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**Talk Given by the Minister [Trần Quốc Hoàn] at the
3rd Investigative Conference [Excerpts]**

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Summary:

Trần Quốc Hoàn reviews cases against foreign and domestic spies in the Vietnam Wars.

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TALK GIVEN BY THE MINISTER AT THE 3rd INVESTIGATIVE CONFERENCE

(Held 23 September - 01 October 1977)

Dear Comrades,

On 30 April 1975 the Southern half of our nation was completely liberated. In view of the changed situation, at the end of that year the 30th National Public Security Conference decided to organize a conference to review our investigative work.

The previous conference, the 2nd Investigative Conference held in 1969, discussed both counter-revolutionaries and those who committed other crimes, but we did not then fully understand that in reality we needed to separate investigations of political targets from investigations of criminal targets and handle them separately. Therefore today we are holding the 3rd Investigative Conference to discuss investigative operations and to review and determine suspected threats by political targets. There will be a separate investigative conference on criminal targets.

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With regard to the need to fully digest and absorb the long-term, complex, and difficult nature of the class struggle along with the concept of practicality and reality in our work of investigating and identifying suspected threats, I discuss that in some detail during the 2nd Investigative Conference. Here I would like to simply to remind you of this matter and to provide some additional clarification. The concept of the long-term, complex, and difficult class struggle and the concept of reality, of using practical experience, are intimately linked together and cannot be separated. When we say reality, this includes an entire process consisting of historical matters, current matters, and even future matters, because real events progress in the direction of the development of the revolution.

In our nation's current situation, we must insist that the political and social situation is developing in a positive direction, that every day things are better, more solid, and that difficulties and negative things are gradually being reduced and eliminated. I say that because some people think that the concept of reality, of practical experience, applies only for the short-term, those things that we are currently facing, and those that think that do not think of the long-term, or that there is only the immediate task before us and that we do not need to consider the past.

For example: I read a report about a French espionage case in South Vietnam. A French spy commanded an espionage network made up entirely of former Deuxieme Bureau personnel, consisting of one first lieutenant and three captains during the resistance war against the French, who were going around collecting intelligence information. They also used Catholic priests and old intellectuals as lackeys and puppets. So, what is reality, practical experience? Reality is their old era, the period of the resistance against the French, the period when they worked for the Deuxieme Bureau... That is reality, comrades. If we only investigate from the Diem era forward, or from the Thieu era forward, that is not enough, and it is not certain that that is reality, that to do that reflects reality. Naturally, there are those from the Diem era or the pre-Diem era whom we will not investigate, but there are others that we must investigate because they are extremely dangerous and extremely stubborn, from the standpoint of their counter-revolutionary stance they will oppose us to the end, to the death.

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In terms of their thinking and their ideology, they will oppose communism to the end, to the death. In terms of materialism versus idealism, atheism versus theism, they will oppose us to the death, so we must pay attention to them and investigate them. When the Duong Van Minh clique eliminated Diem's Can Lao Nhan Vi Party, it was not long before these puppets formed the "Nhan Xa" Party, which was a disguise, a front party for the Can Lao Nhan Vi Party, which was being rebuilt by Assistant Archbishop Nguyen Van Thuan.

Recently, while on a working visit to South Vietnam, I read a report from one of our spies, a report that we will have to check and verify. But the report said that the

reactionaries were resurrecting themselves and rebuilding, and that they were trying to find people who had formerly been members of the Can Lao Nhan Vi Party. This means that even though the Diem era was a long time ago, for us in the struggle that we are conducting the Can Lao Nhan Vi Party is a target that we must investigate. And in the future, I understand that the enemy is now recruiting frogmen from the old regime's navy for training to send them back into Vietnam. Therefore we must investigate all former frogmen, all former navy men, all river and sea-going vessel crewmen who previously worked for the enemy and who fled in the evacuation. We must investigate all of them and see which ones have not yet returned. We must plan a "reception" for them when they return as part of the U.S. plan to "return to Vietnam." We must understand that the concept of reality demands that we do this.

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...If we ignore these targets, we are looking away from an enemy, letting him slip through, and that will be a serious mistake. If we ignore one of these categories and they slip through and attack us, when they do we will say that this is unexpected, that it is a surprise, and that we never expected that former puppets like these would continue to attack and sabotage us. In fact, it would be because we did not pay attention to them, we did not investigate them and did not gain a firm grasp of their activities. We cannot call something like this a surprise! What I want to say here, comrades, is that this is the nature of the long, difficult, complex class struggle. This is not just a one year or a five year struggle. It is ten years, 20 years, and even longer. In the Soviet Union, for instance, the Soviet Union has existed for 60 years and yet there are still counter-revolutionary activities going on there. A few years ago no one would have suspected that the Jews in the Soviet Union would have been as disruptive and raised such a racket as they are doing now. The Jews had risen high, they were academicians, they were scientists, but now they demand to be allowed to emigrate to Israel, and they are stirring up an anti-Soviet movement. Sixty years and this is still going on, comrades!

