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The Origins of the Insurgency in South Vietnam

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No aspect of the Vietnam War (or, to be more precise, the Second Indochina Conflict) is more clouded with controversy than the question of how and why it started. One reason for this is that the answer to this deceptively straightforward question is largely dependent on the perspective from which it is posed. The indigenous parties to the conflict will naturally base their answers on different assumptions and experiences than the external parties, and the contending Vietnamese sides will themselves come at the question from fundamentally different vantage points. Some of the essential documentary records needed to clarify key issues are still inaccessible. More than half a century after the events, it is still difficult to find a satisfactory answer to this simple but fundamental question about one of the twentieth century's most complex conflicts.

This chapter examines the three main interpretations of how and why the Vietnam War began, and discusses their respective strengths and weaknesses. It also analyzes the evolution of the policies of the Vietnamese Communist Party in the years after the Geneva Conference of 1954. The picture that emerges does not suggest that the insurgency that inaugurated the Vietnam War was bound to happen, or that responsibility for the conflict can be pinned on any single state or group of actors. Instead, the interplay among multiple actors and agendas eventually led particular groups of Southerners to take up arms against the Ngô Đình Diệm government during 1959–60. Historians may not yet have definitive answers to questions about the roles played by particular leaders and groups in bringing about the initial uprising against Diệm. But the available evidence suggests that the onset of war was rather more contingent and less foreordained than many previous accounts have suggested. They also show that the senior leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party, far from directing or guiding the insurgency in its initial phases, consistently failed to steer events in the South in the party's desired direction.

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Terms of Debate: Three Interpretations

In the voluminous scholarship on the origins of the Vietnam War, the debate over how the insurgency began in South Vietnam revolves around three main interpretations. The first of these is aptly summed up in the title of a 1965 US State Department white paper: "Aggression from the North: The Record of North Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Vietnam." The authors of this paper declared that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN) was stepping up its years-long effort "to conquer a sovereign people in a neighboring state." This campaign, the authors argued, involved both subversive activities inside South Vietnam and the infiltration of North Vietnamese military forces into the South from the North. Although the State Department clearly considered Hanoi to be the primary perpetrator of this aggressive strategy, they also depicted the DRVN assault on South Vietnam (known officially as the Republic of Vietnam, or RVN) to be merely one front in the global struggle against an international communist movement led by the Soviet Union and China.[1]

At first glance, the "aggression from the North" interpretation of the origins of the Vietnam War appears plausible. In 1965, the year that the white paper was published, approximately 50,000 People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) troops traveled down the Hồ Chí Minh Trail from North to South Vietnam. Those troops were participants in a large-scale escalation of the PAVN military effort in the South launched the previous year. As it happened, the PAVN offensive of 1964–5 did not produce the quick military triumph that Hanoi hoped to achieve. Nevertheless, DRVN leaders continued to seek victory over South Vietnam by force of arms. In the Tet Offensive of 1968 and again in the Spring Offensive of 1972, PAVN units and their Southern supporters launched widespread attacks aimed at bringing down the RVN state. The notion that these escalatory moves were proof of Hanoi's "aggression" is seemingly reinforced by the circumstances surrounding the PAVN's final offensive of the war in the spring of 1975, and especially by the famous image of the North Vietnamese tank that crashed through the gates of Saigon's Independence Palace on April 30, 1975. If the war eventually ended as a straightforward military conquest of South Vietnam by North Vietnam, it might seem reasonable to suppose that it began in the same way.

This supposition is too clever by half, however. North Vietnam's escalatory moves did not take place in a strategic vacuum; the US military was also

1 US State Department, "Aggression from the North: The Record of North Vietnam's Campaign to Conquer South Vietnam" (Publication #7839, Far Eastern Series 130, 1965).

escalating its involvement in the conflict as early as 1961 and it continued to do so throughout the decade of the 1960s. Moreover, even if it is true that DRVN leaders were seeking to win the war via outright military conquest *after* 1964, it does not necessarily follow that Hanoi was perpetrating "aggression from the North" *prior* to that date. In fact, the available historical evidence suggests that DRVN strategy toward South Vietnam during the late 1950s and early 1960s was far less aggressive than it later became. By endorsing the Geneva Accords of 1954, Hanoi formally committed itself to seeking Vietnamese reunification through peaceful means – a policy very much in keeping with the "peaceful coexistence" promulgated by Soviet and PRC leaders during the mid-1950s. As the evidence presented in this chapter will show, not all DRVN leaders agreed with this approach. Nevertheless, recent scholarly analyses of DRVN and Communist Party archives demonstrate that Hanoi's willingness to seek victory in the South via military means remained highly qualified for years after Geneva. One scholar concludes that DRVN leaders eventually adopted a de facto "declaration of war" against South Vietnam and the United States – but that this fateful step was not taken until late 1963.[2]

In lieu of the lack of convincing evidence for the "aggression from the North" thesis, some scholars have argued that the origins of the insurgency must be found in the South. More specifically, many commentators have pointed to the violent and repressive actions undertaken by the Diệm government in rural areas of South Vietnam, beginning with its Denounce Communists Campaign in 1955. According to this view, Diệm's crackdown on the communists provoked widespread fear and resentment among ordinary Vietnamese, even as his security forces were rounding up large numbers of the "stay behind" cadres who had remained in the South after Geneva. The rising rural backlash against the Saigon government worried noncommunist Southern nationalists, who feared that Diệm might be inadvertently paving the way for an eventual communist takeover. In the view of some scholars, these noncommunist nationalists had concluded by 1960 that "if nothing were done to put an end to the absolute power of Diệm, then Communism would end up by gaining power with the aid, or at least with the consent, of the population."[3] From this perspective, the insurgency that erupted in South Vietnam during 1959–60 was not a communist-directed movement, but a rebellion led by an ad hoc coalition of Southern nationalists who came together under the

2 Pierre Asselin, *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War* (Berkeley, 2013), 168.
3 Phillipe Devilliers, "The Struggle for the Unification of Vietnam," *The China Quarterly* 9 (January–March 1962), 15–16.

banner of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam (NLF), the anti-Diệmist coalition of insurgent forces proclaimed in December 1960.

