



Propaganda of the Just Cause to Soldiers and Civil Servants of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon - Gia Dinh During the Spring 1975 Ho Chi Minh Campaign to Achieve Peace For Vietnam

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Abstract

This article studies the work of propagating the righteousness, humanity, and humanitarian values of the resistance war against the U.S. invasion, which the military and people of Saigon – Gia Định carried out during the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign to move towards peace and the reunification of Vietnam. The research highlights that the primary targets of this propaganda effort were the soldiers, officers, and officials of the Republic of Vietnam, aiming to minimize casualties on both sides, protect the lives and property of the people, and convey to these soldiers and officials that the war they were participating in was an unjust war waged by the U.S. imperialists and the ruling authorities of the Republic of Vietnam. The effort also sought to help them understand that the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam were victims of the U.S.'s new colonial war, and to communicate the revolutionary Vietnam's lenient and humane policies towards prisoners of war and those who surrendered. The experiences gained from the propaganda and mobilization efforts directed at the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon – Gia Định during the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign also help researchers propose programs and policies on public mobilization for the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the current period. The article employs two common research methods in historical science: the historical method and the logical method, based on the methodology of dialectical materialism, historical materialism, and the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Keywords: Military Propaganda, Saigon, Gia Dinh, Liberation, Soldiers

Introduction

"Propagating the Just Cause, Humanity, and Compassion to the Soldiers and Officials of the Republic of Vietnam during the War against the American Invasion of Vietnam (1954–1975) is a continuation of the tradition of 'Upholding Righteousness to Defeat Cruelty, Using Humanity to Replace Tyranny' in the history of Vietnam's struggle against foreign invaders. As President Ho Chi Minh once said: 'It is skillful to defeat the enemy by fighting. It is even more skillful to defeat the enemy without fighting. Defeating the enemy without fighting is the result of effective work.'

Studying the process of propagating the just cause, humanity, and compassion to the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) by the military and people in the key battlefield of Saigon–Gia Định during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the spring of 1975 contributes to reconstructing the heroic struggle of the military and people of Saigon–Gia Định on a special front of resistance. It helps clarify the comprehensive, all-people nature of the struggle, offers a detailed explanation of the crucial role this work played—one of the key factors leading to victory—and draws meaningful lessons and insights that can be applied to current civil affairs.

The topic of propagating the just cause, humanity, and compassion to the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam during the resistance against the American invasion of Vietnam (1954–1975) has been addressed by many agencies and discussed by scholars from various perspectives. However, to this day, this issue in the key battlefield of Saigon–Gia Định during the historic 1975 Ho Chi Minh Campaign remains underexplored, and no specialized monographs have been systematically and comprehensively researched. For these reasons, the author has chosen the topic *'The Propaganda of the Just Cause to the Soldiers and Officials of the Republic of Vietnam in Saigon–Gia Định during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975 to Achieve Peace for Vietnam'* for research."

Objective

To vividly and comprehensively recreate the process of conducting propaganda for the just cause during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975 in the key battlefield of Saigon–Gia Định. Based on this, the aim is to fill the historical gap regarding this work on the Saigon–Gia Định battlefield during the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

Subjects

This article presents the propaganda for the just cause carried out by the military and people of Saigon–Gia Định during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, aimed at achieving peace and reunification of Vietnam. The research focuses on the propaganda work conducted by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the Saigon–Gia Định battlefield, specifically examining the policies, measures, methods of implementation, organizational structure, participating forces, the process of deployment, and the outcomes of the propaganda and mobilization efforts directed towards the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

Scope of Research

Content: Propaganda and mobilization efforts targeting officers, soldiers, and officials of the Republic of Vietnam, aimed at confusing, demoralizing, and causing them to loathe and oppose the war, leading to their defection and joining the revolutionary side.

Timeframe: From January 1975 to April 30, 1975.

Geographical Area: The key battlefield of Saigon–Gia Định.

General Research Method: The article is based on the methodology of dialectical materialism, historical materialism, and the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Specific Research Methods: A combination of two main methods: historical method and logical method.