That is reality. That is what is happening in a country that is our friend, our ally. And our country is not 60 years old yet, but we are 30 years old, and in our struggle we must learn lessons from experience and think about these events. We cannot claim that 30 years is too long. ...

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...With regard to the enemy, if we are smart and sophisticated the enemy will not know that Public Security has him under surveillance, that we have our eye on him. However, because of their lack of professional experience, we have some Public Security cadres who do everything very simplistically and blatantly, without studying the situation and trying to think of ways to do things that are skillful, clever, and covert. Instead they just charge ahead and do things blindly to block the enemy, to stop him and forbid him to do things, and there are even some cadres who like to do things that way to show off and display our strength. This is like, recently in other countries people have thought of various methods for dealing with photographs taken by foreigners when they are departing the country from airports or seaports. For instance, some countries use the blatant method of confiscating the film, or of opening up the individual's camera to erase the film. Recently, it seems that our own customs officers have been confiscating film. In fact, however, you people do not need to confiscate the film. All you need to do is to open the camera to let light in and then hand the camera back. Still, that method is not particularly skillful, comrades. Some countries use machines to scan possessions with X-Ray beams, and that will ruin the film. You can even let them leave their film inside their luggage, and you don't have to open the locks, and you don't even have to say anything to them. Now that is artful, that is professional. The old methods of confiscating their film or opening their cameras are all right, because it is the law so people have to obey us, but they will criticize us, so we should be more artful. We should wrack our brains to find a better method. Sometimes we should have someone follow the visitor, and when they take a good picture we won't worry about it, but when they photograph something that involves military secrets our person would stop them and explain things to them. Excuse me, comrades, but let me say this: If they take one or two

photographs of poor people, or of bad situations, we shouldn't interfere, and we shouldn't be afraid.

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This is because there is nothing unusual or strange if a nation like ours that has endured thirty years of war and has just enjoyed peace for a couple of years still has scenes of poverty and shortages. Even if you go to the U.S., which has been building capitalism for 200 years and has a yearly gross national income of untold billions of dollars, you will still find many beggars there, and you will find people that have to dig through the garbage to find something to eat! Now, if in twenty more years our country still has beggars, then that would be a matter of concern; but it has been only two or three years since the war ended, so I say that for us to have the conditions we have now is actually very good. ...

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If we do a good job of investigating individuals, investigating events, and investigating areas, then on the overt side our police personnel can administer things tightly, and so we will be able to adequately monitor all the necessary targets and not let anything slip past us. The important thing here is to correctly and fully understand what investigating targets really means, and the relationship between the different categories of targets [individuals, events, and areas] so that we can come up with the proper combination of measures. During this recent period, our coordination between the three categories of targets has been weak in many areas; it was not tight enough, and one could even say these categories were kept separate and were not linked together. I say that because, when we investigate individuals for example, our investigation of individuals is divided according to the groups - Central Intelligence Organization is separate, Military Security Service is separate, Police Special Branch is separate, etc. But in reality, we must remember that there were individuals who worked in many different places and in many different branches. Nguyen Khac Binh, for instance: he was the Director of the Central Intelligence Organization and at the same time he was also the Director General of National Police, so we cannot compartmentalize him, divide him up between these two functions. Or the guy Vu Van Ba in Tay Ninh as another example. He was one of the enemy's most important espionage agents. Initially he worked for the Police Special Branch, but when his case was reported up to the Americans, the Americans decided that he was too important to be handled that way because they could obtain Party resolutions and COSVN resolution from him, so the Americans forced the Police Special Branch to step aside and allow the Americans to handle him directly. However, the CIO did not have good reporting sources, so that organization recruited Ba and told him that he should provide his primary, his most important information, to the Americans, but other information should be provided separately, privately to his CIO case officer. And so here was one espionage agent who had three reporting channels: the initial channel was the police; the primary channel was the CIA; and the secondary channel was the CIO. I have read both reports, one that he sent to CIO which he signed using a different name (we were lucky that we did not mistakenly arrest one of our own people, because he signed the name of a member of the province Party committee, but we checked the signature and determined that it was not that comrade's handwriting), and another report that he sent to the CIA.

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He wanted to make some extra money, so he wrote special, separate reports for the CIO and signed them in a different name. The CIA had forbidden him to report to anyone else, so he had to use a different name in these other reports, but it was still his handwriting. We checked the handwriting and determined that, 100%, and we also asked his control officer [si quan dieu khien - case officer], and the control officer also admitted this to us.

Therefore, we have one single target but in many different places, so when we conduct an investigation we must be sure to closely, intelligence coordinate everything, we must gather documents from the CIA, from the police, and from the CIO, because that is the only way that we will have adequate, complete documentation and information. The important thing here is that we must have a

full, deep understanding of the relationship between the targets, and especially of individual targets, because depending on the specifics of the individual target, our working methods, how we collect documents and information also needs to be different in each case. Even though this is just one guy, there are documents on him at three different places – the Police Special Branch, the CIA, and the CIO, so we have to concentrate these records, gather them together under one name, and not leave them separate so that we work on this case separately in three different places. I looked at the file held by the police, and it contains important documents; I looked at the file at the CIO, and the documents in that file are not so important. The primary documents are those held by the CIA. This guy provided the text of numerous Party resolutions to the CIA, and because of that Nixon was able to read COSVN Resolution 12! Nixon himself read it! The important thing here is that we must have a correct understanding of the situation, we must not work in a mechanical fashion, we must understand the relationship between the different sides, the different aspects, of our investigation process.

