



**January 23, 1967**  
**Report by Nguyen Duy Trinh to the 13 Plenum of the  
Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam**

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**Summary:**

North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh discusses American military strategy in Vietnam as well as the US's internal political situation. He then outlines the rationale for the Vietnamese "Talk-Fight" strategy.

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## **Report by Nguyen Duy Trinh to the 13 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party, 23 January 1967**

### REPORT TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

23 January 1967

Intensifying diplomatic activities to seize the political initiative and employ our fighting while talking, talking while fighting strategy

NOTE: Nguyen Duy Trinh presented this report to the Central Committee during its 13 Plenum, held from 23 to 26 January 1967.

#### I. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND OUR POLICY

1. *The American imperialists are facing increasing defeats and are increasingly confused and on the defensive, both militarily and politically.*

The purpose of the American imperialist aggression is to turn the southern half of our nation into a new type of colony and a military base for their forces. They have three goals:

- A. Implement neocolonialist rule in South Vietnam;
- B. Counter the national liberation movement;
- C. Block the spread of socialism throughout Southeast Asia.

After the failure of their "special warfare" strategy in South Vietnam, the American imperialists shifted to a new strategy:

1. They have sent a massive number of American and satellite [allied] troops into South Vietnam to directly participate in combat operations while at the same time striving to consolidate and expand the puppet army and puppet government, shifting from their "special war" to a "limited war";
2. They have expanded their war of destruction, fought primarily by their air forces, into North Vietnam to threaten the North with the goal of redeeming the situation in South Vietnam.
3. In parallel with the above acts of war and aggression, they have also carried out a so-called peace offensive. They have presented claims of "negotiations without conditions," "cessation of the bombing with certain conditions," "troop withdrawals with certain conditions," etc. in order to deceive public opinion and conceal their true nature as aggressors.

*Since they shifted to their new "limited war" policy in South Vietnam, however, the American imperialists have increasingly becoming bogged down and have suffered a continuous series of defeats.* During the 1965-1966 dry season campaign, during the recently ended rainy season, and during the early days of the current dry season, they had suffered painful defeats. The puppet army has continued to disintegrate. The puppet government is in turmoil and is deeply divided. The American air war of destruction against North Vietnam has not achieved the hoped-for results, but instead has cost them a large number of aircraft and pilots.

*They are facing many internal problems* inside the United States. The desire to bring the war to an end quickly has become relatively widespread because the war of aggression in Vietnam has begun to weigh heavily on the political, social, and to some extent the economic life of the American people. It has widened the divisions between the American people and the American ruling class and between American political parties, especially in this period before the 1968 Presidential elections.

*In the international community, the US is more isolated than ever before* . Even the US's closest allies do not support the war of aggression in Vietnam. Many neutral countries and many politicians are increasingly critical of the US's escalation of the bombing of North Vietnam, and their neutralist policies contain an increasing number of points of difference from US policies, differences that are not favorable toward the United States. The US is striving in every way possible to conceal the true "Americanization" of the war with the so-called common position of the United States and its allies on the Vietnam problem. They have launched a series of "peace campaigns," presenting first 14 points, then seven points, then three points, etc. They have sent representatives to lobby for support from many different nations, and even from

[UN General Secretary] U Thant and the Pope. They are also lobbying for the support of a number of Eastern European socialist countries and have sent people to make feelers to us directly. During these "peace offensives," the US has made maximum use of their "bombing" and "cessation of bombing" cards, and their recent attacks against a number of locations in Hanoi were aimed at placing further pressure on us. The American "peace campaigns" and their arguments for negotiations without preconditions have all resulted in bitter failure. The people of the world are resolutely denouncing the American aggressors, demanding that they must end this dirty war, demanding that they end the bombing of North Vietnam and withdraw their troops from South Vietnam, and demanding that they negotiate with the National Liberation Front.

It is clear that the American imperialists are confused and on the defensive, both militarily and politically.

However, their evil desire to seize and occupy the southern half of our nation has so far remained unchanged. They believe that the loss of South Vietnam would mean the loss of other positions in Southeast Asia and would have a negative effect on American "influence" throughout the world. The American imperialists are still extremely stubborn and devious. They are continuing to send additional American and satellite [allied] troops into South Vietnam, and they plan to raise American troop strength in South Vietnam to a total of approximately 500,000 men by the end of 1967. They continue to escalate the bombing of North Vietnam. On another front, they are conducting frenetic diplomatic activities as part of their "peace negotiations" plot aimed at:

1. Deceiving world opinion;
2. Forcing us to quickly accept a political solution favorable to their side;
3. Sowing further divisions within the socialist camp.