This second interpretation of the insurgency – what we might call the "Southern Rebellion" thesis – also has a certain plausibility. It fits well with the NLF's founding manifesto, which portrayed the front as comprised of "representatives of all social classes, of all nationalities, of various political parties, [and] of all religions."[4] The idea that the insurgency began as an impromptu "Southern Rebellion" is also reinforced by postwar accounts written by some of the noncommunists who were active in the NLF during the war. The most influential of these accounts was *A Vietcong Memoir*, published in 1985 by Trương Như Tảng, the former minister of justice for the NLF. Tảng depicted both the NLF and the insurgency of 1959–60 as having been led initially by a small group of Saigon-based critics of Diệm.[5] Tảng's claims about the front's nonpartisan origins were subsequently undermined by the publication of Communist Party documents showing that the NLF was in fact secretly controlled by senior communist leaders from the moment of its founding. Nevertheless, some authors continue to argue for a modified version of the "Southern Rebellion" thesis. For example, the historian David Hunt argues that the insurgency was launched and led by rural peasant activists who embraced a form of "revolutionary modernism" that was distinct from Vietnamese communism.[6]

Its persistence in the scholarship notwithstanding, the "Southern Rebellion" thesis sidesteps important questions about how the insurgency was organized and sustained. It is evident that the Diệm government's draconian policies provoked widespread anger and fear in the South Vietnamese countryside during the late 1950s. This was especially true of Diệm's infamous 10/59 law, which established mobile military tribunals with the power to investigate and summarily execute anyone accused of being a Communist Party member or supporter. "Thanks to the 10/59 decree," remembered one farmer in Đình Tương province, "new life was blown into the political movement, and a patriotic appeal was made to overthrow the government of Mr. Diệm."[7] Nevertheless, the mere fact that rural residents were resentful and

4 "Program of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam," printed in Edward Miller, *The Vietnam War: A Documentary Reader* (Malden, MA, 2016), 72.

5 Truong Nhu Tang, *A Vietcong Memoir: An Inside Account of the Vietnam War and its Aftermath* (New York, 1986).

6 David Hunt, *Vietnam's Southern Revolution: From Peasant Insurrection to Total War* (Amherst, MA, 2008), chapters 1–3.

7 Quoted in David W. P. Elliott, *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930–1975* (Armonk, NY, 2007), 103.

fearful of local officials is insufficient to explain why they joined the fight against the government. Terrorized communities sometimes erupt in rebellion, but no insurgency can long endure without a means of mobilizing and maintaining at least a measure of popular support. How was the fear sowed by Diệmist repression transposed into an actual insurgency, and who were the primary transposers?

For some authors, the most plausible answer to these questions lies in what can be described as the "green light" thesis. In some respects, this third interpretation seeks to split the difference between the first two by introducing another group of actors: the local Communist Party cadres who operated secretly at the provincial, district, and village levels in South Vietnam. As the Diệm government ramped up its oppression during the late 1950s, these southern cadres appealed to their Communist Party superiors to permit them to resume revolutionary warfare against the Saigon regime. Although initially reluctant, senior party leaders eventually granted their Southern comrades' request. In these accounts, the "green light" from Hanoi became official in early 1959, when the Politburo approved a measure known as Resolution 15, which authorized small-scale insurrectionary activities in the South. The cadres then responded with a wave of uprisings that exploded across the Mekong Delta and other parts of South Vietnam during the fall and winter of 1959–60.

The "green light" thesis is the interpretation preferred by most Vietnamese Communist Party historians. Early versions of this thesis can be glimpsed in some of the party-endorsed narratives published during the war. For example, in her 1966 memoir *No Other Road to Take*, the Communist Party activist Nguyễn Thị Định recalled her joy when the news about Resolution 15 arrived in her home province of Bến Tre in late 1959. In Định's telling, she and her comrades proceeded to carry out the first in a series of "concerted uprisings" that spread across the Mekong Delta during 1960.[8] The same sequence of events – in which the Southern cadres first received authorization from Hanoi and then acted on it – appears repeatedly in party-sponsored histories published after the end of the war in 1975. A study published in 2010 by a Vietnamese military historian concluded that "the impact of Resolution 15 was direct, rapid, and clear, and opened a new direction for armed struggle in the South." These and other accounts cite the discussion of the text of the resolution at a November 1959 meeting of the Nam Bo Party Committee (the senior Communist Party organization in Southern Vietnam) as the key moment

8 Nguyễn Thị Định, *No Other Road to Take: Memoir of Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Định*, Mai Elliott (trans.) (Ithaca, 1976), 88–91.

when many Southern cadres learned that the long-awaited "green light" had finally been given.[9]

The "green light" thesis improves in certain respects on both the "aggression from the North" and the "Southern Rebellion" interpretations. It does not seek to explain the emergence of the insurgency either as a Hanoi-directed plot or as an improvised response to Diệmist repression. Instead, it emphasizes the interplay among the actions and policies of both the North and South Vietnamese governments, as well as the critical roles played by Southern communist cadres in organizing the insurgency and mobilizing popular support for it. At the same time, however, the "green light" interpretation still aims to affirm the authority and wisdom of senior Communist Party leaders, as reflected in its insistence that the insurgency did not begin until after Hanoi had authorized it.

As the following discussion will demonstrate, the actual sequence of events was not as cut-and-dried as the "green light" interpretation suggests. In the years following the Geneva Conference of 1954, questions about violence and rebellion were fiercely debated in both North and South Vietnam. When war finally came, it did not begin in a single place or moment, but instead unfolded in fits and starts across different regions and provinces of the South. In this regard, the beginning of the Vietnam War during 1959–60 was shrouded in ambiguity and obscurity – a striking contrast from the way that the war would eventually end at the gates of Saigon's Independence Palace in 1975. To uncover these shadowy origins of the conflict, we must therefore begin by examining the evolution of DRVN strategy for South Vietnam in the aftermath of Geneva.

