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COSVN Party Current Affairs Committee Provides Guidance to Shape the Struggle Movement in South Vietnam's Cities

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<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/176176>

Summary:

The COSVN seeks to shape protests led by a Catholic priest against corruption in South Vietnam.

Credits:

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Vietnamese

Contents:

Translation - English

[Translator's note: In late 1974, protests led by a Catholic priest against corruption erupted in Saigon. They quickly spread to the Delta and several other cities. By November, President Nguyen Van Thieu was forced to fire three out of four corps commanders, and also his right hand man, Hoang Duc Nha. Noteworthy in this document is that the Communist movement in Saigon had no control over the protests. While COSVN viewed them warily, they also sought a means to shape the protest to their ends.]

During the last part of 1974 the situation in the cities of South Vietnam underwent many new developments that our side needed to quickly grasp in order to be able to lead the urban revolutionary movement in the right direction. In addition, we also needed to clearly recognize the evil, devious schemes of the Thieu regime, which was using various methods to trick the people by planting reactionaries inside the urban movement, thereby making things difficult and complicated for us. The COSVN Party Current Affairs Committee provided a clear analysis of a number of incorrect trends. These trends were:

"-First, failing to fully comprehend the devious scheme of the Americans and the right-wing reactionaries, and as a result believing that this is a mass movement that has arisen all on its own, or believing that it is a movement created by progressive forces to oppose the Americans and Thieu.

"Second, believing that this wave of protests is being controlled by the CIA and the right-wing reactionaries, and as a result thinking that we do not need to take advantage of it by sending out the masses to participate in the movement and push the movement forward.

"Third, having the illusion that we can sit back and wait, believing that these protest movements might be able to topple Thieu in the future, and failing to realize that only the combined political and armed strength of all three of our zones [the mountain jungles, the rural countryside, and the cities] together can totally overthrow the American puppet regime in South Vietnam.

"-The scheme being used by the Americans and right-wing elements among the Catholics and the Buddhists is to incite these protest movements in order to assuage the people's anger, to quiet the opposition of the masses, and to channel the mass movement in the direction that they desire. However, in light of the intense hatred that the masses have for Thieu at this time, the movement may grow even beyond the aims and intentions of the Americans. For that reason, we must exploit these protest movements so that we can expand the mass struggle."

The COSVN Party Current Affairs Committee reminded Party committees at all levels that they must firmly understand the following operational methods:

"-Provide explanations to the masses so that they clearly see the plots and schemes of the Americans and of Thieu, and direct the masses to participate in the struggle movements incited by Catholic, Buddhist, and third force elements. Actively promote the slogans that those elements put forward, such as demanding the just rights of the people, such as democracy, freedom of movement, freedom of the press, the right to enjoy better living conditions, and demands for national reconciliation. In the rural countryside we need to step up our struggle activities in collaboration with the protests in the cities in order to defeat the U.S.-puppet pacification program. In all situations, in our guidance activities we must have a firm understanding of our offensive concept and of our thinking on the use of violence in order to defeat the enemy's pacification program and his land-grabbing operations. We must eliminate enemy outposts and police stations in order to liberate the people. Only in this way can we coordinate our three fists in all three strategic zones: the mountain jungles, the rural countryside, and the cities."

Source: Document held in the Archives of the Party Central Committee
P 42 (121-27).