However, they have now realized that they have encountered a resolute and tenacious opponent. Now matter how many additional troops they commit and no matter how much more brutal their bombing and destruction becomes, they no longer have any hope of victory. For that reason, they are now forced to choose between three options:

A. Expand their limited ground war of aggression into North Vietnam. If they select this option, it will create the danger of direct confrontation between the two world camps, with unforeseeable consequences.

B. Send in additional troops and equipment to fight a protracted war in South Vietnam. If they select this option, it will lead them into a situation that will erode their personnel and equipment strength, contrary to the aggressor's strategy of "attacking fast and winning quickly."

C. Strive to achieve an important military victory by 1968 and then use their position of strength to achieve a political settlement on terms favorable to them. They would then continue to keep our nation divided and use political and economic tricks to control South Vietnam as a neocolonialist possession.

The general trend of the American leadership is to try to end the war quickly, before the 1968 elections. The “hardliners” (the hawks) want to make powerful attacks to end the war quickly, and some of them even advocate a massive bombing against North Vietnam, including even the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. Except for a few right-wing extremists, generally speaking they do not advocate an expansion of the ground war into North Vietnam because they are afraid of a conflict with China. Those “opposed to expanding the war” (the doves) are against escalation and advocate instead a negotiated solution that will allow them to seize and occupy the southern half of our nation. This faction is still weaker than the “hardliners.” There are also many different opinions within the US government itself, but the influence of the warmongers is still strong, especially in the State Department and among the generals and colonels. Johnson himself is following a middle-of-the-road policy (*middle course*) [in English] in order to win the support of both the “hawks” and the “doves,” but Johnson usually listens to the “hawks” more than he does to the doves. At present, faced with the current stalemated situation, Johnson is very hesitant and undecided. He wants to choose the third option to seek a way out in order to win the support of the majority and retain the presidency during the coming elections.

In summary, the American imperialists are very confused and on the defensive, but they are still stubborn and are extremely devious and tricky. Even though support for America’s third option is growing, we must be on guard against the possibility they may choose a worse option, and we cannot rule out the possibility that they might take a rash and foolhardy action. We must be prepared to deal with each of the options cited above, and first of all to deal with option three.

2. *We have dealt an initial defeat to the American imperialist “limited war” strategy and have won major military and political victories.*

- Beginning during last year’s dry season, in South Vietnam *we have won a continuous string of victories*, defeating tens of thousands of American troops. We have dealt an initial defeat to and are now in the process of totally defeating the “limited war” strategy being employed by the American imperialists. [General William] Westmoreland’s five-point plan has been a terrible failure, which has resulted in great confusion and uncertainty on the part of the American imperialists about their strategy, and they have been unable to resolve the contradiction between their plan to “seek and destroy” our main force units and their “pacification” plan. In North Vietnam, our national defense forces grow stronger every day. The enemy’s air war of destruction is suffering greater and greater losses and is the cause of numerous disagreements within the US ruling class. They are having vicious arguments about the “effectiveness” of the bombing of North Vietnam. In summary, during the past year our military victories have had an important strategic effect.

- Politically, the will of our people to fight and their resolve to win is higher than every before, and internally we are united and solid. After Chairman Ho’s appeal of 17 July 1966, the people of both halves of our nation have fought and produced even more enthusiastically. In South Vietnam, the liberated zone has been consolidated and has expanded and the political struggle movement in the cities has grown, shaking the puppet government to its very foundation. Among the middle classes, support for peace and neutrality is growing.

Internationally, the Vietnam problem has become the central issue for international politics. The people of the world increasingly recognize our people’s just cause, our determination, and the certainty of our victory, and they increasingly strongly support our fight against the Americans to save our nation and support our four-point program and five-point announcement. The prestige of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam has grown tremendously during this recent period.

In summary, even though we are facing a few problems in the new, next step in our struggle against the Americans to save our nation, *our position is the position of victory*, and the enemy’s position is a position of defeat. The enemy’s fundamental weak point, his political posture, is increasingly becoming clearer and is causing the enemy to more isolated than ever before.

3. *From the basis of this posture of victory, the situation is becoming increasingly favorable for us*

*to seize the initiative by employing our strategy of fighting while talking, talking while fighting.*

a. Ever since the 12 Plenum of the Central Committee, by studying and implementing the resolutions passed by the 9, 11, and 12 Plenums of the Central Committee the diplomatic and external relations activities of the Party, the State, and our popular organizations have made positive contributions to our cause of resisting the Americans to save our nation.

