the victories of the Central Highlands and Hue-Da Nang campaigns, and on 30 April 1975 two tanks -- No. 390 and No. 843 -- led the 203d Brigade in the II Corps formation and in a bold, rapid penetration to the puppet administration's Presidential Palace in Saigon. Bui Quang Than, a tank company commander, lowered the "three stripes" flag of the puppet administration and had the honor of raising the flag of the revolution, signifying the total victory of the Ho Chi Minh campaign.

On 20 October 1976 the armor combat arm was awarded the designation Hero of the People's Armed Forces by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. With its glorious tradition of "Winning victory in all battles," it smashed the enemy's resistance when it entered the battle, along with the infantry wipe out the enemy and mastered the battlefield, and contributed worthily to the total victory of our people and armed forces in the war against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

1959: The first Laotian Coalition Government Collapses.

The basic plot of the U.S. imperialists was to annex Indochina and implement their neocolonial policy. Therefore, they had to find a way to attack and liquidate the revolutionary accomplishments achieved by the Laotian people in the anti-French resistance war.

On 11 May 1959 the Government of the Kingdom of Laos ordered that the two Pathet Lao battalions in the Plaine des Jarres be surrounded, and that they lay down their arms within 24 hours.

During the night of 18 May 1959, Pathet Lao battalion No. 2 withdrew from the Plaine des Jarres to its base area. On 12 June 1959, the battalion issued a declaration which clearly expressed its determination to protect the people, and on 1 July 1959 it issued a declaration to the people of the entire nation regarding U.S. intervention in Laos and appealed for the people to unite in struggling for the correct implementation of the Geneva Agreement on Laos.

On 23 July 1959, the government of Phui Sananikon ordered the arrest of the Pathet Lao leaders who were present in Vientiane, including Prince Souphanouvong and issued a communique which stated that those comrades would be tried for serious crimes.

Prior to that, at the beginning of 1959, when the rightist army was continuously violating our country's border in the Huong Lap area, the Laotian reactionaries many times falsely accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of concentrating troops along the Vietnam-Laos border. They also declared a state of emergency in five provinces bordering Vietnam and sent reinforcements to Sam Nua Province. Those were enemy plots of long standing.

Because of the U.S. plots and the traitorous acts of the reactionary Laotian lackeys, the first Laotian Coalition Government collapsed and the Laotian people had to arise and carry out a protracted struggle in order to win victory.

1960.

1 January: Promulgation of the first socialist constitution in our country.

Following the victory of the resistance war against the French colonialist aggressors, the completely liberated North changed over to the phase of socialist revolution. The constitution of 1946, our country's first democratic constitution, was no longer appropriate. On 23 January 1957 our country's National Assembly decided to amend the constitution and set up a Constitution Amendment Commission headed by President Ho Chi Minh. In July 1958 the first draft was submitted for discussion by cadres at the various levels and among the people. Many opinions were solicited, even from our compatriots in the South and Vietnamese living abroad.

On 31 December 1959 the new constitution was approved by the 11th Session of the First National Assembly.

On 1 January 1960, President Ho Chi Minh signed an order officially promulgating the new constitution, the first socialist constitution in our country.

The nature of the state, the basic concern of the constitution, was stated explicitly in the preamble to the constitution: "Our state is a popular democratic state which is based on the worker-peasant alliance and is led by the working class." Article 1 of the constitution stipulates that "Vietnam is an integral whole encompassing both the North and the South and is indivisible."

The new constitution determined that the path of development of the revolution in the North would be as follows: "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam will gradually advance from a people's democracy regime to socialism, and will transform its backward economy into a socialist economy with modern agriculture and industry and advanced science and technology."

The new constitution, which expressed the superior nature of the political system of the Vietnamese state, delineated the objectives in order to mobilize the people all over the country to endeavor to win victory in the new phase of the revolution.

President Ho Chi Minh said, "Our new constitution has further encourages the people of the North to compete in socialist construction and encourages the people in the South to struggle persistently for freedom, democracy, and national unification."

