

June 1967: The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam sets up a permanent representative organ in Phnom Penh. The Republic of Cuba appoints an ambassador to the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of the South Vietnam.

On 22 June 1967 the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam set up a permanent representative organ at Phnom Penh.

Soon afterwards, on 30 June 1967, the government of Cuba took the very special action of reaching an agreement with us to set up a diplomatic representative organ of the Republic of Cuba, in which comrade Raul Vandet Vivo served as ambassador extraordinary, to work side-by-side with the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

By the end of 1967, 41 governments, 12 international organizations, and 5 regional organizations had expressed support for the Front's political program. The Front had a representative delegation in Hanoi and permanent organs in the following countries: the Soviet Union, Cuba, Hungary, the Korean People's Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, China, Kampuchea, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Algeria, and Indonesia.

Those diplomatic victories proved that our people's just struggle had the sympathy and support of the great mass of the progressive people of the world. The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was increasingly recognized by our friends all over the world as the only legitimate representative of our people in the South. The U.S. and its puppets became increasingly isolated.

1 September: Special Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam approves the Front's political program.

After the victory of more than 7 years of activity in accordance with the 10-point program announced on 20 December 1960, and facing the prospect of increasingly greater victories, in accordance with the stand of the Party the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam held a special congress to approve the Front's political program, in order to further expand the national solidarity bloc and mobilize 14 million of our compatriots in the South to advance on the crest of victory and be determined to defeat the U.S. aggressors. Another aim was to make known to the world's people the all of the Front's lines and policies.

The principal contents of the program consisted of four parts:

1. The entire population uniting in opposition to the U.S. for national salvation.
2. The building of an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous South Vietnam.
3. The reestablishment of normal relations between the South and the North, and the eventual unification of Vietnam.
4. The implementation of a peaceful neutral diplomatic policy.

The congress also set forth 14 major policies which fully and absolutely manifested the historic mission of the democratic national revolution.

When introducing the basic features of the program, the Presidium of the congress stressed that the only correct path of the people of the South at that time for achieving independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, and prosperity, and for advancing to the peaceful unification of the homeland was to continue to promote the sacred anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation until there were no more U.S. aggressor troops in our beloved South Vietnam.

December 1967: The Political Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Party Central Committee issues a Resolution shifting the revolution in the South over to a new phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory. (Approved by the Plenum of the Party Central Committee in January 1968 as the Resolution of the 14th Plenum of the Party Central Committee.)

In June 1967 the Party Central Committee met to evaluate our people's great victory in inflicting a very basic defeat on the U.S. imperialists' limited war. The enemy were confused both politically and militarily and the U.S. was encountering difficulties with regard to its capability to send additional troops, so few additional troops were being sent. For our part, we had made much progress with regard to both position and strength. Therefore, taking advantage of the U.S. imperialists' predicament of encountering difficulty in both advancing and retreating, and of the approaching U.S. Presidential election, it was necessary to prepare to strike a decisive blow against the enemy, win a great victory, bring about a great-leap-forward transformation, and force the U.S. to accept military defeat.

In that spirit, in December 1967 the Political Bureau met and issued the historic resolution on "transforming our revolutionary war in the South to a new phase -- the phase of winning a decisive victory."

With regard to the present situation and missions, the Political Bureau made the following analysis: "We are standing before great strategic prospects and opportunities; the U.S. imperialists are in a strategic position of finding it difficult to either advance or retreat. Clearly, in comparison to its definite political and military goals in the South, the war efforts of the U.S. (as well as their losses) in Vietnam are at their ecme."

After reviewing the basic plots and continuous defeats of the enemy, the Political Bureau observed that "Due to the strategic defeats of the U.S. in the South and our great victories during this year's winter-spring season, it will be difficult for the enemy to carry out a third counteroffensive. The tendency of the situation throughout 1968 will be that they that will increasingly take the defensive and become more passive than in the past."

For our part, the Political Bureau observed that we had defeated the enemy both strategically and tactically, our military and political forces in the South were larger and stronger than ever, and we had taken the initiative on all battlefields. But we also had a number of weaknesses with regard to large-scale annihilating battles, our urban work, ensuring supplies and equipment, the military proselyting work, etc.

The Political Bureau concluded that "The basic course of the situation is that we are in a position of victory, initiative, and advantage, while the enemy are in a situation of defeat, passivity, and difficulty. The situation also allowed us to change our revolutionary war over to a new phase -- the phase of decisive victory."

On the basis of the above-mentioned analysis and observation, the Political Bureau concluded that "Our key, urgent mission is to mobilize the greatest efforts on the part of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both the North and the South to advance our revolutionary war to the highest developmental level by carrying out a General Offensive-General Uprising to win a decisive victory, in order to attain our strategic objectives."

Because we would carry out the General Offensive-General Uprising under the conditions of the enemy still having more than 1 million troops and great war potential, the offensive by the military forces on the principal battlefields and the uprising by the people in the large cities, the two principal offensive thrusts, would be closely coordinated with each other and support each other, and would advance the General Offensive and General Uprising in all three areas: the cities, the rural lowlands, and the mountains.

The Political Bureau foresaw three possible courses of development of the situation: first, we would win great victories on the important battlefields, the offensives and uprisings would be successful in the large cities, and the enemy's aggressive will would be smashed and they would have to negotiate to conclude the war in accordance with our objectives and requirements; second, although we won major victories in many places the enemy would still have many forces in the major bases to continue the fighting with us; third, the U.S. would increase its forces and expand the war. We would have to make extraordinary efforts to win the greatest possible victory in the case of the first possibility, but we would also be prepared to cope with the second possibility. There was little likelihood of the third possibility, but we would have to actively guard against it.

The Political Bureau appealed for the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both parts of the country to transform the Party's strategic decision to win a decisive victory on the battlefield into revolutionary acts. The North would have to strengthen its will to fight and defeat the U.S. aggressors and devote all of its strength to serving the great front line, defend and strengthen the great rear area, and be determined to win a decisive victory on the main battlefield.

The December 1967 resolution of the Political Bureau, at a time when the U.S. had escalated the limited war to the level of more than 1 million troops, including 500,000 U.S. expeditionary troops, evaluated the situation very correctly, analyzed the opportunity very scientifically, and set forth very creative offensive measures and forms for winning a strategic victory and advance the revolution in the South to a new phase.

1968

January 1968: Soldiers and people of Laos launch a campaign to liberate Nam Bac in northern Laos.

Nam Bac, a district in Luang Prabang Province that had been liberated by the Pathet Lao, was an important strategic area on the northwestern Laos battlefield. It had therefore become the scene of fierce contention between revolution and counter-revolution in Laos over a period of many years.

In July 1966 the enemy used six main-force battalions, made up of the GM.11 and the BV.12, 15, and 36 units, to occupy the Nam Bac area, with the scheme of transforming that area into a permanent base which connected with and protected Luang Prabang, plunder the on-the-spot manpower and wealth, restore and develop the local bandits, reduce the liberated area in northwestern Laos, and threaten our country's Tay Bac area.

Between July 1966 and July 1967 the Pathet Lao troops, in coordination with the volunteer Vietnamese troops, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and annihilated nearly all of the enemy in the places they had occupied. The enemy in Nam Bac were surrounded and isolated.

In August 1967 the reactionary Laos rulers, obstinately scheming to hold Nam Bac at all costs, sent in GM.12 and GM.15 as reinforcements, in hopes of retaking the lost territory and reversing the situation. But all of the enemy's attacks were defeated.

By December 1967 the enemy forces in Nam Bac included GM.11, GM.12 and GM.15, one battalion of GM.25, and one artillery battalion, garrisoning three strongpoint complexes which were relatively far from one another and were cut off from one another.

The Laos leadership cadres and we understood that the fact that the enemy had sent relatively large forces to Nam Bac presented us with a very good opportunity to annihilate them. Our Laotian cadres and we adopted the policy of coordinating forces in carrying out a Nam Bac campaign to annihilate the enemy in that area, liberate all of the Nam Bac area in order to smash the enemy's plot, restore and consolidate the northwestern Laos liberated area, defend our country's Tay Bac rear area, change the comparison of forces in a manner advantageous to the revolution, create a political-military situation favorable for the Laotian revolution, and advance to the winning of even greater victories.

On 12 January, after nearly a month of continuous operations to approach and surround the enemy, the Lao-Viet armed forces opened fire and simultaneously attacked the enemy's strongpoints in Nam Bac. By 15 January, most of the enemy troops had been annihilated and the rest fled in panic. The Laotian troops and our troops shifted over to pursuing and mopping up the enemy. On 27 January the campaign ended in complete victory.

The results were that we knocked out of action 3,189 of the enemy (973 killed, 2,122 captured, and 94 wounded), including 84 officers and 375 noncommissioned officers; 6 battalions were wiped out and 5 battalions suffered heavy losses. Our friends captured 1,349 weapons of the various kinds, destroyed 9 105mm howitzers, 2 75mm pack howitzers, 2 trucks, and 12 airplanes, shot down 1 T.28 and 1 helicopter, liberated the Nam Bac area and its population of more than 10,000, eliminated the nests of local bandits, and regained the entire area lost to the enemy since mid-1966.

The Nam Bac victory had a very great, all-round significance militarily and politically, with regard to the Laotian people as well as ourselves. Within a short period of time the enemy lost one-third of their strategic mobile forces, including many groups along with nearly all of their officers and noncommissioned officers, which caused the comparison of forces to change rapidly in the favor of the Laotian revolution. The campaign liberated a strategically important area, signified the rapid maturation of the armed forces of our friends and ourselves (especially the main-force troops), strongly inspired and further tightened the spirit of militant solidarity between the soldiers and people of Vietnam and Laos, and coordinated harmoniously with the general offensive and uprisings that would occur on the southern battlefield only a few days later.

30 January to 31 March: The general offensive and simultaneous uprising of Tet Mau Than.

Implementing the December 1967 Resolution of the Political Bureau, our people's armed forces began the offensive by our main-force troops in the area of Route 9-Khe Sanh. And on the occasion of Tet Mau Than, at a time when the enemy were careless, our soldiers and people throughout the South organized large-scale strategic raids throughout the South, attacking the municipalities and cities in coordination with the simultaneous uprisings of the rural and urban masses to win the greatest victory ever.

After their heavy defeat in their second counteroffensive, the U.S. increased its troop strength to 525,000 and decided to launch a third counteroffensive in eastern Nam Bo during the 1967-1968 winter-spring season. On 8 December 1967 the U.S. 25th Division launched Operation Goldbrick against Ca Tum in War Zone C, thus beginning the third counteroffensive. But having discovered that our forces were moving in large numbers to important areas on the southern battlefield, they were forced to cancel their counteroffensive plan and withdraw all of their forces to hold the area around Saigon and north and south of Route 1.

In order to draw in and pin down most of the enemy forces in northern Quang Tri we attacked Khe Sanh and nearly all of the enemy positions on Route 9 during the night of 20 January and the early morning of 21 January.

The U.S. and their puppets knew that we would launch a major offensive but could not predict where it would take place, its scale, or the form it would take, nor did they know what forces we had. Thus they could only sound the alarm all over the South and cancel the Tet ceasefire, but made no specific advance preparations.

During the night of 30 January and the early morning of 31 January 1968 the armed forces and people in the South launched a general offensive and simultaneous uprising on all southern battlefields, especially in the large cities and on the principal battlefield, on a very large scale:

-- The offensive and simultaneous uprising in practically all municipalities and large cities resulted in our mastery of many of them for many days or many hours. We won complete control of Hue, organized a revolutionary administration, held the city 25 days, and fought off hundreds of enemy counterattacks.

--We attacked a very large number of enemy command organs, such as the U.S. Embassy, "Independence Palace," the puppet General Staff, the command headquarters of the corps, armed forces branches, divisions, brigades, and regiments of the U.S., the puppets, and the vassals, and the military sectors and subsectors.

--We attacked a large number of enemy military bases and defensive lines, including 45 airfields, among them such large airfields as Tan Son Nhut, Bien Hoa, Da Nang, and Chu Lai; a large number of supply depots, including many large, central depots such as those at Long Binh, Nha Be, Lien Chieu, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Hue, Play Cu, Buon Ma Thuot, Quy Nhon, Soc Trang, etc.; and a large number of ports and enemy naval bases.

--We attacked nearly all of the water and land routes and paralyzed all of the enemy's communications and transportation activities.

In many rural areas, with or without the support of armed forces the masses strongly arose, smashed the puppets' administrative apparatus and central apparatus, destroyed a large number of "strategic hamlets," smashed or forced the abandonment of many outposts, liberated land and won the right of mastership, established revolutionary administrations, and expanded and consolidated our rear area.

The results were that within only a two-month period in the spring of 1968 (especially from the night of 30 January to the end of February 1968) we annihilated or disintegrated large parts of the puppet army. Some 147,000 of the enemy were killed (including 43,000 Americans), 200,000 puppet soldiers deserted, and 31 battalions, 1 armored regiment, 5 armored squadrons, and 195 companies were heavily damaged, and the combat effectiveness of the puppet army seriously declined. Heavy losses were also inflicted on the U.S. troops: 5 battalions and 69 companies were wiped out or suffered heavy casualties.

A very large amount of war facilities and supplies were destroyed, many supply depots and airfields were attacked: more than 200 gasoline storage depots and 250 ammunition dumps were attacked, there were 160 attacks on 66 airfields and 166 attacks on 77 supply dumps, 2,370 airplanes were shot down or destroyed, and 1,700 tanks and armored vehicles, thousands of trucks, 350 artillery pieces, 230 ships and boats, and 1,368,000 tons of war materiel -- 34 percent of the enemy's reserves -- were lost or destroyed.

The general offensive and simultaneous uprising at the beginning of spring, 1968, were an inevitable development of the offensive strategy of the southern revolution. They had an extremely important significance, for within only a short period of time we completely changed our battlefield position, brought the war to the final lairs of the enemy, rapidly changed the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy much to our advantage, created a new situation, and created a new strategic situation with new capabilities.

"The general offensive and simultaneous uprising of the spring of Tet Mau Than [1968] were a blow struck against the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists. The glorious victory won by that bold, unexpected general offensive and simultaneous uprising upset the enemy's strategic situation, bankrupted the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists, and forced them to deescalate the war and

negotiate with us at the Paris Conference." (Political Report of the Fourth Party Congress.)

31 March: Johnson has to announce a deescalation of the war and admit the defeat of the limited war.

After nearly 3 years of sending a very large number of the U.S. expeditionary troops to our country, carrying out strategic counteroffensives in South Vietnam, and intensifying and expanding their war of destruction in the North, the U.S. was defeated in both parts of our country as well as on the Kampuchean and Laotian battlefields. Our Tet Mau Than general offensive and uprising throughout the South were another unexpected, strong blow which "shook the U.S." It was also a major defeat for their war of aggression as a whole.

Although the most belligerent members of the U.S. ruling apparatus, especially the generals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and CINCPAC, sought all ways to create pressure to intensify the war, such as recommending that 200,000 additional troops be sent to South Vietnam, that air attacks be stepped up, that both naval and land forces be used to attack the North, that U.S. reserve troops be mobilized on a large scale, etc., but U.S. public opinion and even some within the Johnson administration were fed up and strongly protested the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Many U.S. Congressmen protested and demanded that U.S. policy toward the war in Vietnam be reviewed. Clifford, the new U.S. Secretary of Defense, was assigned the task of, along with others, coming up with a new strategy. On 29 February 1968 he concluded that "even if we send 200,000 additional troops we cannot expel the enemy from South Vietnam or annihilate their forces," and that "if we further escalate the war there will explode in our country the greatest crisis ever."