First of all, we have won increasingly greater and stronger political support and material assistance from the fraternal socialist nations, which has made an important contribution to the intensification of our people's just struggle in both North and South Vietnam. We have also striven to expand and strength the united front of the world's population opposed to American imperialist aggression in Vietnam. We have raised our banner of independence and peace, have won widespread international public support, and have isolated the American imperialists.

We have put forward our four-point program and five-point announcement, which have clearly shown the people of the world our determination to win and the rational, logical nature of Vietnam's position. We have at the same time exposed the aggressive nature of the American imperialists and the terrible crimes they have committed, and we have defeated their phony "peace campaigns."

We have also striven to find ways to create divisions within the ranks of the imperialists, have attracted support from neutralist forces, and have caused our enemy additional difficulties and confusion.

The resolution passed by the 12 Plenum of the Party Central Committee stated clearly that,

"At some point in the future, we may employ the stratagem of talking while fighting in support of our military struggle with the goal of stimulating the rapid disintegration of the puppet army and puppet government, thereby providing favorable conditions for our people to secure a decisive victory."

During the recent phase, we have not yet had an opportunity to employ our "fighting while talking, talking while fighting" stratagem because we had only defeated the American imperialist "special war," and the enemy still believed that the massive introduction of American troops into combat operations in South Vietnam could still secure victory. The realities of the struggle have shown that, working from a foundation that demonstrates our high resolve and by firmly maintaining our four-point program, each time we have utilized the strategy of holding high the banner of independence and peace, we have won favorable public support, have isolated the enemy, and have shaken and weakened the enemy's position. Our letter dated 24 January 1966, Chairman Ho's appeal of 17 July 1966, and the Foreign Ministry's announcement of 4 January 1966 have received sympathy and strong support from the peace-loving people of the world. In addition, each time we have demonstrated our rational attitude and our good will, public opinion has been inflamed, putting the United States on the defensive and making it respond in clumsily and with great confusion. The delegations we have sent abroad and our reception of foreign delegations, including Americans and Western Europeans, visiting North Vietnam has achieved good results by making our friends and world opinion understand us better and sympathize with us even more.

*Now the situation has become favorable for us to seize the initiative by utilizing our stratagem of fighting while talking, talking while fighting.*

It is now favorable because of four factors:

- *First*, because based on the test of strength, since the enemy shifted to a "limited war" strategy, our posture has been a posture of victory, and the enemy's posture has been a posture of defeat. The balance of forces is increasingly becoming favorable for our side.
- *Second*, the enemy has clearly recognized that he cannot defeat us, he is undecided and

hesitant, and he is tending toward selecting option number three. On our side, on a foundation of continuing to understand and employ our protracted war formula, we need to make a major effort to concentrate the forces of both North and South Vietnam to create an opportunity to win a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time.

- *Third*, the fraternal socialist nations have clearly recognized our resolve. Even though some of them have some differences with us over strategy or stratagems, they all sympathize with and support us in intensifying our three-front struggle, military, political, and diplomatic, and, generally speaking, they approve of our use of the “fighting while talking, talking while fighting” stratagem, although their level of support varies. We have retained the initiative and have maintained our independence in coming up with our own policies, although we have also paid a great deal of attention to the opinions of our fraternal allies and have consulted with them.

- *Fourth*, generally speaking, international opinion, especially that of the neutral nations, has increasingly recognized the determination of our people to fight and have strongly supported our four-point program. On the other hand, however, they also do not want us to totally reject negotiations while we continue to fight. The movement demanding that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam without conditions is expanding and growing stronger. America’s argument for unconditional negotiations is no longer able to deceive anyone.

*b. During the coming phase, we must, in coordination with the military struggle and the political struggle, further intensify our diplomatic struggle by taking the offensive to attack the enemy politically and employing our stratagem of fighting while talking, talking while fighting.*

For almost two years, the American imperialist aggressors have spread war and fighting throughout our entire nation. The struggle in Vietnam is the focal point of a violent struggle between opposing forces throughout the world. The application of the different basic international contradictions represented in Vietnam is becoming increasingly complex. Our people’s struggle against the Americans to save our nation is a protracted, difficult, and complex struggle, but our victory is certain. The tasks immediately before us are to defend North Vietnam, liberate South Vietnam, and move toward unifying the Fatherland. In the concrete circumstances that exist today, on the basis of continuing to understand and implement our formula of a protracted war, we must make the maximum effort to concentrate the force and the power of both North and South Vietnam to create an opportunity to win a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time.

In order to be able to defeat our extremely stubborn and cunning enemies, the American imperialists, we must maintain high resolve and firmly maintain our strategic formula. At the same time, however, we must know how to use tactics to defeat the enemy, employ skillful stratagems, and secure victory one step at a time.