Hanoi's Strategy for the South after Geneva

In the immediate aftermath of the Geneva Conference, Hanoi's policy for South Vietnam seemed clear: strict adherence to the terms of the compromise peace that the DRVN had negotiated with France. During the talks at Geneva, the DRVN agreed to withdraw from all territory it controlled south of the 17th parallel, including its strongholds in South-central Vietnam and in the southern and western provinces of the Mekong Delta. In addition, all DRVN military forces in South Vietnam were required either to disband or

9 Colonel Nguyễn Mạnh Hà, "Nghị quyết 15 của Đảng soi sáng con đường cách mạng Việt Nam" [Resolution 15 Illuminated Vietnam's Path to Revolution], *Nhân Dân*, January 16, 2010: https://nhandan.vn/nghi-quyet-15-cua-dang-soi-sang-con-duong-cach-mang-viet-nam-post415049.html.

to regroup to North Vietnam. For many DRVN partisans, these were painful concessions. However, senior leaders of the Communist Party – known officially since 1951 as the Vietnamese Workers' Party (VWP) – sought to reassure their followers that the division of the country would be only temporary, and that other provisions of the Geneva Accords offered a path to the reunification of the country under VWP leadership. The leadership focuses especially on the conference's Final Declaration, which specified that nationwide general elections would be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission. In keeping with this strategy, several tens of thousands of cadres and soldiers regrouped to the North, while many more remained behind in the South. The "stay behind" operatives were ordered to eschew armed struggle against the Saigon government in favor of nonviolent political activism and preparations for the elections that party leaders hoped and expected to win.

The decision to cede control of all Southern territory to Diệm's government – even on a temporary basis – did not sit well with some DRVN supporters. The dismay was especially acute among those who had been fighting in the South. General Trần Văn Trà, the deputy commander of all DRVN forces in the South, was deeply upset when he was ordered to regroup to the North. "I was angry and distracted for a week," he later wrote. "But at the time there was a concern that it would be a violation of the Geneva agreement."[10] Trà also recalled his fighters asking, "Why did we stop attacking? Did we really win? We still had the strength to surge forward and achieve complete liberation. … Why didn't we seize this favorable opportunity instead of stopping half-way?"[11] Similar questions were also being asked in the North. Nguyễn Thị Thập, a Southerner from the Mekong Delta who had risen to a senior leadership post in the party-sponsored Women's Association, was in the North when the news of the ceasefire broke. "The northern cadres sat in silent reflection," she remembered. "Everyone was sad. The southern brothers shed tears, and some cried, 'We struggled for unification but now have this division … it's not clear that it can be overcome in five or ten years.'"[12]

Hanoi's adoption of a policy of peaceful struggle in the South was driven in no small part by its agenda in the North. After Geneva, senior DRVN

10 Trần Văn Trà, "Những chặng đường lịch sử B2 Thành Đồng" [Historical Stages in the B2 Theater], vol. I, *Hòa bình hay chiến tranh* [War or Peace] (Hanoi, 1992), 172–3.

11 Ibid., 33.

12 Nguyễn Thi Thập, *Từ đất Tiền Giang* [From the Land of the Upper Delta] (Ho Chi Minh City, 1986), 447.

leaders declared their intent to focus on "building socialism in the North." They reasoned that the revolution's chances for success in the South would be enhanced if they could consolidate the party's gains and base of support north of the 17th parallel. In mid-1954, the DRVN was expanding a sweeping and harsh land reform campaign that it had launched across several Northern and North-central Vietnamese provinces a year earlier. Although VWP leaders were careful to emphasize that they still intended to contest and win the promised 1956 elections, the party's heavy emphasis on state-building and advancing socialism in the North caused many of its supporters to wonder if the objectives of the revolution in the South had been deprioritized.

Although DRVN leaders repeatedly stated their expectation that the 1956 elections would be held as scheduled, both they and their supporters realized that the balloting could not be taken for granted – especially since the South Vietnamese and US governments had both refused to endorse the accords. This recognition prompted the revolutionaries to take secret steps to prepare for an eventual return to armed resistance, should the circumstances demand it. The VWP organization in the South was split in two, with an overt branch dedicated to open political agitation and a clandestine branch comprised of an underground nucleus of leaders and operatives. Meanwhile, even though all DRVN military units in the South had been officially disbanded or regrouped to the North, party leaders ordered small caches of weapons to be secretly buried to ensure their availability for possible future use. In addition, small bands of veteran fighters took refuge in remote swamps and jungle hideouts with orders to await further instructions.

The uncertainty over the fate of the revolution below the 17th parallel, combined with the DRVN's emphasis on "building socialism in the North," provoked considerable anxiety among the party faithful who remained in the South. Nguyễn Thị Thập, the leader of the Women's Association, returned to the South shortly after the Geneva Conference as a member of a senior VWP delegation. The group's public mission was to explain to skeptical Southerners that the peace settlement represented a great victory for the revolutionary forces. But Thập also received secret instructions that seemed to contradict this message. Before leaving the North, her southbound group received the order "Don't let the French take your picture!" The reason was that the party was "afraid that if the photos were printed in the newspapers, we would be compromised, and afterwards [if we] remained in the south, the secrecy and security of the comrades could not be guaranteed."[13]

13 Thập, *Từ Đất Tiền Giang*, 448.

During her travels around the Mekong Delta, Thập heard from many DRVN supporters who were worried about the decision to regroup tens of thousands of revolutionary fighters to the North. "After the indoctrination and the discussion, the morale of the cadres, especially the mothers, was very troubled," Thập later recalled. "The cease fire has already taken place, and now we are moving the troops," some cadres complained to her. "If [our troops] all go, the brothers who remain behind will not have weapons. … If, after two years, [the South Vietnamese government] treacherously refuses to carry out the Agreements to hold the general election, and engage in terror and repression, where will the weapons to resist come from?" Thập admitted that she was at a loss to respond to these questions. She pleaded with her superiors to be allowed to stay in her native region but, like Trần Văn Trà, she eventually followed orders to regroup to the north.[14]

It did not take long for the Southern cadres' worst fears to be realized. By mid-1955, Diệm had signaled that he did not intend to participate in the Geneva-mandated elections – or even to enter into consultations with North Vietnamese leaders. At the same time, Diệm was enjoying unexpected success in consolidating his government's authority in the South. After inflicting a series of military defeats on his noncommunist rivals, he announced the creation of a new state known as the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in October 1955. He also launched the Denounce Communists Campaign and ordered his security forces to begin hunting down suspected communists and their sympathizers. Even before the Geneva deadline of July 1956 arrived, it was evident that the VWP's hopes for gaining power in the South via elections had vanished.