On 25 March 1968 a conference of unofficial high-level advisers made up of "experts" from former administrations and from the Johnson administration, most of them "hawks," also recommended that Johnson deescalate the war.

On 27 March 1968 Eisenhower, a former U.S. President, also had to admit that "...never have I experienced such a lamentable situation as the present circumstances of the United States, which is deeply divided over the war."

Confronted with that situation, Johnson and the rulers in the White House were deeply shaken. On 22 March 1968 Johnson dismissed Westmoreland and recalled him to the U.S., and agreed to send only a symbolic number of troops to Vietnam, not the 200,000 Johnson himself had approved on 13 March 1968.

On 31 March 1968 Johnson announced his decision to restrict U.S. activities in Vietnam by ordering an end to the bombing of the North above the 20th Parallel, and also declared that he would not run for a second term as President and that he would send a representative to talk with a representative of our Government in Paris.

Previously, on 30 March 1968, Westmoreland returned to Saigon from the U.S. to explain the policy of the U.S. government;

--The "search and destroy" strategy would be replaced by a "clear and hold" strategy.

--The South Vietnamese (puppet) Army would gradually replace the U.S. troops on the battlefield and play the principal role. The military efforts would be replaced by military, economic, political, and social efforts. The new strategy would emphasize anti-guerrilla activities and the number of large-scale operations would decline.

With Johnson's announcement of 31 March 1968 the U.S. imperialists officially admitted the defeat of the "limited war" strategy and admitted that they had to deescalate the war and had been forced to negotiate with us and change their strategy.

Our people defeated the "limited war" strategy of the U.S. imperialists. That was a major defeat for their war of aggression in our country and also was a step toward the bankruptcy of their global strategy.

We won a victory in the phase of the most serious challenge to our national destiny. But the U.S. imperialists were very obstinate; they still had potential and had come up with new plots and schemes. Our soldiers and people had to continue to fight to defend the North, liberate the South, and advance to unifying the homeland.

24 April: The Political Bureau holds a conference to assess the Tet Mau Than activity cycle and issues a resolution on the new direction of struggle in order to win a decisive victory.

After 2 months of the general offensive and simultaneous uprising, the Political Bureau met to assess the activity cycle and set forth the direction for the coming period.

In evaluating the activity cycle, the Political Bureau noted that in the first phase of implementing the Party Central Committee's policy of carrying out a general offensive and simultaneous uprising we had won a great, all-round victory and brought about a new turning point in order to advance to the winning of a decisive victory in the war to liberate the South.

Predicting the enemy's future plots and policies, the Political Bureau concluded that their immediate objective was to concentrate their forces on holding the cities and bases, the most important of which were Saigon, Hue, and Military Region I. They would go all-out to increase the number of U.S. expeditionary troops, restore the puppet army and administration, and step up their attacks on the North and their fraudulent diplomatic activities. But they were encountering difficulties in many respects.

On the basis of the characteristics of our situation and the enemy's situation the Political Bureau, in order to exploit our victory and push the enemy into an even more desperate situation, defined our direction of struggle as follows: "Mobilizing the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population to manifest a spirit of victory, continue to develop the all-round offensive, win increasingly

greater victories, rapidly expand the armed forces and political forces of the revolution, become stronger as we fight, and push the enemy into an irreversible status of continuous defeat and increasing weakness and disintegration, in order to advance to the winning of a decisive victory."

The resolution set forth the following specific requirements:

--Continually attacking the cities, tightening our encirclements, creating a situation of permanent crisis in the cities, and inciting the masses to arise strongly to win and maintain mastery.

--Liberating most of the rural area and advancing to the taking of the entire rural area.

--Continuing to carry out an all-round offensive against the puppet army and puppet administration and causing their organization to disintegrate and their morale to collapse beyond salvation.

--Continuing to attack the U.S. troops and annihilating an important part of their manpower.

--Continually attacking the military bases, rear services bases, and key lines of communication.

--Rapidly developing our armed forces and revolutionary political forces with regard to quality and quantity.

--Comprehensively consolidating the liberated area politically, militarily, economically, and socially.

--The North would build and consolidate national defense, promote production, resolutely defeat all of the enemy's escalations, and ensure communications and transportation.

21 April: Formation of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces.

After more than 10 years of the U.S. imperialists committing aggression against our country, in the cities temporarily occupied by the U.S. and its puppets the economic, political, cultural, and moral lives of the people were suffocating. The cities were turned into military camps and houses of prostitution, with a changing society that was full of corrupt customs.

Because of that situation, the people of the cities continuously arose to struggle against the U.S. bandits and the traitorous lackeys. Leading the way was the persistent, resolute struggle of the working class and the laboring people, which served to win over the other strata of people. Among those strata, including puppet officials and officers, there were people who had made progress with regard to their spirit and attitude, and in one way or another they had acted against the U.S. and Thieu-Ky.

Our Party felt that it was necessary to have an organizational form to expand the national united front to oppose the U.S. for national salvation that would be capable of rallying people of many different tendencies and persuasions in the southern cities who were patriotic and were opposed to the U.S. and Thieu-Ky but who, for one reason or another did not yet want to participate in the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

That correct policy met with response. More and more prominent people, doctors, professors, writers, journalists, clergymen, college students, national bourgeoisie, and officials and officers of the puppet army and administration participated in the struggle against the U.S. and Thieu-Ky. On 20 and 21 April 1968 representatives of those strata held a conference to set up the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces and elect the Alliance Central Committee under the chairmanship of lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao.

In its national-salvation declaration the Alliance clearly stated its objectives of "uniting all patriotic forces and individuals, resolutely opposing foreign aggression, overthrowing the puppet regime of Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky, and setting up a national coalition government and winning independence, democracy, and peace."

The appearance of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces was a new developmental step of the popular solidarity bloc. That was a prompt, positive response following the Tet Mau Than victory in support of our people's struggle on the military, political, and diplomatic fronts, especially on the diplomatic front, which caused the U.S. and Thieu-Ky to become more isolated and contributed to the glorious victory of the enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation.

13 May: First meeting of the Two-Party Conference in Paris.

In Johnson's 31 March 1968 speech the U.S. imperialists, although admitting that they had to deescalate the war, in fact continued to obstinately advocate their "limited bombing" of the North of our country.

The people of Vietnam and of the world vehemently protested those acts of the U.S. imperialists. On 3 April 1968 our Government issued a declaration severely condemning the insidious plots and schemes of the U.S. and reiterated the just stand and good-will attitude of our Government and people. The declaration stated, "Clearly, the U.S. government has not yet strictly and fully met the legitimate demands of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, of progressive U.S. opinion, and of world opinion. However, for its part the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares its readiness to send representatives to meet with U.S. representatives to arrange with the U.S. side the unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam so that the talks may begin."

On 3 May our Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a declaration regarding such matters as the rank of representatives and the location and time of the official talks between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the U.S. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, comrade Xuan Thuy, was selected by the Government to represent the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Paris was to be the location of the talks, and the official talks were to begin on 10 May or a few days later.

On 13 May the official talks between the representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the representative of the U.S. government began. The U.S. delegation was headed by Harriman. Minister of Foreign Affairs Xuan Thuy, the first to speak, stressed that the objective of the talks were "to arrange with the U.S. the unconditional cessation of the bombing, and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and then to talk about other matters relevant to the two sides."

The two-party talks at Paris resolved no basic problems in 1968, but they began a period in which we directly attacked the enemy diplomatically at the conference table, which was a very advantageous forum for exposing the aggression, barbarity, and obstinacy of the U.S. imperialists. The struggle at the conference was coordinated with and supported by the military and political struggle on the battlefield. It was the necessary first step toward the Four-Party Conference in Paris, which concluded victoriously with the signing of the agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam.

4 May and 17 August 1968: Beginning of the second and third phases of the General Offensive.

Implementing the April 1968 Resolution of the Political Bureau, the second phase of the General Offensive began on 4 May 1968. Although the enemy had made preparations in advance and had concentrated two-thirds of the U.S. forces and all of the puppet general reserves to defend the large cities, especially around Saigon, we attacked 30 municipalities and cities, 70 towns, district seats, and military subsectors, 27 puppet corps, division, brigade, and regiment headquarters, 40 important airfields and warehouses, etc. The strongest attacks were in Saigon-Gia Dinh. We attacked the Police Headquarters, the City Hall, the U.S. Embassy housing area, the puppet Premier's residence, the radio station, and the TV station, then held our ground and fought off the enemy's counterattacks, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Coordinating with Saigon, we launched simultaneous attacks on the defensive lines around Saigon, such as Duc Hoa, Ben Luc (Long An), Tan Thoi Hiep (Gia Dinh), and Bien Hoa, and the municipalities and cities in the Mekong Delta, such as Can Tho, My Tho, Ben Tre, Chau Doc, Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, Sa Dec, and Ca May, combined with the repulsing of the enemy's counterattacks in Long An, Tay Ninh, Thu Dau Mot, and Bien Hoa (8 to 21 May).

In Zone 5 and the Central Highlands, in coordination with attacks on the cities of Da Nang, Hoi An, Quang Ngai, Da Lat, and Phan Thiet (4 to 5 May) we defeated the enemy's relief operation along the Thu Bon River in Quang Nam from 5 to 24 May.

On the Tri-Thien and Route 9 battlefields, after withdrawing from Hue we both continued to encircle the city and the U.S. complex at Khe Sanh and stopped the U.S.-puppet operation, of which the 1st Air Cavalry Division served us the hard core, in the lowland and jungle-and-mountains areas. The largest operations were "Pegasus" and "Scotland" in the Route 9 area, and "Carentan" and "Delaware" in the A Sau Valley.

Taking advantage the enemy's internal neglect, we carried out raids, ambushes, and heavy artillery shelling, the most outstanding of which were an ambush which

knocked out 10 warships on the Huong River (6 May and the artillery shelling of the Dong Lam base in Thua Thien, which destroyed 150 airplanes of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, destroyed 100 vehicles, most of them tanks and armored vehicles, and killed 1,000 of the enemy (19 May).

The second phase inflicted many losses on the enemy but did not meet the political and military requirements we had set.

In August 1968 the Political Bureau met and decided to continue to "promote the general offensive and general uprising to win a decisive victory" and cause the enemy to be defeated on the battlefield, defeated in the large cities, and defeat defeated in the U.S. itself." At the same time, we had to be "prepared to defeat the U.S. should they prolong or expand the war."

Carrying out that policy, we urgently carried out the third phase of the general offensive between 17 August and 30 September. The general offensive broke out on all battlefields. We simultaneously attacked 27 cities, more than 100 towns, district capitals, and military subsectors, 17 airfields, 3 depots, and 6 enemy division headquarters. In Saigon we attacked the National Assembly building and the puppet General Staff, while our forces on the outer perimeter attacked a whole series of enemy bases, such as the Tay Ninh Holy See, the base camp of the 3rd Brigade of the puppet 25th Division at Trang Lon, Ca Tum, the U.S. communications station on Mt. Ba Den, the U.S. bases at Tha La and Ben Cui, and the position of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division at Loc Ninh. In Nam Bo we annihilated 14,000 of the enemy, including 10,000 Americans. The U.S. Lieutenant General Casey, commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, was killed during that phase.

In Zone 5 we attacked Da Nang, took the Special Zone and the radio station, attacked the airfield, Mt. Non Nuoc, the Son Tra Peninsula, etc., annihilated or knocked out of action 23,000 of the enemy, and inflicted heavy casualties on two puppet mobile regiments and part of the U.S. Americal Division.

On the Tri-Thien front, after the U.S. troops were forced to withdraw from Khe Sanh (9 July), we continued to press the attack on Route 9 and stopped the enemy's operations out to the jungles-and-mountains area.

During the second and third phases of the general offensive in 1968 we annihilated much of the enemy's manpower and war facilities, and won a very great victory. But we still did not meet the basic requirements that had been set forth. Furthermore, because the enemy's situation and our situation had changed we had to fight continually and to concentrate on the cities. In the rural areas we were vulnerable and were strongly counterattacked by the enemy, so our forces were depleted and in some places the liberated area was reduced. The revolutionary movement in the Nam Bo lowlands encountered many difficulties and our offensive posture weakened. When the enemy launched a fierce counteroffensive our weaknesses and deficiencies caused the situation to undergo complicated changes after Tet Mau Than [1968].

26 June to 9 July: The U.S. withdraws from Khe Sanh.

The Khe Sanh strongpoint was set up by the U.S.-puppets in mid-1966, when we opened the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri front.

Because of our strong pressure the enemy forces had to be increased, and by the end of 1967 the enemy had created there a complex of key strongpoints made up of three clusters of strongpoints -- Ta Con, Huong Hoa, and Lang Vay -- which lay within the Route 9 defensive line of the U.S. bandits to the west, along the Vietnam-Laos border. The U.S. troops permanently stationed there totalled nearly 10,000, made up of 4 Marine battalions, artillery forces, armor, and support units, as well as tens of thousands of others who were ready to reinforce. They had strong artillery and air support, including B52 strategic bombers.

We launched four consecutive attacks on Khe Sanh in a period of a little more than 5 months:

-- Between 21 January and 7 February 1968 we annihilated the Huong Hoa military subsector and the Lang Vay strongpoint.

-- Between 8 February and 31 March we surrounded the Ta Con strongpoint cluster.

-- In April we defeated the U.S. siege-relieving operation bearing the name "Pegasus."

-- From 5 to 9 July we maintained our encirclement and attacked the withdrawing enemy troops.

After the measures the enemy took to break the siege of Khe Sanh were smashed our encirclement became increasingly tighter and the U.S. intention of "defending Khe Sanh at all costs" had to be replaced by "we don't intend to set up a Dien Bien Phu." They plotted to surreptitiously flee from Khe Sanh.

On 26 June the U.S. commanders falsely claimed that they had completed the withdrawal from the Khe Sanh base (in fact, they had only just begun). Our troops pursued them, attacked their positions, and intercepted and attacked enemy who were fleeing by land, while also preventing them from withdrawing by air. On 9 July we completely liberated Khe Sanh. During the fighting against the fleeing enemy troops we killed or wounded more than 7,000 Americans, shot down 22 airplanes, destroyed 69 military vehicles, and captured many weapons and military supplies, including 2 helicopters. They were forced to pay a big price for that withdrawal.

The results were that after 170 days of attacking and encircling Khe Sanh and fighting the fleeing enemy troops we wiped out 17,000 of the enemy (including 13,000 Americans), shot down or destroyed 480 airplanes, 120 military vehicles, 65 artillery pieces or heavy mortars, and 55 supply depots. We captured thousands of weapons of the various kinds and hundreds of tons of military supplies and food, and completely liberated Huong Hoa District and its more than 10,000 inhabitants.

The abandonment of Khe Sanh was a major defeat for the enemy. It began the retreat of the U.S. expeditionary army and signified a new step toward the defeat of

the U.S. defensive strategy, for that was the first important U.S. base in South Vietnam that had to be abandoned because of our pressure. A large area from Bao Bao to Ca Lu, extending more than 40 kilometers along the U.S.-puppet Route 9 strategic defense line was thrown open. Our offensive posture became even stronger. It was a victory with a strategic significance.