If we have one enemy from an airborne unit, and another from a ranger unit, then they are separate, but if the enemy works in communications, then no matter what unit they are from, what profession, what service, what branch, they are in, they are still capable of using radios to transmit information out to the outside world. Because in practical terms, in an intelligence operation the reports always have to be sent to the outside by some means or other – one: by sending a person outside to make the report; two: using a radio; three: by sending letters. Often it is not possible, or convenient, to send a person abroad, out of the country, carrying the report. And frequently they are afraid to use radios, so they have to use letters.

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In the case of the guy named WITHE [sic - this is a misspelling of the name; the name is "White", and he was a British citizen who was ultimately deported], he confessed that he sent telegrams through our postal channels, but for some reason or other we had not yet consolidated our control of the Ho Chi Minh City post office headquarters, so some telegrams that contained double-talk were sent because our public security postal control personnel did not understand them, and letters were sent to him through the postal system, letters that were enclosed inside parcels, and at the last minute these parcels were allowed to go through and no one checked them.

For example, there is the case of Miss K. in Canada. She sent letters to an address in Ho Chi Minh City, two separate letters containing an operational order, but in fact there was no such address in Ho Chi Minh City. That means that there was someone working inside our postal system that was supposed to pull out that letter from the system and deliver it for Miss K. For some reason or other that person did not happen to be working when the letter arrived, and so we were able to get our hands on the letter. We should have investigated this, but our people working in that specialized branch were not experienced, so they let this incident go and ignored it. I was monitoring things, so I learned about it.

Then there are those who were sent to study in the U.S. and came back home, people like that person Ha working for our espionage section, and also the two guys who worked in the radio communications component of the former National Police Headquarters. Those two were sent to study in the U.S. for six months, and when they returned one worked in receiving radio broadcasts, and one working in transmitting radio messages. Some of our people said, "Ah, those guys are our guys, our own cadres that we inserted into the enemy's ranks and we allowed them to go [to the U.S.] to study, so we should keep them on and continue to use them." I said, "No, if they went to the U.S. for training, then we must move them out of there. We should not allow them to work in Public Security any longer. Otherwise, when they send cables for the Ministry [of Public Security], or receive cables for the Ministry, they might also be able to covertly send and receive radio messages to and from the enemy as well." I had to intervene repeatedly before I finally succeeded in getting these guys replaced. We must always keep an eye on this type of person, no matter where this person is, where he is working or what agency he is working for.

It is the same for people who worked as translators and interpreters for the Americans. No matter if they worked for the US Embassy, or the US Consulate, or the AID agency, or for one of the US construction companies, or even for one of the

American businesses or commercial offices, they all must be investigated. We have already investigated a number of American cover companies, front companies. For example, there was a guy named Bauer,^[1] he was a CIA commander in South Vietnam and Southeast Asia. He opened a company that sold orchids in Ho Chi Minh City.

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Some employees of the other orchid companies told us that the man who ran his company, who remained behind [after the evacuation in 1975], was a stay-behind agent. Bauer left, but a number of his interpreters, secretaries, accountants, etc. remained behind. These individuals have to be investigated, although we do not need to investigate the workers who grew and tended the orchids. This guy left those people behind for a reason, and we have to investigate them all. In fact, this is a large-scale CIA operation, because almost all of the CIA's interpreters, ah, initially they were just ordinary interpreters, but gradually the CIA began to trust them and used them to translate and interpret for many important cases, and gradually they became full-fledged CIA employees. We have arrested a number of CIA "big-shots" [important personnel], the guy in charge of CIA operations for the 2nd Tactical Zone [ARVN II Corps], for instance. The Americans told him that they would be forced to leave South Vietnam, so before they left they turned everything over to a Vietnamese CIA guy, and this guy was someone who had risen from being just an ordinary translator to being a cadre [officer] who was in charge of CIA's regional operations. For that reason, we must investigate everyone who worked as an interpreter for the Americans, and we must find all the documents, all the files on them.

We have already arrested a few of their people. They admitted that they were given stay-behind missions, and that they were given "carbon" paper, secret ink, and that they were even taught how to transmit Morse code messages by radio. However, the CIA was in such a hurry that it did not have time to issue the radios to them, but they were told that there were radios for them in Vietnam, a bunch of radios that had been hidden. When the time came that they needed a radio, they would be told where to go to find the radio. The radio itself was not a problem; all they needed was for these guys to learn how to transmit Morse code radio messages.

I wanted to talk about this point so that we can understand this problem, so that we know that we must be flexible, so that we understand that relationships and connections must be investigated properly and that there must be close, tight coordination between our different offices and agencies.