The passing of the election deadline in 1956 raised doubts and discontent in the minds of many party supporters – both the "stay behind" cadres in the South and others – about the wisdom of the decisions made by DRVN leaders at Geneva. This dissatisfaction was explicitly acknowledged in a lengthy article in the party's mouthpiece newspaper *Nhân Dân* in mid-July 1956. However, the tone of the article was far from sympathetic toward the party's internal critics. The article noted that there had also been doubters and pessimists during the War of Resistance against the French. The current criticisms, the author suggested, were equally misguided:

> People who are "simple in their thoughts" were sure in their minds that national elections would be held and they became disappointed and pessimistic when elections did not take place. Others are "reluctant to carry on

14 Ibid., 453–5.

> a long and hard struggle" and search for a quick unification by abandoning peaceful methods. They fail to realize that the best means of achieving quick unification of the country is "to positively build up the North, positively to unite and struggle with perseverance and patience in the South, and not to be afraid of difficulties and hardships."[15]

The message for the VWP's Southern cadres and supporters seemed clear: a return to armed struggle in the South would have to wait. But for the Southern cadres who were facing new "difficulties and hardships" and whose very survival seemed increasingly precarious, the idea of waiting appeared increasingly untenable.

Lê Duẩn and the Path to Revolution in the South

Even before the 1956 election deadline had arrived, some senior VWP leaders were seeking a new strategy for the changing circumstances that the party was facing in South Vietnam. The key figure in this strategic reformulation was Lê Duẩn, who hailed from the province of Quảng Trị (located just below the 17th parallel) and who had served as the head of the party's Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) since the early 1950s. As a veteran revolutionary who had fought for decades against French colonial rule in Indochina, Lê Duẩn sympathized deeply with those of his Southern comrades who wanted to return to a policy of armed struggle. Yet he was also a dedicated Marxist–Leninist who believed strongly in the authority of the party and in the paramount importance of ensuring that Hanoi's policies and directives were carried out. The challenge that Lê Duẩn now faced was figuring out how to reconcile his desire for a more militant line in the South with his loyalty to the party.

Lê Duẩn's struggles to resolve this dilemma were evident in "The Path to Revolution in the South" (*Đề cương cách mạng miền nam*), a secret assessment of party policy and strategy in South Vietnam that he completed in 1956. He had begun this project in the fall of 1955, while living under cover in Saigon and the Mekong Delta province of Bến Tre. Additional parts of the document were written during a stay in party-controlled areas of the Cà Mau peninsula. After completing the report sometime in the summer or early fall of 1956, Lê Duẩn presented it first at a meeting of party leaders from the Mekong Delta

15 Quoted in William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam* (Boulder, 1981), 177–8.

and subsequently at a meeting of the VWP's Committee for the South held in Phnom Penh in December 1956.[16]

The tone and language used in "Path to Revolution" conveyed Lê Duẩn's conviction that the VWP needed to adopt a confrontational stance vis-à-vis the Diệm government and its American allies. "With the cruel repression and exploitation of the US–Diệm regime [Mỹ-Diệm], the people's revolutionary movement definitely will rise up," he wrote. "The people of the South have known the blood and fire of nine years of resistance war, but the cruelty of US-Diệm cannot extinguish the struggle spirit of the people."[17] Since the end of the Vietnam War, VWP historians have highlighted the aggressive elements of Lê Duẩn's prose. According to these party-sanctioned narratives, Lê Duẩn's main goal in writing the document was to signal his conviction that Diệm could only be removed from power by force of arms. One 1981 account claimed that the document "clearly laid out the mission, targets, and direction of the revolution in the South, and [showed] that the path to liberate the South was the path of violence."[18]

This reading of "The Path to Revolution in the South" as a full-throated call for insurgency and violence is reinforced by the retrospective accounts of some of Lê Duẩn's fellow Southern revolutionaries. These party activists evidently preferred to treat the document as providing party authorization for waging armed struggle – a position that was at odds with VWP Central Committee directives, which explicitly restricted the use of violence to cases of self-defense. Trần Kiên, a party leader in central Vietnam, later recalled reading "Path to Revolution" in 1957, when he and his comrades "were thrashing around and had not yet found an appropriate form of struggle." They quickly adopted Lê Duẩn's document as a kind of "handbook to continue the revolution in the South during that tense and violent period." In 1958, the party's regional committee for central Vietnam would cite "Path to Revolution" as they devised plans "to shift the revolutionary movement in Region V [central Vietnam] to a new stage."[19]

But to read "The Path to Revolution in the South" as an unambiguous call for a return to arms is to overlook most of its contents. Lê Duẩn drafted

16 "Đồng chí Lê Duẩn và việc ra đời Đề cương cách mạng miền Nam năm 1956" [Comrade Le Duan and the origins of the Path to Revolution in the South in 1956], Vietnam National Museum of History, March 9, 2015: https://baotanglichsu.vn/vi/Articles/3096/17790/djong-chi-le-duan-va-viec-ra-djoi-dje-cuong-cach-mang-mien-nam-nam-1956.html.

17 Lê Duẩn, "The Path to Revolution in the South," in Miller, *Vietnam War: A Documentary Reader*, 67.

18 Cao Văn Lương et al., *Tìm Hiểu Phong Trào Đồng Khởi ở Miền Nam Việt Nam* [Understanding the Concerted Uprising Movement in South Vietnam] (Hanoi, 1981), 13.

19 "Đồng chí Lê Duẩn và việc ra đời Đề cương cách mạng miền Nam."

the document in the months following the landmark 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, held in Moscow during February 1956. At that event, Soviet leaders affirmed their commitment to peaceful coexistence with capitalist countries. Lê Duẩn explicitly acknowledged the 20th Congress in his report, noting its conclusions that all world conflicts "can be resolved by means of peaceful negotiations" and that "the revolutionary movement in many countries can develop peacefully." From this, Lê Duẩn deduced that "the revolutionary movement in the South can also develop following a peaceful line." Much of the rest of the document was devoted to explaining what "following a peaceful line" actually meant. Lê Duẩn declared that the "ardent aspiration of the Southern people is to maintain peace and achieve national unification" and that the "revolutionary movement in the South can mobilize and advance to success on the basis of grasping the flag of peace." He concluded that "the people's movement, generally speaking, now has a temporarily peaceful character," and that its commitment to peace would enable it to "rebuild in order to then advance."[20]

