

## Editorial

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### A No-Winning Situation For The VC

**A**fter 30 years of socialism edification in the north and 12 years in the south, the Vietnamese Communist faces a stubborn reality. The dated Marxist-Leninist cannot solve the nation's economic problem. Under the Kremlin's instruction and in its desperate struggle to consolidate the near-bankrupt regime, Hanoi's new leadership has promulgated a so-called reform policy which is merely a sham modernization.

Since last year's Sixth Party Congress, Hanoi's replica of modernization has become the starving population's main diet. Slogans, such as "the proletarian revolution," "the proletarian dictatorship," "the revolutionary violence," are deliberately stored away for future use. In their place stands the appealing modernization.

Nguyen van Linh, the new general secretary, has instructed his subordinates to modernize their thinking patterns, managing styles, and working habits. Like Gorbachev, he blamed his predecessors for all failures, who had adopted Soviet policy by putting an end to all private enterprises and concentrating in heavy industry, forcing the economy into bankruptcy and the population, party members included, into complete disenchantment. Like his predecessors, Linh follows Moscow step by step.

By emphasizing agricultural production, consumption goods and export commodities as baits, the Vietnamese Communist leadership aims at two main targets. First, it seeks to pacify its disillusioned members. Second, it attempts to convince the free world that it is indeed working toward becoming a reliable economic partner.

Hanoi's salesmanship sounds familiar. The Soviet Union has used it time and again. Despite the erection of a few western-styled skyscrapers in Moscow or the manufacture of certain high cost sedan cars to bring the nation closer to the Western standard, the Soviet regime has not been able to cover up its Third World characteristics in various aspects of life. And despite its much publicized above-quota production statistics, the most avant-garde

communist nation of the bloc still has to import food to feed its own population. Yet, the communist salesmanship still works in persuading the West that its counterpart does indeed have the will to westernize, meaning modernize.

This is exactly what the Viet Cong leadership expects through its modernization sham to persuade the outside world about its willing adoption of behavioral changes. Its plan consists of two parts. First, it calls on Vietnamese refugees to send home the much-needed foreign currency and capital goods, "to help out impoverished relatives." If successful, it will then solicit the free world for trade and other input such as capital, industrial equipments, and natural resources not available in Vietnam.

Modernization, however, cannot succeed merely with material input. It requires the human factor to make the whole system work. Hanoi cannot successfully implement its economic policy with its present personnel.

Despite the governmental encouragement in changing their thinking patterns and despite their willingness to change, these employees nonetheless find themselves in a dilemma that haunts every communist reform attempt-How deeply can they change without drifting away from the totalitarian ideology to embrace freedom? Without freedom of thoughts, one cannot find solutions most appropriate and cost-efficient for social problems.

The VC party on one hand urges its members to modernize their thinking, and on the other hand, by reemphasizing its loyalty toward Marxist-Leninism, it warns them not to drift away from its ideology. Like an ant crawling around the rim of a cup, the faster it crawls, the nearer it reaches the starting point-a no-winning situation as a Vietnamese saying goes, except for, hopefully, a "peredyshka" (a breathing space). That is the very nature of the so-called modernization in the communist world. And one can find ample examples in the Soviet socialism edification under the leadership of Lenin, Stalin, Krushchev, Brezhnev.