With regard to the concrete list of the various categories of targets, the determination of the composition of this list is of particular importance. It is the result of the application of a number of basic concepts, such as the concept of a protracted class struggle, the concept of realism, which as I told you must include the past, the present, and the future, the concepts of democracy and dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. All these concepts must be applied, and we must utilize several foundations that were laid out in the 2nd Investigative Conference.

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After review and checks, we have found that the foundations laid out in the 2nd Investigative Conference are correct.

The first foundation is our revolutionary mission, which included the strategic mission of the socialist revolution, missions for specific eras and phases, specific missions for this five year plan, for the next five year plan, and for the five year plan after that. We must consider how these missions are different from one another, and how we should move forward. We must study these different situations when we plan our investigations. For instance, during the national democratic revolution and during the socialist revolution, for example; during the national democratic revolution we do not investigate the capitalist class, we do not need to investigate the capitalist class, but when we move into the socialist revolution, the capitalist class is the target of the socialist revolution, and so we must investigate both treasonous capitalists and ordinary capitalists. That is what I mean when I talk about separate, individual strategic phases.

The problem I am talking about is one that has existed for quite some time already, for several decades at least, from the time we established the National Democratic

and Peace Alliance up to the present. I told you comrades before that we must study the state of development that our country is in. When times are difficult, they see the promise and the prospects of the revolution, and they become good and do not oppose us; they follow us. However, we must be on guard and vigilant, because they are people who can only go along with us during the national democratic revolution. The socialist revolution has an immediate impact on them, because they own many houses and property, they own a great deal of assets and capital, they have high positions, and they are heavily influenced by their class thinking and ideology, so when the socialist revolution begins, it is by no means certain that they will continue to follow us, and they may even oppose us.

I have been talking about this problem for a long, long time. And it has turned out just as I said. As we move into this new era and the revolution steadily advances, when we conduct reeducation it become very clear.

This is an internal discussion, so I will tell you comrades this. There is the case of Mr. X., for example. It is clear that the reactionaries and the Catholic priests have contacted him, and the reactionary intellectuals have also contacted him.

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Even that guy C., who was involved in the "National Restoration Militia" [Dan Quan Phuc Quoc] [a post-war anticommunist resistance organization], came to talk to him, because that guy had been one of Mr. X.'s students, and previously C. had worked with him. C. confessed that he had given Mr. X. a list of 30 names for him to certify that these were people who had been members of the National Alliance [Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces?] from the beginning. The reactionary Catholic priests also gave him a similar list. However, he never told us about this. He never told us a single thing about all this.

And then there is Mr. H., as another example. He came up here and we treated him very nicely and properly, and I even invited him to visit one of our prison camps. He praised our prison camps as being very humane. However, because of his religion, and because of his feudalist ideology and thinking, he has now been drawn in by the reactionary clique within the community of South Vietnamese Buddhist monks. There was the Can Tho incident, which was an action by the reactionary Buddhists who plotted to provoke us. They appealed to the public so that the masses would use this as an excuse to rise up in protest. They brought in a number of people, including little children, and burned them, then said it was self-immolation and told everyone that these people had immolated themselves as a protest against the revolutionary government. Mr. H. stepped forward to defend them and he sent a file up to the Prime Minister's office asking the Prime Minister to review the case. Later, after we investigated the incident, we informed him very clearly that this incident had been caused by a bunch of sex-crazed degenerates, and we told him that the decent monks there had denounced these people and that good people, honest ordinary citizens, had also denounced them. Only then did he back down. He listened to those guys too much, and he still is involved in many plots with the reactionaries....

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...In this conference it is good that we have devoted a great deal of time to fully and carefully discussing the composition of the target category list. We noted that the draft document that the Standing Committee submitted to the Party Chapter analyzed the problem from many different angles, and the general spirit of the draft is that we should not base our decisions based solely on the type of organization or agency, rank and position.

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Instead we should pay attention to the true character of the target, and not just consider the present, but also consider the past, both the recent past and the distant past. Just as I said, former Deuxieme Bureau employees, for example, and former Can Lao Nhan Vi Party members, etc. We even must pay attention to the time when they lived in North Vietnam as well, because many of the Catholic priests in North Vietnam were very reactionary. They were afraid that if they stayed behind they would be punished, so they fled to the South, and during that period Diem viewed them as his supporters. Diem trusted them and relied on them, so they continued on

with their counter-revolutionary actions aimed at sabotaging the revolution.

Recently we managed to arrest a number of them, remnants of their army, and the vast majority of them were Northern refugees. And the vast majority of those whose names are on the list we have compiled of the most extreme reactionaries are Catholic priests who fled South from North Vietnam, so we must gain a firm understanding of their past, when they were in North Vietnam.