Results and Discussion

1. The Just Cause Propaganda Policies of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975

Following the resounding victories in Buon Ma Thuot, the liberation of the Central Highlands, and the campaigns to liberate Hue, Da Nang, and the provinces in Central Vietnam, the Politburo decided to launch a campaign to liberate Saigon, naming it the 'Ho Chi Minh Campaign.' In the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign to liberate Saigon, the propaganda and mobilization efforts targeting the soldiers, officers, and officials of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) made full use of

all available resources and methods, contributing to the great victory of the entire nation for peace and the reunification of Vietnam.

The specific mission of propaganda and mobilization (soldier mobilization) during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, according to the directives of the Standing Committee of the Southern Central Bureau, was to initiate a mass uprising among the soldiers' families, while simultaneously strengthening and directing the internal network to take immediate action. The goal was to take control of each ward, neighborhood, district, and county, pushing the enemy into a passive position, causing confusion, and forcing them to disperse their forces to cope. This would weaken the enemy's combat strength to the lowest possible level, creating conditions for the main revolutionary forces to advance quickly, decisively strike, and dismantle each enemy unit, ultimately leading to the complete collapse of the RVN military.

The Southern Central Bureau assigned individuals with family connections or old acquaintances with RVN generals the task of contacting, mobilizing, enlightening, and guiding these individuals to take action or abandon their posts and surrender to the revolution. Through the process of building and developing internal networks, by early April 1975, the internal work teams had penetrated, developed, and established contact with key institutions of the RVN, such as the General Staff, Quang Trung training center, Tan Son Nhat airport, the Navy Command, the Naval Arsenal, the Gia Dinh police department, the main divisions, and so on.

On March 24, 1975, the Southern Central Bureau issued Notice 07/TT-75 regarding the launch of a political movement with a seven-point military propaganda policy (supplemented) aimed at further strengthening the activities of the workers', peasants', and soldiers' alliances, and the soldiers' mutiny for insurrection, decisively dismantling outposts, and causing the collapse of large segments of the puppet military and puppet government. In terms of form, the Southern Central Bureau directed the media, radio stations, and cultural and artistic sectors to produce diverse content such as news, poems, songs, and plays that clearly stated the content of the policy declaration for regular propaganda among the people, the families of soldiers, and the soldiers and officers of the RVN. On March 25, 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam issued a statement continuing to promote the seven-point military propaganda policy that had been established on January 25, 1972, and further elaborated on the new seven-point policy. The content from point 2 to point 7 is as follows: "Families with relatives in the puppet military or government, families of orphans and widows, who are the suffering victims of the US colonial regime and its puppets (point 2). Civil defense forces that do not harm the revolution are entitled to citizen rights and duties (point 3). Soldiers who contribute to the revolution and are wounded are entitled to benefits as revolutionary wounded soldiers, and those who sacrifice are recognized as martyrs (point 4). In newly liberated areas, cooperation with the revolution to protect public property, surrender weapons and documents, uncover saboteurs, and discover hidden caches and tunnels will be recognized, praised, and rewarded (point 5). Officers and commanders of units who mutiny or oppose the war and join the revolution will be recognized as revolutionary officers, valued, and rewarded (point 6). Prisoners of war, captives, and those who have committed crimes but sincerely repent will be treated humanely, and those who contribute to atoning

for their crimes will be rewarded (point 7)"^[1]. It can be said that the Seven-Point Policy, when publicized, encouraged the national spirit among the soldiers and officials of the RVN, as they saw the humanity, tolerance, and the opportunity to return to the revolution, minimizing conflicts and unnecessary bloodshed on both sides.

At 2:00 PM on April 1, 1975, in a letter to the Southern Central Bureau, General Secretary Le Duan wrote: "The revolutionary war in the South has not only entered a period of rapid development, but the time has also come to launch a general offensive and uprising in Saigon – Gia Dinh. From this moment, the final decisive strategic battle of our people begins"^[2].

