

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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**THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT
STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF
THE U.S. AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE
SOUTHWEST REGION FROM 1965 TO 1975**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The necessity of the thesis topic

The victory of the resistance war against America for national salvation of the Vietnamese people (1954-1975) “is forever inscribed in the history of our nation as one of the most glorious pages, a shining symbol of the total triumph of revolutionary heroism and human intellect, and entering world history as a great feat of the 20th century, an event of immense international importance and profound epochal significance.” To achieve this victory, the Vietnamese people had to undergo an arduous struggle, with many losses and sacrifices, including the contribution of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the U.S. and the Saigon Administration.

Throughout the course of the war of aggression in Vietnam (1954-1975), the US imperialists always considered “pacification” as the foremost fundamental strategic policy and consistently implemented it throughout, tied to the policy of neo-colonialist invasion. The pacification policy was carried out by using a combination of methods and measures: political, military, economic, social, cultural, educational... in which, the political aspect was both the strategic goal and the main, regularly used measure, aimed at achieving the core purpose of seizing land, winning over the people, controlling the area, eliminating revolutionary forces, and destroying the revolutionary rear base and strongholds in South Vietnam.

From 1965 to 1975, implementing the strategies of “Limited War” and “Vietnamization of the War”, along with launching operations aimed at “searching and destroying” revolutionary forces, the US and the Saigon Administration intensified the pacification program with plans such as “*Focused Pacification*”, “*New Rural Construction*”, the “*Phoenix Campaign*”, “*Accelerated Pacification*”, “*Pacification and Development*”, “*Special Pacification*”, “*Self-Defense Community*”, “*Community Local Development*”, the “*Four-Year Plan*” etc...

The Southwest Region holds a particularly important geographical position, being a strategic area that both the enemy and the revolutionary government wanted to control to gain an advantage in the war. Since 1968, the Southwest Region had been considered by the US and the Saigon Administration as the focus of the “pacification” program in South Vietnam. The rural areas in the provinces of Tien Giang, Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang, An Giang, Dong Thap, Ben Tre... became the focal points of the pacification program. The pacification policy in the Southwest Region by the US and the Saigon Administration was aimed not only at seizing land, winning over the people, and gaining control of the countryside but also at eliminating revolutionary forces. Therefore, the US and the Saigon Administration launched many large-scale, long-day, high-intensity sweeps, utilizing all modern weapons, including B52 aircrafts, with major pacification campaigns such as: “Simultaneous General Offensive”, “U Minh Grass Removal”, etc... The pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration caused many difficulties and losses for the revolution in the South.

For the revolutionary forces, the Southwest Region was not only the revolutionary base of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 but also an important revolutionary base of the Southern Regional Party Committee, later the Central Office for South Vietnam. Facing the extremely insidious pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration, the Party Central Committee, directly the Central Office for South Vietnam, issued rightful and timely guidelines, directing the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 and the Party committees of the Southwest Region to strengthen force building, intensify military and political struggles in rural areas, launch mass uprisings, strive to win over and hold onto the people, expand and consolidate the liberated areas, and defeat the enemy's pacification plan.

With a tradition of uprising, under the leadership of the Party Central Standing Committee, the Central Office for South Vietnam, directly the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, the military and people of the Southwest Region overcame difficulties and challenges, bravely and resourcefully fought, and gradually

defeated the schemes and tactics in the pacification process of the US and the Saigon Administration. The anti-pacification struggle movement in the Southwest Region contributed, along with the people of the South, to successively defeating the war strategies of the US and the Saigon Administration, contributing, together with the people nationwide, to the victory of Spring 1975, liberating the South, and reunifying the country.

Currently, the Southwest Region holds an important strategic position in terms of politics, economy, national defense, and security for the country and the region. Therefore, in recent times, the Politburo and the Government have issued many resolutions, directives, and projects aimed at socio-economic development and ensuring national defense and security in this region. The study of the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975 contributes to clarifying the Party's sound policy and insightful guidance; and the spirit of uprising of the people of the Southwest Region in the resistance war against America for national salvation, which was full of difficulties and hardships but extremely glorious.

Researching the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region aims to draw lessons learned on building strong grassroots Party organizations, serving as the core to lead the struggle against wrongful, hostile views that distort the history of the Southwest Region; the lesson on considering “the people as the root”, “respecting the people, loving the people, being close to the people, sticking to the people”, promoting the position of the people's heart, building the people's security posture associated with the all-people national defense posture; the lesson on national unity based on the solidarity and attachment between the Kinh and Khmer ethnic groups in the cause of building and developing the Mekong Delta region to be increasingly rich and beautiful, contributing together with the whole country to realizing the goal of building a powerful, democratic, just, civilized, prosperous, and happy Vietnam.

For the reasons mentioned above, the doctoral candidate has chosen the topic: “The Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the U.S. and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975” as the subject of the doctoral thesis.

2. Research objectives and duties

2.1. Research objectives

The study clarifies the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975; evaluates successes and limitations, contributing to further clarifying the patriotic spirit and creativity of the people of the Southwest Region in the circumstances where they were forced to rise up and fight to hold onto the land and gain the right to self-determination. On that basis, it draws lessons learned from the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975.

2.2. Research duties

- To clarify the factors affecting the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy in the Southwest Region during the period 1965-1975;
- To clarify the viewpoints and guidelines of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam regarding the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region during the period 1965-1975;
- To present and analyze the process of guidance by the Party Central Committee, the Central Office for South Vietnam, and the Regional and Provincial Party Committees of the Southwest localities regarding the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region during the period 1965-1975;

- To evaluate and comment on the Party's leadership in the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975; stating results, limitations, pointing out the causes, and drawing some lessons learned from the practical experience of the Party's leadership in the struggle against the enemy's pacification in the Southwest Region during the period 1965-1975.

3. Subject and scope of study

3.1. Subject of study

The thesis studies the process of the Party and its various levels of Party committees' leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy and program of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975.

3.2. Scope of study

- *In terms of time:* The thesis studies the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975. The thesis takes the starting point of 1965 because this was the year when the US imperialists began implementing the "Limited War" strategy, directly deploying US troops and allied forces into South Vietnam for combat, and accompanying the "Limited War" strategy were the policies of "Search and Destroy" and "Pacification". The end point is April 1975, when the resistance war against America for national salvation achieved complete victory with the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign, simultaneously marking the conclusion of the "Four-Year Plan - 1972-1975" and other pacification plans of the US and the Saigon Administration. The thesis divides and presents the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region into two periods: 1965-1968 and 1969-1975, based on the South Vietnam revolution's counter-actions against the two US war strategies: "Limited War" (1965-1968) and "Vietnamization of the War" (1969-1975). In addition, the thesis provides an overview of the pacification policy and the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region before 1965.

- *In terms of space:* The process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the rural pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the period 1965 - 1975 in the Southwest Region (belonging to Military Region 9), including the provinces of Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Can Tho, Soc Trang, Ca Mau (during this period Bac Lieu was divided into two parts, one part merged into Soc Trang, one part merged into Ca Mau), Rach Gia, and Ha Tien. Currently, this area belongs to the provinces of An Giang, Ca Mau, Vinh Long, and Can Tho city.

- *In terms of content:* The thesis studies the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975, mainly focusing on researching and clarifying: The schemes and tactics of the US and the Saigon Administration in implementing the pacification policy during the 1965 - 1975 period; The viewpoints and guidelines of the Party Central Committee, the Central Office for South Vietnam, and the guidance of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, and the Party committees of the Southwest Region on counteracting the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration (1965-1975); The achievements as well as the limitations in the Party's leadership against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region (1965-1975). From the content of the thesis, the author draws some lessons learned through the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975.

4. Theoretical basis and research methods

4.1. Theoretical basis

The thesis is based on the viewpoints of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the Party Central Committee, and local Party committees on revolutionary warfare, people's warfare, and the role of the masses.

4.2. Research methods

The thesis uses two main methods: the historical method combined with the logical method. In addition, other methods are also used, such as: analysis, synthesis, statistics, comparison; specialized historical research methods such as the synchronic method, the diachronic method, and the specific research method of the science of Party history, which is to use the resolutions and directives of the Party and Party committees at various levels as the basis for comparison with historical events in practice to clarify the content of the topic.

5. New contributions of the thesis

- Contributing to supplementing scientific documents on the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy and program of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region during the period 1965 – 1975.
- Drawing lessons learned to apply in practice for building the great national unity bloc, serving the cause of national construction and defense in the current period.
- Providing additional scientific arguments, data, and documents for researching and propagating the History of the Communist Party of Vietnam.
- The thesis also serves as a reference material for teaching, studying Party history, local history, and for the work of educating the homeland's traditions for the post-war young generation.