Instead of marking a decisive return to a policy of armed struggle, "The Path to Revolution in the South" was an ambiguous and ambivalent document. Historian William Turley describes it as "a temporizing decision that papered over intractable differences concerning the priority and means of reunification."[21] Lê Duẩn's emphasis on the oppressive and brutally violent qualities of the Diệm government seemed to imply that the party would need to resume armed struggle at some future date. But he also made a point of demonstrating conformity with the Soviet call for peaceful coexistence. Thus, even as some Southern cadres might choose to see the document as granting them leeway to push back against oppression, senior DRVN leaders cast it in a different light. When the report was discussed at a VWP Central Committee meeting in Hanoi in late 1956, the body duly approved it while declaring that "we must not allow the winning over of the South to detract from the requirements of consolidating the North."[22]

Resolution 15 and the Launch of the Insurgency

If Lê Duẩn's "The Path to Revolution in the South" did not include the authorization for violent struggle that VWP cadres hoped to receive, when did

20 Lê Duẩn, "Path to Revolution," 65–7.
21 William S. Turley, *The Second Indochina War: A Concise Political and Military History*, 2nd edn. (Lanham, MD, 2009), 37.
22 Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power*, 179.

Hanoi finally consent to lend its support to a strategy of armed insurgency in South Vietnam? Many authors, both in Vietnam and elsewhere, have pointed to the year 1959 as the moment at which the proverbial "green light" was finally given. According to this view, the launch of the insurgency during the last months of 1959 and the first half of 1960 reflected a decisive shift in the thinking of DRVN leaders in favor of armed struggle. However, a careful assessment of the available evidence suggests that Hanoi's decisions to back the insurgency were made grudgingly, and often only as half measures. The reluctance of senior leaders to endorse a change of course in the South created an opening for southern cadres to take matters into their own hands, and to present the emerging rebellion as a fait accompli. At the same time, the course of events in the South during 1959 was also shaped by a dramatic intensification of the repressive policies of the Diệm government.

Diệm's efforts to crush the insurgency before it began included the aforementioned 10/59 law, promulgated in May 1959, which provided the machinery for summary trials and executions of suspected communists. Yet the 10/59 decree was only one component of Saigon's new crackdown. Another was a program to construct "agrovilles" in various locations across the Mekong Delta. This population regroupment scheme involved large-scale forced labor under appalling conditions. It quickly ignited widespread resentment among the peasants who were dragooned into this task.[23] The agrovilles exacerbated the dissatisfaction with Diệm's earlier land reform program, which had mostly failed to transform the delta's large population of tenant farmers into landowners. Resentment was also generated by efforts to coerce young men in rural areas to join the state-sponsored Republican Youth Movement. In addition to being forced to participate in government initiatives without pay, Republican Youth members were easy targets for communist operatives, who pressured them to quit or even to join the ranks of revolutionary fighters.[24]

The rising tide of Diệmist repression formed the backdrop against which DRVN policy for the South began to shift. It is not clear if there was a pivotal moment at which the policy decisively changed. The evidence points toward an incremental process, which was less a proactive and considered decision, or series of decisions, and more a progressive ratification of increasingly militant activities in the South based on a realization that the central party leadership in Hanoi could no longer contain the momentum toward armed struggle among the Southern revolutionaries.

23 Elliott, *The Vietnamese War*, 105–7.
24 Elliott, *The Vietnamese War*, 205–8.

"Resolution 15" refers to the decisions taken at the 15th Plenum, or full central committee meeting, of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1959. Given the prolonged debate and multiple revisions of the resolution, it is unclear whether there is a comprehensive document that encompasses everything that was decided during the span of time that the 15th Plenum met. The gathering was evidently a prolonged affair, with sessions in both January and July; some sources indicate that the January decisions were not transmitted to the South until May.[25] It is clear that the debate over revolutionary strategy in the South was intense, and the Southern point of view favoring more militant action was reinforced by the presence of Southern party leaders who had come to Hanoi to attend the "expanded session" (e.g., with more than the normal complement of members) of the Central Committee meeting that launched the discussion. One VWP military historian reports that much of the actual work on the text of the resolution was performed by a "small group" appointed by the Politburo for that purpose.[26]

In some accounts of the tortuous progress of Resolution 15, Lê Duẩn was initially successful in persuading his colleagues to adopt the view that "Since the Diem regime refused to carry out nationwide elections for unification, the replacement revolutionary government would have to be imposed by force."[27] By March 1959, the General Military Committee of the Party was discussing how to implement the January decisions. Lê Duẩn reportedly told them, "We won't use war to unify the country, but if the US and puppets use war then we have to use war, and the war that the enemy has initiated will be an opportunity for us to unify the country."[28] In May 1959, when a version of Resolution 15 was announced (there were at least twenty-two different drafts of the document), it was also decided to establish a unit designated Đoàn 559 (Group 559, named after the May 1959 date at which it was authorized), to prepare a logistics route to the South that would become known as the Hồ Chí Minh Trail.[29]

Although the precise contents of the myriad drafts of Resolution 15 remain obscure, one feature of it is clear: the changes it prescribed in the proposed balance between political struggle and armed struggle in the

25 Ibid., 228.
26 Hà, "Nghị quyết 15 của Đảng."
27 Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012), 45.
28 *Trận đánh ba mươi năm* [The Thirty-Year War], vol. III (Hanoi, 1988), 96, cited in Elliott, *The Vietnamese War*, 228.
29 Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*, 45.

Southern Revolution were intended to be incremental and limited, rather than sweeping and transformative. But for growing numbers of VWP cadres in South Vietnam, the time for incremental adjustments to party policies and strategies was long passed. As the debate dragged on in Hanoi, preparations for rebellion were being made in the South. In this regard, Resolution 15 may have been obsolete from the moment it was first drafted.

From Isolated Attacks to "Concerted Uprisings"

Most VWP histories of the Southern insurgency have identified two specific regions of South Vietnam that were the first to rise in revolt. In central Vietnam, the earliest military attacks on RVN targets took place in the mountainous provinces of what was designated as "Interzone V" on VWP maps. Meanwhile, several other early uprisings took place in scattered locations across the Mekong Delta. "Although the struggle movement in this period was still essentially a political struggle," the authors of a 1981 study wrote, "there were places where the masses had emphasized building up armed forces and reinforcing bases, and in some places there were armed actions to eliminate the repressive local authorities and spies."[30] The "masses" (*quần chúng*) is a VWP term used to indicate nonparty people or ordinary civilians. This party account was thus suggesting that VWP cadres and leaders were not responsible for instigating these actions. However, other evidence – including accounts published since the 1980s – shows that this is highly unlikely. Attributing aggressive actions to "the masses" is better understood as a way for party historians to avoid the uncomfortable fact that local VWP actors undertook rogue actions in violation of party policy at the time.

