

Propaganda and Mobilization Activities Targeting Soldiers and Officials of the Republic of Vietnam in the Suburban Areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh During the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, Spring 1975

Nguyen Le Thuy

Lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Science and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on analyzing the propaganda activities promoting just cause, humanistic values, and the humanitarian spirit of the resistance movement conducted by the armed forces and people in the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign. These efforts contributed to advancing peace and the reunification of Vietnam. The study underscores the crucial role of mobilization work targeting soldiers and officials of the Republic of Vietnam, aiming to minimize casualties and safeguard the lives and property of civilians. Through propaganda, the revolutionary forces clarified the unjust nature of the war waged by the United States and the Republic of Vietnam government, while affirming that these soldiers and officials were themselves victims of the neo-colonial conflict.

In addition, the research highlights the effectiveness of disseminating the revolution's policies of leniency and humanitarian treatment toward prisoners of war and defectors. The lessons drawn from propaganda and mobilization activities in the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign provide valuable references for the development of contemporary public mobilization programs and policies of the Communist Party and the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The article employs two fundamental methods of historical research—historical analysis and logical analysis—grounded in the methodological framework of dialectical and historical materialism, as well as the guiding viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

KEYWORDS: Military Mobilization, Saigon, Gia Dinh, Liberation, Soldiers

INTRODUCTION

Military mobilization (binh vận) represents a distinctive form of mass mobilization and an exceptional method of struggle in the history of Vietnam's resistance against foreign aggression. During the resistance war against the United States for national salvation, military mobilization was identified as an integral component of the people's war strategy and constituted a continuous and resolute activity carried out by the Vietnamese armed forces and populace. This practice embodied the long-standing national tradition of "Using great justice to prevail over cruelty, and replacing violence with benevolence."

The study of the military mobilization efforts conducted in the suburban battlefronts of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975 aims to contribute to the reconstruction of the courageous struggle undertaken by the Armed Forces and the people in these areas on a particularly distinctive front. This research thereby clarifies the comprehensive and people-wide nature of the resistance, explicates the crucial role of military mobilization as one of the decisive factors of victory, and draws meaningful lessons applicable to contemporary public mobilization work.

Although military mobilization during the resistance war against the United States has been addressed and summarized by various institutions and scholars across different aspects and levels, the topic as it pertains specifically to the suburban battlefields of Saigon–Gia Dinh in the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign of 1975 remains relatively underexplored. To date, no monograph has examined this issue systematically and comprehensively. For these reasons, the author has selected the topic "*Propaganda and Mobilization Activities Targeting Soldiers and Officials of the Republic of Vietnam in the Suburban Areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, Spring 1975*" for further investigation.

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Objectives

To reconstruct, in a relatively complete and comprehensive manner, the process of conducting military mobilization in the suburban battlefronts of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign of Spring 1975. On this basis, the study aims to fill the historical gap regarding military mobilization activities in this theater during the historic campaign.

Object of Study

This article examines the military mobilization efforts carried out by the armed forces and people in the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, aimed at achieving peace and national reunification. The object of study includes the military mobilization activities implemented by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in this region, specifically focusing on guiding principles, measures, modes of operation, organizational structures, participating forces, implementation processes, and outcomes.

Scope of the Study

Content: Propaganda and mobilization activities directed at officers, soldiers, and officials of the Republic of Vietnam, aiming to induce psychological disorientation, erosion of morale, war-weariness, opposition to the war, desertion, and defection to the revolutionary side.

Timeframe: From early 1975 to 30 April 1975.

Location: The suburban battlefronts of Saigon–Gia Dinh.

General Research Methodology: This study is grounded in the methodological foundations of dialectical and historical materialism, as well as the guiding viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Specific Research Methods: A combination of two principal methods is employed: the historical method and the logical method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Overview of Saigon–Gia Dinh and the Guidelines of the Vietnam Workers’ Party on Military Mobilization during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign

1.1. Overview of Saigon–Gia Dinh

Saigon–Gia Dinh is situated at the central position of Vietnam’s Southeastern region, serving as a strategic nexus connecting the Mekong Delta, the Southeast, the South Central Coast, and the southern Central Highlands. In late 1959 and early 1960, Gia Dinh Province was merged by the Southern Regional Committee with the Saigon–Cho Lon zone, forming the Saigon–Gia Dinh Zone. By May 1961, the Saigon–Gia Dinh Military Region was established to meet the organizational and leadership requirements of the revolutionary movement as the war intensified.