The defeat of the defensive, siege-relieving, and withdrawal tactics of the U.S. troops involving many kinds of forces and many modern facilities also had a strategic significance.

The withdrawal from Khe Sanh was also a serious political defeat for the U.S. imperialists and caused chaos and contradictions within the U.S. rulers and military commanders and fear and consternation among the U.S. soldiers and the puppet army and administration. Johnson "committed U.S. honor to holding Khe Sanh and forced the Joint Chiefs of Staff to sign a pledge in blood" (quote from Schlesinger), but in the end the U.S. troops were forced to withdraw. That event once again demonstrated to our people and to the people of the world that the U.S. imperialists, although obstinate, had been struck with painful blows and had to admit defeat.

2 November and 3 November: The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issues a declaration, and President Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal, regarding the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

Because of the increasingly perilous situation of the U.S. imperialists and the great difficulties their war of aggression was causing them, and because of the pressure of world opinion and U.S. opinion, on 1 November 1968 had to announce the complete cessation of the bombing and shelling of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by the U.S. air force, navy and artillery, in order to reach a political solution to the Vietnam problem.

On 2 November 1968 the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration on that matter. The declaration stated that "The fact that the U.S. has had to unconditionally end its bombings and attacks throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, after 4 years of accumulating unprecedented crimes against the people of North Vietnam and after 5 months of deadlocking the talks in Paris, signifies a great victory for the Vietnamese people in both parts of the country. It is also a great victory for the socialist camp, the national liberation movement, and the peace movement, as well as a great victory for the people of the world, including the progressive U.S. people.

"In order to reach a correct political solution with regard to Vietnam, the U.S. government must abandon all plots of intervention and aggression against Vietnam and must respect the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people. As long as the U.S. continues to commit aggression in Vietnam the Vietnamese people will continue to fight until they win a complete victory."

In his appeal of 3 November 1968, President Ho Chi Minh said, "We have defeated the U.S. imperialists' war of aggression in the North. But that is only an initial victory. The U.S. imperialists are very obstinate and wily. They speak of

'peace' and 'negotiations' but are still unwilling to abandon their aggressive intentions. More than a million U.S., puppet, and vassal troops are continuing to commit countless barbarous crimes against our compatriots in the South.

"Therefore, a sacred mission of our entire population at present is to manifest a spirit of determination to fight and win, and of determination to liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland.

"As long as there are aggressors in our country we must continue to fight and sweep them out."

Also on 3 November the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issued a declaration which stated the stand of the Front regarding a political solution to the matter of South Vietnam.

On 5 November the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army issued a communique and praising the accomplishments of the people's armed forces and stressing the heavy responsibility of the armed forces during the coming period. The communique also referred to the very great and important strategic significance of the defeat by our soldiers and people of the war of destruction of the U.S. imperialists:

-- We had smashed one of their strategic plots, defeated a part of their war of aggression against our country, and struck a heavy blow against their aggressive will.

-- We had defeated a new form of warfare in the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists.

That victory had caused our people to become more confident and determined to fight to final victory, caused our friends all over the world to be enthusiastic and pleased, and terrified the enemy and caused them to encounter an increasingly larger number of difficulties.

Chapter IV

From the Beginning of 1969 to 27 January 1973

Mobilizing the Entire Nation to Make the Greatest Possible Efforts, Cooperating With the Fraternal People of Laos and Kampuchea to Defeat the U.S. imperialists' Strategy of "Vietnamizing the War," Winning a Decisive Victory, and Forcing the U.S. Imperialists to Sign the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and Withdraw all U.S. and Vassal Troops From the South of Our Country

1969

25 January: The Four-Sided Conference on Vietnam convenes in Paris.

In its declaration of 2 November 1968, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam stated that "After the U.S. has unconditionally ended its bombing and shelling in all parts of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Government of the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam will discuss with the U.S. side 'the other matters relevant to the two sides' in order to find a political solution of the Vietnam problem. With the agreement of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares its readiness to participate in a conference of representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the U.S., and the Saigon administration. The presence of the representative of the Saigon administration at that conference does not mean that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam recognizes that administration."

The 3 November 1968 declaration of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam added that "In view of the fact the U.S. has unconditionally ended its bombing and shelling of North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam resolutely supports the stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, stated in its 2 November 1968 declaration, in order to find a political solution to the Vietnam problem. After holding discussions, and reaching agreement, with the Central Committee of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam agrees to participate in a four-sided conference by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the U.S. and the Saigon administration. At that conference the representative of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam will be the voice of the people in the South and the voice of the just cause."

On 13 November 1968 the U.S. Department of State declared that "The United States approves a conference of two sides: the United States and the Republic of Vietnam on one side and North Vietnam and any other party on the other side."

The delegation of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam was still headed by comrade Xuan Thuy, with comrade Le Duc Tho serving as special adviser. The U.S. delegation was still headed by Harriman.

On 10 December 1968, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam sent a delegation to the Paris Conference on Vietnam headed by comrade Tran Buu Kiem, with Nguyen Thi Binh serving as the deputy head.

The Saigon puppet regime was very worried, confused, and vexed over the developments. On 2 November 1968 Nguyen Van Thieu declared that he would send no representative to the expanded talks in Paris and that the decision to halt the bombing in all parts of the North was a unilateral decision made by the U.S. But on 8 December the U.S. lackeys sent a delegation headed by Nguyen Cao Ky and Pham Dang Lam to participate in the Paris Conference.

The first meeting, on 18 January 1969, was held to discuss preparations for the first full session of the Paris Conference on Vietnam, which was officially convened on 25 January 1969. Comrade Tran Buu Kiem, the first to speak during that session, presented the five-point stand of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Comrade Xuan Thuy then expressed opinions about the Vietnam situation, the correct anti-U.S., national salvation line, and the victories of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and stressed the iron determination of our people, who were

determined to fight until they won independence and freedom, should the U.S. continue to obstinately pursue its war of aggression.

The U.S. imperialists, who had been forced to accept the participation in the conference of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, had to accept the initial defeat of their "negotiations from a position of strength" policy, and were forced to recognize the strength of the patriotic movement of the people of the South and their representative, the National Liberation Front. That was a victory of the people of the South and of our entire nation, and was a defeat for the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

April 1969: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee issues a Resolution on the immediate situation and missions.

After our continuous attacks in 1968 and the first part of 1969, the enemy's defeats led to their having to deescalate the war even more clearly. But we also encountered many difficulties with regard to troop strength, the ensuring of supplies, etc., so the thoughts and consciousness of some Party members and cadres with regard to the situation and missions underwent complicated changes.

In view of that situation, in April 1969 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on "the immediate situation and missions." The resolution affirmed the strategic, historic significance of the General Offensive and Uprising of Tet Mau Than, the great accomplishments in 1968 and the spring of 1969 on the southern battlefield, and the great, strategic victory of the people's war against the war of destruction in the North. The Political Bureau also dealt severely with our difficulties, weaknesses, and deficiencies. Some of those difficulties were caused by the enemy's fierce counteroffensive carried out by extremely barbarous schemes, but in some respects they were due to the fact that we had not analyzed the enemy and ourselves accurately and promptly, to failure to fully understand the Party's policies and slogans, to weak organization of implementation, etc.

But it was clear that "the U.S. imperialists have suffered a very heavy defeat in all regards; their aggressive will has clearly been shaken and they have been forced to deescalate step-by-step. It will be difficult for them to maintain their war of aggression on the present scale over a long period of time,"

The Political Bureau estimated that the enemy had very little capability to add large numbers of troops, and expand the war throughout the nation and that the war could develop in one of two ways:

-- First, because of heavy losses and major difficulties the U.S. would be forced to conclude the war early, by means of a political solution they could accept.

-- Second, if we did not attack with sufficient strength and the U.S. was able to partly recover from its difficulties, it would try to prolong the war in the South for a certain period of time.

In both of those eventualities, in order to create pressure on us, the U.S., when concluding the war could, under certain circumstances, resume its bombing and shelling of the North or expand the war to Laos and Kampuchea.

The question of what course the war would take depended on our offensive strength militarily and politically and on the degree of the military, political, economic, and financial difficulties the war caused the U.S. in the South, in the U.S. itself, and in the world.

In analyzing Nixon's strategy of "Vietnamizing the war," the Political Bureau regarded it as being a policy that emerged in a situation of defeat and deadlock. It was full of internal contradictions that could not be overcome. Despite that, the enemy still had relative strengths with regard to troop strength, firepower, mobility, occupied territory, and economic and military potential.

But if we continued to have sufficient combined strength with which to attack, it was certain that their contradictions and weaknesses would become even more serious and that their strengths would diminish. And it was certain that we could defeat the enemy's new strategic plots and policies. The U.S. could not escape total defeat.

The Political Bureau observed that "we now have a great opportunity for rushing ahead on the crest of victory, promoting an all-round, continuous offensive, taking a new, very basic step forward, and defeating the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists."

The Political Bureau stressed the necessity of fully understanding and grasping the slogan of all-round offensive and the relationship among the three areas, resolutely grasping and developing our status of continuous offensive and encirclement in the cities, promoting the liberation of the rural areas, mastering most of the strategic, highly populated rural areas, consolidating and mastering the mountain region and the contiguous area, and doing a good job of preparing the battlefield so that our main-force troops could annihilate large numbers of the enemy. Our strategic slogan was to fight a protracted fight and rely principally on ourselves, while creating and grasping the opportunity to take great leaps forward.

8 May: The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issues a declaration regarding its 10-Point Solution.

At the 16th meeting of the Paris Conference on Vietnam comrade Tran Buu Kiem, head of the delegation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, presented 10 points regarding the "Principles and major contents of an all-round solution to the Vietnam problem, in order to contribute to the restoration of peace in Vietnam."

The all-round 10-point solution delineated the border between ourselves and the enemy and distinguished clearly between two different kinds of problems: 1. Problems between the U.S. imperialists -- the aggressors -- and the anti-imperialist Vietnamese people; 2. Problems among the Vietnamese.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops belonged to the first type of problem. In order to end the war it was necessary to withdraw all U.S. troops and the troops of U.S. vassals from South Vietnam without any preconditions. The matter of the armed forces in the South belongs to the second category of problems: those to be

resolved by the Vietnamese parties. The U.S. position that both sides withdraw their forces placed the aggressors on a par with the victims of aggression and therefore was unacceptable.

The right of the people of the South to handle their own affairs belonged to the second category of problems. The Saigon administration was clearly a tool used by the U.S. aggressors to carry out their neocolonial policy in South Vietnam. That administration was opposed to all the legitimate aspirations of the people of the South. However, in a spirit of national conciliation the National Liberation Front advocated the policy of the political forces in the South negotiating the formation of a provisional coalition government in order to exercise their right of self-determination by means of a free, democratic election without foreign intervention.

Clearly dealing with those two key problems in the 10-point solution, we both adhered firmly to the principle of protecting the country's independence and sovereignty and had a flexible strategy so that the U.S. troops could withdraw from Vietnam without "losing face." But the U.S. imperialists, who were obstinate and still had many ambitious, rejected that solution. That caused the people of the world to see more clearly the unjust, reactionary nature of the U.S. war of aggression. The world popular front in support of our people's fight against the U.S. aggressors was further strengthened and expanded.

6 to 8 June: The National People's Congress of South Vietnam forms the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and a Council of Government Advisers.

After the "simultaneous uprisings" of 1960 revolutionary administrations in the form of Self-Management Committees appeared in each locality and region. During the general offensive and simultaneous uprising period the matter of overthrowing the enemy's central administration was posed and the formation of a central revolutionary administration became a practical, urgent requirement both internally and externally, for in the South the liberated area had been expanded and consolidated, there were strong revolutionary armed forces, and there were powerful political forces in the united national front.

In view of that requirement, the National People's Congress of South Vietnam met and approved a resolution setting up the Republic of South Vietnam. It unanimously elected a Provisional Revolutionary Government headed by President Huynh Tan Phat and a Council of Government Advisers of which comrade Nguyen Huu Tho served as the chairman. It appealed for the soldiers and people of the South to pursue the enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation to complete victory.

President Ho Chi Minh and Premier Pham Van Dong sent a congratulatory telegram to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the Council of Government Advisers. The Standing Committee of the National Assembly and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration which stated that the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam elected by the National People's Congress of South Vietnam was the legal government and the true representative of the people of South Vietnam. Our soldiers and people of the North were extremely enthusiastic over that great victory.

Internationally, the governments of the fraternal socialist countries and of many peace-loving, justice-loving countries congratulated our people for that victory. In June 1969, 23 countries recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. Twenty-one of those countries established diplomatic relations.

The emergence of the Republic of South Vietnam was a victory of great significance in the long struggle of the people of the South in the process of winning political power for the people, building a revolutionary administration, and perfecting that administrative system in order to propel the revolutionary war to victory.

The emergence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam created a situation of two governments existing side-by-side and was a strong blow against the U.S. imperialists' plot to use the puppet administration as a tool for carrying out its neocolonialism and as a basis of support in prolonging the war. It also defeated all bogus schemes of the U.S.-puppets about the so-called "constitutional" and "legal" nature of the puppet administration. It once again affirmed that the revolutionary administration of the people of the South was certain to be victorious and that the lackey, country-selling puppet administration was certain to collapse.

20 July: Final appeal of President Ho Chi Minh.

On 20 July 1969, exactly 15 years after the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh appealed for the soldiers and people of the entire country to persist in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to total victory. That was his final appeal.

President Ho Chi Minh praised our soldiers and people for having united as one, overcoming all sacrifices and hardships, fighting very heroically, and winning a glorious victory. He severely condemned the crimes and plots of the U.S. imperialists.

He affirmed that "The Vietnamese people resolutely demand that all U.S. troops and the troops of U.S. vassals be withdrawn, not only 25,000 or 250,000 or 500,000, but all of them, unconditionally. Only thereby can the U.S. regain its honor, prevent tens of thousands of U.S. youths from dying needlessly in South Vietnam, and avoid mourning and sorrow in tens of thousands of U.S. families.

"After the troops of the U.S. and its vassals are withdrawn and South Vietnam is completely liberated from foreign aggression, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, as stated in its ten-point solution, will organize a democratic general election so that the people of South Vietnam can determine their political system, elect a constituent assembly, draft a constitution, and set up an official coalition government for South Vietnam, without foreign intervention. As long as the U.S. troops and the puppet administration continue to exist in South Vietnam there cannot be a truly free and democratic general election.

"The U.S. imperialists have clearly been defeated but they are still unwilling to abandon their intention of holding onto the South of our country. The soldiers and people of our entire nation, a million acting as one, and manifesting revolutionary heroism, are not afraid of sacrifice or hardship, are determined to persist in and promote the resistance, and are determined to fight and win, fight until the U.S. troops are completely withdrawn, fight until the puppet army and administration collapse, liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland."

President Ho Chi Minh's appeal of 20 July 1969 exposed Nixon's barbarous war schemes and attitude of deceiving the people of the U.S. and of the world by gradually withdrawing U.S. troops from South Vietnam, and the plot of stationing U.S. troops in some areas of the South for a long period of time. Uncle Ho affirmed that "The present situation has completely changed, in a way favorable to us and unfavorable to the enemy," and that our soldiers and people demand that the U.S. troops "must be withdrawn completely and unconditionally" and are determined to fight until final victory. During the final hours of his life President Ho Chi Minh continued to fight for the enterprise of liberating the South, defending the North, and unifying the homeland. His appeal was a source of great inspiration for the soldiers and people of our entire nation, especially those in the South, who were fighting stubbornly under complicated circumstances at the end of 1969.