For example, this guy Pham Ngoc Chi is now the Bishop of Da Nang and is Deputy Chairman of the Council of Bishops. After he fled to South Vietnam, he and that guy [Father] Hoang Quynh became the strong right and left arms of Ngo Dinh Diem and the Americans. Hoang Quynh was the one to whom the U.S. gave money to build the resettlement areas for the Northern Catholic refugees. I want you comrades to take note of this point: the enemy carefully studied the situation and he resettled the Catholic refugees in strategically important areas. For instance, the area around Cam Ranh City is populated by Northern Catholic refugees, and the Catholic refugees occupy a very large area of Nha Trang. They made sure that Dong Nai and Bien Hoa, the gateways to Saigon, were heavily populated with resettled Catholic refugees from the North. Wong A Sang's Nung soldiers also were resettled there. It is the same in Saigon itself. They placed Catholic refugees led by refugee priests in a number of important areas. And in Region 9 they resettled a rather substantial number of Catholic refugees in Cai San to prevent us from moving our troops and cadres down from Cambodia into Region 9, because if one wishes to reach Region 9 one usually must pass through this area. And I will tell you that it was very difficult for us to get through the Catholic refugee area of Cai San.

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In Ban Me Thuot the enemy resettled a number of Catholic refugees from Nghe An, Ha Tinh, and Thanh Hoa in order to defend the border area. The Americans gave funds to [Father] Hoang Quynh supposedly for economic assistance, but it was actually to build strategic areas, areas that were of strategic importance both militarily and politically. Even though Nguyen Van Binh is the Archbishop and the Chairman of the Council of Bishops, and Pham Ngoc Chi is the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Bishops, Pham Ngoc Chi is the one that the U.S. and Diem trusted and used.

And what was Chi's record when he was up North in Bui Chu? Did you know that in 1946-1947, when I was working in Region II, the Catholic reactionaries in Phuc Nhac buried 12 of our cadres alive and then they brought in water buffaloes pulling plows to plow over their heads. The order to do this was issued by Pham Ngoc Chi himself! With these guys, we must review both their current activities and their past activities before we can form a complete and accurate conclusion. Only in that way can we categorize them in a more sophisticated and concrete manner.

Now, for example, on the issue of foreigners who have Vietnamese citizenship, I believe that we should not just put that in our files; we should make our records clearer than that. Chinese who possess Vietnamese citizenship - who are they? What does that mean? In North Vietnam, for example, I have studied this matter and I have found that there are places that have completely filled out all 46 questions on the form for the individual's local family registration, and they have a block for "nationality," but that is still not clear enough. Therefore I added Block 17B to also record "citizenship" and I sent the revised form down to the local areas. In Haiphong, after explaining this revised form carefully to the public security offices of a number of districts, some of the places gave the forms to their ethnic Chinese residents and asked them to fill out the form themselves. In Do Son City, for instance, 40-50% of these people listed their citizenship as "Vietnamese," 30-40% of them listed their citizenship as "Chinese," and the others simply didn't write anything in the new block.

That shows us that a number of these people are definitely on our side and that is why they listed their citizenship as "Vietnamese," while a number of others are still undecided and confused, unsure of whether to definitely take Vietnamese citizenship or to keep their Chinese citizenship, and that there are also those who are determined to keep their Chinese citizenship. At An Thuy I criticized a woman who was in charge of the family registration because she herself made the decision and she filled in the blanks, deciding who had Chinese citizenship and who had Vietnamese citizenship.

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We don't want our own people to fill in the blanks! We want to know what the Chinese themselves say! We want to see what they write down! In Haiphong, the majority wrote down that they were citizens of Vietnam, so we need to pay attention to the issue of Vietnamese citizens of ethnic Chinese origin and clarify this matter further.

And then there is the example of Quang Ninh province; when I went there to inspect the situation, our people in Quang Ninh reported to me that after investigating and researching the situation, they had excluded from this category those people whose families had immigrated to Vietnam from the time of the Qing dynasty [in China] or before, and that they viewed these people just like ethnic Vietnamese. All these people want is that we not say anything bad about China because when someone says bad things about China it offends them and they will argue back. But they do not know where their ancestors came from in China, or where their relatives live in China, and they consider themselves to be Vietnamese. As for those who came to Vietnam during the Chiang Kai-shek era, they immigrated to Vietnam because either because of economic reasons, to make a living, or they fled to Vietnam when the Chinese Liberation Army attacked into southern China, and there are also those who fled to Vietnam to escape the Cultural Revolution in China. All these people consider themselves to be Chinese.

Therefore, to do as one district in Hai Ninh did when it declared that tens of thousands of residents were all Vietnamese citizens of ethnic Chinese origin is not correct; however, to list them all as overseas Chinese (meaning that they are Chinese citizens) is also not correct.

Through all this we can see that those who list their citizenship as Vietnamese are those who emigrated to Vietnam long, long ago, in ancient times, and so that probably makes sense, but we must keep an eye on those who have recently immigrated to Vietnam but who list themselves as Vietnamese citizens. And those Chinese who came here in 1966 or later, meaning those who came here during the period of the Cultural Revolution, but who list themselves as Vietnamese citizens, we must be even more vigilant about them and keep an even closer eye on them. We may be able to trust those Chinese whose ancestors came here from the time of the Qing dynasty or before and who list their citizenship as Vietnamese. This means that we must be careful, concrete, and meticulous about this matter. We cannot handle it in a simplistic, generalized manner.