In August 1968, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) further adjusted the administrative boundaries, renaming the Saigon–Gia Dinh Zone as Saigon–Gia Dinh City, which included the urban area of Saigon–Cho Lon and surrounding suburban districts such as Cu Chi, Nha Be, Binh Chanh, Tan Binh, Go Vap, Hoc Mon, and Thu Duc. This area extended approximately 100 kilometers along the northwest–southeast axis. Today, the former Saigon–Gia Dinh area constitutes an integral part of Ho Chi Minh City.

The central economic, political, and military position of Saigon–Gia Dinh made the area the headquarters of invading forces and a key target in the strategic plan of the United States and the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) to maintain control over South Vietnam. At the same time, it was also a space that gathered diverse social groups with strong traditions of patriotism and revolutionary struggle, thereby creating favorable conditions for the resistance movement to develop extensively and persistently.

Saigon–Gia Dinh was both the starting point and a decisive battlefield of the resistance for the liberation of South Vietnam (1954–1975). In this area, the struggle unfolded across three fronts: military, political, and military mobilization. The coordination between forces inside and outside the region reflected the spirit of nationwide unity, contributing significantly to the ultimate success of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

1.2. Guidelines of the Vietnam Workers’ Party on Military Mobilization during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign

In September 1974, the Saigon–Gia Dinh Party Committee issued a resolution defining revolutionary tasks for the entire year of 1975. The resolution stipulated that in the rural suburban areas, in addition to mobilizing soldiers, the city-level authorities had to establish a specialized unit to mobilize officers of the Republic of Vietnam forces, carrying out both continuous psychological attacks through letters and leaflets and organizing internal networks within the enemy structure [4, p.35]. Regarding the target groups, the resolution specified that the primary focus should be the grassroots apparatus of the Republic of Vietnam military and administration, including civil defense, local militias, neighborhood committees, and family liaison units, while also intensifying efforts to mobilize the police [4, p.25].

This resolution was formulated in the context of profound changes in the southern battlefield. In preparation for the possibility of a general offensive in 1975, it identified military mobilization as a core task, especially in the rural suburban areas where the Saigon government maintained a dense control network. Accordingly, Resolution 9/1974 not only provided concrete directives but also

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carried strategic significance in dismantling the enemy's local security and military system, contributing crucially to the ultimate victory of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in the Spring of 1975.

At the beginning of December 1974 through April 1975 (the dry season), the southern revolution had reached a turning point, achieving numerous victories and standing at a historic juncture to complete the people's democratic national revolution in the shortest possible time. Across the rural areas, revolutionary forces were in direct confrontation with the enemy, engaging in localized attacks and partial uprisings. The revolutionary forces established multiple liberated and contested zones along transportation routes and the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh, creating a strategic threat that encircled and isolated enemy outposts from district to sub-region, between sub-regions, and between several areas and the central Saigon–Gia Dinh zone.

Building on the strategically significant victories in Buon Ma Thuot, the Central Highlands liberation campaign, as well as the liberation of Hue, Da Nang, and the provinces of the South-Central region, the Politburo of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam decided to launch the offensive to liberate Saigon and named it the “Ho Chi Minh Campaign.” During this campaign, the military mobilization forces maximized their potential and employed specialized operational methods, thereby making a critical contribution to the overall victory that ultimately led to the reunification of the country.

Under the direction of the Standing Committee of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), the core task of military mobilization during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign was to initiate a mass uprising among the soldiers and their families while simultaneously strengthening the activities of internal networks. The objectives were to seize control of each ward, neighborhood, district, and county; create disarray and confusion within enemy ranks; and force the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) military to disperse its forces in response, thereby reducing their combat effectiveness to the lowest possible level. These conditions played a crucial role in enabling the revolutionary main forces to accelerate their offensive, decisively capture key positions, dismantle enemy units, and ultimately bring about the complete collapse of the RVN armed forces.