6. Structure of the thesis

Apart from the Introduction, Conclusion, List of References, and Appendices, the content of the thesis consists of four chapters, 10 sections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE THESIS TOPIC

1.1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE THESIS TOPIC

1.1.1. Domestic Research Works

1.1.1.1. Research works referring to the content of anti-pacification

** Research works related to the content of the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration*

Typical works include: “*Summary of the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation: Victory and Lessons*” and “*Vietnamese Revolutionary War (1945-1975): Victory and Lessons*” by the Steering Committee for War Summary, directly under the Politburo; “*History of the Communist Party of Vietnam*”, Volume II by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought (1995); “*Tran Van Giau Collected Works*” by Professor Tran Van Giau (2006); “*The 1968 Tet Offensive- A Great Turning Point in the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation*” by Ho Khang (2008); “*History of the Southern Regional Party Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam (1954-1975)*” edited by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Quy (2015); “*History of Vietnam, Volume 13 from 1965 to 1975*” edited by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Văn Nhat (2017); the work “*History of the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation*”, comprising 9 volumes by the Vietnam Military History Institute - Ministry of National Defense, etc. These works have different approaches to the struggle against the pacification policy across various areas, comprehensively covering the time and space of the anti-pacification policy struggle during the resistance war against America for national salvation period.

** Specialized monographs on the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the South*

The book “*The Movement to Counter and Destroy Rural Pacification in Nam Bo during the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation (1969-1972)*” by Ha Minh Hong (2000); The book “*The Party’s Leadership of the Struggle to Counter and Destroy the US-Puppet Regime’s “National Policy” of Strategic Hamlets in South Vietnam (1961-1965)*” by Tran Thi Thu Huong (2003); “*The Party’s leadership of the movement struggling against the Pacification Program of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Eastern South Region from 1961 to 1965*” by Tran Nhu Cuong (2003); The book “*The Movement to Struggle against the Destruction of Strategic Hamlets*” by Nguyen Cong Thuc (2006); The work “*History of the movement struggling to Counter the Pacification in the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation (1954-1975)*”, comprising 4 volumes compiled and published by the Vietnam Military History Institute - Ministry of National Defense in 2014, 2015, 2018, and 2019, etc. These specialized monographs on the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the South focus on clarifying the close, continuous, step-by-step, timely, and correct guidance of the Party Central Committee and local Party committees for the movement struggling against the pacification policy in the South in general and the Southwest Region in particular. These works are important materials providing valuable historical data for the author of the thesis.

1.1.1.2. Research works on the struggle against pacification policy in the Southwest Region

The proceedings “Defeating 75 Puppet Battalions in Pacifying and Encroaching upon Chuong Thien after the Paris Agreement” (1990) from the Scientific Workshop organized by the Steering and Organizing Committee for Major Holidays of the former Hau Giang province; The book “*Can Tho People’s Armed Forces 30 Years of Resistance 1945 – 1975*”, compiled under the direction of the Party Committee - Military Command of Can Tho province, edited by Colonel Le Trong Nghia (2002); The book “*U Minh Base Area 1945-1975*” by Tran Ngoc Long (2007); The book “*General Offensive and Uprising of 1968 and Defeating the Enemy’s Pacification from 1968 to 1973 in the Mekong Delta*” (2008) compiled under the direction of the Party Committee – Command of Military Region IX; The work “*History of the Southwest Region’s Resistance*” by the Compilation Committee for the History of the Southwest Region’s Resistance (2010), comprising 3 volumes. Regarding the movement of destructing strategic hamlets in the Southwest Region, there is also the work: “*The Movement of Destructing Strategic Hamlets in the Southwest Region (1961-1965)*” by Pham Duc Thuan (2018). In addition, there are documents on the history of the Party Committees in the provinces and cities belonging to the Southwest Region, including: Hau Giang Provincial Party Executive Committee (1987), “*Hau Giang 21 Years of Anti-American Resistance*” (1987); “*Military Region 9 - 30 Years of Resistance (1945 - 1975)*” by the Command of Military Region 9; “*History of the Southwest Region’s Resistance*” by the Compilation Committee for the History of the Southwest Region’s Resistance; “*Preliminary History of the Soc Trang Provincial Party Committee*”; “*History of the Bac Lieu Provincial Party Committee*”, Volume 1 (1927-1975); “*History of the Ca Mau Provincial Party Committee, Volume 1 (1930-1975)*”; “*History of Tra Vinh Province*”, Volume 3 (1954-1975); “*History of the Can Tho Provincial Party Committee (1954 - 1975)*”, Volume 3 (1954-1975); “*Kien Giang Anti-American Resistance (1954-1975)*”; “*History of the Vinh Long Provincial Party Committee (1930 - 2010)*” etc. These works have relatively comprehensively reflected the resistance war against America for national salvation of the people in the Southwest provinces under the leadership of the Party Central Committee, the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, and the local Party committees of the Southwest Region, including the feats of arms of the military and people in the Southwest Region against the pacification program of the US and the Saigon Administration during the years of the resistance war against America for national salvation. These are important works that provide precious historical data for the author of the thesis.

1.1.2. Foreign research works

The resistance war against America for national salvation of the Vietnamese people has attracted the research interest of a large number of foreign scholars, some of whom had participated in this war. Foreign scholars'

research works related to the thesis topic include: The book “*Summons of the Trumpet: A History of the Vietnam War from a Military Man’s Viewpoint*” by Dave Richard Palmer (1984); “*A Bright Shining Lie*” by Neil Sheehan (1990); “*Vietnam - The Ten Thousand Day War*” by Michael Maclear (1990); “*Anatomy of a War*” by American historian Gabriel Kolko; “*In Retrospect - The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*”, by Robert S. McNamara (1995); “*America’s Longest War*” by George C. Herring (1998); “*The Pentagon Papers and the Memoir on the Vietnam War*” by Daniel Ellsberg (2018). These works reflect the comments, viewpoints, and assessments of foreign scholars on the war waged by the US in Vietnam (1954-1975). The authors seek the reasons for the US failure in the war in Vietnam and the factors that created Vietnam's strength. Most authors acknowledge that: it is patriotism, the tradition of solidarity, and the spirit of resilience and indomitability that were the factors contributing to Vietnam's victory.

1.2. ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND ISSUES THE THESIS FOCUSES ON RESOLVING

1.2.1. Assessment of the research results of works related to the thesis

Through the published research results, it can be seen that there have been many research works by scholars both domestically and internationally writing about the resistance war against America for national salvation. In these works, the content of pacification and anti-pacification is mentioned and reflected at different levels:

In terms of the data: At different levels, works such as books, theses, and articles in specialized journals have provided specific data on the resistance war against America for national salvation of the Vietnamese people (1954-1975); on the struggle to counter and destroy strategic hamlets and the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the South from 1972 backward; and on the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region during the period before 1965.

In terms of the content:

- Some scientific works have outlined the historical context of the resistance war against America for national salvation of the Vietnamese people, especially the difficulties and challenges that the Vietnamese people had to face.
- Clarified the Party's guidelines and viewpoints in general on the resistance war against America for national salvation, including those related to the policy and viewpoint of anti-pacification, holding onto land, winning over the people, and building and protecting revolutionary forces in the South in general and the Southwest Region in particular.
- Evaluated the great victories of the resistance war against America for national salvation, including mentioning the Party's success in leading the people to destroy strategic hamlets and counter the pacification policy in the Southwest Region through the phases of the resistance war.

In terms of the methods: The aforementioned works employed specialized historical methods, combining the historical method and the logical method. The authors also used other methods such as: analysis, synthesis, statistics, comparison; field research, survey, ... to study, elaborate on the above issues, and reflect the basic contents at different levels and aspects.

Overall, the research works on the pacification program and anti-pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the resistance war against America for national salvation period have only stopped at general outlines, on the common level of the South from before 1973 and in the Southwest Region from before 1965. There has not been any systematic in-depth study on the process of the Party’s leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975. Therefore, there are still many issues, both theoretical and practical, that need further research.

Research works directly or indirectly related to the topic are all of important significance to the thesis. They are precious sources of rich and useful data for the author in conducting his/her research topic.

In the thesis: "The Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975", the author inherits the results of previous researchers in the following issues:

- Firstly, the research methodology for the issue of the anti-pacification policy movement of the US and the Saigon Administration, thereby grasping the theory of the pacification policy, studying documents, and referencing the reality of the anti-pacification policy movement on the South Vietnam battlefield in general and the Southwest Region in particular.
- Secondly, the theoretical issues regarding the anti-pacification policy movement during the resistance war against America for national salvation period: on promoting the strength of the great national unity bloc, people's warfare, and the combination of the three prongs of attack (military, political, proselytizing) in the movement against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration .
- Thirdly, based on the system of documents on the anti-pacification policy movement of the US and the Saigon Administration on the general level of the South to gain an overview, thereby making comparisons and contrasts to find the distinctive characteristics of the anti-pacification policy movement in the Southwest Region, and thus drawing lessons learned for the current cause of national construction and defense.