Realizing the importance of the key battlefield of Saigon and the urban areas, the Standing Committee of the Southern Central Bureau issued Directive No. 390/TV (on April 6, 1975) to strengthen the military mobilization forces in the outskirts of the cities, and to send cadres to guide and direct the grassroots organizations. In response to this directive, during the General Offensive and Uprising of Spring 1975, the Military Mobilization Department of the Southern Central Bureau reinforced the Saigon-Gia Dinh battlefield with 800 military mobilization cadres and provided various types of hand-written letters, leaflets, and loudspeakers to carry out military mobilization. Three comrades were assigned to check and supervise in three directions: Comrade Nguyen Vo Danh, Deputy Head of the Department, went to the Southwest; Comrade Tu Chi, a Committee member, directed the Northeast; and Comrade Vo Tran Tri (Hai Chi), a Committee member, directed the Northwest. "The military mobilization forces in the Southeast region and the Mekong Delta provinces were all concentrated and coordinated for the Saigon-Gia Dinh battlefield. In the Central-South region, forces were positioned close to the towns, townships, and 1450 outposts. In the Southwest region, 3,000 cadres were deployed, and 300,000 women members and 100,000 soldiers' families were mobilized to attack all the targets"^[3]. On April 8, 1975, in order to seize the strategic opportunity, the Standing Committee of the Southern Central Bureau directed the strategic internal network within Squadron 540 of the RVN Air Force's 3rd Division stationed in Bien Hoa. Nguyễn Thành Trung, a pilot, flew an F5E aircraft to bomb the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Vietnam. This event had great military and political significance, causing further panic among the soldiers and officers of the RVN, deepening the internal divisions within the RVN, and accelerating the mutiny actions.

At 3:30 PM on April 22, 1975, General Secretary Le Duan sent a telegram to the Southern Central Bureau, the Military Command of the South, and the campaign headquarters, recalling the event on April 21, 1975: "Under pressure from the U.S. and the generals, Nguyen Van Thieu had to resign. To slow down our offensive into Saigon, the U.S. – puppet government established a new government..."^[4]. General Secretary Le Duan affirmed that there would be great turmoil

within the enemy's ranks, and the military and political opportunity to launch the offensive into Saigon had ripened.

2. The army and people of Saigon – Gia Dinh carried out propaganda and mobilization of soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam during the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign

Following the directives of the Party Central Committee, the Southern Central Bureau, and the Military Command of the South, in line with the offensive momentum on the Southern battlefields, in early March 1975, the Saigon – Gia Dinh Party Committee deployed 1,700 military and political cadres into the districts of the inner city and the suburban areas. The goal was to mobilize the masses to prepare for an uprising and coordinate with the main forces in the offensives. The city's armed units, consisting of 2 regiments, 5 infantry battalions, commandos, special forces, and 3,500 guerrillas and self-defense forces, urgently prepared plans for coordinated combat and led the main forces to attack the targets. Many armed propaganda teams were formed in the wards and neighborhoods. Some loudspeakers were set up on cars, ready to drive through the streets when the opportunity arose, calling on soldiers to lay down their arms and surrender, and urging the people to join the liberating army in freeing the city. People's organizations secretly sewed flags, printed leaflets, and wrote slogans welcoming the Liberation Army. From April 24, 1975, to April 29, 1975, the propaganda and mobilization forces, alongside the advancing units of the main army, saw the people and army of Saigon – Gia Dinh rise up in parts. In the outskirts and suburban areas, the people revolted and took complete control of all the hamlets in 83 communes. As part of the mobilization offensive, "the masses rose up, raising flags at the district centers and county towns, calling on the enemy to surrender, organizing weapons collection points, and issuing certificates of surrender to tens of thousands of enemy soldiers who laid down their arms..."^[5].

2.1. The offensive and mobilization of soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam in the suburban areas on the key battlefield of Saigon – Gia Dinh during the spring of 1975

In Thu Duc district, on April 24, 1975, a battalion of the Republic of Vietnam's Marine Corps set up camp along the Long Binh River, intending to cross the river to reinforce Xuan Loc. On the morning of April 25, 1975, the local mobilization committee called on the people and families of soldiers to conduct propaganda and mobilization, and by the morning of April 26, 1975, the brigade disbanded on the spot. On the night of April 28, 1975, the people called for the disbandment of hundreds of students from the Thu Duc Military Academy. The district party committee directed the mobilization of local parishes to hand over over 2,000 guns, and convinced the 301st Security Battalion, consisting of 600 men, to surrender. On the morning of April 30, 1975, at the

¹ Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee (2000), *Summary of the military mobilization work during the resistance war against the American invasion and for national salvation (1954–1975) on the old B2 battlefield*, Hanoi, Department of Mass Mobilization, General Political Department, Ministry of Defense, p.135

² Le Duan (1985), *Letter to the South*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, p.386

³ Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee (2000), *Summary of the military mobilization work during the resistance war against the American invasion*

and for national salvation (1954–1975) on the old B2 battlefield, Department of Mass Mobilization, General Political Department, Ministry of Defense, Hanoi, p. 138

⁴ Le Duan (1985), *Letter to the South*, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, p.392

⁵ General Department of Politics, Vietnam People's Army (2002), *Summary of Military and Enemy Mobilization Work during the Resistance War against the American Invasion and for National Salvation*, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, p.180

Thu Duc water plant, the local base organized engineers and key workers, including Engineer Manh, to raise the flag and mobilize the Republic of Vietnam's armored unit guarding the plant to lay down their weapons and flee. The people rose up to liberate the communes and, in coordination with the local militia, took control of the water plant, the power plant, and by 9 a.m. on April 30, 1975, captured the district and town of Thu Duc. The local armed forces, together with the people, rose up to attack, spread propaganda, and seized the 3rd Airborne Brigade's base and the Song Than base. The two Marine Corps brigades at Song Than disbanded on the spot. In Hoc Mon, on April 29, 1975, the people rose up to liberate the communes of Xuan Thoi Son, Tan Thoi Nhut, Tan Xuan, and Tan Hiep, coordinating with the troops to successfully capture the military post. The people of An Phu Dong, in coordination with the special forces, wiped out the local militia and police, and seized power. The people of Trung My Tay, together with the internal network, called for the surrender of a portion of soldiers at the Quang Trung Training Center.

At the Quang Trung Training Center, many attacking units advanced, causing the disintegration of various sections and eventually completely capturing the area. On April 28, 1975, Sister Tam Huu directed the local base in the Cầu Market area, Đông Hưng Thuận commune, to gather 100 young men who had deserted the army and soldiers hiding at the Thiện Minh and Giác Vương pagodas. They organized into a company, armed themselves, and made flags. At 6 a.m. on April 29, 1975, this force rose up, capturing the sub-district of Cầu Market and establishing a revolutionary committee, with Út Ngõi as chairman, Tám Thọ in charge of security, and Tư La handling communications. The revolutionary committee called on local militia in neighboring hamlets to surrender their weapons, collecting many firearms, five typewriters, and one computer. At noon on April 29, 1975, they raised the flag and launched two offensives toward the southeast of Quang Trung, where over a thousand soldiers ran to the Thiện Minh pagoda, surrendering their weapons and abandoning their military uniforms to return to their families. By the night of April 29, 1975, this force had completely taken control of the Cầu Market area and the southeastern Quang Trung area.

On April 29, 1975, Team 735, led by Comrade Lương Thị Mười as the team leader, cut through barbed wire and by the morning of April 30, 1975, had disbanded the entire military camp, raising flags across all camps. 20,000 soldiers, officers, and cadets stripped off their military uniforms and returned to their families, party cells, core members, and sympathizers, taking control of the military camp and handing it over to the revolutionary troops.

At the command base of the Quang Trung Training Center, one faction of the internal base, led by Nguyễn Văn Huấn, deputy commander of the Quang Trung Training Center, on April 29, 1975, saw General Trần Tấn Di, the commanding officer, flee. Nguyễn Văn Huấn, from the internal base, ordered the camps to refrain from firing. At 10:30 a.m. on April 30, 1975, the Trường Sơn unit arrived, and Nguyễn Văn Huấn greeted them, handing over the entire base, warehouses, and weapons to the revolutionary forces.

In Bình Chánh, on April 28, 1975, the people of Tam Tân (the

three communes of Tân Tạo, Tân Túc, and Tân Nhứt) rose up, and Vĩnh Lộc commune was liberated. On the morning of April 30, 1975, the people of the communes simultaneously rose up to seize power. By 1:00 p.m. that same day, the people and local armed forces had completely liberated the entire district.

In Cần Giờ district, on April 29, 1975, the binh vận base connected with a captain named Mũi, who raised the white flag and surrendered, welcoming the delegation of officers to take over the district at 10:00 a.m. on April 30, 1975. By noon on the same day, the people rose up and, in coordination with the armed forces, launched an attack and successfully liberated all 11 communes of the district.