The military struggle will be the directly decisive element. The military struggle must be closely coordinated with the political struggle in order to rapidly cause enemy forces to disintegrate. The diplomatic struggle must support the military struggle and the political struggle, and success in the military struggle and in the political struggle will create favorable conditions for us to expand the diplomatic struggle.

The mission of the diplomatic struggle is to contribute, along with the military struggle and the political struggle, to the achievement of our current two primary concrete goals:

- Forcing the US to end the bombing of North Vietnam;
- Forcing the US to withdraw its troops from South Vietnam.

This is because forcing them to end the bombing of North Vietnam will represent an extremely important victory for our mission of defending North Vietnam, and forcing them to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam will represent an extremely fundamental victory for our mission of

liberating South Vietnam.

On a foundation of firmly maintaining our four-point program, we will develop total supremacy on the political front, seize the initiative in attacking the enemy, support the struggle on the battlefield, contribute to winning victory step by step, and create an opportunity to win a decisive victory. We will employ our stratagem of fighting while talking, talking while fighting. This means that, while in South Vietnam we will continue to fight to try to win a decisive victory, there can be talks between the enemy and ourselves in various forms, ranging from individual contacts to a peace conference. Naturally, victory on the battlefield in South Vietnam is the decisive factor. As long as we have not won such a victory, we cannot win victory at the conference table.

It is for that reason that our effort to employ our “fighting while talking, talking while fighting” stratagem will be *very complicated and difficult*. Because of his aggressive nature, our enemy is very stubborn and devious. He understands, to a certain extent at least, our intentions. Even if he is defeated, he will still seek every possible means to gain the advantage and carry out his scheme of hanging on in South Vietnam.

On our side, to carry out a strategy of securing victory one step at a time while we employ our “fighting while talking, talking while fighting” stratagem, we must first of all fight for the demand that the enemy end the bombing of North Vietnam, and in that way provide practical, real support to our mission of defending North Vietnam. This demand is suited to the requirements of our current combat effort, and it is also a demand being made by the people of the world. The enemy knows that if they do not end the bombing there is no possibility of negotiations. After achieving one step toward this goal, we need to continue to struggle to force them to prolong the cessation of the bombing while at the same time focusing on demanding that they withdraw their troops from South Vietnam. In the struggle to demand that they withdraw their troops from South Vietnam, we should resolutely hold firm to our principles but at the same time skillfully seek to win success one step at a time.

Although the struggle to demand that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam and the struggle to demand that it withdraw its troops from South Vietnam will be conducted step by step and with different levels of focus, the two struggles are closely related to one another. When we demand that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam, we will continue to devote the proper level of attention to the demand that it withdraw its troops from South Vietnam. When we demand that the US withdraw its troops from South Vietnam, we will still continue to demand that they permanently and unconditionally end the bombing of North Vietnam.

In summary, the enemy’s position is to stubbornly try to hang on in South Vietnam, and his plan is to link the cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam with a solution to the problem in South Vietnam. The enemy has presented a plan that we must accept or reject *in toto* to achieve this goal. On the other hand, although as an initial step we demand that they must stop the bombing of North Vietnam, the most important issue for us is still the liberation of South Vietnam. Our strategy is to demand that they end the bombing unconditionally and not link the end of the bombing with a settlement of the problem in South Vietnam.

c. The concrete goals of our application of the “fighting while talking, talking while fighting,” stratagem are:

1. To win additional support from international public opinion by demonstrating our good will and exposing the phony peace proposals made by the American imperialists, thereby creating additional pressure to demand that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam, begin talks with the NLF, and withdraw its troops from South Vietnam.
2. To exacerbate the enemy’s domestic problems and his international difficulties in order to limit his ability to expand the war in South Vietnam and to escalate his attacks against North Vietnam while at the same time gaining additional time for us to strengthen our national defense forces in

North Vietnam and to increase our assistance to South Vietnam.

3. To contribute to the disintegration of the puppet army and to intensify and strengthen our urban movement in South Vietnam to make the puppet government's hold on power even shakier and to make it difficult for them to maintain their yoke of oppressive rule.

d. Looking at the entire process of our employment of the "fighting while talking, talking while fighting" stratagem, we can visualize three different phases:

- Phase One is the phase in which we force the enemy to end the bombing of North Vietnam without conditions, leading to official and public contacts between North Vietnam and the United States. During this phase, after the US agrees to end the bombing of North Vietnam, North Vietnam and the United States will talk to one another, not for the purpose of reaching a total settlement of the Vietnam problem, but in order to clarify the position of each side. In South Vietnam, meanwhile, the two sides will continue to fight one another. In reality, we will utilize the forum provided by these talks to accuse and denounce the US to the general public.