3 September: President Ho Chi Minh passes away, bequeaths a historic Testament. Party Central Committee issues appeal.

At a time when the anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation was entering its most fierce phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory, our people suffered a very painful loss: at 0947 on 3 September 1969 President Ho Chi Minh passed away. The Party Central Committee held an urgent plenary session and approved appeal "To the cadres, Party members, soldiers, and compatriots throughout our country and our compatriots abroad." The Military Commission of the Party Central Commission and the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army also sent an appeal "To all cadres, soldiers, national defense workers and personnel, Party members, and Youth Union members in the people's armed forces."

The death of President Ho Chi Minh created a very strong, deep, and universal sorrow throughout the nation as well as in the world. Along with our people, the fraternal socialist countries and 10 nationalist countries organized national mourning or bereavement for President Ho Chi Minh, and more than 40 delegations from the socialist countries arrived to participate in President Ho Chi Minh's funeral in Hanoi. More than 23,000 telegrams and letters were sent by heads of state, Party and state leadership organs, mass organizations, and progressives of more than 120 countries to console our people in their sorrow. Many countries of the world organized activities in many different forms to commemorate Chairman Ho Chi Minh. In the U.S. and a number of Western European countries the masses concluded memorial services for President Ho Chi Minh by demonstrating and marching against the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists.

In May 1969, before he passed away, President Ho Chi Minh wrote a Testament to our entire Party and population. In beginning his Testament he wrote, "Our people's anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation, even if we must experience even more

sacrifice and hardship, is certain to win a complete victory." He also wrote, "The anti-U.S. resistance war may be prolonged. Our people may have to sacrifice much wealth and manpower. Even so, we must be resolved to fight the U.S. until we win final victory." "No matter what the hardships, our people are certain to win a complete victory. The U.S. imperialists are certain to have to get out of our country. Our homeland will certainly be unified. The people of the North and the South will certainly be reunited in the same house." In his historic Testament, Uncle Ho carefully and profoundly instructed our entire people and entire army, and bequeathed limitless love for the future generations.

On the morning of 9 September 1969, at Ba Dinh Square, more than 100,000 people participated in the solemn funeral of President Ho Chi Minh. At the funeral comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, read the Testament of President Ho Chi Minh and a eulogy, and spoke of the five unshakable oaths of our entire Party and population.

Carrying out the instructions in his Testament with regard to the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, our entire population 1 million as one, "transformed sorrow into revolutionary activity, bravely carried on the great work of President Ho, and achieved his ideals and aspirations." (Appeal of the Party Central Committee.)

The passing away of President Ho was an extremely great loss for our Party, people, and armed forces, and for all of progressive mankind. He bequeathed to us a very precious legacy: his great work, thought, virtue, and style.

"Holding high the determined-to-fight-and-win flag bestowed by Uncle Ho, with a spirit of rushing forward on the crest of victory the people's armed forces must, along with the entire population, pursue the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to complete victory, liberate the South, defend the North, advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland, and respond to the sacred appeal of President Ho: "As long as there remain aggressors in our country we must continue to fight to sweep them out." (Appeal of the Military Commission of the Party Central Commission and the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army.

1969: Faced with the collapse of their "limited war" strategy, the U.S. imperialists shift over to carrying out the strategy of "Vietnamizing the war" in South Vietnam.

After our great victory in the Tet Mau Than [1968] general offensive and uprising, the U.S. President Johnson was forced to adopt the policy of "de-Americanizing" the war. That policy had taken form in the process of defeat of the "limited war" strategy, which was full of contradictions. The U.S. was confronted with an inescapable contradiction between the fact that the large U.S. aggressor army was bogged down in the South and its global strategic aspirations. On the battlefield, the U.S. imperialists could not continue their "search and destroy" and "pacification" strategy but had to hastily shift over to the defensive and carry out a strategy of "clear and hold" and "defense in depth," which was contrary to the desires of the U.S. They continued to use U.S. troops and puppet troops as the two strategic forces. That strategy was proposed by General Abrams and was approved by the U.S. government.

That strategy was intended to fulfill the following requirements:

- Holding the cities, the military bases, the important lines of communication, and the highly populated, wealthy lowland areas.
- Avoiding the inflicting of heavy losses on the U.S. troops.
- Preventing the disintegration and collapse of the puppet army and administration.

The "de-Americanization" policy of Johnson had been implemented only a short time when Nixon, who represented the most reactionary and obstinate war-loving powers in the U.S. monopoly capital circles, because of the bankruptcy of the global "flexible response" strategy came up with the "Nixon Doctrine" and the "real deterrence" military strategy. Nixon's goal was to restore the strength and position of the U.S. and its role as a superpower which led the "free world." Nixon brought forth a new global strategy with three basic principles: 1. U.S. power; 2. The sharing of responsibility; 3. Readiness to negotiate from a position of strength. It was a strategy of retreat because of the collapse of the war of aggression in Vietnam, but it was also intended to retain the U.S. aspirations. At the same time Nixon, who was very practical, took advantage of the collusion and treason of international reactionaries to implement the U.S. plot.

In Asia, Nixon adopted the policy of promoting regional alliances, especially in Southeast Asia. He especially emphasized the role of Japan and used South Vietnam as a testing ground for rallying the lackeys in Asia to suppress the revolutionary movement and regarded that as the key to success of the "Nixon Doctrine" in Asia.

With regard to the South of our country, Nixon changed Johnson's "de-Americanization" policy into a "Vietnamization" strategy, the basic objectives of which were still to hold onto Vietnam and stop the revolutionary movement in Indochina and Southeast Asia, while at the same time reducing the U.S. involvement in the land war and avoiding a disgraceful defeat for the U.S. The true nature of that policy was using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese, and using Indochinese to fight Indochinese, with U.S. munitions and commanders. It was an integral part of a global strategy in which the U.S. imperialists still had high hopes.

Nixon's "Vietnamization" strategy was identical to the "de-Americanization" policy of Johnson in the withdrawal of U.S. troops, in the maintenance and strengthening of the puppet army and administration in order to keep the South in the orbit of U.S. neocolonialism, and in the status of defeat, passivity, and deescalation. But it must be noted that the "Vietnamization" strategy opened the way for a new plan by new powers in the U.S. who were represented by Nixon.

If "de-Americanization," the method of deescalating the war during the final phase of the hapless Johnson administration, was a plan to merely withdraw U.S. troops, "Vietnamization" would withdraw an important part of the U.S. troops in order to reduce the difficulties in the U.S. and avoid an excessively obvious defeat that could harm U.S. interests in the U.S. and in the world, and to gain time in order to create a balance that would allow the U.S. to prolong the situation. On that basis, the U.S. would negotiate with us from a position of strength.

That was a new strategic policy, an all-round military, political, and economic plan that was intended to maintain the U.S. neocolonial regime in South Vietnam. That was clearly stated by Nixon on 18 February 1970, when he discussed that strategy within the scope of the "Nixon Doctrine": "Vietnamization is not a substitute for negotiations but will serve to further the negotiations."

Internationally, Nixon sought all ways to ally with Chinese expansionism and hegemonism and use Vietnam as something to be bartered between each other, in order to limit aid for our resistance war so that the revolutionary movement in the South of our country would "gradually weaken and wither away," and stepped up diplomatic activities in support of the "Vietnamization" strategy.

The "Nixon Doctrine" was tried out first in Vietnam, so the Nixon clique made very great, very concentrated efforts to carry it out in a barbarous, wily manner in three forms, which they called the war to win control of the population, the strangulation war, and the destruction war. They wanted to create a kind of combined counterrevolutionary violence with maximum strength. They combined political, economic, and cultural schemes with espionage warfare in order to eliminate the infrastructure of the revolution and build the infrastructure of neocolonialism.

Just after the appearance of Nixon's "Vietnamization" strategy the Political Bureau of our Party Central Committee, meeting in April 1969, regarded it as a U.S. policy that had been adopted in a situation of defeat and stalemate, and as being full of internal contradictions that could not be overcome:

--First, they had been forced to passively deescalate out of defeat and weakness, but they wanted to be able to deescalate from a position of strength; they wanted to reduce their forces and expenses but also wanted to create strength.

--Second, they had to deescalate and gradually withdraw the U.S. troops but also wanted to strengthen the puppets so that they could replace the U.S. troops, some think the puppet troops could not do while there were still more than 500,000 U.S. troops.

--Third, they were forced to deescalate and withdraw U.S. troops as soon as possible in order to reduce casualties and war expenditures, but the puppet army was becoming weaker so the U.S. had to prolong the war, and the more they prolonged the war the more casualties and difficulties rose to levels unacceptable to the U.S.

--Fourth, if the U.S. could not withdraw its troops the internal contradictions within the U.S. ruling circles and the contradiction between the people and the U.S. government would become increasingly serious. But if the U.S. troops were withdrawn the puppets would be in even greater danger of collapsing. The puppets felt that they were being abandoned, so the contradictions between the U.S. and the puppets and the contradictions within the puppet factions would become increasingly fierce.

Fifth, in applying the "clear and hold" military strategy, at a time when the war objectives of the U.S. were committing aggression, winning control of the population and occupying land, it was necessary to take the offensive. Since their offensives and counter offensives had been defeated, how could a defensive strategy help the U.S. attain its aggressive goals?

--Nixon, the U.S.-puppet forces would not increase but might decrease. The responsibilities of the puppet army would be very heavy and they could not do the job when we attacked strongly.

The "Nixon Doctrine" and the "Vietnamization" strategy, although very wily and insidious, were conceived hastily and merely reflected the desperation, defeat, and decline of the U.S. imperialists, who were increasingly isolated politically, were divided internally, had poor morale, and had lost all confidence.

The bankruptcy of the "Vietnamization" strategy of the U.S. imperialists during the next few years proved that the above analysis by our Party was very correct and wise.

1970

January 1970: The Party Central Committee holds its 18th Plenum.

The great victory of the general offensive and uprising of the spring of 1968 led the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to a new phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory.

In order to lead the resistance war in the new phase, in January 1970 the Party Central Committee held its 18th Plenum to review the development of the war situation since the beginning of the 1968 spring season, especially to review the situation in 1969, and to set forth policies and missions regarding the major tasks which were appropriate to the new developments of the situation.

The Party Central Committee agreed unanimously with the Political Bureau resolutions which correctly evaluated and analyzed the situation and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves and the enemy, and the predictions of the Political Bureau regarding possible developments in the situation:

With regard to the characteristics of that phase, the resolution of the 18th Plenum observed that we were developing the offensive strategy of revolutionary war to a new height and creating a new strategic situation in the war, for we were carrying out a general offensive-general uprising at a time when the enemy still had large forces. Therefore, the new phase would be a long process, an extremely difficult, fierce, and complicated phase. With regard to the enemy, the U.S. imperialists, reorienting their strategy and carrying out their plot to "Vietnamize the war," were concentrating on resolving the question of how many U.S. troops should and could be withdrawn, and withdrawn over what period of time, so that the puppets would not fall apart and so that Vietnam would not become a problem in Nixon's 1972 presidential campaign.

The decisive period would be the latter part of 1970 and 1971, during which time we would have to resolutely step-up our all-round attacks and smash the enemy's "Vietnamization" plot.

The Party Central Committee set forth the following mission for the new phase: "Mobilizing the greatest possible efforts on the part of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both parts of our country; building on

the victories that have been won; persisting in and promoting the resistance war; continuing to comprehensively, continuously, and strongly develop our offensive strategy; promoting the military, political, and economic offensive, in combination with the diplomatic offensive; both attacking and endeavoring to build increasingly larger and stronger military and political forces; defeating the enemy's plot to gradually deescalate and prolong the war in order to create a position of strength in hopes of maintaining their neocolonialism in South Vietnam; defeating the enemy's defensive strategic posture; creating a new transformation in the war situation and winning step-by-step victories leading to a decisive victory; and fighting until the U.S. must withdraw all of its troops and until the puppets collapse, thus creating the basic conditions for achieving an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral South and advancing to the unification of the nation."

The Party Central Committee corrected the deficiencies of the recent period and stressed the necessity of correctly applying the slogan of promoting an all-round offensive; attacking militarily, politically, and diplomatically; putting into effect the slogan of attacking in all three areas; correctly applying the strategic slogan of protracted fighting, and on that basis endeavoring to win a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time by defeating the enemy's defensive strategy in the new phase, defeating the scheme of the U.S. and its lackeys to "Vietnamize the war," and smashing the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists.

With regard to the fighting the Central Committee deemed it necessary to step-up the conventional fighting by the main-force troops, and that it was necessary to resolutely bring about a strong transformation in the local guerrilla warfare movement and to strongly develop all three kinds of troops, with emphasis on the elite forces of all three kinds, and strengthen the on-the-spot armed forces.

The Party Central Committee stressed that the rear-services task was one of strategic importance and the importance of organizing truly solid strategic rear-services echelons and doing a good job of ensuring campaign and tactical rear services, with emphasis on developing the on-the-spot rear services capabilities.

It foresaw that the situation in Kampuchea could become complicated, that the supply route to Nam Bo and partly the supply route to the Central Highlands, could be cut off, and that it was necessary to begin the construction of a pipeline network, develop the river routes, and increase the scale of the land routes.

In view of that situation, special attention was paid to coordinating in combat with the Laotian soldiers and people in central and southern Laos, and regarded that as an urgent, pressing requirement the good fulfillment of which required active advance preparations.

While paying attention to all three strategic areas, it was necessary to strengthen the Party's leadership in the cities and promote the military and political struggle in the rural areas, launch a high tide of mass uprisings, endeavor to win and keep the people, expand the liberated area, and defeat the enemy's plan to "pacify" the rural areas.

With regard to the North, in the period following the cessation of U.S. bombing it was necessary to continue the enterprise of urgently building socialism, have a plan for fulfilling the sacred responsibility of the great rear area for the great

front line and always be prepared to fight and fight well, defeat all armed provocation plots or plots to expand the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, endeavor to fulfill our international responsibilities and aid the Laotian revolution, and prepare to coordinate closely with the Laotian soldiers and people in order to cope with the worst possible contingencies should the enemy expand the war to Laos and Kampuchea because of their passivity and defeat in the South.

The resolution of the 18th Plenum of the Party Central Committee made a correct, creative analysis of the characteristics of the situation, clearly pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves and the enemy, and expressed determination to step up the all-round offensive. The Party Central Committee also provided specific guidance regarding our actions should the U.S. imperialists expand the war to Kampuchea and Laos. We would continue to maintain the offensive, inflict heavy losses on the enemy, win a great victory, and fulfill the requirements of "creating a new transformation in the war situation, win step-by-step victories, and advance to the winning of a decisive victory."

February 1970: Publication of the work "Under the Glorious Flag of the Party, for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism Advance to the Winning of New Victories" by comrade Le Duan.

On the occasion of the three major anniversaries in 1970 (the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Party, the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lenin), our Party published theoretical works by the Party's leadership cadres, including the work "Under the Glorious Flag of the Party, for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism Advance to the Winning of New Victories" by comrade Le Duan.