17 January: The simultaneous uprising in Ben Tre and in many other Nam Bo and Central Highlands province.

During the last months of 1959 and the first months of 1960, due to the seething revolutionary situation and the guidance of the resolution of the 15th Party Central Committee Plenum, the Party committee echelons in the South rapidly re-oriented their struggle motto, launched a high tide of mass uprisings with the positive support of the armed forces, and shifted the revolutionary movement in the South over to an offensive status to win mastership in the rural areas.

Our people arose in a number of provinces in Nam Bo and the Central Highlands, and in the mountainous areas of the lowland areas of Interzone 5. They amounted to a great revolutionary uprising which signified the beginning of a serious, tangled political crisis of the U.S.-Diem regime and also began the period in which the revolution would change over to an offensive posture all over the South. An uprising of an exemplary nature was the simultaneous uprising of the people in Ben Tre Province, where uprising masses created extremely rich struggle forms in the spirit of emphasizing politics, the use of arms as a key factor, and the maintenance of the masses' legal status.

Beginning on 17 January 1960, within a short period of time the districts of Mo Cay, Minh Tan, and Thanh Phu, under the leadership of the local Party organizations, simultaneously arose to shatter or paralyze the enemy's hamlet and village governmental administrations, set up People's Self-Government Committees, confiscated the land of cruel landlords and divided it up among the poor peasants, and organized and developed their armed forces to oppose the enemy's counterattacks and maintain the people's mastership right.

The simultaneous uprising movement rapidly spread to many province in Nam Bo and the Central Highlands, and in the western parts of the lowland Interzone 5 provinces. The revolution gained control in a vast, strategically important area which connected the Central Highlands with the eastern and western Nam Bo areas and the provinces of the Interzone 5 lowlands, and also encouraged the masses in the cities and municipalities, especially in Saigon-Cho Lon, to launch strong struggles. In addition to smashing the control system of the puppet tyrants, the masses set up their own self-government, administrations and armed forces. Many militia, guerrilla, self-defense, and local provincial and district units were developed very rapidly. Arming the masses and creating and developing concentrated units became urgent requirements of the movement to develop the offensive and resist the enemy's counterattacks.

The simultaneous uprising movement transformed the revolution in the South from a status of conserving forces to a status of strong, continuous offensives, and gave rise to a revolutionary high tide of armed uprisings by the masses in vast rural areas.

"That revolutionary high tide is in fact an uprising movement of the masses, local, step-by-step uprisings of the people's revolutionary movement to win political power, create people's revolutionary administrations in the hamlets and villages, and create the initial organizations of the People's Army in the villages, districts, and provinces." (Letter from comrade Le Duan to the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee, 28 April 1961.)

Therefore, the simultaneous uprising was an initial, very basic victory in our people's protracted struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

With the simultaneous uprising movement, our Party learned many great lessons regarding revolutionary guidance, such as the correct evaluation of the enemy and ourselves, full comprehension of the viewpoint of violence, the concept of strategic offensive, the application of the art of guiding armed uprisings, etc.

26 January: The Tua Hai battle, one of the first large battles of the revolutionary armed forces in the South.

At the beginning of 1960, the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee adopted the policy to fighting a large annihilating battle to further the common movement, support the masses in arising to kill the tyrants and destroy the control apparatus, liberate the countryside, and capture weapons from the enemy with which to equip the revolutionary armed forces.

The Military Committee of the South selected as its objective Tua Hai, the base of the 7th Regiment of the enemy's 5th Division, 7 kilometers from the city of Tay Ninh. The Interzone Party Committee approved that decision.

Although we had only a small force we selected Tua Hai, a large base, as our objective, for we fully understood the enemy's situation, had activists in the enemy's ranks, and persuaded a number of enemy soldiers to be sympathetic and not oppose the revolution.

Our forces consisted of three infantry companies and a sapper company under the direct command of the Regional Military Committee. We combined a surprise attack with military proselytizing and sent a sapper force inside before opening fire.

The time of the attack was the night of 26 January 1960, i.e. The night of the 27th and the early morning of the 28th of the lunar Tet month, a time when the enemy was very careless.