On the morning of April 28, 1975, the internal base led by Lê Quang Ninh (agent number 110), a lieutenant colonel and commander of Battalion 1 of Regiment 50, Division 25 of the South Vietnamese Army, led his unit in a mutiny, bringing 270 soldiers over to the revolution. This mutiny contributed to the rapid disintegration of the northwest defense line of Saigon, significantly reducing casualties for both the Liberation Army and enemy soldiers at the northwest defense line, and helping Corps 3 to approach Saigon more easily.

At the Đồng Dù base (Củ Chi), the internal base led by Huỳnh Ngọc San in the staff of the 25th Division of the Republic of Vietnam provided a defensive map of the Đồng Dù base to the Liberation Army, which helped them capture this important base at the northwestern gateway to Saigon quickly. At the Quang Trung training camp, with the binh vận offensive, 20,000 trainees were persuaded to drop their weapons, strip off their uniforms, and flee. "At the command center, when the brigadier general fled, a colonel who had been contacted by our forces seized power, issued orders to his subordinates not to fire, ensured the integrity of the facilities, weapons, and documents, and then welcomed our troops to take control of the base" ^[6].

In Củ Chi District, on the afternoon of April 29, 1975, revolutionary cadres and undercover militia, led by Mrs. Nguyễn Thị Lãnh (Má Bảy), launched an attack to capture the district capital, the military outpost, and the police station. At the same time, the people rose up, overwhelming all the outposts in the district. This opened the way for the revolution to advance from the northwest direction of Saigon.

Thus, the achievements of the military and people in the outskirts of Saigon created a favorable foundation for the revolution to swiftly advance and liberate Saigon, with minimal casualties for both sides involved in the conflict.

2.2. The propaganda and mobilization efforts targeting soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam in the inner city of Saigon

The mass movement formed armed forces with a lively revolutionary spirit, gaining increasing control over more areas, expanding the momentum from the inner city to the outskirts. The internal networks within most of the key agencies of the Republic of Vietnam, such as the General Staff, Tan Son Nhat Airport, Navy shipyards, paratrooper divisions, marine forces, special forces, the post office, warehouses, and the presidential press office, among others, operated openly, taking control of key positions, protecting offices, and securing documents, etc.

⁶ General Department of Politics, Vietnam People's Army (2002), Summary of Military and Enemy Mobilization Work during the Resistance War against

the American Invasion and for National Salvation, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, p.180

In the districts, starting from April 29, 1975, local armed forces and propaganda units, together with the people and families of soldiers, rose up to launch binh-vận operations, collecting weapons, hoisting the liberation flags, and taking control of important positions. In District 1, the people rose up and raised the flag at Ben Thanh Market. In District 2, the people seized the district headquarters and the city police station. On the morning of April 29, 1975, troops in Districts 11 and Phu Nhuan took over the precincts, disbanded the civil defense forces, and by the morning of April 30, 1975, seized the district administrative offices. In Go Vap, Binh Thanh, and Nha Be Districts, people took control of the wards and communes by 9:30 AM on April 30, 1975. On the morning of April 30, 1975, District 3 mobilized the people to rise up; in Le Van Duyet Ward, they took the weapons from the civil defense storage; in Le Van Liem Police Station, the personnel surrendered their arms to the revolution; in Phan Dinh Phung Ward, soldiers from the Hoang Hoa Tham Camp also surrendered their weapons; in Do Thanh Block, they took control of the Vườn Chuối Police Station; in Bàn Cờ Ward, they organized the collection of weapons, set up a flag-making team, and a patrol team for maintaining order. In District 4, the people used loudspeakers to call on soldiers to surrender their weapons, and Sergeant Siêng, head of the Tran Văn Cúc Police Station, went to the gate to invite the people into the station to surrender all weapons. In District 5, the people took over An Dong Market, Hoa Binh Market, and various police stations. In District 6, they seized police posts and stations in Binh Tien, Binh Tay, Phu Lam, Phu Dinh, as well as the district police headquarters and administrative offices.

In Binh Thanh, from April 27, 1975, guerrillas and the people rose up, forcing the civil defense forces to surrender their weapons and taking control of the local security headquarters in Thanh My Tay and Binh Hoa. Comrade Ba Loi, the team leader of internal network D10 under the Binh Vận Committee of Saigon – Gia Dinh, directed the internal network member Tran Hue Nhat, the acting company commander of the police protection unit at the Gia Dinh Provincial Police Headquarters (Hàng Keo Police Station), along with another police officer named Tuan and 8 key figures, to prepare for an uprising. Tran Hue Nhat allowed all police officers to return home to attend to their families, and by the afternoon of April 29, 1975, ordered the unit to stop receiving reinforcements and not to fire unless instructed. The internal network took full control of the police command, protected documents, and disarmed police officers who fled, allowing them to return home. By the afternoon of April 30, 1975, the internal network handed over the entire base to the Gia Dinh Provincial Security Committee.