It was an important document of our Party, a work with the distinctive flavor of Vietnamese revolutionary theory which contributed to further illuminating our Party's correct, creative revolutionary line and the great revolutionary thought of President Ho Chi Minh, the teacher of our country's revolution. The work profoundly generalized the basic problems regarding the theory and practice of the Vietnamese revolution and presented in a relatively complete and systematic manner the basic experiences of our country's revolution, signified an important development of Vietnamese revolutionary theory and of the process of recapitulating the experiences of our people's revolutionary struggle, and further enriched our country's fund of revolutionary theory.

The work stated that the most important factor determining victory was the leadership of our Party, with its independent, autonomous, correct, and creative political line and military line. The Party's line was one of holding high the banners of national independence and socialism, simultaneously fulfilling two closely interrelated revolutionary missions -- the people's democratic national revolution in the South and the socialist revolution in the North -- in order to achieve the common objectives of completing the people's democratic national revolution throughout the country, unifying the homeland, and creating conditions for advancing the entire nation to socialism. With that line, the Party was able to mobilize to the maximum degree the powerful forces of our people throughout the nation, combine the great frontline with the great rear area, combine the strength of our

people with the strength of the three revolutionary currents of the era, and create combined strength with which to fight and defeat the U.S.

That work, the crystallization of the collective intelligence of our Party and people over a period of 40 years of combat that was full of hardship and sacrifice but was extremely heroic, intelligent, creative, and full of glorious victories, reflected the absolute revolutionary stand and offensive revolutionary spirit of the working class and the tradition of resolute, unyielding struggle of the Vietnamese people.

The work also illuminated the basic problems of our Party's military line. That military line, which had been affirmed in many documents and resolutions of the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission, proved to be very correct and had a peerless strength because it was based directly on our Party's correct political line. The Party's strategic line and revolutionary methods in the democratic national revolution and line toward the socialist revolution referred to in that work were the political and theoretical bases of the basic matters in the Party's military line. Only by firmly grasping the revolutionary direction, objectives, and missions of the Party can one fully understand the political objectives of revolutionary warfare and our army's combat objectives. Only by clearly understanding the scientific deployment of large revolutionary forces can one fully understand the line of building the forces of revolutionary war and the people's armed forces. Only by being imbued with the revolutionary methods can one understand and creatively apply the war-waging mode and military art of people's war.

24 and 25 April: The High-Level Indochinese People's Conference.

On 18 March 1970 the U.S. imperialists ordered the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak lackeys to carry out a coup d'etat in Kampuchea and overthrow the Sihanouk government. Then, on 30 April, they embarked upon a military adventure by invading Kampuchea. Stepping up the "special war" in Laos and expanding the war to Kampuchea, the U.S. imperialists wanted to create conditions for "Vietnamizing" the war in South Vietnam while also making Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Bangkok into an effective axis for dividing, isolating, and repressing the resistance war of the people of the South and rule the people of the Indochinese countries and Southeast Asia.

But the situation did not develop in accordance with the calculations and desires of the U.S. A broad national front -- the "Kampuchean National United Front" -- was formed in Kampuchea, and the Kampuchean National Monarchy and the Kampuchean National Liberation Army. The people of Kampuchea were determined to arise and fight "against all aggressive plots and acts of the U.S. imperialists and for the overthrow of the dictatorship of their lackeys headed by Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, in order to build a democratic, peaceful, neutral, democratic, and prosperous and prosperous Kampuchea." (Program of the Kampuchean National United Front.)

With a spirit of militant solidarity against the common enemy -- the U.S. imperialists -- the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference, made up of the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, which met on 24 and 25 April 1970, was very successful and signified a new developmental step in the history of the militant solidarity of the people of the three countries and the history of the maturation and growth of the anti-imperialist Indochinese people.

During the opening session of the Conference comrade Le Duan said, "With the momentum of the victory of the national liberation struggle in our three countries, and in the very serious present situation caused by the intervention and aggression of the U.S. imperialists, the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference will strengthen the solidarity, and tighten the ranks, of the people of Kampuchea, Laos, and Vietnam, so that they can persist in and step up their stubborn, fierce combat and advance to winning a complete victory."

The Conference issued a joint declaration which had the nature of a fighting program of the people of the three Indochinese countries, and was at the same time a charter regarding the relationships among the peoples of the three neighboring countries, who were uniting against the common enemy.

The victory of the High-Level Conference of the people of the three Indochinese countries reflected the victories of the military and political struggle of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, and served to strongly stimulate that struggle. The fierce retaliatory blows struck against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys on the Indochinese battlefields in 1970-1971, especially on the Lao and Kampuchean battlefields, proved that the people of the Indochinese countries profoundly understood that the destinies of the three Indochinese countries were closely interrelated: none of them could live a tranquil, free life while the territory of another was still occupied by imperialist aggressors.

The victory of the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference was not only contrary to the intentions of the U.S. imperialists but was also a defeat for the expansionism and big-nation hegemonism of China, which wanted to sell out the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea to the U.S. for a profit, and was preparing a scheme of long-term expansionism in the Indochinese Peninsula. (When we decided to hold the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference, China campaigned for the convening of a conference of five countries and six sides to oppose Japan, in hopes of deflecting the revolutionary objectives of the three Indochinese countries. Failing at that, it sought all ways to direct the resistance wars of the three Indochinese countries for its own ugly purposes. But its scheme was rejected by the representatives of the three Indochinese countries.)

19 June: Resolution of the Political Bureau Conference regarding the "New Situation on the Indochinese Peninsula and Our New Missions."

Since the beginning of 1970 the U.S.-puppets had made very great efforts and carried out the most reckless acts of adventurism, especially on the Kampuchean and Laos battlefields, just as foreseen by the Political Bureau in April 1969 and the resolution of the 18th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in January 1970. Our soldiers and people, implementing the resolutions of the Party and the sacred Testament of President Ho Chi Minh, closely allied with Kampuchea and Laos, and with a creative spirit, not regretting sacrifices, and overcoming all difficulties and hardships, won a great victory. Since then, the new developments in the war situation had posed many new problems. The Political Bureau concluded that it was possible to, and that it should, promptly set forth policies and leadership measures to advance the revolution to the winning of a decisive victory.

On 19 June 1970 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on "The new situation on the Indochinese Peninsula and our new mission."

After reviewing the developments regarding the enemy since the beginning of the year, the Political Bureau observed that "although heavily defeated, due to their extremely obstinate nature, and because they still have potential, the U.S. imperialists will seek ways to prolong the war, simultaneously deescalating and launching limited counteroffensives, simultaneously withdrawing U.S. troops and continuing adventuristic acts while in a passive, defeated state. They may also seek ways to expand the war of aggression to the countries of the Indochinese Peninsula in a manner, and to the degree, they consider appropriate and advantageous, to assist "Vietnamization" in South Vietnam and in order to suppress the Kampuchean and Laotian revolutions. At the same time, they will have their lackeys set up a new strategic line encompassing South Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, and Thailand and endeavor to rally the other reactionary forces in Asia to help out the U.S. imperialists on the Indochinese battlefield and form regional alliances to suppress the national liberation movement, stop the influence of socialism, and prepare a staging area from which to attack the socialist camp."

On the basis of analyzing the weaknesses and strengths of the enemy, the Political Bureau set forth our new mission: "Mobilizing the greatest possible efforts on the part of the Party, the population, and the troops in both the South and the North of our country, strengthening the militant solidarity of the people of the three Indochinese countries, forming a united bloc with a common strategy, and persisting in and promoting the national-salvation wars of the people of the three countries against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys." Specifically:

With regard to South Vietnam, "the most important battlefield in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation of the people of the three Indochinese countries," and the place where our forces and those of the enemy are concentrated, so our victory and the enemy's defeat would determine the development of the political and military situation on the Indochinese Peninsula. The specific mission of the South of our country was to "persist in and promote the resistance war, more closely combine military struggle with political struggle and military proselyting, continue to build an increasingly stronger offensive strategy, annihilate large U.S.-puppet military forces, annihilate and disintegrate an important part of the lackey puppet army, concentrate forces to smash their 'pacification' plan and 'Vietnamization' plot, and defeat their defensive strategy to prolong the war.

It was necessary to take advantage of the fact that the enemy were bogged down on the Kampuchean battlefield to step up our activities in the Mekong Delta and threaten Saigon and the other cities.

The Kampuchean battlefield, a recently created one, was the enemy's weakest link on the Indochinese Peninsula. There was being waged there a special kind of aggressive war, with local lackey forces supported by the U.S., with U.S. troops participating directly, and with the South Vietnamese puppet troops serving as the hard core. Our common mission was to "endeavor to help our friends grasp the opportunity, continue to develop their status of continuous offensive, and strongly advance the Kampuchean revolution. It was necessary to annihilate or rout the major part of the puppet army and administration at the various echelons; attack them so

they do not have time to consolidate; promote guerrilla warfare and mass uprisings in vast rural areas; develop and consolidate in all respects; surround, isolate, and attack the cities still controlled by the enemy; step up the political struggle; cut the lines of communication; sabotage the enemy's economic activities; and be prepared to defeat all of their plots to regain lost territory. "The matter of annihilating the South Vietnamese puppet army, the enemy's hard-core force on that battlefield, is a matter of strategic importance." In the immediate future, it would be necessary to step up the offensive in the direction of Phnom Penh, threaten the enemy's capital, and combine military attacks with mass uprisings, a coup d'etat, and military revolts.

With regard to the Laos battlefield, since the war had been expanded to Kampuchea, Laos had taken on an increasingly crucial importance, especially in central and southern Laos, for it was a corridor which connected the rear area in the north of our country with the South Vietnam and Kampuchea battlefields. Our mission was to "endeavor to assist and coordinate with our friends, continue to amplify the recent victories, resolutely attack the enemy in all respects, and advance the Laotian revolution. We must mobilize all efforts to annihilate an even more important part of the reactionaries' military forces and political forces, endeavor to expand and consolidate the vast liberated area in all respects in accordance with a comprehensive, long-range plan, step up guerrilla warfare and political struggle along the Mekong River, and step up the political struggle in the city." It was essential that during the coming period we helped our friends and joined them in expanding and developing the central-southern Laos area into an increasingly stronger base area, and in defending the strategic corridor, which was extremely important to us.

The North of our country was not only the great rear area for the great front line in the South, but was also the common rear area of the Laotian and Kampuchean revolutions. The mission of our people in the North was to "Mobilize manpower and materiel for the front and make the greatest possible contribution to the national-salvation anti-U.S. resistance war of our people in the South and of the people of Laos and Kampuchea," and to "truly manifest a spirit of revolutionary vigilance, always be prepared to fight and fight well, and defeat all provocative plots of the U.S. imperialists to expand their war of aggression."

Predicting the development of the situation, the Political Bureau observed that: "First, the U.S.-puppet could be defeated on the Kampuchean battlefield, which could exacerbate their contradictions and weaknesses, cause the situation in Kampuchea to undergo sudden changes, and create a good opportunity for us to win a victory relatively quickly. Second, the revolution could develop victoriously but still have certain difficulties, the U.S. imperialists could continue to intensify and expand the war, and the war could become stalemated and be prolonged. We must try to bring about the first possibility, defeat the plots of the U.S. imperialists to prolong and intensify their war of aggression, win step-by-step victories, advance to winning a decisive victory, and chase the U.S. imperialists from the Indochinese Peninsula.

In order to fulfill that strategic mission, the Political Bureau stressed the necessity of grasping and correctly applying the laws of people's war and a strategic motto appropriate to the new situation, create a strategic offensive status in the Indochinese theater by making all-out efforts to build increasingly stronger

armed forces and political forces on the battlefields, go all-out in building up the direct rear area, expand and strengthen the base areas, and do a good job of the strategic and campaign rear-services work.

The June 1970 resolution of the Political Bureau provided very important, timely guidance for our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, at a time when the U.S. imperialists were expanding the war throughout the Indochinese Peninsula. With its accurate analysis and evaluation of the forces and strategic positions of the enemy and of ourselves, the resolution set forth correct, incisive missions and requirements and directed our entire Party, entire army, and entire population to unite closely with the two fraternal countries in order to advance together to the winning of a new victory.

1970: Our armed forces and the soldiers and people of Kampuchea defeat the U.S.-puppet operations, enable Kampuchean revolution to take a great-leap-forward developmental step into the new phase.

After the reactionary coup d'etat overthrew the Sihanouk government, on 30 April 1970 the U.S. imperialists mobilized 100,000 troops, made up of 50,000 U.S. troops and 50,000 Saigon puppet troops, invaded Kampuchea and expanded the war on the Indochinese Peninsula. Their objective was to get rid of Kampuchean neutrality, which did not benefit the schemes of the U.S. imperialists and bring Kampuchea into the U.S. orbit; interdict our supply route passing through Kampuchea, destroy the direct strategic rear area of the Nam Bo battlefield, first of all breaking up the threat of our attacks on their vital areas; and upset our preparations to launch large-scale attacks on Saigon and in the Mekong Delta.

Between 30 April and 30 June they carried out 23 operations in east and southeast Xoai Rieng (29 May - 6 June) in the Mimot-Snul area (1 May to 30 June), and in the Takeo-eastern Kampot area (17 May to 22 May), with 75 infantry battalions (12 of them U.S. battalions), 22 artillery battalions, and 7 mechanized battalions and squadrons. The area of operations was six provinces along the Vietnam-Kampuchea border (Takeo, Kampot, Kongpong Cham, Xoai Rieng, Pray Veng, Ratanakire), extending 30-40 kilometers -- at one point 80 kilometers -- into Kampuchea.

When the U.S. sent troops across the border into Kampuchea the Party Central Committee promptly instructed the Central Office, South Vietnam [COSVN] and Regional Military Commission: "Make good use of time in preparing forces and plans to, along with our friends, occupying and expanding the liberated area in seven border provinces, from our border to the bank of the Mekong River, while also helping our friends set up guerrilla zones in the southwest, north, and northwest. The main-force troops in the border area not only have the mission of continuing to fight the U.S.-puppet forces in our country but also have the mission of attacking resolutely, in coordination with our friends, to broaden the front, expand the rear-area liberated area in Kampuchea, and defeat the U.S. plot."

The Political Bureau observed that although the U.S. coup d'etat and invasion of Kampuchea created a number of difficulties for us, the U.S. was deescalating in Vietnam and the puppet troops, who were being stretched out to replace the U.S. troops, now had to man a new front, and the Lon Nol army was very weak. That battlefield was the enemy's weakest link in Indochina. It was an act of adventurism by the enemy and was a very serious mistake on their part. We had to fight

rapidly, strongly, and effectively, organize a new offensive battlefield position, and launch an all-round offensive before they have stabilized their position.

The Political Bureau regard Kampuchea as "a rather important area internationally, so we must prevent or limit the presence of international reactionary forces there. We had to work rapidly and strongly; the more strongly the Kampuchean people arose the more perplexed the imperialists and the other reactionary forces who had eagerly intervened in Kampuchea became.

The observations and directives of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee were very timely and accurate. Therefore, when the U.S.-puppets launched their operations our armed forces prepared to fight the enemy ceaselessly and inflict heavy losses on them, especially in the Chup, Dam Be, and Snul areas.

On 30 June 1970, because of their heavy defeats and the pressure of the people of the world, the U.S. army had to withdraw from Kampuchea and only provide heavy air support (170 tons of bombs per day) for the Saigon puppet army, to help that gang hold out with 20 battalions.