Because we fully grasped the situation, made careful preparations, and had an accurate plan, after only 20 minutes of fighting our troops completely mastered the Tua Hai base, killing or wounding 400 of the enemy. More than 1,000 enemy officers and enlisted men surrendered and we destroyed a 105 mm artillery battalion and a battalion of light tanks and captured more than 5,000 weapons and three trucks loaded with ammunition.

The battle of Tua Hai, one of the first large battles of the revolutionary armed forces in the South, resulted in the annihilation of many of the enemy and the capture of a large number of the enemy. It was also the battle which began the period of political struggle combined with armed struggle in eastern Nam Bo.

1 March: First population census in the North.

In order to serve the mission of constructing socialism in the North and meet the requirements of strengthening national defense and aiding the revolutionary war to liberate the South, in 1960 our Party and government decided to carry out the first population census in the North.

According to the census, as of 1 March 1960, the 32 provinces, municipalities, and zones directly under the central echelon in the North had a total population of 15,916,955, including 7,687,814 men and 8,229,141 women. The most populous province was Thanh Hoa, with 1,598,261 people.

It was very important that we have accurate knowledge of our population. It helped the Party and government have a solid basis on which to draft plans to develop the economy, strengthen national defense, and resolve problems regarding policies, culture, and society in the enterprise of constructing socialism and defending the nation.

April 196 : Promulgation of the Military Obligation Law.

Beginning with the formation of our army, and throughout the anti-French resistance war, troop recruitment had been voluntary and based on the voluntary spirit of all patriotic citizens.

"Our former way of doing things was thus completely necessary and rational."

Now, "the situation has changed, peace has been restored, the North has been liberated and has begun to be consolidated, and the land reform has essentially been completed. In view of that situation, the system of voluntary enlistment must be replaced with a system of obligatory military service." (Report of the Political Bureau of the 12th Party Central Committee Plenum.)

After a period of study, at the end of 1957 the Council of Ministers assigned to the Ministry of National Defense, in coordination with the relevant organs, organize test points regarding the application of the obligatory military service system in Vinh Phuc Province.

-- In 1958, the test points were expanded to Hai Duong, Nghe An, and Ha Nam provinces, and to Phu Yen District in Son La Province.

-- In 1959, nearly all of the provinces in the North organized test points for the implementation of the obligatory military service system in one or two districts.

After being amended and supplemented after the trial applications, the Military Obligation Law was officially approved by the National Assembly of the Democratic

Republic of Vietnam. In April 1960, President Ho Chi Minh signed a decree promulgating that law.

"The implementation of the obligatory military service system increases the people's consciousness of national defense and enables all citizens to serve in the army and fulfill their obligations to defend the homeland." (Report of the Political Bureau at the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee.) By implementing the new obligatory military service it was possible to have a large powerful reserve force which has undergone training, while reducing the standing army and economizing on manpower and materiel in order to step up national construction. By implementing the new obligatory military service system it was possible to create favorable conditions for implementing the professional systems in the army and overcoming the irrationalities and limitations caused by the system of voluntary enlistment over a long period of time.

The promulgation and implementation of the Military Obligation Law contributed importantly to the task of mobilizing and recruiting troops in order to build up our armed forces and defeat the U.S. imperialists in both the South and the North.

8 May: Election of the Second National Assembly.

Due to the wartime conditions, the term of the First National Assembly was extended from 1946 to 1960.

The war had ended, the North had been completely liberated, the new constitution had been promulgated, and on 8 May 1960 97.52 percent of the voters in the North cast ballots to elect the Second National Assembly.

Some 362 people were elected as delegates to the National Assembly. The person receiving the most votes was President Ho Chi Minh, a candidate in Ba Dinh Ward, Hanoi, who received 99.91 percent of the votes. With regard to the composition of the delegates to the Second National Assembly, 65 were members of ethnic minority groups, 49 were women, 40 were youths between 21 and 30 years old, 46 were peasants, 20 were military personnel, 65 were engaged in scientific, artistic, or educational work, 2 were members of the national bourgeoisie, 3 were priests, and 2 were Buddhist priests.