## Viet Cong Opened New Attacks On Religions

The congregation of the Mother Coredemporist, Missouri Chapter, USA, recently



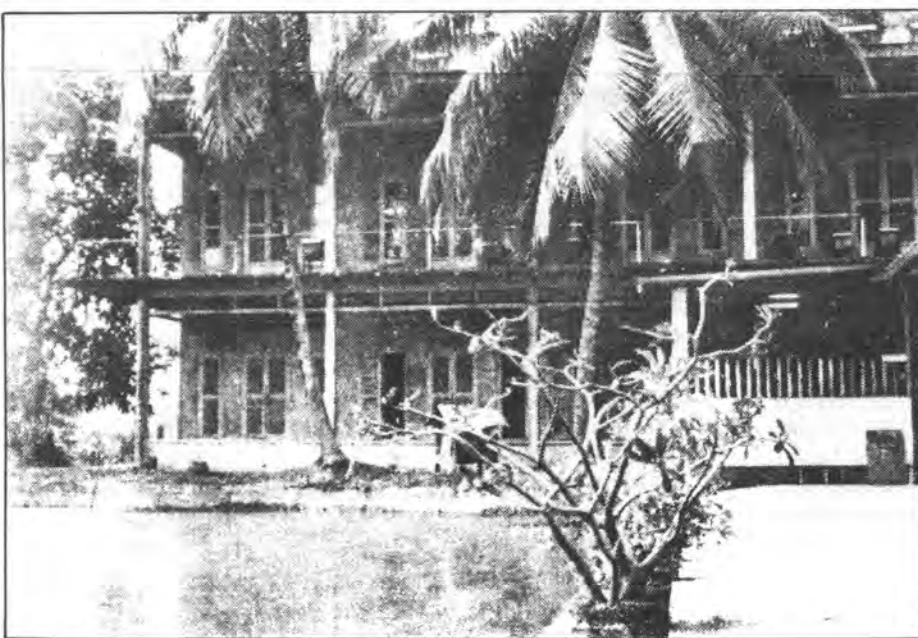
The printing shop now has become the temporary jail cells to hold priests (top).

The Boarding School which had housed hundreds of young priests before 1975, is now occupied by VC security forces (bottom).

reported a new waves of attacks directed by VC regime at a number of churches in Vietnam.

The report said VC security agents in Thu Duc, on the outskirts of Saigon, broke up a religious seminar held at the local mission. The church was informed of being disallowed to hold any further meetings. Superior Father Tran Dinh Thu, 81, founder of Congregation of the Mother Coredemporist, was taken to the security post the next day for interrogation. This is not the first time father Thu got into troubles with the regime, after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975 he was sent to a re-education camp for two years.

In the afternoon of that day, forty VC agents entered the church and took away all religious materials. They also went to nearby food farm run by the order's members, arrested five priests then confiscated all harvests and equipment.



Father Tran Dinh Thu, founder of the Congregation of the Mother Coredemporist - 81 years old.

Local residents upon learning of the attack on their church rushed to the scene and surrounded the convoy transporting confiscated goods. During the ensuing clash, all arrested priests were released, three VC agents and scores of local people were wounded. Despite a plea from the church, people stayed and organized vigils each night. The stand-off went on for five days and at the end the parish was overwhelmed by a heavily armed security-army combined forces. After the assault, they arrested forty parishioners and took complete control of the area.

In the following weeks, the regime controlled media in Saigon took turns to denounce the Congregation of the Mother Coredemporist which has approximately 1,600 ordained priests as a "spy nest" and Superior Father Thu as the head of the "army of priests".

This is just one example of blatant religious oppression perpetrated by the regime. Not long ago, they imprisoned leaders of CAO DAI and HOA HAO, two major religions in South Vietnam, after accused them of "being reactionaries" as well as other unfounded charges. ■

# Nguyen Chi Thien

## The Poet

**H**e could have become a bard of the regime if he so wished and could have been part of Hanoi's nomenklatura if he so desired, with his natural talent of a poet. All he had to do was to produce poems to the regime's order. Before him there has been poets and writers assigned to highest positions such as minister of the Viet Cong Ministry of Information and Culture, or even deputy prime-minister.

He chose a different path instead. And he has become the regime's pariah for having written from his heart in praise of freedom and the humankind. As a result, he has spent more than half of his years in prisons. No one knows if he is still alive or already dead.

His name: Nguyen Chi Thien, if alive, 54 years old. His specific crime: illegally contacting a Western diplomat and giving this person his manuscript of some 400 poems written during his 20 years in Hanoi's various prisons.