Our armed forces, in coordination with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, by June 1970 killed or wounded 170,000 U.S.-puppet soldiers, more than 1,500 military vehicles -- including 750 tanks and armored vehicles -- were knocked out or set afire, and 20 airplanes were shot down. By November 1970 we had killed 54,785 of the enemy (including 13,770 Americans), wiped out 9 battalions and 71 infantry companies (2 battalions and 19 companies were U.S.), inflicted heavy losses on a regiment and 17 battalions (including 5 U.S. battalions), 83 infantry companies (including 15 U.S. companies), captured 445 weapons of the various kinds, destroyed 620 airplanes, 3,375 vehicles, 66 ships and boats, 374 artillery pieces, and 78 depots, and completely liberated 5 provinces -- Stung Treng (May 1970), Mandukiri, and Preah Vihar -- and liberated most of the rural areas in 10 other provinces. The liberated area in Kampuchea became a vast area that encompassed 61 of the 102 districts and 4,545,000 of Kampuchea's 7 million people.

Although U.S.-puppet operations in Kampuchea in 1970 caused us a certain number of difficulties but they could not fulfill the requirements. As Westmoreland admitted in his book "A Soldier's Report": "The raid into Cambodia, which began on 30 April, achieved good results (?), although only part of the enemy's supply caches were destroyed and we failed to locate COSVN headquarters which, unfortunately, the President told the press was the objective of the operation." However, there were other important defeats which Westmoreland dared not mention: they lost much manpower and many war facilities in those operations. The fighting against U.S. aggression tightened the militant solidarity among the people of the three Indochinese countries; the revolutionary movement in Kampuchea arose strongly; and when the U.S. and its puppets sent troops outside the country, in South Vietnam, favorable conditions were created for us to attack "pacification" and to annihilate the enemy, so we achieved many important results.

1970: The Pathet Lao troops and the Vietnamese volunteer troops expel the enemy from the Plaine des Jarres and liberate Attopeu and Saravan provinces.

February 1970: The Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory.

In August 1969 the U.S. and its lackeys in Laos launched operation "Cu Kiet" to occupy the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang area. They were determined to hold onto that area to serve as a staging area from which to advance deeply into the liberated area and threaten Sam Nua, a revolutionary base area in Laos. That operation was also intended to coordinate with the implementation of the "Vietnamization" plan in South Vietnam and threaten North Vietnam from the west, while also carrying out the strategy of "defense at a distance" by defending the Mekong defense line of the U.S. and Thailand and protecting the headquarters lair of the bandit Vang Pao at Long Cheng and shoring up the morale of the lackeys, which had declined after their defeats at Muong Kuei. That was the greatest military effort to date of the U.S. and their lackeys in Laos. They concentrated a large force: 10 special battalions, 4 garrison battalions, 1 ranger battalion 1 mobile battalion, 3 special reconnaissance battalions, many bandit gangs, and 5,000 Thai soldiers wearing Laotian uniforms, a total of 12,000 troops with the support of 5 squadrons of U.S. fighter-bombers and 100 helicopters used for mobility and supply, along with a large amount of artillery. The operation was under the command of the CIA, exercised by means of a joint U.S.-Thai-Vang Pao command. Taking advantage of the rainy season, the enemy troops were able to occupy the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang area and advanced to the gateways to the Vietnam border, such as Ban Bau-Nong Het. Immediately afterwards, the main-force and local troops of the Pathet Lao, the Vietnamese volunteer troops, and the units of the patriotic neutralist forces, along with the Laotian militia and guerrillas, continuously and fiercely attacked the enemy. The Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces, stopping the enemy and penetrating deeply into their formation, in 5 months of fighting (September 1969 to January 1970) knocked out of action 4,500 of the enemy, shot down or destroyed 13 airplanes, and inflicted heavy losses on 6 enemy battalions.

At the beginning of February 1970 the Laotian Military Commission decided to annihilate the enemy forces and completely liberate the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang area. The offensive began on the night of 10 February 1970 and by the end of 27 February 1970 the enemy had been pushed out of their final positions in that area. Some 6,000 of the enemy (most of them special forces) were knocked out of action and thousands of other fled. Our friends and we captured or destroyed thousands of weapons of the various types -- including 25 artillery pieces and large-caliber mortars, captured or destroyed 70 military vehicles (including tanks and armored vehicles), shot down or destroyed 42 airplanes of the various types, and captured or destroyed more than 100 radio sets. That great Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory was a heavy blow against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys smashed their greatest military effort in a strategically important area in Laos, set back the U.S. strategic plan and scheme in Laos, and presented them with new difficulties and perplexities. The comparison of forces continued to change in favor of the Laotian revolution.

April to June 19⁷⁰~~60~~: Liberation of Attapeu and Saravan.

After the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory, the Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces continually attacked the enemy and expelled the enemy from the Pac Beng area (Udomsay) and northwestern Laos and liberated a vast area

extending 100 kilometers along the Mekong River. Combining military attacks with psychological warfare, they cleared out all of the bandits in Sam Nua Province and part of Luang Prabang Province, took the initiative in attacking and wiping out the enemy in the buffer zone in Xieng Khoang and Beri Khamstay provinces, created and consolidated an integrated position in the two provinces, etc. During the night of 28 April and early morning of 29 April the Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces in southern Laos, in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists' plot to isolate and strangle the revolutionary wars in South Vietnam and Kampuchea, launched an attack on Attopeu, a base for bandits and commandoes who specialized in attacking the liberated area and the tri-border area. The enemy forces there included the BV43 battalion, the 4B1 battalion, a company of armed government officials, and a police company, totalling 800 in all. By 30 April the enemy garrison totalled only 300 men, who had to abandon Attopeu and go to Nha Hon (Mt. Phu Luong on the Bolovens Plateau). On 1 May 1970 the city of Attopeu and the surrounding area, with a population of 10,000 were liberated.

After the victory at Attopeu, the Laotian-Vietnamese troops launched one attack after another and defeated many enemy counterattacks. In June 1970 they attacked the city of Saravan. The enemy troops there included the BV 41 battalion, reinforced with a 105mm howitzer, two 106.7 mm mortars, and four armored vehicles. After suffering a heavy defeat they had to flee from the city of Saravan and a number of positions around the city. On 9 June 1970 the Pathet Lao armed forces took over management of the city and the surrounding area.

The Plaine des Jarres victory and the liberation of Attopeu and Saravanne in Laos, along with the liberation of northeastern Kampuchea in the first half of 1970, had a very great strategic significance. They created a vast integrated strategic area which connected the North of our country with northern Laos, central and southern Laos, western Tri-Thien, the Central Highlands, Nam Bo, and northeastern Kampuchea, and formed a solid revolutionary base area in the central part of Indochina, and strong battlefield positions for the three Indochinese countries which bordered on one another and thus were even stronger. The U.S. imperialists expanded their war of aggression to all of Indochina in hopes of isolating the revolutionary movement in the South of our country, cutting off the North's aid for the South, and weakening our people's resistance war. But with the all-out assistance of the fraternal people of Laos our strategic supply route was even expanded to the western Central Highlands and, with a combination of land routes and river routes, stretched uninterrupted to the South.

The three countries of the Indochinese Peninsula, because of the acts of aggression of the common enemy, became a single front and in fact became a unified anti-U.S. theater, the most decisive battlefield of which was South Vietnam.

1971

February 1971: The Party Central Committee holds its 19th Plenum.

In February 1971 the Party Central Committee held its 19th Plenum to make decisions regarding economic construction and development and strengthening the socialist forces in the North. The plenum listened to reports and discussed our people's anti-U.S. national salvation struggle. This plenum, the first after 4 years of the

U.S. war of destruction, focused on resolving the North's economic problems and advancing the North's economy to large-scale socialist production.

In view of the situation of the U.S. imperialists' continuing to carry out adventurous acts to prolong and expand the war, the Party Central Committee once again affirmed that "Resisting the U.S. for national salvation is the foremost mission of our entire Party, entire army, and entire population." The plenum's resolution stated the present mission of our Party, army, and population as being "carrying out the sacred Testament of President Ho Chi Minh, persisting in and promoting the resistance war, manifesting a will to fight and win, advancing to winning a complete victory, liberating the South, defending the North, and advancing to the peaceful unification of the homeland."

February to March 1971: The Route 9-Southern Laos victory.

Because of their heavy defeats on the three Indochinese battlefields in 1970, the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys clearly realized their bogged-down position and bleak prospects as they began the year 1971. But they were very obstinate and unwilling to admit defeat, so they jumped into a new adventure in hopes of escaping from their deadlocked situation.

In February 1971 they launched a large strategic operation called "Lam Son 719" in the Route 9-southern Laos border area to attain the following objectives: 1. Destroying our strategic corridor and "strangle at the throat" our supply route to the South, in order to essentially halt the flow of supplies, since they had already cut off the sea route that ended at the port of Kompong Som; 2. Testing the South Vietnamese puppet troops in carrying out the "puppet infantry plus U.S. firepower" formula of the "Vietnamization" strategy by sending them to challenge the North Vietnamese main-force troops in the jungles-and-mountains area contiguous to the North, in order to, on that basis, complete the "Vietnamization" plan in 1972; 3. Setting up a barrier line to cut Indochina in two, create a strong position for themselves in the South of our country, threaten the North, and support their special war in Laos and war of aggression in Kampuchea.

We very accurately grasped their intentions and correctly predicted their operational plan, so we prepared a meticulous operational plan of our own. Our Party made the decision to, by means of a large, strategic counteroffensive campaign, win a strategic victory to change the situation on the Indochinese battlefield, inflict a basic defeat on the "Vietnamization" strategy and the plot of the U.S. imperialists to isolate our main-force units and push them out of the South, and advance the resistance war a step further.

On 9 February 1971 the Military Commission of the Party Central Commission directed our armed forces to respond to the following appeal of the Party Central Committee: "Concentrate forces, resolutely annihilate large numbers of the U.S.-puppet manpower and war facilities, defend by all means the supply routes to the fronts, and in coordination with the other battlefields and the fraternal people of Laos and Kampuchea, smash the military adventure acts of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys"; and to advance to winning total victory in the campaign.

With regard to the guiding thoughts of the fighting in the campaign, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee pointed out that it was necessary to be extremely positive and active, resourceful and flexible, and courageous, continually attack the enemy, fight to completely wipe out the enemy, master the battlefield, capture prisoners, capture weapons, win a smashing victory in the very first battle, exploit all fighting methods, combine small-scale, medium-scale, and large-scale fighting, fight the enemy while they are on the move, resolutely annihilate the enemy under all circumstances, take advantage of and create opportunities, make good use of time to fight and defeat the enemy; when the enemy come out, annihilate them, when the enemy bunch up, resolutely smash and annihilate them; when the enemy troops flee, resolutely pursue them; both annihilate the enemy and defend the supply lines, bases, and depots; pay attention to fighting enemy airplanes and to wiping out enemy mechanized facilities and artillery; and pay attention to anti-aircraft and anti-chemical activities, to feints, and to doing a good job of maintaining secrecy.

As far as the enemy were concerned, their campaign was one of the "Vietnamization" variety which was intended to win a military and political victory for the puppet army and administration, so they concentrated nearly all of the strategic reserve forces of the puppet army and part of the forces of I Corps. There were 47 infantry battalions, 9 armored squadrons, and 21 artillery battalions, most of them puppet units, while the U.S. contributed 7 infantry battalions and 2 mechanized battalions, but they served as rear-area reserve forces.

There were 45,000 enemy troops in all, 20,000 of which were from Saigon's most elite strategic reserve forces. There was a very high degree of coordination with the U.S. Air force, which had much modern technical equipment. With such forces, they were very subjective and calculated that by the second day of the operation they would have taken Xepon, and then advance to Savannakhet and form a barrier splitting Indochina into two.

From the very beginning the enemy were halted because they ran up against incessant counterattacks. They were attacked everywhere, and all of them were attacked. Our on-the-spot forces, in coordination with the mobile units and with the close cooperation of the armed Pathet Lao troops, attacked continuously and fought very bravely and skilfully. In 43 days of fighting the soldiers and people of Vietnam and Laos smashed the enemy's operation, killing more than 23,000 of the enemy, destroying or shooting down nearly 500 airplanes of the various kinds, and capturing nearly 600 military vehicles and 150 artillery pieces. The enemy troops remnants fled in all directions and many of them were captured, including a brigade commander. The battles at Ban Dong, Cha Ki bridge, Lao Bao, etc., were historic feats of arms of the Vietnamese and Laotian armed forces.

In coordination with the Route 9-Southern Laos battlefield, our soldiers and people from Tri-Thien to the Central Highlands, Zone 5, and Nam Bo launched widespread attacks against the enemy, especially in northern Quang Tri and the Central Highlands. In general, the situation on the southern battlefield clearly improved. The Laotian soldiers and people in northern and southern Laos coordinated very well, stepped up their attacks, developed their victories, and achieved shattering accomplishments: in southern Laos, on 13 February the soldiers and people of Laos attacked Long Cheng -- the ranger base of the CIA and Vang Pao; in lower Laos, on

10 March the revolutionary forces chased the enemy from the southeastern part of the Bolovens Plateau and after that, on the crest of victory entered Pac Soong and Ban Nhim and liberated the entire Bolovens Plateau (15 May to 11 June 1971).

On the Kampuchea battlefield, the revolutionary forces moved up close to Phnom Penh, attacked the Pochentong airfield, destroyed many airplanes, and killed enemy pilots. The greatest victory was the counteroffensive campaign along Route 7 and the defeat of the "Toan Thang" operation by Saigon puppet troops and Kampuchean puppet troops from 4 February to 17 April 1971.

With regard to the significance of Route 9-southern Laos victory the Political Bureau made the following evaluation:

First, the victory of that campaign was very great and had a strategic significance. In addition to the defeat of the large enemy operation on the Kampuchean battlefield, the victory on the southern Laos front created prospects for defeating the U.S. "Vietnamization" policy militarily.

The defeat of the most elite Saigon forces also weakened their hard-core role in implementing the Nixon Doctrine of using Indochinese to defeat Indochinese. Therefore, the victory had a very great significance with regard to the war situation, not only in the South of our country but also in the two neighboring countries.

Second, that victory was a brilliant victory of the line of resisting the U.S. for national salvation, the military line, and the war guidance art, of our Party in the phase of the implementation of the "Vietnamization" strategy, the high point of the process of adventurism to expand the war to all of Indochina. We firmly grasped the strategic offensive concept, created a new battlefield position, created a new strategic opportunity, and achieved close coordination among the soldiers and people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea in the spirit of Indochina being one battlefield, stepped up attacks to annihilate the enemy and destroy "pacification," and closely combined military, political, and diplomatic struggle.

Third, it was a successful application of campaign art, and was an exemplary large-scale annihilation campaign. It creatively developed fighting methods that were created in the process of revolutionary war which has a Vietnamese flavor. At the same time, it also provided us very basic experience in the guidance, organization, and development of armed forces, especially the main-force troops.

The Route 9-Southern Laos victory was a common victory of the three Indochinese countries in anti-U.S. solidarity. That victory was won on the basis of the new developments in the fight of the people of the three fraternal countries, with regard to which the people of each country made an important contribution.

January to May 1971: A counteroffensive and offensive on the Kampuchean battlefield.

4 February to 4 March: Defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" Operation of the Saigon puppet army.

The U.S. and its puppets had many hopes for that operation: surprising, surrounding, and annihilating an important part of our main-force units; destroying our

revolutionary bases, supply depots, and lines of communication; reopening Route 7; setting up a barrier line in eastern and northeastern Kampuchea; and winning a political victory to bolster the lackeys in Phnom Penh. They also regarded it as a major operation to coordinate with the "Lam Son 719" operation in the Route 9-Southern Laos area.