1.2.2. Issues the thesis focuses on resolving

Within the framework of the doctoral thesis topic, the doctoral candidate focuses on researching and resolving the following issues:

- The factors affecting the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region such as: the historical context, natural conditions, population, ethnic groups, religions and beliefs, and revolutionary struggle tradition in the Southwest Region and the results of the anti-pacification policy movement before 1965, creating a basis for the subsequent anti-pacification policy movement.
- Clarifying the important and urgent role of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975.
- Presenting a systematic and comprehensive view of the Party's viewpoints and guidelines on anti-pacification policy in general and the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975.
- Clarifying the process by which the Party Committees and the military and people of the Southwest Region struggled against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration there from 1965 to 1975.
- From the successes and limitations of the process of the Party's leadership of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975, the thesis draws some key lessons learned to contribute to the cause of national construction and defense in the current period.

Chapter 2

THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION DURING THE PERIOD 1965-1968

2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION AND THE MOVEMENT STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION BEFORE 1965

2.1.1. Natural, population, economic, cultural, and social characteristics of the Southwest Region

The Southwest Region is located in the southernmost part of the Fatherland, holding an important strategic position in terms of politics, socio-economy, and national defense and security. The Southwest Region is a multi-ethnic land: the four main ethnic groups settling and developing the Southwest Region are the Kinh, Khmer, Hoa, and Cham. The co-residence process led to cultural exchange among the ethnic groups. They live together harmoniously on a rich delta, making the culture of the Southwest Region distinctly multi-ethnic yet highly unified. The Southwest Region is also a multi-religious and belief-based region. The patriotic and revolutionary tradition of the people of the Southwest Region was formed and fostered in association with the process of land reclamation, nation-building, and national defense.

The Central Office for South Vietnam assessed the role, position, and potential of the Southwest Region as follows: “T3 (the Southwest Region) is an area with enormous potential (in terms of politics, economy, and military), a battlefield where the enemy is weakened, and where we have great capacity and very basic conditions to liberate most of the countryside, utilize human and material resources, develop a new posture and strength to rapidly change the situation and advance the movement to a new phase of development”. Therefore, whichever side between us and the enemy gains control of the Southwest Region will possess a great political, economic, and military posture and strength in the war.

The favorable natural, economic, and social conditions, and the patriotic revolutionary tradition, along with the experience from the process of national construction and defense struggle of the Southwest Region people, form the basis for the Central Office for South Vietnam and the local Party committees there to implement the policy of national unity, mobilizing the entire people to participate in the resistance war against America for national salvation, resolutely fighting against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in all historical periods.

2.1.2. Schemes, tactics, and pacification activities of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region before 1965

In the war of aggression by the US in Vietnam, the pacification policy (pacification plan) was focused on right from the start of the war. The US and the Saigon Administration carried out pacification through programs, plans, and action measures of the entire Saigon Administration apparatus (using police, military, secret agents, self-defense forces, local officials, civil guards, etc.), placed under the direct command of US military and civilian advisors. This policy was continuously implemented, associated with and corresponding to each war strategy under different names and increasingly larger scales.

From 1954 to 1965, the US and the Saigon Administration carried out the strategic measure of “Denounce and Eliminate Communists” and then the “Special War” strategy. Through each war strategy, the US and the Saigon Administration implemented several pacification programs as follows: The “Denounce and Eliminate Communists” Campaign, launched on July 7, 1955. Along with the “Denounce and Eliminate Communists” program, from 1955 to 1959, the Saigon Administration carried out socio-economic programs: “Land Reform” (February 1955), establishing “Resettlement Areas” (1957-1958), “Agroville Zone” (1959-1960) to win over the people, control the people, and push back the influence of the revolution among the people in the South. From 1961, the US launched the “Special War” strategy, directly intervening militarily in South Vietnam. In the “Special War” strategy, the US and the Saigon Administration schemed to pacify the South with the “Strategic Hamlet” national policy, through two plans: the “Staley-Taylor Plan” and the “Johnson-McNamara Plan”. Through this, the enemy conducted sweep and destruction operations,

eliminating revolutionary forces; forcing and relocating the people into “new life hamlets”, aiming to win over, hold onto the people, and separate the people from the revolutionary forces.

2.1.3. The Party's Leadership and Guidance in Countering Enemy Pacification in the Southwest Region before 1965

Immediately upon the deployment of the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration, the struggle movements against “Denounce and Eliminate Communists” took place with a larger scale and greater ferocity. The military and people of the Southwest Region found ways to survive and develop through many forms: carrying out the elimination of tyrants and secret agents; building political enclaves and “forest villages” (which later developed into revolutionary bases). As a result, in the movement struggling against “Denounce and Eliminate Communists” in the Southwest Region in the years 1957-1958, we “eliminated tyrants and secret agents” from thousands of enemy personnel, including commanders of civil guards, self-defense forces, as well as district chiefs, police chiefs, secret police, informants, etc.

Clearly recognizing the requirements of the revolution and the aspirations of the people of the South, at the 15th Central Committee Plenum (1959), the Party Central Executive Committee issued a Resolution on the revolution in the South, advocating the combination of political struggle with armed struggle to overthrow the Ngo Dinh Diem ruling clique, advancing toward the liberation of the South. Under the guidance of Resolution 15, starting from January 1960, the movement of partial uprisings of the people in the South took place across the countryside and mountainous areas (also known as the General Uprising movement). The victory of the General Uprising in the South won back the right to mastery for the people in many vast rural areas, dealt a strong blow to the enemy's oppressive machinery in the South, failed the plan to herd and relocate the people to establish Resettlement Areas and Agrovillage Zones, contributing to the bankruptcy of the pacification program of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region and the South in general during the 1954-1960 period.

From 1961, the US launched the “Special War” strategy through a three-stage plan, with the first stage being the pacification of the South within 18 months (June 1961 to December 1962) primarily by herding the population to establish “Strategic Hamlets” (1961-1963), “New Hamlets” (1964), “New Life Hamlets” (1965), implementing the “draining the water to catch the fish” tactic to eliminate revolutionary forces. Entering the stage of countering the pacification program using the tactic of herding the population into “Strategic Hamlets” by the enemy, at the Politburo Conference in February 1962, the Party advocated: “Destroying strategic hamlets, breaking the enemy's grip... is an urgent task as well as a long-term one”. By November 1962, the Central Office for South Vietnam held a militia and guerrilla conference, advocating: when the enemy oppresses, we break the oppression; when the enemy conducts sweeps, we counter the sweeps; when the enemy establishes strategic hamlets, we destroy strategic hamlets.

Implementing the above policy, the military and people of the South upheld their determination to fight back against enemy sweeps and destroy the enemy's strategic hamlets. A highlight in the movement to counter strategic hamlets was the battle of Ap Bac by the military and people of My Tho (Tien Giang) in January 1963.

After the counter-sweep battle at Ap Bac (January 2, 1963), the Central Office for South Vietnam held the first whole-region conference on countering strategic hamlets (June 1963), summarizing the experience of destroying strategic hamlets in My Tho, the Central Office for South Vietnam advocated: “The struggle to counter and destroy strategic hamlets and hamlets is the top priority task of the Party in the current situation”.

Implementing this policy, in July 1963, the entire South entered the second phase of countering strategic hamlets. In this phase, the revolutionary forces encircled and attacked and destroyed enemy sub-sectors and posts, supporting the people in the strategic hamlets to rise up, break the grip, and regain mastery. From 1964 onwards, the movement to counter and destroy strategic hamlets and new life hamlets in Nam Bo combined the three prongs of attack (military, political, proselytizing combined to attack the enemy) and the widespread mass participation in guerrilla warfare. The military and people of the localities closely combined the destruction of strategic hamlets with countering enemy sweeps, promoting various forms of political struggle by the masses; there was a close combination between destroying strategic hamlets in the countryside and the struggle in the cities; armed forces were gradually formed, strongly supporting the movement against strategic hamlets and rural pacification by the enemy.

2.2. THE PARTY'S POLICY TO COUNTER THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION DURING THE PERIOD 1965-1968

2.2.1. The Situation in the South after 1965 and the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the Period 1965-1968

Having failed in the “Special War” strategy, the US imperialists deployed US troops directly to participate in the war in Vietnam with the “Limited War” strategy – the highest level in the US government's global military strategy of “Flexible Response”. The purpose of the “Limited War” strategy was to continue pacifying the South, destroying the armed forces and infrastructure of the revolutionary forces; winning the “hearts” and “minds” of the people of the South; establishing a unified administrative organizational regime throughout the South, imposing a new type of neo-colonial rule in South Vietnam.