Born in 1933 in North Vietnam, Thien started to compose poems since his teens. In the mid-1950s he was among writers and poets participating in the short-lived Nhan Van (Humanities) Movement, criticizing the regime's shortcomings. Toward the end of the movement, in 1958, despite the others's arrest, Thien went on publishing a literary samizdat,

NUFRONLIV leadership to assign him the commander's position of the Hong Ha (Red River) Groups when the organization launched its Dong Tien (Eastward) campaign in mid-1981.

His unit helped securing the Dong Tien "corridor" which has facilitated rebels' activities including the establishment of his

"For The People." For that, he spent two years in prison. Released from the prison, he continued to produce fiery verses and received another two years of forced labor in a "re-education" camp.

This kind of camp, however, seemed working against the regime itself, in Vietnam as well as elsewhere in the communist world--instead of breaking the poet's will, it only whetted his appetite for truth and enhanced his perception of life. Upon his release came another arrest and on and on until he became a familiar face to prisoners guards in various camps within Hanoi's gulag.

By 1978, he was temporarily freed not allowed to take up any kind of job. Needless to say, Thien continued composing poems, supporting himself with meager income by renting his room to a prostitute.

Within one year, he emptied his mind of stored poems composed during his last 20 years in prisons. Titled "Hoa Dia Nguc" (Flowers From Hell), the manuscript was then smuggled out of Vietnam via a Western diplomat while its author was once again arrested and put back into prison.

Throughout his 191 poems and 188 quadrains, the reader could feel, if not "touch" the poet's passionate love for poetry. He

long-dreamed radio station. He did not wait to listen to his dream's voice when the Vietnamese Resistance Radio broadcasted its first program on December 27, 1983. Few months earlier, wounded during an ambush, Hiep died of excessive blood loss on the way back to his base, wrapped in a canvas stained with his own blood and carried by his two unit men.



considers himself "married" to it since his school days. His life's tragedy began with this "marriage". He preferred prison life rather than seeing his poetry prostituting the party, turning its back on the reality of life and transforming itself into a lying machine.

In return, however, his "Hoa Dia Nguc" has received warm appreciation among Vietnamese. To them, Thien has established himself as one of the greatest poets in recent decades. Various recitals of his poems took place in Vietnamese communities around the world and the well-known composer Pham Duy arranged some of his poems to popularize his message. Huynh Sanh Thong of Yale University's Southeast Asia Studies translated his poems into English (1). The French-speaking community has also acquainted his passionate verses through Tran Van Phuoc's translation (2). In 1985, the International P.E.N. awarded Thien with the International Poetry Prize.

Despite his tragic life, Thien, like the Cuban poet Armando Vallederes, still embrace life wholeheartedly and has conveyed his passion to the reader through his beautiful verses. Unlike Vallederes, however, Thien's fate is still unknown except to Hanoi. Nevertheless, to those who have read him, his whisper is still heard, telling them not to give up the fight for human dignity against communism.

(1) "Flowers From Hell," *Southeast Asia Studies*, Yale University, 1984, US \$7.00. Check/money order payable to Yale Southeast Asia Studies, Box 13A, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520- USA.  
(2) "Testament d'un neveu de l'oncle Ho," published by the translator, Canada, 1984.

# Hanoi's "Glasnost" Unmasked

Only six months after the Sixth Party Congress's promulgation of its "glasnost" version, Hanoi's secret police invaded the Catholic Congregation of the Mother Coredemptrist in Thu Duc on the outskirt of Saigon, arresting its head priest, 81-year-old Father Tran Dinh Thu, among others and confiscating its properties including agricultural products produced by its members. Forty parishers were also arrested after a series of fightings between the police and about one hundred protesters resulting in the death of one security agent.