- Phase Two is the phase when we force the enemy to continue the unconditional cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam, force him to talk to the NLF, and force him to withdraw his troops from South Vietnam. This phase is aimed at reaching a settlement of the problem of South Vietnam. After the US ends the bombing of North Vietnam, the primary struggle will be between the NLF and the United States to reach a solution in South Vietnam. The course of the struggle during this phase will be intimately linked with the military and political struggle on the battlefield in South Vietnam. Only when we secure a decisive victory on the battlefield will we be able to secure success in this phase.

- Phase Three is the phase in which the international community recognizes and confirms the results achieved during Phase Two.

It is possible that the process of applying our stratagem will proceed in order, following the three-phase process outlined above. We will strive to prolong the process and hold firm to our demand that the enemy's suspension of the bombing lead to a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam and the withdrawal of his troops from South Vietnam. Of the three phases outlined above, Phase Two is the most important phase. It is the decisive phase. However, Phase One is the initial phase and is also of great importance.

It is also possible that during the course of our employment of this stratagem, we will only carry out the first phase and then end it, or end it before the second phase is completed. It is also possible that each phase will be left uncompleted. In addition, we cannot rule out the possibility that we will not be able to carry out any of the three phases. In that case, there will be only fighting without talking until the US fails and is forced to accept a political settlement.

The above has been our vision of the major features of the process of utilizing our stratagem, and it is based on our understanding and our perceptions. We are not subjective. In real terms, the basic situation is advantageous for us, but it will develop in a very complex fashion, because the enemy is very stubborn and devious, because internally there are many differing opinions within the enemy camp, and because the serious disagreement within the socialist camp will also influence, to a certain extent at least, his attitude. The struggle will be very difficult and ferocious. At some point, because of the victories won by the military and political struggles in South Vietnam, and because of the pressure of international opinion, the possibility for a "fighting while talking" situation will emerge. However, it is also possible that because of the extreme stubborn nature of the enemy, such a situation will not emerge. In addition, we must realize that even if the enemy sits down to talk, the struggles to force him to end the bombing of North Vietnam permanently and unconditionally as well as to force him to withdraw from South Vietnam will be very difficult. Based on the actual situation, we will make concrete assessments and develop struggle policies suitable to each situation.



We must anticipate and plan for every possibility. We must be on guard against and overcome misguided assessments and ideas within our own internal ranks. At the same time, we need to develop a plan to lobby, explain to, and persuade both those fraternal socialist nations that may suspect that we are seeking negotiations too soon and may therefore take an attitude that, directly or indirectly, does not agree with us, and those that are so much in favor of negotiations to settle the problem that they pressure us to reach a political settlement too soon, before the situation is ripe. We must be extremely careful to keep our enemy from exploiting disagreements about strategy between us and our fraternal socialist allies. Neutral countries will also have different reactions, and we should try to win their support while at the same time blocking any efforts they may make to serve as intermediaries, which would only serve to further complicate the situation.

## II. SEEKING AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT PHASE ONE OF THE APPLICATION OF OUR "FIGHTING WHILE TALKING, TALKING WHILE FIGHTING" STRATAGEM TO FORCE THE ENEMY TO STOP THE BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM AND LEAD UP TO CONTACTS BETWEEN NORTH VIETNAM AND THE UNITED STATES FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWPOINTS

*The mission of protecting North Vietnam is of extremely important strategic importance and has a major impact on our strategic mission of liberating South Vietnam. Forcing the enemy to end the bombing of North Vietnam will be a tremendous victory for us in the task of carrying out our duty of protecting North Vietnam. We must, however, clearly understand that only when South Vietnam is completely liberated will we have fully completed our mission of protecting North Vietnam. The enemy's air war of destruction against North Vietnam is an element of the American imperialist strategy aggression against South Vietnam.*

### 1. Goal of the initial phase

The goal of the initial phase of the use of our stratagem is to force the enemy to end the bombing of North Vietnam without conditions, and only then will there be talks between North Vietnam and the United States. The two sides will sit down to talk with each other, officially and publicly at the ambassadorial level. The purpose of the talks will not be to resolve the Vietnam problem but to clarify each side's views while the fighting continues in South Vietnam.

This action will be to our advantage both politically and militarily. Even though it will be difficult for the enemy to end the bombing of North Vietnam, with the pressure of public opinion now demanding that the US end the bombing immediately and unconditionally, the bombing of North Vietnam has become one of the leading demands, and we believe it is possible that some point the enemy will have to consider taking such an action.