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Now, as for Vietnamese who live abroad, the overseas Vietnamese, we must study this matter carefully and establish a number of different categories. There are a number of overseas Vietnamese who went abroad during the French colonial era, before the August [1945] Revolution, those who went in the years 1939-1940, meaning the coolies who were abroad to do ordinary physical labor work for the French Army, or those who went to France to study, those people are different. And those that moved overseas after the Paris Agreement was signed [1973] are another category. And then those who left after we attacked Phuoc Long [December 1974] are yet another category. Those who fled from early April 1975 on are still another category. And those who fled after the liberation [after 30 April 1975] are still another category. Each is different.

In realistic, practical terms, given the situation at the time, we must study this to set up correct, accurate target categories. There are people who in fact fled because they were frightened, because the enemy's psychological warfare claims terrified them. There are also those who were afraid that we would punish them for their crimes, and that is why they fled. Those are different. And there are also those who were stuck abroad when we liberated the nation, students who had gone abroad to study in France, West Germany, Japan, Canada, etc., and were not able to return in time. Now there are people asking to be allowed to return home because they have no family abroad, because their entire family, husbands, wives, or children are all in Vietnam. They have nothing against communism, so we can allow them to return. After reviewing their cases carefully, I have allowed a number of those who had gone abroad to study and who had been stuck overseas to now return home.

In summary, although they are all Vietnamese living abroad, in reality there are specific cases that we must resolve individually. The old [long-time] overseas Vietnamese are one thing, and the new [recent] overseas Vietnamese are something different, and those who fled in the evacuation are yet a different case. And within those who fled in the evacuation, there is the category of those who fled early, and the category of those who fled late; there is the category of those who fled because they had committed crimes against the revolution and there is the category of those who fled to accompany their families or those who fled out of fear. Now there are some who may not have fled for political reasons. A number of old intellectuals directly and straightforwardly asked us to let them leave because, "actually, we do not hate communism, but now life is too hard for us and we just cannot endure these hardships."

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There are even some who we allowed to leave, and they are yet another group. In deciding whether to grant people permission to emigrate, to leave the country permanently, there are situations where people have family, children, abroad, and they are old and have no one to support them, or who want to go abroad to receive medical treatment, etc. We can allow these people to emigrate to live with their children or to receive medical treatment; these people are not in the category of targets for investigation.

We must understand the reality, the actual circumstances in very concrete terms. Not all overseas Vietnamese should be targets for investigation. The overseas Vietnamese in Thailand for instance; there are overseas Vietnamese who have lived there since the time of Phan Dinh Phung, and those who moved there during the Eastern Emigration of Phan Boi Chau, those who fled during the era of the Nghe Tinh Soviet uprising, and all of these were agents and supporters of the revolution, so they have a good attitude toward the revolution and toward the Fatherland. Overseas Vietnamese whom the reactionary priests told to go, these people are not good and they are different cases. We must study and investigate these people very meticulously.

I would like to remind you of a phrase that I am sure you all know: "Truth is concrete," truth is not generalities, so you must remember that point. What do I mean by concrete? Of the 160,000 people who fled in the evacuation, we do not have to investigate all 160,000, but we must categorize them, separate them into categories, study and make careful calculations about them. I will tell you the truth, comrades, even if it is just a five year-old kid, we still have to investigate him, because when he grows up he will be recruited to become a commando or a spy...I am certain that a number of the Catholic refugees are going to turn out to be some very nasty people. They will select and train lackeys to send back in to sabotage our country's revolution. Reality has taught us this lesson already; that that is why we must be very concrete, very detailed in what we do.

During the discussion some of you have suggested that we should have several more categories, because of the enemy's dirty policies. In the intelligence category, for instance. Our people had discovered that among the secret informants of the enemy's "people's intelligence" there were some to whom the enemy assigned missions but who were not paid salaries - if they submitted a good report, they got an award, that is all. There were others that they recorded in their books, but some of the enemy's lackeys just wrote down any old name so that they could take the money that was supposed to be for the salaries and put it in their own pockets.

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So initially we need to establish a list of names so that we can watch them and we have to do the work of finding out if they actually got paid a salary or not. Did the enemy fake their names just to take the money, or did they actually receive a salary? Did they really report? Is there evidence to prove that they did not receive money? That is the kind of information we need - information that is definite, certain. Every six months we will categorize them again, and after another six months we can take them off the list if it turns out that they really did not receive a salary and that the enemy just placed their names on the list but they did not do anything. After six months we will review and if there is nothing there we can cross them off the list. Also, there are the enemy officers whose only work was in logistics, and rich guys

who paid bribes to get desk jobs so that they would not be sent off to the battlefield to fight. On the other hand, there are also guys who were just enlisted men but who were really vicious thugs. We need to pay attention to the positions they held as well. Usually officers who had a lot of power and whom the enemy trusted were the especially outstanding lackeys, so we must investigate them. As for the enlisted men, we don't have to investigate all of them.