During its first session the Second National Assembly elected:

- President: comrade Ho Chi Minh.
- Vice President: comrade Ton Duc Thang.
- Chairman of the Standing Committee of National Assembly: comrade Truong Chinh.
- Premier: comrade Pham Van Dong.

During that session the National Assembly also elected a National Defense Council and appointed the Director of the Supreme People's Organ of Control and the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court.

The perfecting and consolidating of the central legislative and executive organs, so that they could be appropriate to the requirements of the new situation and missions, strengthened the proletarian dictatorship state in order to construct and defend the socialist North, while also aiding the great front line in the South.

5 to 10 September: Third Congress of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party.

This was the first time -- after 30 years of arduous and heroic struggle -- that our Party had held a Congress in the capital of the homeland.

Participating in the Congress were 525 official delegates and 51 alternate delegates, who represented 500,000 Party members throughout the nation. Nearly 20 delegations of other communist parties also attended the Congress.

The Congress reviewed the work since the Second Party Congress (February 1951) and outlined a program for the revolutionary line for our country as a whole and the lines for the two regions. "The common missions of the Vietnamese revolution at the present time are strengthening national solidarity, resolutely struggling to maintain the peace, and promoting the socialist revolution in the North, while promoting the people's democratic national revolution in the South, achieving national unification on the basis of independence and democracy, building a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam, truly contributing to strengthening the socialist bloc, and protecting peace in Southeast Asia and in the world.

The Congress decided to amend the Party Statutes and to elect a new Central Committee. The 1st Plenum of the Party Central Committee elected President Ho Chi Minh as Party Secretary and comrade Le Duan as First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, elected a Political Bureau consisting of 11 regular members and 2 alternate members, and elected a Party Central Committee Secretariat with 7 members.

The Third Party Congress was a very important event in the history of our country's revolution. On the basis of the development of the revolutionary situation in both parts of our country and common tendency of the world revolution. The Congress delineated an independent, autonomous, creative political line intended to promote the people's democratic national revolution in the South and the socialist revolution in the North, and develop the combined strength of the two great revolutions of the era in our country and abroad, in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

The Congress analyzed, and set forth in a scientific, creative manner, our country's two strategic revolutionary missions and the relationship between those two strategic missions, and outlined the prospect of inevitable victory for the revolution and the mode of operation for winning victory in each region.

The line delineated by the Congress illuminated the path for our people, who were constructing socialism and struggling to unify the homeland. The Congress signified a new maturation of our Party's leadership and served as the basis for all future victories.

20 October: Simultaneous uprisings by the ethnic minority people and armed forces in the Central Highlands.

In 1960, our people's uprising movement rapidly spread to nearly all provinces in Nam Bo and the western parts of the coastal provinces in Interzone 5.

In the Central Highlands, the simultaneous uprising began with the attack and uprising in Dac Ta, which gave rise to a revolutionary mass movement in all three Central Highlands province.

Dac Ta was located on strategic Rt. 14 north of Cong Tum. On 20 October 1960 the soldiers and people there simultaneously attacked the outposts at Dac Ru, Dac Lay, Dac Ta, Dac Bun, etc. When we wiped out the Dac Ru and Dac Lay posts, the enemy at Dac Ta fled in panic and the Dac Bun outpost surrendered. We killed or captured 300 of the enemy and captured 50 weapons. East of Cong Tum we attacked and wiped out the Mang But and Mang Den outposts and destroyed seven enemy vehicles on Rt. 5. At the same time, the people in Gia Lai attacked and wiped out the Kanak outpost (near An Khe) and the Le Thanh outpost in Gia Lai. In Dac Lac took the Play Coc and Ai Nu posts to support the uprising and struggle of our compatriots in Buon Ma Thuot. In addition to the military attacks, our people arose to destroy a large part of the enemy's base-level administrative network. We gained control of a vast, strategically important area which connected the Central Highlands with eastern and western Nam Bo and extending from the Central Highlands to the Interzone 5 lowlands.

2 November to 6 December: Our Party delegation participates in a ceremony commemorating the October Revolution and the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties.