The Mother Coredemptrist order, established 30 years ago by Father Thu, has gained official recognition from the Vatican. Its members, thanks to their simple, thrifty and self-sufficient lifestyle, have long instilled respect among Christians in Vietnam. After the Viet Cong takeover of South Vietnam, the regime had sent the priests including the aging order head to "re-education" camps for a few years. One wonders if Father Thu would survive the hardship this time especially when he is now charged by the regime for "contempt toward the governmental orders" and "illegal hoarding goods."

The incident occurred while the Viet Cong cadres are trying to explain the meaning of "glasnost" to the population, including freedom of religion, in order to persuade it into participating in the regime's economic salvage. Once again the regime is speaking its familiar double language. The most naive could easily realize that it is not abandoning its original policy--to conform various

religions within the Marxist ideology.

As if to smooth out the mounting tension heated by the Coredemptrist incident, Nguyen Van Linh met with delegates of the Eighth Plenum of the Vietnamese Episcopal Council in Hanoi on May 29, two weeks after the invasion. During the widely-publicized meeting, the new Viet Cong general secretary emphasized that "an unswerving policy of the Party and State is to respect the freedom of religion." Trying to salvage his "glasnost" sham, Linh explained that "there have still been here and there shortcomings and errors in the implementation of the policy due to the 'knowledge of cadres' and the prejudices of some people."

How sincere are Linh's words, one can measure by listening to Hanoi Radio's broadcast of the same day, concerning some different if not contradicting notes compared to its big boss's.

According to the broadcast report, not very well-known to outside journalists as the one about Linh's meeting with the Catholic priests, many Vietnamese refugees have clandestinely returned to Vietnam and engaged in anti-government activities in coastal areas "where many Catholics have taken residence." Also, according to the source, these individuals have received assistance from governments "hostile" toward Hanoi.

To those who are familiar with the Viet Cong news reporting, Hanoi has implicitly condemned the Catholic congregation for having cooperated with foreign forces in anti-government scheme.

This kind of reporting is similar to the regime's accusation of the Coredemptrist order. It is also similar to those used against the leaders of the Buddhists, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai churches, who have been executed by the regime during the last 12 years.

The suppression of freedom of religion in Vietnam is a reality. Only its victims know how subtle yet brutal the anti-religion measures have been imposed upon them and their religious beliefs. To the outsider, only Hanoi's "glasnost" mask prevails.

The year of 1988 will soon come with a few interesting developments regarding Christians in the Communist bloc. First, there will be the 1000th anniversary since the adoption of Christianity in KievanRus', the first Slavic state now in the Soviet territory. Gorbachev will certainly exploit the opportunity for his glasnost's propaganda. Who knows if Nguyen Van Linh is not going to take advantage of the Vatican's recent announcement that it will beatify 117 martyrs killed by feudal regimes in Vietnam in the past centuries. Charged by the monarchs as cooperators with the French colonialist in the sowing of paganism which was against the monarchy's ideology, these martyrs including 96 Vietnamese converted were condemned to death after horrible tortures.

Should we wait till one hundred years from now for the Vatican to officially acknowledge as Blessed those being executed by Hanoi for the same charges that put 117 martyrs to death in the past ?

## **Vietnamese Community In Australia Launched Campaign Against Hanoi's Money Raising Scheme**

**V**ietnamese Communities in the world are now setting up Special Committees to coordinate our people's efforts in countering VC's exploitative scheme. These committees represented people from all walks of life such as students associations, trade and professional groups, former servicemen.... The first one was formed in France composed of nearly 30 groups and the newest one was in Victoria, Australia.

Members of the Vietnamese community in Victoria last month organized street canvassing in several nearby residential and commercial districts to hand out leaflets alerting local refugees of Hanoi's scheme to raise money from Vietnamese abroad. Over five thousand leaflets were distributed

and one thousand posters affixed. The group called on refugees in Australia to boycott businesses operated by VC agents. The reaction from people, especially from the business establishment,

was overwhelmingly positive. Many store owners have gotten together and signed a resolution declaring their objection to commercial ties with the VC regime. ■

## **Vietnamese Refugees In West Germany Challenged VC Exhibit**

**V**ietnamese refugees in Hamburg and nearby areas last June closed down an exhibit organized by the VC at the Lutheran Convention in Messe-Frankfurt.