In order to ensure victory they threw in rather large numbers of troops. At the highest point, in Kompong Cham and Kratie provinces they used 34 infantry battalions, 5 armored regiments, and 8 artillery regiments totalling about 23,000 men, with 15 U.S. Air Force squadrons providing air support or transportation.

They divided into two major columns. The main column (19 battalions) started out from the Crech Kandom Crum base and surrounded the Chup plantation, while the secondary column (the 9th Regiment) started out from the Snul base and advanced northward. Furthermore, there were a number of small coordinating columns of Saigon puppet troops and Phnom Penh puppet troops. They intended to carry out the campaign from February to May 1971.

But the results of the operation were contrary to their expectations. They were continually attacked by our main-force units, were defeated step-by-step, and ultimately had to abandon the operation in March 1971. Our main attacks were the battle Kompong Cham, which lasted from 4 to 12 February, in which we attacked the enemy in the Chup area; a series of battles between 13 and 26 February in which we attacked the main enemy column, which had shifted over to the Dam Be-So Long area; and between 27 February and 3 April attacked enemy troops fleeing the Dam Be area.

Between 4 February and 17 April, in Kompong Cham and Kratie our forces, along with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, killed or wounded more than 17,000 of the enemy (180 Americans and 1,500 Phnom Penh puppet soldiers), captured 500 Saigon puppet troops, Phnom Penh puppet troops, and Americans, wiped out 9 infantry battalions and 4 armored squadrons, inflicted heavy damage on 2 armored regiments and 16 infantry battalions, set afire nearly 1,500 military vehicles (including 750 tanks and armored vehicles), shot down 200 airplanes, destroyed 180 artillery pieces, and captured 900 weapons. Most of those losses were incurred by the Saigon puppets' III Corps.

The defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" operation had a very important significance, for it smashed the final efforts of the enemy to carry out a large operation in Kampuchea, annihilated an important part of their manpower and, along with the Route 9-Southern Laos victory, created anew step in the decline of the Saigon puppet army, and was a strong blow against the U.S. "Vietnamization" plan to use the Saigon puppet army as the U.S. assault force in South Vietnam and in the Indochinese Peninsula.

25 to 31 May: The Snul victory.

Snul is a town in Kratie Province 184 kilometers northeast of Phnom Penh, 136 kilometers north of Saigon, and 20 kilometers from the Vietnam-Kampuchea border. It is situated at the intersection of strategic route 13 and 7.

Since Snul was so important, the U.S. and its puppets were determined to hold onto that position, even after the heavy defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" operation, in hopes of maintaining a staging area from which to attack and occupy our base areas and control our activities during the 1971 rainy season. The Saigon puppet army units stationed there included "Armored Task Force No 8," made up of an infantry regiment of the 5th Infantry Division, a combined artillery battalion, and the 1st Armored Regiment of Military Region 3. On 20 May, threatened by attack they reinforced Snul with the 15th and 18th armored regiments and a ranger regiment.

Beginning on 25 May our main-force troops, in coordination with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, surrounded and launched a strong attack against the enemy troops in Snul. All counterattacks by puppet infantry and armor to break the encirclement were broken up. The enemy suffered heavy losses with regard to infantry, military vehicles, and airplanes during the 5 days we encircled them. Faced with that perilous situation, in violation of Saigon's order to hold Snul at all costs, at noon on 30 May all of the enemy troops there withdrew from Snul to South Vietnam via Route 13. During the withdrawal, in the afternoon of 30 May, our troops ambushed, then surrounded and annihilated, the enemy infantry, all of the 1st Armored Regiment, and the combined artillery battalion, killed or wounded 1,500 of the enemy, captured 300, captured or destroyed nearly 200 military vehicles, shot down 40 airplanes, and captured more than 500 weapons, 500 tons of ammunition, and more than 100 radios.

May 1971: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee and the Committee's Military Commission meet to discuss the 1972 strategic offensive.

The strategic victories on the Kampuchea and Route 9-Southern Laos battlefields created a change in the situation that was advantageous to us.

On our country's southern battlefield, although the enemy's "pacification" plan to win control of the population was brought to a stop and pushed back, we were still unable to bring about a strategic transformation.

In view of that situation, in May 1971 the Political Bureau met to evaluate the situation, predict what the enemy would do next, and affirm the strategic opportunity. The Political Bureau set forth the following urgent mission for our soldiers and people: "Promptly grasping a good opportunity and, on the basis of the strategic motto of fighting for a long period of time, stepping up the military, political, and diplomatic offensives, developing the new strategic offensive status on both the southern battlefield and the Indochina battlefield, defeating the U.S. strategy to Vietnamize the war," defeat all important steps of their aggressive plan in Kampuchea and Laos, win a decisive victory in 1972, and force the U.S. imperialists to end the war by negotiating from a position of defeat, while also being prepared to persist in and promote the resistance war in the event that the war is prolonged."

At the beginning of June 1971 the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met to study the situation and organize the implementation of the Political Bureau's resolution. Reaching a conclusion regarding the evaluation of the enemy's situation and our situation, and of the opportunity, the Military Commission

stressed that "The situation is changing rapidly, which demands that we make the greatest possible efforts, make good use of time, overcome the difficulties and weaknesses in building our position and strength on the battlefield so that they can be more rapidly improved, promptly take advantage of the opportunity, achieve surprise, win the greatest possible victory, force the U.S. to end the war and withdraw all U.S. troops, and cause the puppet army and administration to take an important step toward disintegration and collapse."

Predicting the enemy's next plot, the Military Commission noted that although the U.S. imperialists had been heavily defeated during the spring and summer of 1971, they were not yet willing to abandon their plot of "holing onto South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, maintaining their neocolonialism by 'Vietnamizing the war,' gradually reducing the scale of the war, and causing us to weaken and admit defeat or enabling themselves to end the war by negotiating from a position of strength."

In order to fulfill the urgent missions set forth by the Political Bureau, the Military Commission defined our strategic intention for 1971-1972 as being, "concentrating all efforts and promoting the political and military offensives in all three areas in South Vietnam -- the principal battlefield -- and on the Indochinese battlefield as a whole."

The general guideline for the southern battlefield was to "Coordinate strong main-force blows in the jungle-and-mountains region, a strong offensive and uprisings movement in the lowlands, and a strong political struggle and armed struggle movement in the cities, thus attacking the three sources of support of the 'Vietnamization' policy, creating a new situation that would be advantageous to us in the event of a ceasefire, and create conditions for strongly advancing the revolutionary movement in the new situation."

In the North, we had to endeavor to consolidate and raise the combat readiness level of the armed forces so that they could cope with bombings by the enemy air force and navy, annihilate the small ranger and commando groups, and defeat all of the enemy's acts of aggression and adventurism. There had to be strong mobile reserve forces that are prepared to react promptly if necessary, and forces to adequately supplement the South.

The resolution of the Military Commission also set forth specific guidelines and missions for our troops coordinating in combat with the soldiers and people on the Laotian and Kampuchean battlefields in 1972, and with regard to the necessary preparatory tasks.

The May 1971 resolution of the Political Bureau and the June 1971 resolution of the Military Commission set forth a timely, correct policy regarding the strategic general offensive of 1972. The resolutions correctly evaluated our situation, the enemy's situation, our situation, and the opportunity, and accurately set forth the immediate missions and the course of action for implementing those missions.

8 December 1971: Our troops and the soldiers and people of Kampuchea defeat the "Chen La 2" operation of the Phnom Penh puppet army.

During the first half of 1971 the Saigon puppet army was struck with one painful blow after another in the Route 9-Southern Laos area, in northeastern Kampuchea, and in South Vietnam. It proved to be increasingly impotent in its role as the U.S. assault force on the Indochinese Peninsula.

Under those circumstances, the U.S. imperialists had to build up the Phnom Penh puppet army, in the hope that it could be capable of coping with the revolutionary movement in Kampuchea by itself, create conditions for withdrawing some of the puppet troops back to South Vietnam, and therefore send home additional U.S.-troops and carry out their policy of "Vietnamizing the war." The "Chen La 2" operation, which was part of that scheme, was intended to stell and challenge the Phnom Penh puppet army. That operation also had the objectives of taking the initiative in a state of passivity, occupying Route 6 from Tang Coc to Kompong Thom, encroaching on and reducing the highly populated, prosperous liberated areas, and divide the Kampuchean battlefield into many zones to facilitate "pacification" and the concentration of the population.

That was the first large operation carried out by the Phnom Penh puppet army in the U.S. policy of "Khmerizing the war." They mobilized 15 brigades, with more than 70 infantry battalions, artillery, armored vehicles, and warships, including their most elite forces -- the "Khmer Krom" -- and with the support of the U.S. and Saigon puppet air forces.

They began the operation on 20 August 1971. But it ran up against the strong, resilient resistance of our main-force troops, in coordination with the Kampuchean liberation armed forces. In 100 days and nights of combat the revolutionary armed forces, coordinating closely, spread the enemy out along a 60-kilometers-long stretch of the road (from Snul to Kompong Thom), cut them up into many segments, and surrounded, isolated, and annihilated them one after the other. After striking them with many heavy blows, during the night of 12 November and the early morning of 13 November we launched an attack to annihilate the enemy's 16th Brigade at Rum Luong. On 28 and 29 November we took nine positions on the outer perimeter from Ba Ria to Kompong Thom. By 1 December all of the enemy forces in those two towns had been annihilated or routed. With the loss of those positions, the enemy's operation was thrown into confusion and many units fled their posts. In danger of being annihilated, Lon Nol secretly went to Snul and ordered the withdrawal of his troop remnants from Route 6. On 2 December the "Chen La 2" operation of the Phnom Penh puppet army was completely defeated and ended by their fleeing from Route 6. More than 12,000 of the enemy -- one-half of the operation's forces -- were knocked out of action, five brigades and 30 battalions were annihilated or heavily damaged, and many brigade and battalion commanders were killed, wounded, or captured.

By completing defeating the "Chen La 2" operation we struck a very heavy blow against the U.S. plot to "Khmerize the war," carried out a major campaign to annihilate much of the elite manpower of the Phnom Penh puppet army, smashed the enemy's Route 6 defense line, and strongly developed our strategic initiative.

December 1971: The Plaine des Jarres and Southern Laos victories.

Following the major Route 9-Southern Laos victory at the beginning of the year and the liberation of the Bolovens Plateau in mid-year, the people's armed forces of Laos and Vietnam concluded 1971 with a big victory in the Plaine des Jarres-Long Cheng area in December 1971.

Nixon, in a hopeless position of defeat and passivity on all the Indochinese battlefields, in June 1971 once again made a very great military effort. The U.S. sent Thai mercenary troops and Vang Pao's special troops from Xam Thong-Long Cheng to take the Plaine des Jarres-Muong Sai area in hopes of occupying that important strategic area for a long time, divide the liberated areas in Laos, threaten the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, disperse the revolutionary armed forces of the three countries, and create an advantageous position for them in their war of aggression in Indochina.

They threw into the operation 33 battalions of Thai and Vang Pao troops. Taking advantage of the rainy season, by 2 July 1971 they occupied the Plaine des Jarres airfield and intended to take all of the Plaine des Jarres and advance along Route 7 to the Vietnamese-Laotian border, but were stopped by the Laotian and Vietnamese troops and could not advance past the Plaine des Jarres airfield. They used the GM's [Groupe Mobile] as tactical units and took the defensive, with six fire-support bases of the Laotian puppet army and the Thai troops and with the support of the U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. was determined to take the Plaine des Jarres to maintain a favorable political and military position in Laos, while at the same time tying down an important part of our main-force troops and creating conditions for it to carry out its program to "Vietnamize the war" in South Vietnam. Many U.S. VIP's such as Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Alexis Johnson, the Under Secretary of State, went to Long Cheng to inspect, supervise, and motivate the Vang Pao-Thai lackeys during that period.

But all of their plots, hopes, and schemes were shattered. The soldiers and people of Laos and our troops, coordinating in combat, concentrated a strong force and decided to annihilate the enemy in the Plaine des Jarres-Long Cheng area, recover the entire Plaine des Jarres-Muong Sui area, liberate Xam Thong-Long Cheng, push the enemy west of Nam Ngum, and eliminate the bandits remaining in the liberated area.

Between 18 December and 20 December, after 3 days of combat the revolutionary forces, with strong forces and correct fighting methods, smashed the enemy's entire outer defensive complex between the Plaine des Jarres and Muong Sui, consisting of the Phu Tang, Phu Ton, and Phu Keng defensive cluster. Some of the Thai troops and Vang Pao's special troops were killed and some fled in panic from the Plaine des Jarres, although the U.S. provided very strong air support.

Immediately thereafter, in the Plaine des Jarres area, our troops pursued the enemy, occupied Xam Thong-Phu Moc, and attacked Long Cheng and Buom Long. In the Muong Sui area the Pathet Lao troops pursued the enemy and liberated Muong Soui, Sala Phukun, Kieu Kacham, and Bac Kasi.

Because of the disintegration of the Vang Pao's special troops, the U.S. hastily sent additional Thai troops to Long Cheng. The force defending Long Cheng had been increased to 14 Thai battalions and 8 battalions of Vang Pao's special troops. On 5 April 1972, after 115 days of combat, we concluded the campaign.

The results were that 5,824 of the enemy were killed and 1,137 were captured or surrendered. Our friends and we wiped out 8 Thai infantry battalions, 2 Thai artillery battalions, 1 G.M., and 7 battalions of Vang Pao troops, shot down 130 airplanes, captured or destroyed 47 heavy artillery pieces, recovered the entire Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang-Muong Soui area, and also liberated the Xam Thong area with its 22 population-concentration hamlets.

That major victory in the Plaine des Jarres had an important strategic significance. It struck a very painful blow against the new U.S. strategic measure -- using the Thai troops as the hard core, alone with Vang Pao's special troops, with U.S. rear-services support, mobility, and air power, to occupy the liberated areas in Laos -- and sent the Thai-Lao puppet army into an irreversible decline. That victory also signified an important step in the maturation of the Laotian revolutionary armed forces with regard to their ability to independently fight concentrated battles, wipe out many enemy battalions, and outstandingly fulfill their campaign missions.

At the same time as the Plaine des Jarres victory, in southern Laos the revolutionary armed forces of Laos and Vietnam launched a campaign to defeat the encroaching operation of the Lao puppet army and the Thai troops in the Attapeu-Saravan and Bolovens Plateau areas. On 7 December our friends and we chased the enemy from Saravan and on 10 December liberated Tha Teng. The Laotian puppet troops and the Thai troops at Paksoong were terrified and fled to Pakse, leaving behind all of their heavy equipment. On 29 December our friends and we recovered all of the Bolovens Plateau, wiped out 4 Thai companies, and killed more than 4,000 of the enemy.

After suffering heavy defeats in the Plaine des Jarres and Bolovens Plateau at the end of 1971, the morale of the Thai troops and the Lao puppets greatly declined. The Thai troops began to desert and demand that they be returned to their country. The Thai mercenary troops revealed many weaknesses and proved to be no better than the Laotian puppet troops. Clearly, they could not serve as the hard core and as the base of support for the Lao puppet troops.

1972

First part of 1972: Military Commission of the Party Central Committee issues a resolution on the military missions for 1972 and the strategic general offensive of 1972.