Between 2 November and 6 December 1960 a Vietnam Lao Dong Party delegation led by President Ho Chi Minh went to Moscow to attend a ceremony commemorating the October Revolution and the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties.

In January 1961, the 3rd Plenum of the Party Central Committee observed that the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties was a great success of the international communist and workers movement, and appealed for our Party and population to strictly observe the revolutionary principles of the plenum declaration, combined with the implementation of the missions outlined by the Third Party Congress.

20 December: Formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

In accordance with the Party's stand, in the revolutionary high tide of 1960 (20 December 1960), a Congress of People's Representatives from all parts of the South met in a liberated area in eastern Nam Bo to study the situation in the South and proclaimed the formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

The Front advocated solidarity among all strata of people -- the classes, political parties, religions, ethnic minority groups, democratic figures, and patriots -- regardless of political orientation, to overthrow the ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and the lackey Ngo Dinh Diem clique. On the basis of the

actual circumstances of the revolution in the South, the Front adopted a 10-point program the basic content of which was the overthrow of the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorship in order to construct an independent, democratic, peaceful, and unified Vietnam.

The formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was the inevitable result of the revolutionary struggle movement of our people in South against the neocolonial ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys. The Front, carrying on and adding to the tradition of patriotism and ethnic solidarity, held high the flag of solidarity in opposing the U.S. for national salvation under new historical conditions. The Front's 10-point program correctly resolved the basic problems of the revolution in South Vietnam, especially the problems of national independence, democracy, and peaceful neutrality.

The emergence of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam signified an important event in the revolution in the South. The Front program, which followed the line delineated by our Party, had the effect of more broadly rallying all strata of patriotic people to oppose the U.S. and Diem, further isolate and divide the enemy, and struggle for national independence and democracy.

26 September 1960: Soldiers and people of Laos liberate Sam Nua.

On 23 May 1960, with the assistance of some patriotic soldiers in the rightist army and of the local people, the Pathet Lao leaders, including Chairman Souphanouvong, who had been imprisoned by the Laotian reactionaries near Vientiane, escaped from prison and returned safely to the base area.

On 26 September 1960, the Pathet Lao armed forces, in coordination with the Vietnamese volunteer troops, liberated the city of Sam Nua and nearly all of Sam Nua Province.

The liberation of Sam Nua was a historic victory, an important victory of the Laotian revolution which opened the way for a succession of future victories. With the liberation of Sam Nua the Laotian revolution had a solid, relatively large base area which could be expanded in three directions -- north, south, and west -- and bordered socialist North Vietnam. That was a major advantage in organizing leadership of the revolution throughout Laos until the day of complete victory.

1960: The Chinese rulers prevent the Vietnamese people from stepping up their armed struggle in the South.

In May 1960, in talks with Vietnamese representatives, the Chinese rulers said the following with regard to Vietnam: "It should not be said that military struggle or political struggle is more important. Whether political struggle or military struggle, there is no question of winning political power immediately. The struggle must be a protracted one Even if Diem is overthrown unification cannot be achieved right away, for the U.S imperialists would never agree to that

"The North may support the South politically and help the South in adopting policies, but it must principally nurture the spirit of self-reliance of their brothers in the South When the chances of success are certain, the North may aid the South militarily, i.e. when it is absolutely certain that nothing will happen, it will be possible to supply some weapons without anyone knowing about it. But in general it should not lend assistance."

That proved that they were not sympathetic with the "simultaneous uprising" of our people in the South, but when they could not prevent it they wanted our people in the North to abandon their obligation to the South and let the people in the South fight alone. They wanted the people in the South to restrict their armed struggle to small-scale attacks and guerrilla attacks, by companies or platoons.

Masters of their own destiny, the people of Vietnam strongly advanced the revolutionary war in the South. At the end of 1963 the fascist dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem, a lackey of the US. imperialists, was overthrown and the U.S. "special war" was completely bankrupted.

Chapter II

From the Beginning of 1961 to Mid-1965

The Revolution in the South Develops From Local Uprisings to a Revolutionary War Which Combines Armed Struggle With Political Struggle and Defeats the U.S Imperialists' "Special War" Strategy.