At the Hang Xanh intersection, the people rose up starting on the morning of April 29, 1975, hoisting flags and displaying slogans such as "Power to the People." The enemy police station at Hang Xanh fled, and the people poured into the streets, blocking the enemy's tank convoy from Go Vap and coordinating with the infantry to block the highway bridge. With a strong attacking spirit, the people seized the Nguyen Van Nho Marine Corps base and the Thi Nghe Re-education Center, securing the Thi Nghe rice storage, the Tân Cảng food warehouses, and the oil depot at Son Bridge. During the struggle, many courageous civilians emerged, such as Nguyen Thi Phong Thu, who captured the chief of Phu My Hamlet and seized hundreds of guns; Nguyen Thi Phuong, at Kinh Bridge, who, holding her young child, persuaded a

colonel, a lieutenant colonel, and a major to surrender and hand over their weapons to the revolution, while also protecting 10 fuel tanks, 200 transport vehicles, 10 radios, and 10 artillery pieces for the army.

2.3. The propaganda and mobilization activities of the strategic internal networks contributed to the final victory in the Ho Chi Minh Campaign

Internal Network Group I, under the Saigon – Gia Dinh Mobilization Department, on the morning of April 30, 1975, the leaders of the political cells gathered six internal network units within the civil defense force and mobilized the youth to rise up and seize power, forming the uprising committee in Phú Trung Hamlet, Phú Thọ Hòa, and Tân Bình (now Ward 8, Tân Bình). They surrounded the Nguyễn Văn Cừ police station, called for the police to surrender, and took control of the female military personnel school. By 12:00 noon on April 30, 1975, they had completely liberated Phú Thọ Hòa commune. On the morning of April 30, 1975, another branch of internal network unit I attacked and took control of key areas such as the Bảy Hiền area, deployed forces to take over the Tân Hòa commune headquarters, controlled Nguyễn Tri Phương street in District 10, mobilized a battalion of the Republic of Vietnam's special forces to disband at Trần Quốc Toàn fish market, collected vehicles, weapons, and seized military vehicles and the gas warehouse of the American Depot; took control of Nguyễn Văn Thoại area, took over a disbanded airborne battalion at the Cộng Hòa stadium; seized the 65th signal company at Trần Nguyên Hãn camp, confiscated the entire communication system, and handed it over to the city military command; took control of the Pétrus Ký area, Hàng Xanh area, and Pháp Hội Pagoda. Additionally, internal network unit I directed internal network units to guide revolutionary armed forces in taking over the warehouses of transport unit 81 at Đào Duy Từ camp and the officer base Lê Ngọc Huân, and assisted in the takeover of arms depots at the I Department of the General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam.

At the General Staff of the Republic of Vietnam, on the morning of April 30, 1975, there was no longer any command, but the 81st Airborne Division stubbornly held the gates. Revolutionary commandos attacked and seized the flags at gates 2 and 3, coordinating with the internal network to secure the interior of the base, preserving all assets and documents, and handing them over to the troops.

At the Presidential Palace, the Central Committee's Propaganda and Mobilization Department assigned Comrade Hai Dân from the P729 internal network team to directly manage key contacts such as Colonel Lộc, the commander of the Presidential Guard; Lieutenant Kính, the officer in charge of inspecting President Nguyễn Thiệu's meals; Sergeant Bé, the military police at the inner circle of the Presidential Palace; Trần Công Ba, a police officer at the Nguyễn Du gate checkpoint; and Lieutenant Colonel Sự, the deputy head of the VIP protection division. Comrade Hai Dân was captured, and this network was compromised, with Colonel Lộc being reassigned, cutting off communications. Later, Colonel Lộc became the commander of the 316th Special Forces Division, and on the morning of April 30, 1975, he ordered the division to disband completely.

Also on the morning of April 30, 1975, the women's internal network led by Trương Thị Huệ safely protected the entire press office of the South Vietnam Presidential Palace (now located at 116 Nguyễn Thị Minh Khai), handing it over to the

revolution.