"Armed struggle" in South Vietnam during 1959–60 covered a diverse range of violent activities. It included what RVN and US officials described as "terrorist attacks" – usually assassinations of government-affiliated individuals – as well as operations against RVN police and militia posts. VWP cadres often described the assassinations as "defensive measures" even though the targets were often people such as schoolteachers who were not participating in government repression. Although these targeted killings did not take place on a large scale until 1960, they were often carried out in gruesome fashion for maximum effect. The primary purpose of assassinating RVN-linked individuals was to create a rough "balance of terror" in which the paralyzing

30 Lương et al., *Tìm Hiểu Phong Trào Đồng Khởi*, 51.

fear generated by government repression could be counterbalanced by fear of reprisals against those who declined to support the revolution.

In central Vietnam, the VWP's Interzone V leadership committee concluded as early as 1957 that the post–Geneva policy of peaceful struggle in the South had failed. However, they drew inspiration from Lê Duẩn's "The Path to Revolution in the South" as they set about devising new methods of struggle. On June 20, 1958, the Quảng Ngãi province committee held a meeting near Trà Bồng that was attended by 80 VWP representatives.[31] The purpose was to implement the provincial leadership's decision to set up a military affairs committee – a step that clearly anticipated organizing and deploying military units. That meeting came a month after Interzone V leaders had advised the provincial committee "to build a base in the western area and strongly step up political struggle combined with armed struggle to advance to an uprising to seize power in the mountain areas."[32] Later in the year, provincial authorities followed through on these instructions by setting up a military base in the southern villages of Trà Bồng; they also organized a detachment of fighters. This small force was armed with 42 weapons that had been buried in 1954 in anticipation of the resumption of armed struggle.[33] Significantly, these activities were sited in areas in which the party had retained a measure of unofficial control, even after the 1954 Geneva ceasefire.[34]

Some Vietnamese historians consider the first "insurrection" of the war to be the one that took place in Trà Bồng on August 28, 1959. "This was not just unorganized spontaneous struggles breaking out, with no leadership, but unfolded in accordance with the common line of the Party," claims one postwar account.[35] The assertion that this attack was in conformity with existing party policy is not supported by the actual historical record, but this account leaves little doubt that the Trà Bồng uprising was in fact the product of meticulous planning by local VWP authorities.

31 Dr. Nguyễn Văn Hiệp, "Liên Khu Ủy V Lãnh Đạo kết hợp đấu tranh chính trị với đấu tranh vũ trang trong nhựng năm 1954–1960" [Inter-Zone V Leads the Coordination of Political Struggle and Armed Struggle in the Years 1954–1960], *Tạp Chi Lịch Sử Đảng* 2 (2010), 53.

32 Vũ Quang Hiển and Lê Quỳnh Nga, "Điểu kiện bùng nổ của cuộc Khới Nghĩa Trà Bồng" [The Explosive Conditions of the Tra Bong Uprising], *Tạp Chì Khoa Học Đại học Quốc Gia Hà Nội* [Scientific Journal of Hanoi National University] 20 (4) (2004), 19.

33 Bùi thị Thu Hà, "Khởi nghĩa Trà Bồng trong phong trào cách mạng miền Nam những năm 1954–1959" [The Tra Bong Uprising in the Revolutionary Movement of the South in the Years 1954–1959], in *Tạp chí Lụch sử Đảng* [Party History] 8 (2004), 51–4.

34 Institute of Marxism Leninism and Institute of History of the Party, *Bước mở đầu thời kỳ lịch su vẻ vang* [The First Step in a Glorious Historical Period] (Hanoi, 1987), 189.

35 Ibid.

The timing of both the preparations for the Trà Bồng Rebellion and the actual attack raises questions about responsibility for this first instance of "armed struggle" in South Vietnam. One party source reports that the text of Resolution 15 had reached Quảng Ngãi by June 1959, before the uprising took place.[36] But given the fact that Quảng Ngãi party leaders had begun mustering military forces in the province the previous year – that is, even before the Politburo had adopted Resolution 15 – it hardly seems like they were waiting for a "green light" from the party center in Hanoi.[37]

In the Mekong Delta, the first large-scale armed encounter between a large revolutionary military unit and the Saigon forces took place in Kiến Phong province in September 1959. In the battle of Gò Quản Cung, the rebels claimed to have killed 100 soldiers of the South Vietnamese army and captured another 100. Remarkably, however, this success was excluded from VWP official accounts for many years after the end of the war, evidently because it was a violation of party policy at the time. The first published account appeared only in 1991 in the memoir of Lê Quốc Sản, a Southerner who had regrouped to the North in 1954 but then returned to command the party's military forces in the central Mekong Delta for most of the duration of the war. Sản based his narrative on an after-the-fact study of the battle he was asked to conduct in 1961, shortly after his return to the South.

Even allowing for the customary inflated claims of revolutionary propaganda and historiography, the battle of Gò Quản Cung was clearly a large-scale clash that differed from the scattered small-unit incursions in remote villages conducted in earlier years. Although the figures may be inflated, there was no doubt that the level of military conflict was escalating. The later claim that by 1959 there were 130 concentrated armed platoons operating in the base areas and "hundreds" of "secret action cells" (*tổ đội hành động*) operating across the delta may also be a retroactive inflation of the reality, but communist military capabilities were obviously growing.[38]

Despite the apparent success of the Trà Bồng and Gò Quản Cung operations in the late summer of 1959, senior VWP leaders remained wary of the idea of military escalation in the South. During the 1958–60 period, debate within the party focused on the relative balance between political struggle and armed

36 Dr. Nguyễn Văn Hiệp, "Liên Khu Ủy V Lãnh Đạo kết hợp," 55.

37 "Kỷ niệm 54 năm, khởi nghĩa Trà Bồng-Quảng Ngãi (28/8/1959–28/8/2013)" [54th Anniversary of the Trà Bồng-Quảng Ngãi Uprising], Vietnam National Museum of History, August 27, 2013: https://baotanglichsu.vn/vi/Articles/3097/14960/ky-niem-54-nam-khoi-nghia-tra-bong-quang-ngai-28-8-1959-28-8-2013.html.