Initially we will investigate and then conduct a review once every six months. But we will not allow the investigation to be skipped. We will not allow a conclusion to be reached on a case based solely on subjective, groundless factors without an investigation.

As for contacts with foreigners, those we must pay attention to, but we must know what kind of contacts they are? Contacts on political matters, or contacts as a translator, or just ordinary, run-of-the-mill business contacts. In fact, there is also another type of contact - the contacts of whores. There were some prostitutes who also worked as secret agents for the enemy, who were given the mission of fishing for and luring in our cadres for the enemy. In general, we must dig deep, check carefully, and then review, re-categorize, determine which should be scratched off the list, etc. We do not need to investigate everyone who works in the maritime trades, who goes out to sea. We can recruit agents, people who are good and honest, and perhaps we can send armed public security people out to set ambushes and traps, to see who is carrying out counter-revolutionary activities, and then arrest those people. But those who previously served as enemy frogmen, in the enemy Navy, on the enemy's coastal vessels, if we find that they are now working in the maritime trades, going out to sea, not only must we investigate them, we must also bar them from working in these jobs entirely and force them back up on the beach; force all of them to work ashore, and only ashore.

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I told the armed public security conference that we must force all those who were enemy frogmen, who served in the enemy Navy and on enemy vessels to shift to shore jobs and not permit them to work in any sea-going, maritime profession, and I said that we absolutely must investigate these people. However, there were also many such people who worked as our agents, who were working for us and who provided us a lot of good intelligence information. Even though such people are now working at sea, in one of the maritime trades, we will not investigate them. We must be realistic and practical about this matter. ...

[...]

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...We investigate using reconnaissance [intelligence] operational methods, such as using secret informants and agents, through physical surveillance, through technical surveillance,... Those as very valuable sources of information, And during interrogations and debriefing sessions, especially when the individual must register his name and report in to us, many targets want us to trust them, so they tell us the truth. Naturally there are also those who tell us lies or who fail to tell us everything. Later, when the Ministry has sufficient specialized professional personnel to interrogate these guys, we will question them in detail and conduct a full and complete interrogation. The documents on each individual must be placed in the personal file of that individual. The documents must be centralized and held in that way, because only then will we be able to conduct more in-depth research, especially on the categories of targets on whom we must concentrate our attention.

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It is the same for the work of debriefing and interrogating targets. Now we do not have enough personnel and we must complete the work quickly, so we only ask about their own counter-revolutionary activities in order to find out about their own individual crimes. Later, however, when we have sufficient time, we must ask questions about other people, other groups, and interrogate them on the crimes committed by others. When we ask those kinds of questions it is easier to get the targets to answer, and we may find it easier to collect information on other groups. For example, I just read three personal confessions written by [Father] Tran Huu Thanh. Although he wrote a great deal about his own anti-communist ideology and

actions, about his “nationalist” ideology, there was one section in which he wrote about the fact that he had connections with many other people, and he named one person who he said was following directions being given to him by the CIA. He did not say that this guy was CIA, but he said that this guy was following the orders of the CIA. These types of targets must be interrogated very carefully, very completely. During their study sessions, the targets who are being held in the reeducation camps conduct self-criticism and make additional confessions, and these types of documents are extremely valuable to us. ...That is why I say that we must understand that the work of conducting interrogations and debriefings is extremely important.

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This work is a direct, face-to-face struggle against the enemy. For instance, there was the interrogation of this guy Nguyen Viet Khai.^[2] He knew that the crimes he committed while he lived in the North were very serious, because he had opposed us very violently in Nghe An. After he fled to South Vietnam he commanded all the commandos who were dropped into North Vietnam. The commandos told us about him when we questioned them after they were captured. He gave us a rather complete confession of his own crimes, and he also told us about many other people. He even told us how to question one of the people that he told us about. He said that we only needed to ask him about two things: First, what kind of activities did CARITAS conduct (The Caritas religious order was supported by the U.S. and it was an actively anti-communist organization that was headed by the individual Khai had named). And second, about the crime of working to resurrect Diem’s Can Lao Nhan Vi political party. Khai told us, “just ask him about those two crimes, and don’t ask him anything else.” When we asked him about these two crimes, the individual became very frightened and he concealed everything. He then wrote a letter that he tried to send to the outside to tell another Catholic priest and his band of lackeys to burn all documents regarding Caritas, and in particular to burn the Caritas charter and the document setting out Caritas’s goals. This was an interrogation of one person to collect information on other people. That is how important this is. Therefore, we must carefully and completely question targets to gain information to use to investigate other targets.

We collect documents and information by questioning enemy targets, by use of technical operations, and by exploiting documents and files that the enemy left behind. We also have the documents of the South Vietnamese Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) that our army captured and turned over to us. We must work to prepare a building into which we can move and store the approximately 1.5 million files so that we can then exploit them. Our people have conducted a preliminary review of these documents. This is an extremely valuable treasure trove of documents about the enemy’s intelligence agency. What could be better than to have the enemy’s own plans? Every case has a plan, has the name of one officer who controls the implementation of the plan, a research specialist to conduct the case. Each file contains the goal of the case, the requirements, the target, the reports submitted by the target, the amount of money paid to the target – everything is recorded in the file.