The US pacification policy was deployed in South Vietnam through programs, plans, and action measures of the entire Saigon Administration apparatus (army, police, security forces, etc.), under the direct command of US military and civilian advisors, aiming to “seize land, win over the people” in all areas of South Vietnam throughout the Vietnam War (1954-1975). However, in each war strategy, the US implemented corresponding pacification programs with different names, accompanied by different policies, measures, and scales.

In October 1966, the “New Rural Construction” program was born and officially applied at the end of 1966, starting with the establishment of “New Life Hamlets”, “New Hamlets” with the slogan “destroy the old life, build the new life”. This was an advancement in the enemy's pacification policy to win over the people. The goals were: “Destroying the embedded communists - Eliminating the cruel tyrants and wicked oppressors - Eradicating hatred, building a new spirit - Organizing people's democracy and administrative bases - Organizing the people to fight against the Viet Cong - Eliminating illiteracy - Attacking diseases - Land reform - Developing agriculture and small industry - Developing the liaison system”.

In addition, to boost reconnaissance and espionage activities, and to maximize forces to destroy the revolution, on July 1, 1968, President Nguyen Van Thieu signed Decree No. 280a/TT/SL on the establishment of the “Phoenix Campaign”. In reality, the “Phoenix Campaign” was promulgated by the Saigon Administration, but was nurtured by the US government, commanded by US advisors, serving the US war of aggression. The Phoenix Committee set the goal of eliminating the Viet Cong infrastructure to maintain local security and order, so the main operational area of the Phoenix Committees at all levels was in rural areas, of which the Southwest Region was a key focus for implementing this plan.

From October 1968 onwards, the US and the Saigon Administration continued to focus on the rural areas of the delta with the “accelerated pacification” program. The goal was to restore control over the

hamlets that had been broken during our offensives and uprisings. The focus of pacification was the provinces around Saigon, Military Region 5, Tri-Thien, and the Mekong Delta region.

The notable characteristic of the rural pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the 1965-1968 period was the use of strong military forces, focusing on fierce and large-scale destruction in many places, forcing people to leave the liberated zones and flee to areas controlled by the enemy; for places where people held on, the enemy sought every way to “sweep and scoop up” them en masse into remote areas so that the people could not return to their old places of residence.

The massive deployment of US troops with powerful forces and modern weapons in the “Limited War” strategy caused a segment of cadres, soldiers, and people to feel confused, worried, afraid of the fierce war, giving rise to wavering thoughts and reduced fighting spirit. In this situation, timely leadership by the Party with sound and synchronized policies and guidelines from the Central to the local levels was required.

2.2.2. Policies of the Party Central Committee and Party Committees at all levels in the Southwest Region to counter the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the period 1965-1968

The direct participation of US troops in the war made the revolutionary situation in the South complicated, and the fate of the nation faced serious difficulties and challenges. Facing this situation, from March 25 to March 27, 1965, the Party Central Executive Committee held the 11th Plenum focusing on “The current situation and urgent tasks”, the Conference determined: “We must be highly vigilant and prepared to deal with and defeat the enemy if they turn the war in the South into a limited war...”.

Implementing the determination of the Party Central Committee, in December 1965, the Central Office for South Vietnam issued a Resolution on stepping up military and political struggles to defeat the “Limited War” strategy of the US imperialists. Regarding the method of struggle, the Resolution put forth the policy: “Persistently adhere to the method of combining military struggle with political struggle. Thoroughly apply the three prongs of attack” to defeat all enemy schemes in military, political, economic aspects, and rural pacification.

On the basis of absorbing the guidance of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam, in October 1965, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 held a political reorientation course for cadres from battalion level upwards to thoroughly grasp the situation and tasks in the new phase. The Regional Party Committee advocated countering enemy pacification, encroachment, “scooping up the people”, protecting the lives and property of the people, holding onto the locality, and organizing combat against enemy sweeps.

Implementing the Regional Party Committee's policy, the local Party committees in the Southwest Region had policies and measures to consolidate the movement, both focusing on fighting the enemy and mobilizing the people to cling to the land and the hamlets. In addition, Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region also paid attention to the ideological front, opening study sessions on the Party's Directives and Resolutions; consolidating the “three good” Party branches, implementing the “three clings” (The Party clings to the people, the people cling to the land, the armed forces cling to fighting the enemy), and “four clings” (The Party clings to the people, the people cling to the land, the armed forces cling to fighting the enemy, the superior clings to the subordinate), bravely holding onto their positions to carry out production and compete in combat to counter the enemy's pacification policy.

In January 1966, the US launched the first strategic dry season counter-offensive with two pincers: “search and destroy” and “pacification”, aiming to regain the initiative on the battlefield. Facing this situation, in March 1966, the Central Office for South Vietnam held its 4th Conference, issuing Resolution No. 1 on

“Assessing the revolutionary situation in the South in 1965, future direction and tasks, and some tasks of the revolution in the South”, affirming the determination: “to defeat the enemy's military, political, economic, rural pacification, and urban control schemes; consolidate and expand the mastery in the mountainous and delta rural areas, ... continue to destroy strategic hamlets, narrow the enemy's control scope,... create a solid opportunity to defeat the enemy in the situation of prolonged and nationwide war”.

By January 1967, the Standing Committee of the Central Office for South Vietnam issued the Directive “Vigorously promoting the offensive initiative, resolutely defeating the US-puppet's rural pacification scheme in 1967”, which affirmed: The US and the Saigon Administration consider rural pacification a particularly important strategic issue in the South. Therefore, “it is necessary to strengthen the leadership of Party branches in base areas, liberated areas, weak areas, especially where the enemy conducts pacification. It is necessary to closely combine building and consolidating Party branches with the practical struggle against the enemy's pacification scheme”.

Under the direct leadership of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 and the Provincial Party Committees, the military and people of the Southwest Region united their efforts and were determined to fight to defeat the pacification pincer, break the grip, and gradually defeat the rural pacification strategy of the US and the Saigon Administration. Along with the victory of the military and people of the North in the struggle against the US war of destruction, this pushed the “Limited War” strategy to the brink of bankruptcy, transitioning the revolution in the South to a new period - the period of general offensive and general uprising.

In December 1967, the Politburo of the Party Central Executive Committee decided to transition the revolutionary war in the South to a new period, advancing to gain decisive victory by the method of general offensive and general uprising. Then, in January 1968, the 14th Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee passed the Resolution: “Bravely advancing, implementing the General Offensive and General Uprising, winning decisive victory for the cause of anti-US resistance for national salvation.” According to the guidance of the Central Office for South Vietnam and the Regional Command, the Southwest Region had two key targets for the Tet Mau Than Offensive: Can Tho city (key target 1) and Vinh Long town (key target 2).

Thoroughly grasping the policy of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 quickly developed a plan, reorganized the battlefield, consolidated organizations, built up forces, and directed units and localities to prepare for combat according to the new requirements in implementing the Mau Than General Offensive and General Uprising. Under the leadership and direct guidance of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, during the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968, the military and people of the Southwest Region gained mastery over many hours and days in many places and targets within the cities. In the rural areas, armed forces such as local troops, militia, and guerrillas served as the core for the masses to rise up and attack the enemy using the three prongs of attack, encircling enemy posts. Notably, in the Vinh Long - Tra Vinh battle field, we liberated a vast rural area from Vinh Long to Duyen Hai district (Tra Vinh). This created a psychological effect, ranging from surprise to confusion and shock, for the Saigon Administration and their US masters in the Southwest Region.

In summary, with sound policies and guidelines, the Party put forth the policy of resolutely fighting against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration. The victory of the military and people of the South in defeating the two strategic dry-season counter-offensives of 1965-1966 and 1966-1967 of the US created the posture and strength for the military and people of the South and the Southwest Region to conduct the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968 across the entire South, breaking the

two pincers of “search and destroy” and “pacification”, and simultaneously contributing to the bankruptcy of the US “Limited War” strategy.

2.3. THE PARTY'S GUIDANCE ON COUNTERING THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION DURING THE PERIOD 1965-1968

2.3.1. Guidance on building and developing local revolutionary forces, establishing combat communes and hamlets, consolidating and protecting revolutionary base areas

Along with the goal of “seizing land, winning over the people”, the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration also aimed to eliminate revolutionary forces, destroy revolutionary base areas, and eliminate revolutionary infrastructure. Therefore, to prepare the conditions for advancing to overthrow the US and the Saigon Administration, as well as to defeat the enemy's pacification policy, the Party guided the building and development of local forces, consolidating and protecting revolutionary infrastructure to advance the revolution. “The local revolutionary forces include grassroots Party organizations, mass organizations, and combat armed forces.” Building local revolutionary forces, consolidating and protecting revolutionary infrastructure is building the practical strength of mastery to counter pacification.