Implementing the May 1971 resolution of the conference of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, which set forth the mission of "winning a decisive victory in 1972," the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee determined that "The most important mission is to concentrate our war guidance on, and ~~strong~~ strengthen the forces of, the battlefields, especially the southern battlefield." At a time when the U.S.-puppets had just suffered heavy defeats and the U.S. was in

the process of a presidential election campaign, we would resolutely strike three strategic blows against the enemy:

-- First, we had to intensify the strategic blows by the main-force troops in areas and on battlefields where we had the advantage, annihilate part of the forces of the southern puppet army, destroy part-by-part the enemy's defensive deployment, and expand the liberated area. While regarding the puppet army as the principal operational objective, we had to continue to attack and annihilate the U.S. troops.

-- Second, we had to step up our attacks and uprisings in the important lowland rural areas, combine military and political offensives with military proselyting, and promote the guerrilla warfare movement and the mass uprising movement.

-- Third, we had to promote the struggle movement of the people in the cities, combine the revolutionary struggle of the masses with exacerbating and exploiting the enemy's internal contradictions, in order to prepare to, when there is a specific opportunity, transform the struggle into a revolutionary high tide.

The Military Commission of the Party Central Committee reminded the battlefields to guide and closely coordinate the three strategic blows, closely coordinate concentrated warfare with guerrilla warfare, endeavor to build up the real strength of the revolution, build up the direct rear area in the strategic areas, with emphasis on the key maneuver areas, so that our troops can deploy and have solid support; do a good job of organizing the battlefield, concentrate guidance, and supplement the forces on the battlefield, while also preparing strategic mobile forces and ensuring that those forces can play the role of strong fists in the important areas when there is a favorable opportunity.

With regard to the Laotian and Kampuchean revolutions, the resolution of the Military Commission stated that, in the spirit of militant solidarity among the people of the three Indochinese countries it was necessary to do a very good job of assisting and coordinating with our friends in combat, in building forces, and in consolidating the liberated area, in order to work together harmoniously, attack the enemy uniformly, and create an opportunity for winning a great victory. Attention had to be paid to providing supplies and transporting them to our friends.

With regard to the North, it was necessary to increase its combat readiness.

Implementing the resolutions of the Party Central Committee and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, on 11 March 1972 the Standing Committee of the Military Commission issued a resolution on the carrying out of the 1972 strategic general offensive, focusing on the Tri-Thien battlefield, "to annihilate large numbers of enemy troops, contribute to changing the balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy, change the war situation in South Vietnam, and advance the resistance war another step."

The Standing Committee of the Military Commission stated that "The Tri-Thien campaign will be a large-scale campaign in a very important strategic area, a combined arms campaign, and a combined military-political campaign."

The specific missions of the campaign were:

1. Annihilating many of the enemy's military forces, much of their manpower, and many of their war facilities, especially their regular troops, smash the enemy's defense line, and victoriously develop the offensive.
2. Coordinating with the mass movement in the lowlands, the cities, and the areas still controlled by the enemy, helping the masses attack and arise to destroy the enemy's control apparatus and win the right of mastery, defeat the enemy's "pacification" plan, and consolidate our three strong areas.
3. Liberating all areas we are capable of liberating and, when there is a favorable opportunity, endeavoring to expand our liberated area.
4. Drawing in and tying down an important part of the enemy's forces and coordinating closely with the other battlefields.
5. Steeling and developing our military and political forces in all regards.

Of the above missions, the foremost, decisive mission was annihilating many of the enemy's military forces, much of their manpower, and many of their war facilities, especially their regular troops; inflicting very heavy losses on their forces, causing their morale to collapse, and rapidly changing the comparison of forces to our advantage, in order to advance to the winning of complete victory. The mission of promoting the mass offensive and uprising movement was very important.

In coordination with the principal battlefield, the Central Highlands, Zone 5, and Nam Bo battlefields would also carry out medium and large campaigns and create a strategic general offensive all over the South.

On 28 March 1972 the Political Bureau met and listened to a Military Commission report on our situation, on the enemy's situation, and on preparations on battlefields. The Political Bureau agreed unanimously with the plan of the Military Commission and added a number of conclusions regarding some matters concerning the enemy, ourselves, and the organization of the guidance and command of the offensive.

February 1972: Nixon's visit to China begins the phase of the U.S. imperialists and the Chinese reactionaries brazenly allying with each other.

At the beginning of 1971, when our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation was entering a fierce period and when we were preparing to win a decisive victory, the Beijing rulers sent a diplomatic note to the U.S. (via Pakistan) inviting a U.S. delegation to China to hold high-level talks with the Chinese rulers.

After many open and secret preparations between the two sides, between 21 and 28 February 1972, the U.S. President Nixon, accompanied by Kissinger and Rodgers, visited China. Before setting out, Nixon decided to use his air force to carry out bombings by a large number of B.52's and tactical aircraft in South Vietnam and north of the demilitarized zone. They thought that that was a necessary signal to increase the effectiveness of Nixon's trip to China.

Mao Zedong and Shou Enlai organized a grand welcome for Nixon.

The result of the conference of the leaders of the U.S. and Chinese governments was the "Shanghai Communiqué," which stated that the U.S. would gradually withdraw its forces from Taiwan when the situation in the region became less tense, i.e. when the Vietnam War ended. In other words, if China wanted the U.S. to rapidly withdraw its troops from Taiwan, China would have to pressure us and force us to accept a negotiated solution, i.e. the U.S. would withdraw all of its troops from South Vietnam but the puppet army and the puppet administration would continue to exist for a long period of time.

With Nixon's trip to China the relationship between China and the U.S. officially entered a new phase. It began the counterrevolutionary strategic alliance between the reactionaries in the Beijing ruling circles and the Washington ruling circles against the Vietnamese revolution specifically and the socialist system in general. They formed an alliance and exerted pressure to force our people to abide by their settlement (in 1974 China's aid to Vietnam was only 30 percent of what it was in 1973, and in 1975 it was only 13 percent of what it was in 1973.)

However, our Party's independent, autonomous line bankrupted from the very beginning the plot of the U.S. imperialists and the Chinese reactionaries to collude with regard to Vietnam. Under the leadership of the Party, our soldiers and people smashed the traitorous pressure of the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists by means of their renowned victory of the spring of 1975. They fought until the U.S. got the hell out, until the puppets collapsed, and until the South was completely liberated.

4 April: The Party Central Committee holds its 20th Plenum.

The plenum listened to reports, held discussions, and approved a resolution regarding the mission of resisting the U.S. for national salvation and the mission of economic construction in the socialist North in 1972.

After carrying out an all-round evaluation of our people's victories in anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, the Party Central Committee unanimously concluded that "1971 will be a year in which the enemy will make great efforts, but will also be a year in which they suffer heavy defeats and we win big victories." The great victories on the battlefields of the three Indochinese countries in 1971 were important steps toward the bankruptcy of the "Vietnamization" and "Nixon Doctrine in Indochina" policy. The revolutionary forces of the people of Vietnam and the peoples of Laos and Kampuchea became increasingly large and strong.

"The sympathy, support, and assistance of the fraternal socialist countries and of the progressive people of the world have been increasingly strengthened and expanded. In general, in the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy, with regard to both position and strength, the basic development of the situation is that we are in a status of victory, initiative, advantage, and advance, while the enemy are in a status of defeat, passivity, difficulty, and decline."

The struggle between ourselves and the enemy -- militarily, politically, and diplomatically -- in a very important period. But we had favorable conditions for strongly advancing the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

The Party Central Committee set forth the mission of "With a spirit of persistently waging the resistance war until complete victory, we must mobilize all of our strength, make outstanding efforts, heroically advance, step up the resistance war, closely coordinate in combat with the fraternal soldiers and people of Laos and with the fraternal soldiers and people of Kampuchea, defeat the U.S. 'Vietnamization' policy, defeat the 'Nixon Doctrine,' and win an even greater victory for the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

In order to meet the increasingly greater requirements of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, and continue to promote the great undertaking of socialist construction in the North, the Plenum made specific decisions regarding the direction and missions of the 1972 state plan and preparations for 1973. Of those missions, the most outstanding was "meeting as promptly and as fully as possible the requirements for manpower and materiel to supply to the front. Strengthening our national defense forces, and being prepared to smash the enemy's acts of military adventurism carried out by their air force, commandos, or infantry against the socialist North."

The resounding victories on the battlefield in 1972 proved that the assessment of the Party Central Committee and the direction and missions it set forth were very correct. The U.S. bandits were unable to stop the strong attacks and continuous, widespread uprisings of our soldiers and people in the South, and could not hold back their increasingly rapid decline on the path to complete defeat.

30 March: The 1972 strategic offensive on the southern battlefield. The Tri-Thien campaign (liberation of Quang Tri Province.)

At the beginning of spring, 1972, the U.S.-puppets knew that we would launch a major attack, but they could not predict the time, the main thrust, the scale, or the intensity of our attack. They believed that the main attack of our main-force units would be Cong Tum, that the secondary attacks would be in the Route 9 area and in eastern Nam Bo, and that the attack would take place during Tet Nham Ty [1972].

Catching the enemy off-guard because the time they predicted had passed and they had been waiting for a long time, at noon on 30 March 1972 our strategic offensive on the Tri-Thien battlefield began. We launched a direct attack against the enemy's heavily fortified outer defensive line, wiped out the enemy's regimental base camps, forced the surrender of a regiment, inflicted heavy losses on many other regiments, shattered the Route 9 defense line, and completely liberated the districts of Gio Linh and Cam Lo. With that victory, we were able to take a staging area in north and west Quang Tri, move up close to and directly threaten the Dong Ha-Ai Tu- Quang Tri-La Vang, and increase our pressure west of Hue.

Then, on 5 April, we smashed the enemy's border defense line in eastern Nam Bo, wiped out three understrength enemy infantry regiments and two understrength armored regiments, and liberated the provinces of Loc Ninh, Bu Dop, and Thien Ngo. Thus we were able to take a staging area on the eastern Nam Bo border, cut Route 13, and surround and attack the city of Loc An.

In the Central Highlands, we attacked the enemy's defense line west of the Po Co River, inflicted heavy losses on the 2nd Airborne Brigade, and strongly threatened the northern Cong Tum area.

In the Military Region 5 and Nam Bo lowlands we occupied a number of staging areas, such as northern Quang Nam, northern Binh Dinh (Military Region 5), Dong Thap Muoi (Military Region 8), and U Minh Thuong (Military Region 9).

The enemy were taken by surprise by our strong offensive blows, suffered heavy losses, and put up a confused resistance. They had to abandon their outer lines and withdraw to their inner lines, brought up mobile forces from the rear, and withdrew into large enclaves in the areas attacked by our main-force units.

Developing our victory on the Quang Tri front, on 27 April we launched the second wave of attacks against the Dong Ha-Ai Tu-La Vang defensive zone, in coordination with the offensives and uprisings in the Trieu Phong and Hai Lang lowlands and the offensive by main-force units in the Route 12 area west of Hue. In 5 days of fighting we wiped out the Dong Ha-Ai Tu enclave, liberated all of Quang Tri Province and the Dong Thanh area, and directly threatened Thua Thien Province and Hue.

On the Central Highlands front, on 24 April we attacked and annihilated the enemy at Dac To-Tan Canh, liberated northern Cong Tum Province, and directly threatened Cong Tum City.

In Nam Bo, after advancing along Route 22 and attacking the Xa Mat-Thieu Ngon line, we attacked the communications center on Mt. Ba Den. On Route 13, we liberated a vast area with a population of 30,000 in Loc Ninh District, took Loc Ninh City, and threatened the area northwest of Saigon. In the Mekong Delta, after attacking many district capitals and subsectors, and wiping out or inflicting heavy losses on many enemy units, we motivated the people to arise and master many rural areas and recovered the U Minh liberated area and the Dong Thap base area.

In Military Region 5, we attacked a large number of enemy bases and subsectors, and liberated the Hoai Nhon, Bong Son, and Hiep Duc district capitals, and the town of Tam Quan.

In May and June 1972 we also launched attacks on the lines south of the My Chanh River and west of the Huong River (Tri-Thien), in the outskirts of and inside Cong Tum City (Central Highlands), and the city of An Loc (eastern Nam Bo).

By June 1972, after nearly 3 months of fighting, we had won a great victory in annihilating the enemy and liberating land: in the South as a whole we annihilated about 200,000 of the enemy, wiped out 2 divisions, 9 regiments, and 38 battalions, inflicted heavy losses on 1 division, 10 regiments, and 31 infantry battalions, wiped out 12 armored regiments and 17 artillery battalions, liberated all of Quang Tri Province, most of Cong Tum Province, the northern part of Binh Dinh Province, and a large, integrated area in eastern Nam Bo (in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Phuoc Long provinces), occupied many important areas in the lowlands of Military Region 5 (Quang Da, Quang Nam, and Quang Ngai) and in the Mekong Delta (Dong Thap Muoi, the area north and south of Route 4, U Minh, Ca Mau, etc.), and liberated and

gained control of more than 1 million people. Our main-force units broke up the enemy's strongest defensive zones and took and held mobile areas in the jungle-and-mountains area, the border area, and a number of important areas in the lowlands.

In that test of strength, it is clear that the puppet army, which the Nixon clique had gone all-out to build up in accordance with the "Vietnamization" formula, and which had become weaker after its adventures in Kampuchea and in the Route 9-Southern Laos area, was now in danger of collapsing. We were able to create a new situation on the southern battlefield, brought about an important change in the comparison of forces that was to our advantage, and created a very favorable revolutionary situation.

The very great victory of the 1972 strategic offensive, along with the victory of defeating their second war of destruction in the North, especially the glorious victory over their strategic air raids on Hanoi and Hai Phong at the end of 1972, and our victory on the diplomatic front, contributed to the essential smashing of the U.S. imperialists' "Vietnamization" strategy. They had to sign an agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam, and unilaterally withdraw their troops.

6 April: Soldiers and people of the North Wage a victorious people's war against the U.S. imperialists' second war of destruction.

The 1972 strategic offensive carried out by our soldiers and people in the South placed the puppet army in a perilous situation. The Nixon administration had to recklessly carry out a strategic policy that was beyond the framework of the "Vietnamization" strategy, i.e. it had to "re-Americanize" the war. They mobilized very intensive air and naval support for the puppet army's counterattacks and brought the system of advisers back into action at the regimental level to take direct command of the fighting.

In the North, the Nixon administration carried out an extremely serious act of adventurism, despite the protests of world opinion and the progressive U.S. people. On 6 April Nixon decided to mobilize large air force and naval forces to participate in the fighting in the South and resume the attacks against the North, purportedly in retaliation for our attacks in the South. On 9 May Nixon also ordered a blockade of the ports and territorial waters of the North, the intensified bombing of our roads and railroads, and the bombing of all of our economic and national defense installations. The enemy's plot was to strangle the North and cut our country off from the outside aid and cut off the North's aid for the South. They hoped that in a brief period of only 2 or 3 months we would be paralyzed and be forced to negotiate with them from a position of weakness. Nixon proved to be extremely obstinate and reckless, and did things Johnson never dared to do. He cynically declared that "I would rather lose the presidential election than be defeated in the war."

In the North our people waged a people's war against the second war of destruction, which was more fierce, and on a larger scale, than the previous one.

The U.S. imperialists mobilized the greatest naval and air forces ever, made up of all types of modern aircraft (F.4, F.111, B.52G, B52.H), to attack both parts of