1961

January 1961: The Political Bureau issues a Resolution (which became a Directive on 31 January 1961) regarding the direction and immediate missions and tasks of the resolution in the South. ✓

After the repeated victories of the revolution in the South following the simultaneous uprising, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met to concretize the resolution of the Third Party Congress regarding the direction and immediate missions and tasks of the revolution in the South.

The North was becoming increasingly strong in all respects and, along with the socialist countries, had become a solid bloc. It was increasingly capable of preserving the peace and more strongly defending itself. It was increasingly becoming a source of support and a base area of the revolution to liberate the South, and played an increasingly decisive role in the enterprise of liberating our nation.

With regard to the situation in the South, the Political Bureau concluded that "The period of temporary stability of the U.S.-Diem regime has ended and the period of continuous crisis has begun; the appearance of the forms of limited guerrilla warfare and local uprisings has opened the way for a revolutionary high tide in the South, because "The revolution in the South is developing along the path of a general uprising, with new characteristics, and there remain practically no

possibility that the revolution will develop peacefully" and "The people's general offensive and general uprising will be carried out in order to overthrow the U.S.-Diem regime and liberate the South."

With regard to the struggle form and motto, the Political Bureau pointed out that "At present, because the balance of forces has changed it is necessary to change the struggle motto to "Step up the political struggle while also stepping up the armed struggle until it is on a par with the political struggle, and attack the enemy both politically and militarily."

Because the comparison of forces and topographical characteristics differed from area to area, the Political Bureau set forth a work motto for the three areas: "In the jungle-and-mountain area, stress military struggle. In the lowland area, military struggle and political struggle may be at equal levels. In the urban areas, stress the political struggle."

The Political Bureau set forth the following mission for the South in the immediate future: "Endeavor to rapidly build up our forces politically and militarily, rally the broad revolutionary forces in the Liberation Front, launch a strong mass political movement, positively annihilate the enemy's manpower and conserve and develop our forces, smash the enemy's governmental administration and forces on an increasingly larger scale, advance to mastering the jungle-and-mountains area and retake all of the lowlands, endeavor to build bases and step up the political struggle in the cities, and create all conditions and take advantage of all favorable opportunities to overthrow the U.S.-Diem regime and liberate the South."

The 31 January 1961 resolution of the Political Bureau Plenum provided very important strategic guidance for the revolution in the South. It resulted from the creative application of the Resolution of the 15th of the Party Central Committee and the Resolution of the Third Party Congress under new conditions and set forth basic matters regarding the revolutionary line and methods in the South in the new phase and in continuing to advance the revolution.

15February: The revolutionary armed forces in the South unified.

From the formation of small armed self-defense and armed propaganda units in 1957-1958 to the beginning of 1961 the revolutionary armed forces developed very rapidly all over the South and there began to take form three types of troops: regular troops, local troops, and guerrilla militia.

However, the organizational forms and names by which the units were known differed from area to area and the command and guidance system was not yet truly solid.

In view of that situation, on 15 February 1961 a military conference held in War Zone D decided to unify all revolutionary armed forces in the South into the "Liberation Army of South Vietnam" and changed the Regional Military Committee into the Liberation Command of South Vietnam.

On 27 July 1961 the Party Command and Command of Interzone 5 were formed, and because of the developmental requirements of the revolutionary war the first main-force regiment of the revolutionary armed forces -- designated Q.761 -- was formed in Eastern Nam Bo on 27 July 1961.

The unification of the revolutionary armed forces of the South reflected the maturation of our armed forces in the South and the transformation of the revolution to a new phase, the phase of waging a revolutionary war.

January to May 1961: Soldiers and people of Laos liberate the Plaine des Jarres and many other places in Laos.

On 1 January 1961 the Pathet Lao troops and the other patriotic forces, coordinating with volunteer Vietnamese troops, liberated the Plaine des Jarres and the Noong Het area in Sieng Khoang Province. The city of Phong Saly was liberated on the same day.