2. The immediate situation demands that we stay continuously on the offensive and take the initiative in presenting the issue as follows: If the United States ends the bombing permanently and unconditionally, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States could hold talks.

The advantages for our side are:

Militarily, the US is tottering:

- In North Vietnam, after its attacks on Hanoi the US continued to bomb many other locations, but recently they temporarily stopped attacking targets within ten miles of the center of Hanoi in order to calm public opinion. At the same time, they are plotting to try to demand in exchange for this move that our side agree not to attack Saigon or [across] the Demilitarized Zone.
- In South Vietnam, we are continuing to win victories, large and small. Although the US has increased its troop strength, it still has not accomplished anything and it is not being forced to shift from its plan to seek out and destroy our main force units to a "two-fisted" plan that aims to "pacify" and secure control of a number of key regions while at the same time destroying our main force

units to support "pacification." The Americans hope to use this as a basis for reaching a political solution favorable to their side.

- Public opinion is now heated and is favorable to our side and not to the enemy.

After the recent US bombing of Hanoi, a powerful movement has grown up around the world that is vigorously denouncing the Americans. Taking one more step with respect to the demand that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam, after the US refused U Thant's request and refused to extend the cessation of the bombing through several holidays, international opinion no longer trusts the US and is worried that the US might escalate the bombing further. In this environment, Comrade Pham Van Dong's reception of the American journalist Salisbury and the press conference held by our representative in Paris has caused a great deal of public interest and created a new opportunity to take another step forward in the struggle to demand that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam. The US is struggling clumsily to respond to these moves.

- The US ruling circles are becoming increasingly divided internally:

The US feels it is in great trouble with respect to ending the bombing. The Americans clearly see our resolve and have a recognized, to some extent, our intentions, so they are afraid that we will step up our supply efforts. They are afraid that if they stop the bombing, they will face both military and political difficulties. They are afraid of a recurrence of the situation of fighting during talks that took place during the Korean War. If they stop the bombing, it will be even harder for them to resume it again. However, they also see that if they do not stop the bombing, it will be difficult to enter into negotiations and that they will become increasingly isolated in the face of public opinion. They know that if they stop the bombing, we might begin talking to them. During his speech to Congress, Johnson clearly displayed the bleak status of the war of aggression in Vietnam. During the coming days, the debate on the Vietnam issue will become heated.

However, public opinion does not yet clearly realize that we could begin talking to the Americans if they stop the bombing of North Vietnam permanently and unconditionally. For that reason, if we raise this matter publicly, public pressure on the US will increase and they will become even more confused, clumsy, and placed on the defensive. It may also deepen the internal disagreements, further divide their ranks, and make their stance even shakier.

If we do not take the offensive now, we will be missing an excellent opportunity, because:

- Public opinion is now heated on this subject, and if we do not do something further, it will quiet down. Once that happens, when we raise an issue it will be hard to gain as much attention as we can do at this point in time.
- It is still possible that Johnson will decide to escalate to win over the opposing factions. If that happens, it will be harder for us to employ this stratagem in that situation. Also, if the US sees that we do not take action, they will mount a public offensive and distort and slander our position.
- Our friends may take some misguided action in one direction or another, which would make further complicate our effort to utilize this stratagem.

### 3. How we will publicly present this question to the world

The enemy's point of greatest weakness and confusion is the bombing of North Vietnam and the suspension of the bombing. We need to drive public opinion forward to exploit and deepen this enemy weakness. We will therefore present this issue to world opinion in the following manner:

We will denounce the US for stepping up the war in South Vietnam and escalating the bombing of North Vietnam but say that they are now suffering bitter defeats. The US talks about peace but its actions contradict its words. The Americans have not exhibited even the slightest amount of good

faith. The conditions that the US demands from the people of Vietnam are insolent and irrational. The American scheme of “ending the bombing with conditions,” of refusing to recognize the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, and of “troop withdrawals with conditions,” is really a plot to hang on in South Vietnam, turn South Vietnam into a new type of colony and a base for American armed forces, and to keep our nation divided in two. After expressing these opinions, we will say,

“The four point program of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam embodies the fundamental principles and primary provisions of the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Vietnam. It is the basis for the best possible political solution to the Vietnam problem. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has previously stated that if the US truly wants peace and is truly seeking a political solution, it must recognize the four point program of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five point proclamation of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, which is the only true representative of the people of South Vietnam.”

“The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a sovereign and independent nation. The American bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a blatant act of aggression and a brutal violation of the 1954 Geneva Agreement on Vietnam and of international law. The people of Vietnam, peace-loving people, and people of conscience throughout the world resolutely demand that the US permanently and unconditionally end all acts of bombing and destruction directed against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This is something that the US must do, and it cannot set forth any conditions whatsoever to avoid its responsibility.”