We must give very great attention to all sources of information and documents, because every source is important. Naturally, when we use them we must check the information and verify it.

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For example, in the case of an enemy penetration agent operating inside our ranks, we must make sure that we check and verify the information to guard against the possibility that the penetration agent sold the information to the enemy under someone else’s name. We must check the signature and verify that the handwriting is the same. Even documents that the enemy left behind when he fled must be verified so that we avoid making any mistakes. ...

[...]

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...This time our categories in this draft proposal are a bit more concrete. However, I believe they are still too general and that different people can interpret them differently! So we still need to continue to study this issue to make them ore

concrete, to make the standards and criteria clearer. Otherwise, if we leave things as they are at present, there can be differences in how they are interpreted, and the range of targets can be expanded in one place and restricted somewhere else. This time, we have established the following categories: A, B, C, D, and E. We establish that A and B are targets for investigation. Of these, category A is a target that will be reviewed periodically, on a set schedule. B is a target that requires attention. C and D are suspected threats, but of different levels; D is a considered a dangerous suspected threat. E is the category for a full-blown case aimed at arrest and prosecution. These regulations are more concrete. A and B are targets for investigation, and C and D are targets of investigation on whom we have sufficient documentation to determine that they are suspected threats. However, I say that this is still not clear enough, because there are categories of targets that have not yet carried out any act of opposition – for instance, like those who have just been released from reeducation, field-level and company-level officers. Some of these guys are extremely dangerous, but after three years, according to the policy set by the Party, we have to release them and let them go home. If we believe that this amount of reeducation is sufficient, then do we need to investigate them any more, and should we temporarily suspend further investigation? I believe that is not correct and that there are those among this group who must be put into the suspect threat category immediately. Some time ago I reported to you all that there were categories of historical suspected threats. However, in the course of carrying a number of full-blown arrest and prosecution cases, we saw clearly that there were targets that the French imperialists had used to provide them with information during the period when they occupied our country and that the French were still continuing to use in that same manner during this current period.

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Does the enemy view this as just a “historical matter? In the past these guys were their special, favored lackeys, so now they come back and try to re-recruit them and give them new missions. The enemy does not consider them as “historical” cases; they have used them for years and years, for several decades. But on our side, we view that as the period of resistance to the French, and now that France has been defeated, the fact that these people followed the French is just a matter of history, of no current significance. That view of the problem is completely incorrect, so there are categories of historical targets on whom we should be lenient, and there are others that for many reasons must automatically be elevated to the category of suspected threats. I read a document about Truong Dinh Du [Truong Dinh Dzu]. This guy works for the CIA. He is someone whom the Kennedy Democratic Party wing of the CIA was grooming to move up to replace Thieu if that became necessary. However, because Thieu belonged to the Nixon wing, and because at that time the Nixon wing was more powerful than the Kennedy wing, Truong Dinh Dzu never was able to move up. Truong Dinh Dzu is a man of character, a capable man. Thieu was afraid that if he ran in the Presidential election he would win the Presidency, so Thieu arrested him and threw him into prison, but he allowed him to live well and freely out on Con Son Island. This guy Dzu had met all kinds of people, from Robert Kennedy to “Men-phin” [Stu Methven] and Colby (before Colby became Director of the CIA). They discussed their plans with him. How can we avoid placing this kind of guy in the suspected threat category? Or should we think that since he did not work for the puppets, and since the puppets arrested him and imprisoned him for several years, that is the end of it and we do not need to investigate him anymore? Is that what we should do? No! Absolutely not! In my opinion, he is still a dangerous suspected threat, a Category D. We cannot just say that he was Thieu’s victim, that he opposed Thieu. He is still a CIA man, a high-level American puppet; he is a pawn of the Americans, one of their hole cards. We have met him, and he is a much more capable man than Duong Van Minh. He is an able man, not just some dud. So there are historical suspected threat targets that should be immediately placed in the suspected threat category as soon as they are released from prison.

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If we don’t put these individuals on the list of suspected threats, we will be letting an enemy slip through our fingers. ...

[...]

[\[1\]](#) Clyde Bauer.

[\[2\]](#) Translator's Note: According to an internet search, Nguyen Viet Khai was a Catholic priest who was ordained in the Vinh diocese in March 1951, was arrested and imprisoned by the Viet Minh. He was released after the Geneva Agreement was signed in 1954 and fled to South Vietnam as a refugee. He worked for the International Control Commission as an interpreter in 1955, later served as a chaplain in the Office of President Ngo Dinh Diem. From 1970 on he was a parish priest in Phuoc Tuy province. The internet listing said that he retired after 1975 and lived in Saigon until he died in 1998. See also Kenneth Conboy and Dale Andrade, *Spies and Commandos: How America Lost the Secret War in North Vietnam*, University Press of Kansas, 200, for information to Father Nguyen Viet Khai's role in helping U.S. and South Vietnamese intelligence organizations to select and recruit spies and commandos to be sent into North Vietnam during the late 1950s-early 1960s.