Building on that victory, the Pathet Lao troops and the volunteer Vietnamese troops liberated one place after another: Nam Bac and Ban Ban (4 January), Tha Vieng (12 January), Vang Vieng and Tha Thom (18 January), Muong Hiem (29 January), Pa Thi (31 January), Sala Phukhun (7 March), Cam Cot-Lat Sao-Na Pe (11 March), and Pha Tang (19 March).

Heavily defeated, the reactionary rightist Phumi Nosavan proposed a ceasefire. The Pathet Lao accepted that proposal and representatives of the three factions met at Hin Hop, then at Na Mon. In May 1961 they agreed to a ceasefire.

However, that agreement was sabotaged by the reactionaries just after it was signed, so the fighting continued and became increasingly fierce.

The victories in Laos during the first months of 1961 were also victories of the revolution in the South of our country following the simultaneous uprisings which caused the comparison of forces between revolution and counterrevolution to change in a manner favorable to the revolutions of both countries. Both the status and power of the Laotian revolution developed, the liberated area was expanded, the armed forces became stronger, and the prestige of the Neo Lao Haxat became increasingly strong among the Laotian masses. They also strongly supported the revolution in our country.

1961: The U.S. imperialists begin the "special war," use war stratagems to attain their aggressive goals.

During the first months of 1961, after the victorious "simultaneous uprisings" in the South, the revolution developed in an offensive status and won one great victory after another. The puppet army and administration were forced with the peril of complete collapse.

The U.S. imperialists would not accept defeat. In January 1961 Kennedy replaced Eisenhower as the U.S. President and obstinately moved further along on the path of armed aggression on an even larger scale.

Having lost superiority with regard to nuclear weapons in his counterrevolutionary global strategy, and faced with the growth of the national independence movement with a tendency toward socialism, Kennedy had to come up with a new military strategy -- "flexible response" -- with its three types of war: "special war," "limited war," and "world war." His objectives were to enter into a detente with the Soviet Union, suppress the national independence movement, and make Vietnam the first testing ground for that new military strategy.

The U.S. plotted to rescue the Diem regime from collapse and defeat the revolutionary forces, correct the weaknesses of Diem's army with regard to numbers, equipment, and mobility, regain the initiative, and regain the lost territory, while also preparing material-technical bases so that the U.S. could intervene militarily in South Vietnam when the situation permitted.

On 11 May 1961 Kennedy sent 400 additional U.S. Special Forces troops and 100 advisers to South Vietnam, while also ordering the organization of secret sabotage and harassment campaigns against North Vietnam, the development of the puppet army to 200,000 regular troops, 68,000 Civil Guards, and the creation and expansion of local troops.

In June 1961 Kennedy sent the Staley delegation to South Vietnam to work with Taylor in drafting a plan to "pacify" the South in 18 months and prepare the way for the new U.S. strategy in South Vietnam: the "special war" strategy.

In implementing "special war" in South Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists waged a neocolonial war of aggression, used Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese, and used the lackey forces of the puppet army and the puppet administration, with weapons, equipment war facilities, and financial aid provided by the U.S., under U.S. command, and with the support of U.S. forces, to carry out the U.S. plan. U.S. combat troops would be used in a limited manner when necessary.

In December 1961, Kennedy and the U.S. National Security Council approved a recommendation from Taylor to expand the U.S. advisory group and send U.S. troops to play support roles in the battles, a decision Johnson (then the U.S. Vice President) later characterized as follows: "Kennedy made a basic decision on Vietnam: to officially jump into the special war."

The U.S. imperialists expanded and prolonged the war by obstinately and beligerently plunged into the "special war" in the South. The Vietnamese revolution encountered many additional difficulties. But the true nature of the country-stealing, country-selling U.S. and its lackeys was exposed. The "special war" strategy could not save them from their peril but caused them to suffer a defeat, greater than their previous defeat, at the hands of the indomitable Vietnamese people, who were determined to fight for independence and freedom.

1962

February 1962 and December 1962: Political Bureau resolutions on the immediate tasks of the revolution in the South.

After the Resolution of the 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee and the Political Bureau directive of January 1961, the revolutionary movement was