We will then say something like, “recently, the US has suggested that it would like to talk to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.”

Finally, we will say,

“After the United States has unconditionally ended the bombing and all other acts of war directed against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States could talk to one another.”

(The above is the general thrust of the content of our statement, which will be given in the form of an answer by our Foreign Minister during a press interview. After it is written out formally as an answer, we will review the wording and tighten it up.)

4. After our statement is made public, there are several possibilities:

- The US will reject it out of hand and will continue to escalate.
- The US will put forward conditions for bargaining purposes. After a period of bargaining, they might:
  - Lie and place the blame on us in order to continue escalating their attacks.
  - Halt the bombing as a practical matter in order to talk to us.
  - The US accepts our conditions and ends the bombing in order to sit down with us for discussions.

At present the first possibility is unlikely because the US, like us, wants to win over public opinion. The third possibility is very unlikely. As for the second possibility – that after a period of bargaining they will stop the bombing in practical terms in order to talk to us – there are difficulties here as well. We are not subjective [overoptimistic] about this, but we need to fight hard to push the US into taking this option. Whether we succeed in attaining this option or not, we will still benefit because we will have won over public opinion, which will place pressure on the US and further isolate the Americans. It is also possible that while the US Government is feeling us out, an extremist military

clique will escalate the attacks in order to disrupt the contacts. No matter what happens, however, we must fight strongly in the arena of public opinion (while at the same time making even more powerful military and political attacks against them) if order to be able to pressure them into stopping the bombing and sitting down to talk.

The struggle will be very difficult, because the US has many devious schemes to try to bargain about the cessation of the bombing. They want to implement a plan that must be accepted or rejected *in toto* (package deal) (in English).

- They will demand that, for the sake of “fairness,” each side must make concessions. The US will say it cannot unilaterally stop the bombing to make it easier for the other side to kill American troops in South Vietnam. They will demand a reduction in military operations in South Vietnam.
- They might announce a “de-escalation of the bombing” or “exclude a number of areas from bombing attacks” in order to demonstrate their “good faith” and deceive public opinion.
- They will demand that the International Control Commission inspect and control the Demilitarized Zone.
- They may demand that North Vietnam reach a complete settlement with them of the entire Vietnam question, or they may demand that a conference be convened of the interested parties, or an international conference, etc.

For conduct this bargaining, the US will intensify its secret diplomatic activities in parallel with trying to make direct feelers to us. They will spread distortions and propoganda to try to win over public opinion. In addition, the number of US politicians who want to meet with us will increase because they will want to gain political capital for their faction or party to use during the 1968 elections.

- The Saigon puppet government and the satellites [allies] of the Americans now participating in the fighting in South Vietnam will be more stubborn. They will either not approve of these contacts or they will demand that the US discuss the matter with them, and if talks are held with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, they will demand to be allowed to participate in the talks.

In summary, after we raise the issue of talks, two points will surface to which we must pay attention:

- The US will bargain hard with us;
- World opinion will applaud us, but the tendency in favor of early negotiations to resolve the problem will grow.

Our policy is:

a) We are launching a propoganda campaign, directed primarily abroad, before we put forward the position discussed in the section above. We are currently now engaged in this propoganda campaign, which is aimed at:

- Exposing the stubborn American plans to intensify the war in South Vietnam, to step up their bombing of North Vietnam, and to commit crimes in both halves of the country. We are devoting particular attention to properly exploiting the investigating committees, the delegations of prominent Americans, the statements of US pilots, etc.
- Making it clear to all that the enemy’s peace proposals are phony, that the “conditions” the enemy demands are irrational and impudent, and that his peace campaign has failed.
- Clearly demonstrating that the US is very confused, clumsy, and on the defensive; that it faces many disagreements and difficulties; and that it is becoming increasingly more and more isolated.

We are paying particular attention to strongly criticizing the speech that Johnson gave before Congress in early January 1967.

- Stressing our just cause, our resolve, our victories, and our good faith.

b) We will continue to attack the enemy after we put forward our position. We will intensify the struggle to stir up public opinion against the plots and arguments of the Americans. We will crush the enemy's distorted arguments and claims, such as that we are suggesting negotiations because we are weak, that our policy position has changed, that North Vietnam is abandoning South Vietnam, that we have differences with China and are becoming closer to the Soviet Union, etc. We must analyze and reject the enemy's bargaining conditions. At the same time, we must intensify the movement demanding that the US end the bombing of North Vietnam unconditionally. We must be careful to mold and reshape misguided tendencies in public opinion.