38 Elliott, *The Vietnamese War*, 233–6.

struggle. Even though armed struggle was taking place, it officially remained an adjunct element to political struggle rather than a coequal component of strategy. Trần Văn Trà, the former deputy commander in the South, discovered this in mid-1959, when he asked Lê Duẩn (who by that point had been recalled to Hanoi and was serving on the VWP Politburo) for permission to lead a group of 100 regrouped Southern fighters back to the South. After mulling the proposal, Lê Duẩn told Trà that he could go, but that he could only take twenty-five men with him, because a larger group might provoke criticism from other Politburo members.[39]

In January 1960, in what amounted to a bid to call the question, the VWP Party Committee of the South – the senior Communist Party organization in the South, soon to be renamed the Central Office for South Vietnam – sent a secret report to the Central Committee in Hanoi. The report bluntly asserted that "political struggle combined with armed propaganda is no longer sufficient to protect the revolutionary bases" in the South. The authors proposed a new policy: "Political struggle and armed struggle will receive equal weight, and they both hold a critical and decisive role in the movement."[40] Despite this request, armed struggle was not officially placed on a par with political struggle until a year later. As later accounts by party military historians pointed out, that directive coincided with a sharp increase in North-to-South infiltration, with more than 40,000 cadres and soldiers traveling down the Trường Sơn Trail by the end of 1963.[41]

During 1960, before the bulk of the Southern regroupees had begun to travel down the Trail, the primary form of insurgency in the South was what cadres came to call the "concerted uprising" (*chiến dịch đồng khởi*). Although these "uprisings" involved the deployment of military force, they relied primarily on mass popular demonstrations aimed at overthrowing or humiliating local RVN authorities. Insofar as the party used military tactics at all during 1960, most of its operations were best described as exercises in "armed intimidation" rather than direct clashes with RVN military units. Indeed, insurgent forces during 1960 were sometimes armed with little more than wooden rifles and machetes. Nevertheless, these forces succeeded in eroding

39 Elliott, *The Vietnamese War*, 234–5.

40 Trần Kim Hà, "Chuyển hướng cách mạng miền Nam, đấu tranh chính trị kết hợp đấu tranh quân sự" [Shifting the Southern Revolution, Toward Political Struggle Combined with Armed Struggle], in *Quân Đội Nhân Dân*, March 12, 2015: www.qdnd.vn/quoc-phong-an-ninh/xay-dung-quan-doi/chuyen-huong-cach-mang-mien-nam-dau-tranh-chinh-tri-ket-hop-dau-tranh-quan-su-257688.

41 Ibid.

Saigon's control in many rural districts as the serial "waves" of concerted uprisings washed across the region. This helped clear the way for operations by larger insurgent military units, which started to pose a more serious threat to RVN forces in terms of numbers and firepower during 1961.

The impact of the "concerted uprisings" was reinforced by another episode that took place in early 1960. On the night of January 25, insurgent forces attacked and overran the "Tua Hai" (Watch Tower Number Two) military base a few miles outside the provincial capital of Tây Ninh. The base, located in the settlement of Trang Sụp, was occupied by the ARVN's 32nd Division, and its defenses featured bunkers and a 1,000 yards-long perimeter wall. But according to American sources, the attacking force of around 200 insurgents were able to penetrate the facility, inflict more than 60 casualties on the defenders, destroy two barracks, and make off with hundreds of captured weapons. The Trang Sup/Tua Hai incident stunned South Vietnamese and American officials, some of whom had dismissed previous insurgent attacks as the desperate actions of rebels on the brink of defeat. General Samuel Williams, the commanding general of the US military advisory group, described the battle as a "severe blow to the prestige of the Vietnamese army and [an] indication of the VC [Việt Cộng] ability to stage large-size, well planned attacks."[42] Meanwhile, VWP leaders celebrated the windfall of captured weapons that would subsequently be used in additional "concerted uprisings" across the delta.[43] More than any other prior episode, the insurgents' triumph at Trang Sup suggested that the revolution's capabilities in South Vietnam with respect to armed struggle had been underestimated – a realization that would reverberate not only in Saigon but also in Hanoi.

The Southern Revolution Triumphant

By mid-1960, the insurgency was spreading rapidly across much of South Vietnam. As RVN leaders scrambled to respond, their DRVN counterparts also raced to catch up to the rapidly changing revolutionary realities in the South. In September 1960, the VWP convened its 3rd Party Congress in Hanoi. In a landmark resolution, the congress indicated that the progress

42 Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years of the US Army in Vietnam 1941–1960* (New York, 1985), 338.

43 Nguyễn Ngọc Liệu, "Chiến thắng Tua Hai: Mở màn cho cao trào đồng khởi" [Victory at Tua Hai: Setting the Stage for the Concerted Uprising," *Báo Quân Khu 7*, August 12, 2015: https://baoquankhu7.vn/chien-thang-tua-hai-mo-man-cho-cao-trao-dong-khoi-1464132455-00179s37810gs.

of the Southern Revolution would proceed on its own track and would no longer be subordinate to the goal of building socialism in the North. "The Vietnamese Revolution has two strategic tasks," the congress declared. "The first is to push forward with the socialist revolution in the North. The second is to liberate the South from the yoke of the American imperialists and their lackeys and achieve unification of our country and complete independence and democracy in the entire country." Lest anyone miss the implications of this, the congress added that "these two strategic missions have a close relationship with each other and are mutually supporting."[44]

In another important decision, the 3rd Congress also called for the creation of "a worker-peasant-soldier alliance" in the South for the purpose of "bringing about a broad unified national front to oppose Mỹ-Diệm." The resolution went on to describe how this front would unite groups and individuals across multiple classes and social groups. "The mission of this front is to unite with all forces that can be united with, to win over all forces that can be won over, to neutralize all forces that can be neutralized, and to attract a large number of the masses into the struggle against Mỹ-Diệm in order to liberate the South and peacefully unify the country."[45]