Therefore, to counter the schemes and actions of sweeps and pacification by the US and the Saigon Administration, the Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region focused on building and developing local forces, consolidating and protecting revolutionary infrastructure. By the end of 1967 and early 1968, the revolutionary forces in the Southwest Region had a new step in posture and strength, ready for the general offensive and general uprising during Tet Mau Than in 1968.

2.3.2. Guidance on combining the struggle against enemy sweeps, encroachment, herding the population, and establishing hamlets, aimed at “holding onto the land, holding onto the people”

In the years 1965-1968, facing the schemes, tactics of destruction, and pacification by the US and the Saigon Administration, under the leadership of the Party, directly the Central Office for South Vietnam and the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, the local Party committees, the military and people of the Southwest Region were determined to fight against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration. The highlight in the movement to counter pacification in the Southwest Region during the 1965-1967 period was: the widespread mass participation in guerrilla warfare; the close combination of countering and destroying strategic hamlets with countering enemy sweeps; promoting various forms of political struggle by the masses; attacking the oppressive system of the Saigon Administration at the commune and hamlet levels; and winning the right to mastery for the people. The correct and resolute leadership and guidance of the Party in the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the years 1965-1967 created the posture and strength for our military and people to conduct the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968 across the entire South, breaking the two pincers of “search and destroy” and “pacification”, and simultaneously contributing to the bankruptcy of the US “Limited War” strategy.

2.3.3. Guidance on combining political struggle and military proselytizing against conscription, mobilizing to disintegrate the enemy; the struggle against chemical poisoning and the bombardment of people's property

To implement the “pacification” pincer, in the Southwest Region, the Saigon Administration sought to create resources by conscription and militarizing schools. Besides, the US and the Saigon Administration mobilized troops to conduct sweeps, spray chemical poisons, and bombard, damaging the houses and property of the people. Facing this situation, the Resolution of the Central Office for South Vietnam

Conference “On some issues in rural work in the coming time” (August 5, 1965) clearly stated the need to combine political, armed, and military proselytizing forms of struggle with the slogans “against bombardment, against terrorism, against conscription, for land, for the right to mastery”. Implementing this guidance, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 directed cadres to cling to the area to lead the movement against terrorism, against conscription, and the militarization of schools. Under the direct guidance of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, the movement struggling in the Southwest Region took place in many forms such as: opposing tax collection, opposing conscription and troop buildup, opposing forcing people to build posts; opposing herding the population, relocating houses into new life hamlets, demanding to return to the old places to work; opposing military operations, sweeps, destruction, opposing shelling and bombing; demanding compensation for lives and property, etc.

2.3.4. Guidance on coordinating the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968, breaking the two pincers of “search and destroy” and “pacification” by the US

In January 1968, at the 14th Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee (PCEC), our Party decided to launch the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968 on the night of January 30 to the morning of January 31, 1968, with the main direction of attack in the cities, key targets being Saigon, Da Nang, Hue; the attack space was across the entire South.

Implementing the Party's policy, the Central Office for South Vietnam and the Regional Command directed the localities in the Southwest Region to carry out the Tet Mau Than Spring 1968 General Offensive and Uprising across the entire region according to the general policy. In addition, the Central Office for South Vietnam determined that the Southwest Region had two key targets for the Tet Mau Than Offensive: Can Tho city (key target 1) and Vinh Long town (key target 2).

Implementing the policy of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 directed the units and localities in the Southwest Region to prepare for combat according to the new requirements in implementing the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and General Uprising in 1968. In the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968, the military and people of the Southwest Region gained mastery for many hours and days in many places and targets within the cities. In the rural areas, armed forces served as the core for the masses to rise up and attack the enemy using the three prongs of attack, encircling enemy posts. Notably, in the Vinh Long - Tra Vinh battlefield, we liberated a vast rural area from Vinh Long to Duyen Hai district (Tra Vinh). This caused surprise, confusion, and shock to the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region.

In general, during the 1965-1968 period, the military and people of the Southwest Region resolutely fought against the US “search and destroy” strategy and the Saigon Administration's “pacification, occupation, and control” to maintain the war situation in the context of the direct participation of US troops in the “Limited War” strategy. The highlight in the anti-pacification movement in the Southwest Region during the 1965-1968 period was: the widespread mass participation in guerrilla warfare; the close combination of countering and destroying strategic hamlets with countering enemy sweeps and promoting various forms of political struggle by the masses; attacking the oppressive system of the Saigon Administration at the commune and hamlet levels; and winning the right to mastery for the people. However, after the first phase of the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising, we failed to timely adjust our forces and targets, lacking flexibility in dealing with the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics, so from mid-1968, the liberated area was narrowed, and the population under our control was reduced by nearly half. This caused difficulties for the anti-pacification struggle movement in the following years.

Chapter 3

THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION AND ENCROACHMENT POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION DURING THE PERIOD 1969-1975

3.1. THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH AFTER 1968 AND THE PACIFICATION AND ENCROACHMENT POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION (1969-1975)

Although the “Limited War” strategy had been bankrupted, with their belligerent and stubborn nature, and wanting to maintain the neo-colonial regime in the South, the US continued to prolong the war in Vietnam with the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy, and the rural pacification program was considered the “key” to winning this strategy. Implementing this war strategy, the US increased economic and military aid, equipped the Saigon Army with war means, and modernized it enough to shoulder the main burden of the war. On the other hand, the US and the Saigon Administration replaced the “search and destroy” strategy with the measures of “sweep and hold”, “defense in depth”, and intensified the pacification policy with the “accelerated pacification” program at the end of 1968, aiming to control the entire population and territory. “Sweep and hold” meant attacking to push back the opponent and carrying out pacification to seize land, win over the people, exploit resources, manpower, and materials, serving the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy. Following this were a series of pacification programs: “Special Pacification” at the end of 1968 and early 1969, “Pacification and Development” in 1970, the “Community Self-Defense and Local Development” Plan in 1971, the “Four-Year Community Self-Defense and Local Development Plan 1972-1975” (abbreviated as the Four-Year Plan).

The notable characteristic of the rural pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the 1969-1975 period was the continuous implementation of pacification programs, aiming to encroach on more land and win over more people in strategic rural areas, especially densely populated areas rich in resources. Their pacification policy became increasingly comprehensive in all aspects (psychological warfare, political, military, economic, cultural, social), more insidious, brutal, and fierce to achieve the goal of seizing land, winning over the people, and eliminating the communist infrastructure. In this period, the pacification activities of the US and the Saigon Administration were deployed on a large scale, with fierce intensity of destruction, causing us many difficulties, losses, and loss of land and people. Therefore, the task of anti-pacification became increasingly difficult and complex. Thus, timely leadership by the Party from the Central to the local levels was needed, along with the determination of the entire Party, military, and people, to overcome difficult and challenging times, and defeat the pacification programs and plans of the US and the Saigon government and military.

3.2. THE PARTY'S POLICY TO COUNTER THE PACIFICATION AND ENCROACHMENT POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION (1969-1975)

Facing the situation where the US and the Saigon Administration continuously carried out widespread pacification programs, causing us many difficulties, the Party Central Committee advocated a strategic shift for the anti-rural pacification policy movement in the South. To timely adjust the policy and direction for the South Vietnam battlefield, the Politburo of the Party Central Executive Committee convened a meeting and issued Resolution No. 188-NQ/TW on May 10, 1969, “On the situation and tasks”, which affirmed: “The countryside is a strategic area of utmost importance for us now and in the future”.

Implementing the determination of the Party Central Committee, in July 1969, the Central Office for South Vietnam held its 9th Conference, determining: the enemy considered rural pacification policy an extremely important part of their “sweep and hold” strategy and their overall policy of de-escalation from a

position of strength. For the Southwest Region, the enemy would focus on “Striving to contest with us in the Mekong Delta, mainly focusing on pacification and encroachment, winning over the people and holding onto land in strategically important, densely populated areas”... The 9th Central Office for South Vietnam Conference marked a shift in the guidance of the anti-pacification struggle, shifting the focus to the countryside, considering the countryside an extremely important strategic area and identifying the most important tasks at this time as anti-pacification. This policy was further emphasized and clarified after the 18th Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee (January 1970).

Implementing the Resolution of the Central Office for South Vietnam, on August 15, 1969, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 issued Resolution No. 48/CT-T69 on “the work of breaking the grip and destroying rural pacification”. Accordingly, the Regional Party Committee determined: “The countryside of the Southwest Region occupies a very important position, being a delta battlefield, densely populated and rich in resources, with many Khmer and religious compatriots, capable of encircling the cities, having a close and direct relationship with Saigon. Gaining the countryside means gaining a strong posture on the Southwest battle field”.