We need a propaganda plan to widely publicize the contents of our statement widely.

In addition, we need to come up with a plan to plant division within the ranks of the puppet government in South Vietnam.

c) We will provide timely notification of our moves to the Soviet Union, China, other fraternal nations, and nations that have good relations with us so that everyone understands what we are doing and supports us.

d) We will intensify our foreign relations activities. Our representatives stationed abroad will meet with the local governments to provide a clear explanation of our position, our principles, and our attitude of good faith. We will study the possibility of sending delegations to visit a number of countries, such as Cambodia, France, Algeria, the United Arab Republic, etc. to provide explanations and lobby for support.

e) The National Liberation Front will demonstrate its support for the answer given by the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the interview. At the same time, the Front will emphasize its resolve to hold firm to South Vietnam's demands (the demands that the US immediately and unconditionally end the bombing of North Vietnam, that the US recognize the four point program and the five point proclamation, that it recognize the Front as the only true representative of the people of South Vietnam, and that all US and satellite [allied] military personnel must be withdrawn from South Vietnam).

In addition, we must combine this struggle with an intensification of the political struggle movement in South Vietnam and with an intensification of our puppet proselyting operations aimed at causing further disintegration within the ranks of the puppet army and puppet government.

f) Prepare an official Government announcement on our position and attitude for public release when our struggle is going well and when we see that there is a clear possibility that the enemy will agree to end the bombing of North Vietnam in order to begin talks.

#### A NUMBER OF NECESSARY PREPARATORY TASKS

In order to properly carry out both our immediate and long-term operations, we need to do a number of things right away:

1. Closely monitor American plans. Study their specific schemes regarding negotiations. Study the attitudes and positions of concerned countries regarding a political solution for the Vietnam problem.

Analyze each phase of the application of our stratagem, beginning with the contact phase and our struggle plans for use during the initial contacts.

We need to form an organization to coordinate research and analysis efforts of a number of different sectors.

2. We must have a plan for diplomatic lobbying and international activities by popular organizations. The goal of this plan will be to win additional support from the socialist nations, neutral nations, and the people of the world. We must analyze concrete policy steps for use with Cambodia and France

3. Intensify our international propaganda operations. We must have a concrete plan for each phase, for use both domestically and abroad, in meetings, talks, and negotiations.

4-Prepare to carry out internal ideological activities. Stress the determination of the entire Party and the entire population to defeat the American imperialist aggressors. Counter all illusions of peace, all thoughts of exhaustion, any decrease in vigilance, and any weakening in fighting spirit.

5-We need a separate plan for South Vietnam to use to intensify its activities during each individual phase in all areas involved with the political struggle, foreign relations activities, and international propaganda.

Strengthen coordination between North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

The subject of our utilization of this stratagem must be kept *absolutely secret*, because if there is a leak and if our goals, policies, and plans in this endeavor are exposed, it will produce a number of major negative effects.

## CONCLUSION

The following points require special emphasis:

First, our posture is an aggressive posture, a victorious posture, and an offensive posture. We always maintain the initiative on all three fronts, in the military, the political, and the diplomatic struggle. Our utilization of the "fighting while talking, talking while fighting" stratagem and our effort to seek an early opportunity to present our position, that "after the enemy ends the bombing unconditionally, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States could begin talks" demonstrates our offensive posture, attacking the enemy politically, and is aimed at placing the enemy on the defensive and isolating him even further.

Second, our utilization of the "fighting while talking, talking while fighting" stratagem will involve a process of extremely complex, difficult, and savage struggle. It is closely linked with other military, political, and diplomatic struggle fronts. It demands that we maintain our principles to the highest extent, but at the same time we must be flexible in exploiting every chink in the enemy's armor.

Third, while laying out guidelines in terms of strategy and policy regarding the utilization of the stratagem, our Party will always maintain its independence, although we will still pay attention to and consult with fraternal countries. In addition, when implementing this stratagem, we will pay attention to, discuss with, and try to win the support, assistance, and coordination of fraternal [Communist] parties in order to achieve good results.

We realize that the employment of our "fighting while talking, talking while fighting" stratagem will face many more difficulties and complexities, but, both theory and practical realities demonstrate that it is the correct policy. During the course of our utilization of this stratagem, the most important factor will still be that we must fight hard on the battlefield in an effort to create an opportunity to win a decisive victory. We will be vigilant, cautious, and on guard against any eventuality. If we discuss matters carefully and provide close, correct, and timely guidance, we will achieve victory in the diplomatic struggle, which is aimed at providing good coordination and support to the military and

political struggles.