To implement these tasks, COSVN assigned cadres who had familial or personal connections with senior RVN officers and generals to establish contact, conduct persuasion, raise awareness, and guide them to abandon their posts or surrender to the revolutionary forces. Thanks to the prior establishment and development of internal networks, by early April 1975, these internal working teams had infiltrated and built networks within numerous key RVN institutions, including the General Staff, Quang Trung Training Center, Tan Son Nhat Airport, Naval Command, Naval Shipyards, Gia Dinh Police Department, and main divisions of the RVN army, among others.

On 24 March 1975, COSVN issued Circular 07/TT-75 to launch a political mobilization campaign, outlining a seven-point military mobilization policy (supplementary) aimed at further promoting joint activities among workers, peasants, and soldiers, as well as uprisings and mutinies. The goal was to eliminate enemy outposts and dismantle the RVN military and administrative apparatus. In terms of methods, COSVN directed the press, radio, and performing arts sectors to produce a diverse range of news and publications—including poetry, songs, and plays—clearly communicating the policy statements to ensure continuous propaganda among the general population, soldiers' families, and RVN soldiers and officers.

On 25 March 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam issued a declaration to continue implementing the “Ten-Point” military mobilization policy originally promulgated on 25 January 1972 and to clarify the content of the new seven-point policy. Specifically, points 2 through 7 were as follows:

Point 2: Families with relatives in the RVN military and administrative apparatus, as well as orphaned or widowed families, were recognized as victims suffering under the new colonialist regime imposed by the United States and its collaborators.

Point 3: Civil defense personnel who did not act against the revolution were entitled to the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

Point 4: Soldiers who had contributed to the revolution and were wounded were to receive benefits equivalent to revolutionary war veterans, and those who sacrificed their lives were to be recognized as martyrs.

Point 5: In newly liberated areas, individuals who cooperated with the revolution to protect public property, surrender weapons or documents, expose clandestine sabotage, and uncover caches or tunnels would be commended and rewarded.

Point 6: Officers and generals who led units in uprisings or defected to the revolutionary side were to be recognized as revolutionary officers, entrusted with responsibilities, and rewarded.

Point 7: Prisoners of war, defectors, and individuals who had committed crimes but sincerely repented were to be treated humanely, and those who contributed to the revolution to atone for past actions were to be rewarded [5, p.135].

This seven-point policy effectively encouraged nationalist sentiment among RVN soldiers and officials, allowing them to perceive the humanitarian, lenient, and viable path of reconciliation with the revolution. As a result, it minimized unnecessary conflict and bloodshed for both sides.

At 2:00 p.m. on 1 April 1975, in a letter to the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party Lê Duẩn wrote: “The revolutionary war in the South has not only entered a phase of rapid development, but the opportunity to launch a general offensive and uprising in Saigon–Gia Dinh has ripened. From this moment, the final strategic decisive battle of our people begins” [1, p.386].

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Recognizing the importance of the key battlefield of Saigon and other urban centers, the Standing Committee of COSVN issued Directive No. 390/TV on 6 April 1975, directing the reinforcement of military mobilization forces in suburban areas of the cities and sending cadres to provide guidance and leadership to the grassroots. In accordance with this directive, during the Spring 1975 General Offensive and Uprising, the Military Mobilization Department of COSVN reinforced the Saigon–Gia Dinh battlefield with 800 military mobilization cadres and supplied various hand-written letters, leaflets, and loudspeakers to conduct mobilization activities. Three cadres were assigned to supervise and expedite operations in three directions: Deputy Head Nguyễn Võ Danh in the southwest; Committee Member Tư Chí in the northeast; and Committee Member Võ Trần Trí (Hai Chí) in the northwest. The military mobilization forces in the Southeast region and the provinces of the Mekong Delta were all concentrated to coordinate for the Saigon–Gia Dinh battlefield. “In the South-Central region, forces were deployed to approach towns and 1,450 outposts. In the Southwest region, 3,000 cadres were deployed, mobilizing 300,000 women’s union members and 100,000 soldiers’ families to attack all designated targets” [5, p.138].

On 8 April 1975, in order to accelerate the unfolding strategic opportunity, the Standing Committee of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) directed a key underground operative within the Republic of Vietnam Air Force—Nguyễn Thành Trung of Squadron 540, 3rd Air Division stationed at Biên Hòa—to take off in an F-5E aircraft and bomb the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Vietnam. This event had significant military and political implications: it deepened panic among RVN soldiers and officers, exacerbated internal divisions, and stimulated acts of mutiny within the RVN forces.