The exhibit displayed pictures of destructions, said to be caused by the "orange agent" pesticide sprayed by the USA during the Vietnam war. The demonstrators gave out leaflets denouncing the exhibit as an attempt by Ha Noi to cover up its use of chemical warfare in Laos and Kampuchea, and to solicit aids from other nations by citing chemical destructions. The demonstrators also told convention attendants of human rights violations by Hanoi against the Vietnamese people and alerted them of VC propaganda ■

## **Vietnamese In San Diego USA Showed Supports For The Resistance**

**A** hundred and sixty Vietnamese in this southernmost part of California joined a "Fund raising dinner for Supports to the Resistance" held at a local restaurant last June. The gathering was organized by San Diego chapter of NUFRONLIV to commemorate the DONG TIEN campaign. The strategically important campaign was launched by NUFRONLIV four years ago to establish the lines of communication between resistance groups inside and outside of Vietnam. ■

*The San Diego chapter's representative welcomed diners at the fund raising dinner for the supports to the Vietnamese Resistance.*





*Khang chien quan Phung Tan Hiep.*

*Phung Tan Hiep Preparing For a Patrol.*



## Phung Tan Hiep The Khang Chien Quan

**O**ne of his dream while living in Japan as a refugee was to establish a radio station broadcasting messages of freedom into Vietnam. When the Vietnamese Resistance Radio he helped to set up finally beamed into existence in late 1983, however, he was not among its first listeners. He had been killed in action a few months earlier. His dream lives on.

When South Vietnam was forced under communist rule, Hiep was 22. Within months, he realized the only way to live as a human being was to fight against the Viet Cong. He joined a resistance group and went underground, leaving behind his wife and their only child.

Despite his age, he was soon promoted as assistant commander of the 818th battalion headquartered in the province of Dien Khanh, central Vietnam. His responsible area covered a 100-mile stretch of Highway 1 from Cam Ranh to Tuy Hoa.

Two years later, Hiep went to Tay Ninh, a western province near

the Kampuchean and Vietnamese border, to contact resistance forces of Cao Dai, an eclectic religion. Upon his return to Dien Khanh, he was to devise a plan of attacking the radio station and the airport of Nha Trang. The plan did not work, and Hiep was arrested. Two days later, he escaped and found his way back to his base. The Viet Cong regime immediately dispatched a regiment to sweep the area. After days of bloody fighting, it crushed the resistance group, forcing its survivors including Hiep to withdraw deep into the jungle.

Unable to continue their resistance without support, political as well as material, from the outside world, the group leadership decided to send Hiep abroad in search of assistance. He arrived in Japan in 1979 among dozens of boat people rescued by a Japanese merchant vessel.

During his three years in Japan, Hiep joined Vietnamese refugees in anti-Hanoi activities, causing embarrassment to Viet Cong delegates soliciting Japanese aids. Along with Vietnamese political groups, Hiep also planned to establish a sea borne radio station broadcasting to Vietnam from South China Sea. However, due to many risks involved, they had to abandon the project. Nevertheless the dream of a radio station continued burning inside the former khang chien quan.

Despite his political activities that brought about many Japanese's awareness of what have happened in Vietnam since the Viet Cong takeover, Hiep did not truly enjoy his freedom. "This freedom does not belong to me," he used to say, as recalled by friends. "I can't feel free when my mind is still deep in debt to those who still remain back home waiting for my return."

In 1981, he joined the Japanese-based NUFRONLIV chapter. Hiep's patriotism and much-needed knowledge of resistance activities prompted the

**QUESTION :** Since our last discussion about new Hanoi's fund-raising scheme among Vietnamese refugees, I have seen many efforts of your community, sometime with the cooperation from other governments I guess, to thwart this plan. However, there are many indications from Vietnam that the regime is now trying earnestly to improve the life of the people there. Don't you see that?