Entering 1970, the enemy deployed the pacification program across a wide area, through the “Pacification and Development” (1970), “Supplementary Pacification and Development” (mid-1970) programs, the opponent continued to intensify rural pacification in all fields: political, military, economic, cultural, educational, etc. Facing this situation, on January 27, 1970, the Party Central Executive Committee held its 18th Plenum to discuss the direction of the revolution in the South in the new phase, which determined: “Stepping up military and political struggle in the countryside, launching a mass uprising high tide, striving to win over the people, hold onto the people, expand and consolidate the liberated areas, and defeat the enemy's rural pacification plan”.

Moving into 1971, the enemy raised the pacification program to the highest level and deployed a new pacification program in the South with the “Community Self-Defense and Local Development” Plan (1971-1972), aiming to elevate the pacification program to a higher level. Based on the actual situation on the anti-pacification battlefield, the Central Office for South Vietnam issued Directive No. 01/CT71, dated January 5, 1971, clearly stating: “The task of the rural movement is to focus on fighting and destroying pacification, expanding the people's mastery over almost all communes and hamlets, which has particularly important strategic significance in political and military terms to initially loosen and then completely break the enemy's new oppressive system, hitting hard at the foundation of the Vietnamization of the War policy, to expand our political, military, and military proselytizing offensive movement”.

Entering 1972, the US and the Saigon Administration advocated consolidating the encroached areas in the countryside, controlling the people, strengthening mobile forces, forming a continuous defensive posture closely combining the system of strongholds, resettlement zones, strategic hamlets with a dense network of posts. To implement this policy, the enemy launched a new pacification plan: the “Four-Year Community Self-Defense and Local Development Plan 1972-1975” (Four-Year Plan), in which the enemy tried to strengthen the effectiveness of the oppressive forces at the grassroots, merging the Phoenix organization into the national police, and continuing to implement the pacification program. Facing this situation, in May 1971, the Politburo of the Party Central Executive Committee advocated launching the Spring-Summer strategic offensive across the entire South to eliminate a significant portion of the Saigon Army's main forces, expand the liberated areas, change the war situation, and advance the resistance to a new step.

In early 1973, after successive defeats on the Southern and Northern battlefields, the US was forced to sign the Paris Ceasefire Agreement on January 21, 1973. However, the US still used the Saigon government

and army as a tool to continue implementing the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy, violating the Paris Agreement, and trying to maintain neo-colonialism in the South. In the Southwest Region (SWR), the enemy deployed hundreds of posts, encroaching on many communes and hamlets. Especially in Chuong Thien, from February to November 1973, the enemy deployed between 30 and 75 battalions to continuously attack the Long My - Chuong Thien area to continue implementing the Pacification policy and encroachment.

Against the enemy's acts of pacification, encroachment, and violation of the Paris Agreement, on February 3, 1973, the expanded Standing Committee of the Military Region 9 Party Committee held a conference in Vinh Vien commune (Long My-Hau Giang) chaired by Comrade Vo Van Kiet - Secretary of the Regional Party Committee and Military Region 9 Party Committee Secretary, proposing that the Central Office for South Vietnam maintain the offensive posture and resolutely strike back at enemy encroachment and pacification. The Conference determined the guiding ideology: “Attacking the enemy is a matter of principle” and “fighting to hold onto land, protect the people, maintain and expand the area”. The struggle of the military and people of Military Region 9 to punish the enemy violating the Paris Agreement and counter enemy pacification and encroachment in 1973, with Chuong Thien as the focus, was summarized into experience and lessons to be disseminated for the entire Region to study and apply in the struggle against enemy pacification.

In July 1973, the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee was held. Based on an analysis of the developments in the South, our Party set forth a Resolution clearly stating: “the foremost political task of the revolutionary movement in the South now is to win over the people and win the people's right to mastery across the countryside and cities”. The Resolution of the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee contained many decisions on the revolution in the South, marking an important milestone in the Party's leadership process and a shift in the policy against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration.

Entering 1974, the enemy still had not abandoned the pacification policy and encroachment. The Saigon Administration adjusted its plan from “Reconstruction and Development 1973” to “Security and Development 1974”. In the Southwest Region, the enemy still had not abandoned its ambition for pacification and encroachment. In the 1973-1974 plan, in addition to the goals of pacification and encroachment, the opponent also added a plan to steal and collect rice. Accordingly, they built large rice drying yards, rice storage areas, etc., to steal and collect the people's rice there.

Afterward, in August 1974, the Central Office for South Vietnam organized a conference to summarize the destruction of pacification throughout B2 and issued Resolution No. 01/NQ-74 in September 1974 on “Defeating the new pacification and encroachment policy of the US-puppet, advancing to complete the national democratic revolution in the South”, which set forth the task of defeating the enemy's pacification plan in the coming time. This was a thematic Resolution on the Party's anti-enemy pacification in the final stage of the war.

3.3. THE PARTY'S GUIDANCE ON COUNTERING THE PACIFICATION AND ENCROACHMENT POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION (1969-1975)

3.3.1. Guidance on building, consolidating, and developing local revolutionary forces, consolidating, and protecting revolutionary bases

After the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising, in the Southwest Region (SWR), by the end of 1969, the enemy had pacified and encroached upon almost all of the former liberated area, leaving only the U Minh base and the southern Ca Mau liberated zone; the armed forces suffered losses, the political forces seriously declined. To evade the bombs and shells of the US and the Saigon Administration, the people of the Southwest Region had to flee to enemy-controlled areas; in many localities, grassroots cadres retreated from

their operating areas to preserve forces. This was considered the period when the armed forces in the Southwest Region faced the most difficulties and shortages since the period of resistance against the French colonialists. Therefore, the urgent requirement of the Southwest Region battlefield at this time was to both fight and build, consolidate, and develop local forces and protect revolutionary bases and infrastructure, aiming to build practical strength to counter enemy pacification and encroachment. Building strong local forces was a highlight, playing an important role in the victory of the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration during the 1965-1975 period.

3.3.2. Guidance on the struggle against enemy pacification and encroachment, demanding the implementation of the Paris Agreement, determined to “hold onto land, win over the people, and hold onto rice”

During the 1969-1975 period, the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration was continuously implemented through large-scale pacification programs with fierce intensity of destruction, aiming to encroach on more land and win over more people in strategic rural areas, especially densely populated areas rich in resources, causing us many difficulties and losses.

When the enemy shifted from the “accelerated pacification” plan to “special pacification”, launching the “U Minh Grass Removal” campaign in the Southwest Region in early 1969, the Standing Committee of the Military Region 9 Party Committee directed all armed forces in Military Region 9 to persistently hold onto their positions and defeat the enemy's intention to encroach upon U Minh. During the 1969-1972 period, the Party led the military and people of the Southwest Region to struggle against the pacification plans: “Accelerated Pacification”, “Special Pacification”, “Supplementary Pacification”, “Pacification, Construction, and Development”, the “Community Self-Defense and Local Development” Plan (1971-1972), the Four-Year Plan (1972-1975), etc. In this period, the US and the Saigon Administration continuously implemented pacification programs with their highest efforts, but they were defeated before our military and people's Spring-Summer Offensive in 1972.

Entering 1973, after successive defeats on the Southern and Northern battlefields, the US was forced to sign the Paris Ceasefire Agreement (January 27, 1973). However, the US still used the Saigon government and army as a tool to maintain neo-colonialism in South Vietnam. At this time, the enemy focused on the Southwest Region as the key area for pacification and encroachment. In fact, even though the Paris Ceasefire Agreement was signed, the Mekong Delta region did not stop fighting, the war still continued, and in some places it was even fiercer than before the signing of the Paris Agreement, such as the Chuong Thien battlefield.

To carry out pacification and encroachment in Chuong Thien, they concentrated 52 battalions, which later increased to 75 battalions, with about 22,000 personnel (both main forces and civil guards), and over 14,000 shock self-defense forces. In March 1973, the enemy began the plan with breakthrough phases in the Southwest Long My area, taking Long My - Vi Thanh district as the focus of attack and considering it a springboard to occupy the U Minh revolutionary base area and create a shield to protect the tactical zone IV headquarters in Can Tho city.