Critical locations such as the radio station, telegraph station, and the workshop were secured by the internal network's telecommunications division, with each section assigned to ensure safety. The scattered internal network cells guided soldiers in disbanding units or surrendering, assisting the revolution in taking control quickly.

At the headquarters of the Capital Military Zone, Commander Lâm Văn Phát, who had been previously influenced by the revolution through his sister Lâm Thị Phần (a member of the military intelligence unit), was initially hesitant. By the morning of April 30, 1975, however, Lâm Văn Phát surrendered the entire base, weapons, and war equipment to the revolution, and the unit in charge took over, issuing a certificate of confirmation.

At the heart of the South Vietnam government's command, the Strategic Internal Network Task Force of the Central Propaganda and Mobilization Department established Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh, a brigadier general of the Republic of Vietnam Army (who became a key figure for the Central Propaganda and Mobilization Department starting in 1970). On April 27, 1975, the National Assembly of South Vietnam held an emergency meeting and voted to elect Dương Văn Minh as president. On April 28, 1975, the U.S. appointed Dương Văn Minh as president of the Republic of Vietnam in an attempt to salvage the situation. Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh was appointed as the Assistant Chief of Staff of the South Vietnamese Army. The Strategic Internal Network Task Force assigned Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh the task of cooperating with Dương Văn Minh to seize power, influence him, and encourage him to surrender quickly, in order to avoid further bloodshed. At the same time, the Enemy Propaganda Department of the General Political Department sent Comrade Dương Thanh Nhựt – the younger brother of Dương Văn Minh, a military officer who had been stationed in the North and returned to the South in 1961, working for the Central Propaganda and Mobilization Department – to approach Dương Văn Minh directly.

In addition to the propaganda and mobilization work directed at soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), intelligence and ideological units also engaged with Dương Văn Minh. Trần Ngọc Liễng recommended lawyer Triệu Quốc Mạnh to Dương Văn Minh, who was from the Saigon-Gia Định Front. Triệu Quốc Mạnh was appointed as the director of the Saigon municipal police in the afternoon of April 28, 1975. In this position, Triệu Quốc Mạnh ordered the dissolution of the special police units of Saigon and released all political prisoners. On April 29, 1975, Triệu Quốc Mạnh instructed the police not to fire on civilians and allowed anyone who wished to go home to take care of their families. As a result, the entire 16,000-member police force was neutralized and disbanded by April 29, 1975.

On April 29, 1975, with the rapid disintegration of the South Vietnamese military forces, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Southern Liberation Front sent a secret telegram (number 506/TV) directing all levels to implement the 7-point soldier mobilization policy from the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (dated March 25, 1975). This once again demonstrated the government's attitude of goodwill and humanitarianism

towards the soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam who surrendered to join the revolution. They would be educated and granted amnesty, while those who actively resisted the revolution would be appropriately punished.

On April 29, 1975, after the Chief of Staff Vĩnh Lộc fled, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh virtually took control of the South Vietnamese military and ordered the army to remain passive, awaiting the president's orders. On the morning of April 30, 1975, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh and Nguyễn Hữu Cồ met with President Dương Văn Minh and Prime Minister Vũ Văn Mẫu to report the urgent situation and urged Dương Văn Minh to order a ceasefire. At 9:30 AM, President Dương Văn Minh declared a ceasefire and began discussions with the revolutionaries to transfer power in an orderly manner. Immediately, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh ordered the South Vietnamese military to lay down their arms in accordance with the president's decree.

Although this declaration did not fully meet the revolution's demand for unconditional surrender from the Republic of Vietnam, it did help reduce organized resistance from stubborn forces, making it easier for the military, political, and ideological units of the revolution to crush the enemy's will to fight. This facilitated the complete liberation of Saigon, forcing President Dương Văn Minh to announce an unconditional surrender. At 11:30 AM on April 30, 1975, under the overwhelming advance of revolutionary forces, President Dương Văn Minh declared unconditional surrender. The Liberation Flag was raised atop the Presidential Palace, marking the complete victory of the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign and the full liberation of Saigon-Gia Định.

The day after the liberation, the Party directed the entire mobilization industry to combine military and police forces in the task of registering and reporting the remaining soldiers. In the Saigon-Gia Định area, the registration recorded 347,742 soldiers, officers, and 36,686 police, security, and intelligence officers”^[7].