**ANSWER :** No, I don't. And I wish I could understand how you get to that conclusion. Could you give me an example of what you perceive as the VC regime's efforts to improve the life of your people?

**QUESTION :** Yes, of course, based on what the world media have widely reported during the last couple of months. Do you know that the VC media recently has run lenghtly articles about the problems of the ruling machine as well as exposing corrupted high ranking party cadres. Moreover, Nguyen Van Linh boldly opens a new column named "Things That Must Be Done Immediately" in the newspaper "Nhan Dan", dealing directly with big wigs in the regime and demanding immediate actions from them to correct wrongdoings or negligences. Regardless of what you may think of the regime, you should agree that the exposé of problems such as "Negligences in Dac Lac Hospital Killed Patients," "Corrupted Tax Agents in Saigon" or "Daylight Bandits in Thanh Hoa," are efforts to clean up the society. Is it not so?

**ANSWER :** My dear friend, the answer again is NO. Those things you mentioned are not new at all. They are "things must be done immediately" in order to follow Moscow's instruction to create favourable images of Hanoi's new rulers and most important of all to use them as a "safety valve" for the people preventing the possibility of a widespread protest already happended in the VC history. Let me recall, for your knowledge

refreshment, what happened 30 years ago when the newly-installed VC government in the North promulgated its "Let Hundred Flowers Bloom" policy. Intellectuals and writers were encouraged to speak up their most truthful thoughts. As it turned out, those who took the risk were finally sorted out and sent in jails or labor camps. The Vietnamese people, especially those who have lived in the North, can never forget what happened to these hapless intellectuals long after the termination of this particular campaign. Moreover, I should also remind you the "in-fighting" aspect of this made-in-Hanoi "glasnost" campaign. A diligent Vietnamese follower must know there are also power struggles within the regime. This is just another tactic of self-serving PR stunt of Nguyen Van Linh - mobilizing the mass' discontent against the bureaucracy to Linh's own advantage. The longer this comedy lasts, the uglier its outcome unfolds.

**QUESTION :** I begin to see the picture. What have been reactions of those bureaucrats criticized under Linh's "glasnost" policy?

**ANSWER :** According to the VC media reports, a teacher in Dac Lac -a provinve in South Vietnam where is located the famous hospital which killed patients you

have mentioned earlier- a teacher has been disciplined by local authority for having, in response to "glasnost" encouragement, criticized the ill-treatment of teachers. In the northern province of Thanh Hoa, members of an investigation team have been transferred or demoted after their exposé of corruption within the state-owned shop. Just to cite a few examples of the powerful bureaucracy's resistance toward "glasnost". Who then among powerless ordinary people would dare to bathe themselves in "glasnost"?

**QUESTION :** Do you see any good things coming out of this glasnost campaign?

**ANSWER :** Certainly. The communist in-fighting has unfolded the resistance of the people inside Vietnam, those who have been fed up with the whole situation. The Pha Lai power station incident is a case in point. The workers, mostly members of the official Youth Brigade, have participated in the sabotage of this station. Advised by the Vietnamese Resistance Radio, they removed parts of the machinery, replaced them by fake ones to destroy the station.

This "glasnost" game can't last long because the stake is getting higher and higher.

## New Address Of The NUFRONLIV'S Public Relation Office

Effective this month, the NUFRONLIV'S PUBLIC RELATION OFFICE in USA. will be located at:

5119 - A Leeburg Pike, Suite 111  
Falls Church, VA 22041



These poems, excerpted from the "Flowers From Hell" collection, provide us a glimpse of the courageous and talented poet Nguyen Chi Thien (see page 5).

