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SUMMARY: COMMUNIST TERROR TACTICS IN VIET-NAM

Predictions of mass arrests and wholesale executions have been made by those who oppose a Communist victory in South Vietnam. Such predictions are based on past performance and present policies of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party of Vietnam. From August 1945 to the Land Reform terror of 1954-56, and through the Hue massacre in February 1968 to the present day, Communist performance justifies such concern.

1945

In 1945 the Communist-controlled Viet Minh seized power in North Vietnam. The Party made a very considerable effort to eliminate any actual or potential opposition through political murders and arrests. According to Party Secretary General Truong Chinh, "foreign intervention" (Nationalist Chinese and French presence) hampered a more extensive purge. The terror was aimed principally at eliminating the leaders of parties and factions which were not under Communist control. Among those killed were Bui Quang Chu, the founder of the Constitutional Party; Vo Van Nga, the leader of the Party for Independence; Huynh Phu So, Hoa Hao, Truong Tu Anh, Dai Viet leaders, and Ta Thu Thau, head of the Trotskyist "Struggle Group". (Joseph Buttinger, Vietnam: The Dragon Embattled, New York: Praeger, 1967).

1946

In the summer of 1946, the purge of the opposition reached another peak. Acting Minister of Interior Vo Nguyen Giap destroyed the nationalist party strongholds, executed hundreds of nationalists and even destroyed old comrades in arms. On July 11, 1946, Giap launched a country-wide purge of nationalist leaders and closed down Viet Nam, the last opposition newspaper. The coalition government in the National Assembly was similarly decimated. By the end of 1946, the non-Communist representatives had been reduced from 70 seats to 20 in attendance and of the 20 all but two voted with the Communists. Of the two, one was arrested and the other went into hiding. (Bernard Fall, Profile of Giap in Vo Nguyen Giap's People's War, People's Army, New York, Praeger, 1965; Bernard Fall, The Viet Minh Regime, 1956.)

1954-56

The Land Reform campaign carried out with ruthless brutality killed landlords by quota in a countryside that had few genuine landlords. More than 50,000 people were killed and half million placed in labor camps. The Party apologized later for its excessive use of murder and terror stating that it had been "overzealous". (Bernard Fall, The Two Vietnams, New York, Praeger, 1963 p. 156) (Hoang Van Chi, From Colonialism to Communism, Praeger, 1964, p. 166)

1968-69

More than 5,500 citizens of the city of Hue in South Vietnam were murdered by Communist North Vietnamese and Viet Cong terror squads during the three week Tet offensive, in February 1968. Communist broadcasts and statements continue to boast that the blood debts owed by the anti-Communist population of South Vietnam will be collected by the VC.