These decisions, which came several months before the formal unveiling of the National Front for the Liberation of Southern Vietnam (NLF), confirm an important historical fact about the NLF: from the moment of its founding, the front functioned as the disguised face of the real force that controlled it, the Vietnamese Workers' Party (VWP). By promoting the myth of the NLF as an independent force, the VWP created substantial confusion over the origins of the front and the insurgency that it ostensibly led. For many years, proponents of the "Southern Rebellion" thesis insisted that the NLF was an indigenous southern creation that had emerged spontaneously in response to Diệmist repression. Meanwhile, those who favored the "aggression from the North" thesis argued just as ardently that the front was merely a stratagem designed to conceal the culmination of Hanoi's years-long efforts to bring about the overthrow of the Saigon government by force. Although the latter argument turned out to be a more accurate representation of the relationship between the NLF and Hanoi after 1960, its advocates did not grasp the extent

44 Nghị quyết của Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ III của Đảng Lao động Việt Nam về nhiệm vụ và đường lối của Đảng trong giai đoạn mới, ngày 10-9-1960 [Resolution of the Third Congress of the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam on the Mission and Policy Line of the Party in the New Period, September 10, 1960], printed in *Văn Kiện Đảng Toàn Tập* [Party Documents], vol. XXI (Hanoi, 2002), 913–45; quotation on 916.

45 Ibid., 920.

to which senior VWP leaders had resisted a return to armed struggle prior to that date.

Following the official creation and proclamation of the NLF in December 1960, the VWP finally adopted a formal stance of support for the strategy of all-out armed struggle in the South. In January 1961, the party's Committee for the South was formally renamed the Central Office of South Vietnam (Trung Ương Cục Miền Nam or COSVN).[46] COSVN and its Military Affairs Committee were placed in overall command of the South Vietnam Liberation Army (also formally created in early 1961); at the same time, COSVN was under the direct authority of both the VWP Central Committee and the senior command of the DRVN military, the People's Army of Vietnam.[47] The supreme authority of party and military leaders in Hanoi over the Southern insurgency was confirmed six months later, when COSVN's responsibilities were divided along regional lines. For the remainder of the war, COSVN directed all military forces operating in southern Vietnam (the provinces around Saigon and those in the Mekong Delta). Responsibility for waging war in central Vietnam was transferred to an entity known as "Region 5," a restructured version of the old Interzone V organization. Henceforth, the territory administered by Region 5 would be known as the B1 Front while the territory under COSVN's command became known as the B2 Front. Senior leaders in both regions reported to and took orders directly from their superiors in Hanoi.[48]

The elaboration of the new command structure for South Vietnam coincided with another important change. At the same moment it created COSVN in early 1961, the senior leadership of the VWP adopted a new strategic slogan: "Even more strongly push forward the political struggle, at the same time pushing forward the armed struggle to the same level as the political struggle, and attack the enemy on two fronts, political and military."[49] The awkward syntax obscured a conceptual shift of great significance – one that

46 *Trận Đánh Ba Mươi Năm*, vol. III, 156.

47 "Quân Giải Phóng miền Nam Việt Nam — bước phát triển mời về tổ chức lực lượng vũ trang nhân dân trong kháng chiến chống Mỹ, cứu nước" [The Liberation Army of South Vietnam – A New Step Forward in Organizing the People's Armed Forces in the Anti National Salvation Resistance], *Tạp Chí Quốc phòng Toàn Dân online*, February 13, 2011: http://tapchiqptd.vn/zh/tim-hieu-truyen-thong-quan-su/quan-giai-phong-mien-nam-viet-nam--buoc-phat-trien-moi-ve-to-chuc-luc-luong-vu-trang-nhan-/220.html.

48 John Carland, *Stemming the Tide: May 1965 to October 1966 Combat Operations* (Washington, DC, 2000), 5: https://history.army.mil/catalog/pubs/91/91-5.html.

49 *Trận Đánh Ba Mươi Năm*, vol. III, 158–9.

Figure 19.1 Fighters serving in the armed wing of the National Liberation Front (NLF) on patrol in South Vietnam in March 1966.
Source: Keystone / Stringer / Hulton Archive / Getty Images.

had been several years in the making. For the first time since 1954, senior party leaders embraced the notion that political struggle and armed struggle would play coequal roles in the Southern revolution. This would remain the party's official stance for the remainder of the war. In point of fact, the embrace of armed struggle opened the door to a rapid expansion of the VWP's war effort in the South and the sheer size of the Southern insurgency. By the mid-1960s, the military personnel serving in the DRVN war effort in South Vietnam and adjacent areas of Laos and Cambodia numbered in the hundreds of thousands (Figure 19.1).

As the war expanded, the goal of liberating the South quickly took on paramount importance, and the objective of "building socialism in the North" faded into the background. In 1964, at a special political conference presided over by Hồ Chí Minh, the lead resolution exhorted "everyone do the work of two for our kith and kin in the South." Around the same time, party propagandists resurrected a slogan that had originally been coined for the battle of Điện Biên Phủ: "Everything for the front line." This latest version, however, was enhanced with the additional words "Everything to defeat the

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American aggressors."[50] By this point, the debate over the place of South Vietnam in revolutionary strategy had effectively ended. And yet the tensions between the party's dream of socialist transformation and its members' desire for national unity had not been resolved. In the years after 1975, these tensions would re-emerge when the party embarked on a ruthless attempt to impose socialist institutions on the newly conquered South, only to find itself reversing course and embracing the "Southernization of the North" a decade later.[51] In this regard, the emergence of the South Vietnamese insurgency in the years after 1954 suggests the complex ways in which the entire history of the Vietnamese Revolution has been defined by the interplay among socialist ideals, aspirations for national liberation, and regional identities.

50 "Mọi người làm việc bằng hai vì miền Nam ruột thịt," [Every One Do the Work of Two for our Kith and Kin in the South], *Báo Tin Tức*, September 4, 2015: http://baotintuc.vn/ho-so/moi-nguoi-lam-viec-bang-hai-vi-mien-nam-ruot-thit-20150409140443425.htm.

51 Huy Đức, *Bên thắng cuộc [The Winning Side]* (OsinBook, 2012); see also "The South Shall Rise Again," in David W. P. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization* (Oxford, 2012), 40.

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