Faced with this situation, the Military Region 9 Command was determined to defeat the enemy's encroachment and rice theft activities and directed the Southwest Region localities: “Combining anti-encroachment with anti-rice theft. Firmly adhere to the principle of stable clinging to positions, combining mobility and attack. The key area of the Military Region remains Chuong Thien. The provinces must implement a widespread attack plan to stretch the enemy's control and prevent them from concentrating forces on the Military Region's key area”. Under the direct leadership and guidance of the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9, the military and people of Can Tho coordinated with the localities in the Southwest Region to defeat the 75 turns of enemy battalions involved in pacification and encroachment in Chuong Thien. The victory

of Chuong Thien in 1973 was a great victory for the Party Committee, military, and people of Military Region 9 in the struggle against pacification, thereby holding onto land, protecting the people, and expanding the liberated area. This victory boosted the movement to destroy enemy posts throughout the Region, opened many liberated enclaves, frustrated the enemy's plan to encroach upon U Minh, and repelled the opponent's development pacification program in the number one key area of the Southwest Region in 1973.

By early 1974, the Saigon Administration still had not abandoned its ambition for pacification and encroachment in the Southwest Region. The Saigon Administration implemented the 1973-1974 plan, according to which, in addition to the goals of pacification and encroachment, the enemy also added a plan to steal and collect rice. To carry out this scheme, they built large rice drying yards, rice storage areas, etc., to steal and collect the people's rice there. But by the end of 1974, the military and people of the Southwest Region had encircled and forced the withdrawal of many enemy posts, liberated many communes and hamlets; regained large portions of the countryside, pushing the enemy to contract into towns and district seats. In this period, we liberated and held many liberated areas that the Saigon Administration could no longer retake. The pacification and encroachment plan of the Saigon Administration on the Southern battlefield had fundamentally failed.

Entering early 1975 – the twilight period of the Saigon Administration – the anti-pacification policy struggle movement of the military and people of the South in general and the Southwest Region in particular continuously developed, attacking the enemy on all fronts with the three prongs of attack, creating a combined strength that broke all pacification and encroachment efforts of the Saigon military and administration.

3.3.3. Guidance on combining political struggle and military proselytizing to counter conscription and surrender appeals; mobilizing to disintegrate the enemy

Failing in the “Limited War” strategy, the US replaced it with the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy (1969-1975), gradually withdrawing US troops home and handing over the main role on the battlefield to the Saigon Army. Therefore, the enemy issued a general mobilization order, relentlessly searched for and conscripted soldiers to reinforce the Saigon Army, by setting up “military recruitment” points, “militarizing schools”, and increasing the draft age for males from 17 to 45 years old.

Facing this situation, the Resolution of the 9th Conference of the Central Office for South Vietnam (July 1969) clearly stated: “Party committees and sectors at all levels must launch a resolute movement against conscription among youth and the entire population to combine the elimination of the enemy with cutting off the enemy's source of reinforcement. In this movement, Party committees must rely on the military proselytizing sector and mass organizations”. Implementing the directive of the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 promptly directed cadres of the Provincial Party Committees, District Party Committees, and cadres of various departments, sectors, and mass organizations at the provincial and district levels to cling to their operating areas to lead the movement against conscription and the militarization of schools.

Generally, during the 1969-1975 period, in the Southwest Region, the movement struggling against conscription, surrender appeals, and mobilization to disintegrate the enemy took place vibrantly and continuously, with many struggles involving thousands of people from various components, such as: students, monks, Khmer compatriots, women, and families of Saigon Army soldiers. These struggles contributed to the polarization of the enemy. Many Saigon Army soldiers resisted orders for sweeps and conscription by deserting, going absent without leave, deliberately causing self-inflicted injuries, or carrying out collective anti-war actions on the scale of companies to battalions. This weakened the enemy, contributing to the victory of our military and people's struggle against pacification and encroachment.

3.3.4. Guidance on the military and people of the Southwest Region conducting the General Offensive and Uprising of Spring 1975, the anti-enemy pacification struggle movement achieving complete victory

Entering 1975, the Saigon Administration still had not abandoned its ambition for pacification and encroachment, continuing to focus its efforts on pacification and territorial security work. However, military defeats, economic difficulties, and political crises severely reduced the fighting spirit of the soldiers and officers of the Saigon Army, rendering them no longer strong enough to serve as the core for the Saigon Administration's pacification and encroachment plan.

In the final stage of the Anti-American Resistance War for National Salvation, the movement struggling against the pacification policy of the military and people of the South and the Southwest Region continuously developed, attacking the enemy on all fronts, creating a combined strength, breaking all efforts of pacification and encroachment by the Saigon military and administration. The General Offensive and Uprising of Spring 1975 marked the complete victory of the anti-pacification policy struggle movement of the military and people of the Southwest Region, contributing to the successful completion of the nearly 21-year resistance war against American for national salvation of the Vietnamese people.

Chapter 4

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1. ASSESSMENT OF THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION (1965-1975)

4.1.1. Strengths and Causes

4.1.1.1. Strengths

The achievements in the struggle against the enemy's pacification during the 1965-1975 period by the military and people of the Southwest Region were the result of the sound policies and lines of the Party Central Committee; the creative application of the Party's policies and lines to the local reality by the Party committees in the South and the Southwest Region in the movement struggling against the pacification of the US and the Saigon Administration.

First, regarding the policy

The Party's policy of struggling against the enemy's pacification and encroachment was a sound policy, suitable to the aspirations of the people for freedom and democracy. The reality of our military and people's movement of struggling against the enemy's pacification showed that to achieve victory, there must be a sound policy and appropriate, timely methods of struggle to defeat the pacification and encroachment schemes and tactics of the US and the Saigon Administration. The Party correctly perceived and assessed the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics, thereby putting forth timely policies and resolutely fighting against the enemy's pacification and encroachment, and holding onto the land and winning the right to mastery for the people.

With the sound policy of the Party Central Committee and the leadership of Party committees at all levels, the military and people of the Southwest Region overcame difficulties and challenges, proactively and flexibly struggled against the enemy's pacification policy and encroachment, preventing and repelling step by step the pacification plans and programs of the US and the Saigon Administration, gradually pushing the enemy into a passive, weakened, and disintegrated position. The victory of the General Offensive and Uprising of Spring 1975 marked the complete victory of the resistance war against America for national salvation, including the movement struggling against the pacification policy by the military and people of the Southwest Region.

Second, regarding the guidance and results

Implementing the policies of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region guided the anti-pacification struggle movement with rich content and forms; proposing timely and effective leadership measures for the anti-enemy pacification struggle.

Throughout the process of leading the anti-enemy pacification struggle, the Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region always thoroughly grasped and followed the Party's policies, but the implementation process involved creativity and flexible application of the Party's policies and lines close to the local reality with a spirit of daring to think, daring to do, and daring to take responsibility before the Party and the people. Thereby, they led the military and people of the Southwest Region to win in the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in various stages of the war.

4.1.1.2. Causes of success

First, the reason for the above results is primarily due to the timely formulation of sound policies and lines by the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam regarding countering the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration.

Second, the Regional Party Committee of Military Region 9 and the Party committees of the Southwest Region provinces thoroughly grasped and creatively applied the Party's policies and lines to the reality of the Southwest Region. Based on sound policies and a correct understanding and assessment of the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics, the Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region provided timely guidance, resolutely fighting against the enemy's pacification and encroachment, holding onto land and winning the right to mastery for the people.

Third, an extremely important factor leading to the victory of the anti-pacification struggle movement in the Southwest Region was the patriotism, proactiveness, and creativity of the people of the Southwest Region.

Fourth, the harmonious coordination between the Southwest Region battlefield and the Southeast Region, Central South Region, and Military Region 5 battlefields helped to stretch the enemy, reduce military pressure, and create favorable conditions for the military and people of the Southwest Region to push back the enemy's pacification program in many places in the Mekong Delta region.

4.1.2. Limitations and Causes

4.1.2.1. Limitations

Besides the achieved results, the Party's leadership of the movement against the enemy's pacification and encroachment in the Southwest Region still had some limitations in policies, lines, the process of leadership and guidance, and the results of the movement.

- Regarding policy formulation

In the process of leading the struggle against the enemy's pacification and encroachment, sometimes the Party's formulation of lines and policies was not timely, appropriate, or closely aligned with local reality; the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics were not correctly assessed.

- Regarding guidance

In the process of leading the struggle against the enemy's pacification and encroachment, the Party made some errors in strategic guidance, was slow to adjust, and lacked flexibility in dealing with the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics; sometimes the guidance of the Central Office for South Vietnam was not closely aligned with local reality; in the leadership and guidance activities, there were periods when the Regional Party Committee and the Military Region Party Committee were not truly united.

- Regarding results

The movement struggling against the pacification programs of the US and the Saigon Administration basically took place with the content and forms of struggle as planned. Besides the achieved results, sometimes during the revolutionary struggle, the armed forces suffered heavy losses, especially after the first phase of the Tet Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising in 1968. Our subsequent reinforcement attacks reduced the combat strength of the armed forces, while the opponent had overcome the surprise and subsequently organized fierce counterattacks, leading to the depletion of our forces. This loss is a lesson for Party committees at all levels in the process of leadership and guidance in the subsequent period.