On May 2, 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam decided to release members of the former government of the Republic of Vietnam, including President Dương Văn Minh, Vice President Nguyễn Văn Huyền, and Prime Minister Vũ Văn Mẫu. This decision was made because they had cooperated and directly ordered the surrender, contributing to facilitating the liberation of the South.

The implementation of the mobilization policy immediately after the liberation helped stabilize the political security and public safety in Saigon – Gia Định, playing a crucial role in national reconciliation after the war ended. Soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam were shown leniency and given the opportunity to quickly reintegrate into the new society. As a result, the people united to overcome the consequences of the war and moved toward national reunification.

Conclusion

The General Offensive and Uprising of Spring 1975 in the key battlefield of Saigon – Gia Định concluded successfully, completely dismantling the armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and the local government system. With the strength of the three-pronged assault at its peak, local

⁷ Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee (2000), *Summary of the military mobilization work during the resistance war against the American invasion and for national salvation (1954–1975) on the old B2 battlefield*, Department

of Mass Mobilization, General Political Department, Ministry of Defense, Hanoi, p.163.

uprisings autonomously liberated wards, communes, districts, and towns, seized power, and proactively crushed any resistance from the enemy. They took control of all military, economic, cultural, social, and governmental institutions, preserving them intact.

The Spring 1975 Ho Chi Minh Campaign in Saigon – Gia Định unfolded through various forms, including: mobilizing and urging RVN soldiers, officers, and government employees to surrender; blocking enemy vehicles to force their surrender; capturing fleeing officers and war criminals; disarming police and soldiers who surrendered or deserted; seizing ward and district headquarters; securing and protecting government offices, warehouses, military bases, and factories to hand over to the army for takeover; establishing self-governing local governments; guiding the army to strategic objectives; raising revolutionary flags; and maintaining local security and stability in the city's daily activities. When the main forces entered the city, the people supplied them with food, assisted in capturing traitors, hunted down war criminals, and led the army to destroy the last enemy strongholds. The streets were filled with revolutionary flags as the people warmly welcomed the army.

The forces of mobilization, political work, and intelligence actively operated within enemy lines, working to mobilize personnel and encourage enemy units to surrender quickly, thereby minimizing casualties on both sides and contributing to the swift success of the general offensive.

President Dương Văn Minh's unconditional surrender was the result of the long and arduous struggle of the entire Vietnamese military and people, with the decisive defeat of the RVN's military on the battlefields from Buôn Ma Thuột, Huế, Đà Nẵng, and along the defensive lines from Ninh Thuận to Xuân Lộc, and ultimately at the central headquarters in Saigon. However, President Dương Văn Minh's declaration of a ceasefire at 9:30 AM on April 30, 1975, was also a victory for propaganda and mobilization efforts. It was the result of a persistent struggle, combined with the timely targeting of the right individuals at the right moment.

During the Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising, the treatment of prisoners of war and surrendering soldiers was characterized by the large-scale disintegration of RVN soldiers and officers, who surrendered in mass at the front lines. Initially, they were mostly released on the spot and allowed to return home. However, as the enemy's disintegration deepened, the Party's Central Secretariat issued directives requiring local Party committees and revolutionary governments in newly liberated areas to set up systems to help the Military Administration Committee process the registration of surrendered RVN soldiers and officers. This had a strong impact on the RVN soldiers, helping them trust in the revolution's tolerance and humanity. It made them realize that their best option was to surrender and receive leniency, rather than continue following orders from stubborn leaders.

The experience of military mobilization during the Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising holds significant historical meaning and offers important lessons. These lessons should be promoted to strengthen national unity, resist the schemes of opposing forces, and build a peaceful and stable Vietnam.

Appendix



A1 Brigadier General of the Republic of Vietnam Army, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh, persuaded Dương Văn Minh to surrender in 1975. [Source: (AP: photo)]



A2 Lieutenant Lê Quang Ninh (second from the left), an undercover agent, led an entire battalion of the Republic of Vietnam Army to surrender on April 28, 1975. [Source: (AP: photo)]



A3 Mr. Dương Văn Minh (seated, on the right) reads the surrender statement at the Saigon Radio Station's studio on the afternoon of April 30, 1975. [Source: Historical photo].

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