### **The Modern Children Of The Regime**

*The modern children of the regime  
seemed darlings when they came to jail,  
toddling around without their pants :  
the prison blouses covered them  
down to their feet.  
But as time flies, they're reached the age of ten.  
With noses in the air,  
they're regular terrors now.  
When gape their mouths,  
curses come gushing out and spare no one.  
And they can kill  
for a potato, a cassava root.*

**(1966)**

### **Within The Night That Chokes**

*Within the night that chokes,  
a sun is lying now in wait.  
Inside unspoken grief,  
thunder is lying now in wait.  
Among the hungry and the cold,  
armies are lying now in wait.  
When a new turn the country takes,  
like atoms splitting they'll explode.*

**(1976)**

### **I Wedded Poetry While I Was In School**

*I wedded Poetry while I was in school.  
At once she new I love her when we met.  
My Poetry was as fair as Kieu, (1)  
as gorgeous as a palace queen of Ch'in. (4)  
Lasses like History, Chemistry, Geometry,  
I quite ignored — I was too much in love.  
Poetry was often sad, like me,  
with only Dream and Reverie for friends.  
She married me because I could not live  
without her by my side to comfort me.  
Our wedding, one for lovers, had few guests :  
the bridesmaid and the best man,  
or Reverie and Dream.*

*With both arms full of children now,  
she's doomed to prison life, grown thin and wan.  
She's moved out of her palace in the clouds :  
she stays in stupor, having drooped from dreams.  
The world scorns her  
because in pain and anger she'll cry out,  
because she will not smear some rouge or powder on  
and to the Party sell herself  
for a livelihood.  
She's stuck by me and suffered so,  
sharing my griefs, my woes.  
How long will she keep faith with me,  
in silence bearing my ordeal ?  
"Until you tell me some untruth, some lie."*

**(1963)**

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*(1) Kieu : the heroine of "The Tale of Kieu" by Nguyen Du (1765-1820). An English translation by Huynh Sanh Thong was published in a bilingual edition by Yale University Press in 1983.  
(2) The founder of the Ch'in dynasty in China had palaces built in which he kept a harem of beautiful women.*

The National United Front for the Liberation of Viet Nam (NUFRONLIV) was formed in 1980 by the Vietnamese people, inside Viet Nam and abroad to liberate their country from the viet cong, and to build a free and democratic nation. Under the leadership of President HOANG CO MINH, the National Resistance Council directs the three branches of NUFRONLIV, the General Directorate of In-land Affairs, the General Directorate of Overseas Affairs, and the Armed Resistance Forces in mobilizing the Vietnamese people in every way and by every means to overthrow the viet cong. Throughout the country, from North to South, the General Directorate of In-land Affairs has developed resistance network, in which mobilization activities are carried out under the protection of the Armed Resistance Forces. Directed by the General Directorate of Overseas Affairs, NUFRONLIV chapters have been formed and are active around the world wherever Vietnamese are resettled.

The following are addresses of NUFRONLIV overseas offices :

America : 1900 M Street, NW. # 1318, Washington, DC 20036, USA.  
P.O. Box 7826, San Jose, CA 95150-7826, USA.

Asia : P.O. Box 223, Shiba, Tokyo 105-91, JAPAN.

Australia : P.O. Box 152, Bankstown, NSW 2200, AUSTRALIA.

Europe : Boite Postale 131, 92164 Antony Cedex, FRANCE.

To present background information on Vietnamese liberation struggle, "THE VIETNAMESE RESISTANCE" is published monthly by the overseas Directorate of Information, and sent to a selected readership. Also available are publications in Danish, French, German, Japanese, etc..., and "KHANG CHIEN", the most widely read monthly tabloid among the Vietnamese overseas.

To promote our just cause, your financial contributions are welcome. For subscription or contributions, please contact our Public Relations Office :

NUFRONLIV 5119 - A Leeburg Pike, Suite 111, Falls Church, VA 22041 (Attn : Mr. DO NIEM, Tel (301) 474-2115).