4.1.2.2. Causes of Limitations

- *Objective causes:* The anti-pacification and encroachment struggle of the people in the South in general and the people in the Southwest Region in particular was a confrontation with the US and the Saigon Administration; while the US was a leading economic and military power. The Saigon Administration and its US masters continuously changed their pacification and encroachment programs, plans, methods, and tactics, causing the struggle against the enemy's pacification by the military and people of the Southwest Region to face many difficulties, losses, and sacrifices.

- *Subjective causes:* Throughout the process of leading the resistance war, there were times when the Party Central Committee was slow to shift its strategic guidance, and the policy against the enemy's pacification was not closely aligned with the situation. The Central Office for South Vietnam sometimes proposed policies and guidance that were not entirely accurate with the reality in the Southwest Region. In addition, Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region sometimes did not pay due attention to Party building, mass mobilization, building political forces, armed forces, and building mass organizations; they did not pay due attention to political and ideological education for the contingent of cadres, Party members, and soldiers.

4.2. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT STRUGGLING AGAINST THE PACIFICATION POLICY OF THE US AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION (1965-1975)

4.2.1. Correctly assessing the enemy's pacification schemes and tactics, serving as the basis for formulating sound policies and methods of struggle appropriate to the specific conditions of the locality.

4.2.2. Closely combining the three prongs of attack: political - military - military proselytizing to create a combined strength in the struggle against the enemy's pacification.

4.2.3. Building strong armed forces, persistently holding onto positions, determined to repel all enemy pacification programs.

4.2.4. Firmly relying on the masses in the struggle against the pacification policy.

4.2.5. Focusing on building strong grassroots Party organizations, serving as the nucleus for leading the movement of struggle against the pacification policy

CONCLUSION

1. In the war of aggression in Vietnam, the US and the Saigon Administration always considered the pacification policy (pacification plan) a "national policy", a key, decisive factor for the success or failure of the war. Therefore, in the stages of the war in Vietnam from 1954 to 1975, the US implemented a series of pacification programs and plans with the core objective of seizing land, winning over the people, eliminating revolutionary forces, and destroying revolutionary bases. The pacification policy was implemented through programs, plans, and action measures of the entire Saigon Administration apparatus (using civil guards, self-

defense forces, local officials and spies, police, military, secret agents, etc.), placed under the direct command of US military and civilian advisors. This policy was continuously deployed, associated with and corresponding to each war strategy under different names and increasingly larger scales.

During the period of implementing the “Limited War” strategy (1965-1968), the US directly deployed troops to participate in the war along with the allied forces - the main force in charge of “search and destroy” the Southern Liberation Army; the Saigon Army was the main force in charge of “pacification” and occupation with large-scale military operations, along with modern, sophisticated weapons and brutal, fierce pacification tactics. Deploying the “Limited War” strategy, the US and the Saigon Administration took the Southeast Region as the main battlefield for “search and destroy”; the Southwest Region was the main battlefield for “pacification”. Moving into the period of implementing the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy (1969-1975), the rural pacification program was considered the key to winning this war strategy. Implementing the “Vietnamization of the War” strategy, the US replaced the “search and destroy” strategy with the “sweep and hold” measure, carrying out intense pacification on a large scale, while deploying a series of measures to destroy the revolutionary infrastructure in the South. In this period, the US and the Saigon Administration identified the priority pacification areas as the area surrounding Saigon, the Mekong Delta, Military Region 5, and Tri-Thien. After the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Mekong Delta region became the key area in the enemy's pacification policy.

2. The anti-pacification struggle movement in the Southwest Region during the 1965-1975 period showed the insightful leadership of the Party Central Committee, and the direct leading role of the Central Office for South Vietnam.

Right from the time the US deployed troops to the South and implemented the “Limited War” strategy, at the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Executive Committee (December 1965), the Party resolved: “To mobilize the forces of the whole country, resolutely defeat the war of aggression by the US imperialists in any situation.” In that spirit, the Central Office for South Vietnam affirmed the determination: “To defeat the enemy's military, political, economic, rural pacification, and urban control schemes; consolidate and expand the mastery in the mountainous and delta rural areas.” Implementing the Regional Party Committee's policy, the local Party committees in the Southwest Region had policies and measures to consolidate the movement, both focusing on fighting the enemy and mobilizing the people to cling to the land and the hamlets. Party committees at all levels thoroughly implemented the “three clings” and “four clings” approach, persistently holding onto positions to carry out production and compete in combat to counter the enemy's Pacification policy.

3. Applying the sound policies and lines of the Party Central Committee and the Central Office for South Vietnam, the Party committees at all levels in the Southwest Region guided the anti-pacification movement creatively and flexibly with rich content and forms, closely aligned with the local reality. The movement against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration in the Southwest Region from 1965 to 1975 carried both the general characteristics of the revolutionary struggle across the entire South and the distinct features of the delta region crisscrossed with rivers and canals.

Regarding the forms of struggle, due to the flat terrain of the Southwest Region, crisscrossed by rivers and canals, and a continuous water and land transport system, the anti-pacification policy activities were combined with various forms such as: destroying small naval fleets on the river; using rudimentary combat methods like spike pits, traps, booby traps combined with modern weapons to fight the enemy; using hornets or slingshots to eliminate the enemy; or using sniper rifles, digging trenches to encroach on enemy posts;

organizing and conducting comprehensive campaigns to destroy pacification, open up areas and zones, suitable to the specific characteristics of the riverine delta battlefield of the Southwest Region.

Regarding the forces, the anti-pacification policy struggle involved combined forces such as: the political forces of the masses, the three types of armed forces (militia and guerrillas, provincial and district local troops, and the main forces of the Military Region and the Region).

Regarding the methods, attacking the enemy with the three prongs of attack (military, political, military proselytizing), attacking in the strategic areas of the rural delta and cities. Especially in the delta region, coordinating attacks in three areas: enemy-controlled areas, contested areas, and liberated areas. The anti-pacification struggle was also conducted with comprehensive campaigns: military attacks to counter enemy encroachment so the people could hold onto land and break the control; military attacks to destroy enemy bases so the people could rise up and win the right to mastery. These are the unique and creative features of the Party committees, military, and people of the Southwest Region.

4. During the resistance war against America for national salvation, the Southwest Region had an important strategic position, serving as a base area and on-site rear providing human and material resources for the revolution. In addition, with the characteristic of being a multi-ethnic, multi-religious land, in the resistance war against America for national salvation in general and in the anti-enemy pacification struggle, the Southwest Region saw the mass participation of ethnic and religious compatriots, especially the Khmer compatriots. In reality, ethnic minorities and religious followers were important forces in various aspects of political and military proselytizing struggles, creating a continuous posture with the military prong, generating immense strength that contributed to the victory of the struggle against the pacification policy of the US and the Saigon Administration.

The victory of the movement against pacification policy in the Southwest Region left many valuable lessons for the Vietnamese revolution in general, including the lesson of thoroughly grasping and firmly adhering to the Party's perspectives and lines on the basis of creative application to the specific conditions of the locality to subsequently propose appropriate methods and forms of struggle aligned with local reality.

In the current period, the Southwest Region has an important strategic position in terms of politics, economy, national defense, and security for the country and the region. Therefore, in recent times, the Politburo has issued a series of resolutions and directives to develop socio-economy and ensure national defense and security in the "Nine Dragons" region.

However, in the past and currently, hostile forces often exploit ethnic and religious issues to divide national unity, causing political insecurity and social disorder in the Southwest Region. Some reactionary elements intentionally distort the history of the Southwest Region, raising the issue of the "Khmer Krom State" to incite and cause unrest in the lives and thoughts of a segment of ethnic minority compatriots; causing political insecurity and social disorder in the area. Facing this situation, applying the lessons learned from the anti-pacification policy movement of the US and the Saigon Administration still holds practical value, which is the lesson of building strong grassroots Party organizations, serving as the nucleus for leading the struggle to refute wrong and hostile views, historical distortions of the Southwest Region, neutralizing the activities of reactionary elements who exploit human rights, ethnic, and religious issues to cause instability; the lesson of taking the people as the root, "respecting the people, loving the people, being close to the people, clinging to the people", promoting the people's heart posture, building the people's security posture associated with the all-people national defense posture; the lesson of national unity on the basis of solidarity and attachment between the Vietnamese and Khmer ethnic groups in the cause of building and developing the Mekong Delta region to become increasingly prosperous, beautiful, contributing with the whole country to achieve the goal of building a strong, democratic, equitable, civilized, prosperous, and happy Vietnam./.

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