At 3:30 p.m. on 22 April 1975, General Secretary Lê Duẩn sent a telegram to COSVN, the Military Region Command, and the campaign headquarters, recalling the developments of 21 April 1975, when “under pressure from the United States and the military clique, Nguyễn Văn Thiệu was forced to resign. In an attempt to slow our advance on Saigon, the U.S.–RVN side has formed a new government...” [1, p.392]. First Secretary Lê Duẩn affirmed that major disorder was already unfolding within enemy ranks and that both the military and political conditions for the final offensive against Saigon had fully matured.

2. Propaganda and Military Mobilization of Republic of Vietnam Soldiers by the Armed Forces and People in the Suburban Areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign

In the context of the enemy concentrating numerous key command agencies in Saigon–Gia Dinh, military mobilization played an especially important role in undermining the combat morale of U.S. military advisors and RVN forces, fragmenting enemy ranks, and garnering the support of the populace and international opinion. The ripple effect of mobilization in this area contributed significantly to the disintegration of enemy forces throughout the South.

To build momentum and capacity for the final struggle to liberate the South and unify the country, the armed forces and people in the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh waged steadfast resistance over a period of 21 years (1954–1975). The mass movement gave rise to armed and political mobilization forces, characterized by a vibrant revolutionary spirit. During this period, the three-pronged struggle—military, political, and military mobilization—against pacification efforts in the rural suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh was carried out intensively, forcing RVN forces to stretch their resources, suffer continuous losses, and ultimately disintegrate.

2.1. Organizational Structure and Deployment of Military Mobilization Forces

The cadre system and the political–military mobilization network in Saigon–Gia Dinh prior to the April 1975 general offensive were prepared on a comprehensive and strategic scale under the direction of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) for the Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

Beginning in early March 1975, the Saigon–Gia Dinh Party Committee deployed 1,700 military and political cadres to inner-city districts and suburban communes. The objective was to mobilize the masses to prepare for an uprising and to coordinate with main-force units during the ensuing offensives. The city’s armed units—including two regiments, five infantry battalions, commando and reconnaissance units, and 3,500 militia and self-defense forces—rapidly developed coordinated combat plans and prepared to guide main-force troops in attacking designated targets.

Numerous armed propaganda teams were established in wards and neighborhoods. Several mobile broadcasting units were positioned on vehicles, ready to move through the streets at the opportune moment to call upon RVN soldiers to lay down their arms and to rally the population to support the liberation forces. Mass organizations secretly produced flags, printed leaflets, and painted slogans welcoming the Liberation Army.

On 8 April 1975, the Command of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign was formally established. This marked the completion of organizational preparations and enabled centralized leadership across military, political, and military mobilization fronts, thereby facilitating the implementation of the general offensive and uprising.

To maximize the effectiveness of propaganda and military mobilization efforts, COSVN rapidly reinforced its cadre presence in the Saigon–Gia Dinh area in a targeted manner. The number of personnel included “over 700 cadres operating within the inner city, more than 1,000 in the suburban areas, and 1,300 stationed in outer zones ready to infiltrate” [2, p.5]. This deployment demonstrates a deeply layered, multi-tiered, and flexible organizational configuration. The network expanded the area of influence, ensured

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coordination between internal and external units, and maintained initiative in assessing the situation, mobilizing the populace, and supporting military offensives.

In addition to the cadre forces, the political–military mobilization network established before and during the campaign played a particularly important role. “With 1,290 Party members together with thousands of core mass activists, combined with 400 public and covert organizations gathering nearly 25,000 people” [2, p.5], this force created a solid political and social foundation within the urban center of Saigon. The growth of this mass base not only directly supported propaganda and mobilization activities but also contributed to weakening the resistance of the Republic of Vietnam’s administrative apparatus by disseminating information, generating psychological confusion, and disrupting the urban security control system.

Furthermore, the presence of armed propaganda teams, along with seven printing presses and hundreds of mobile loudspeakers, reflected the high level of organization and effectiveness of revolutionary communication efforts. These were key instruments for mobilizing the populace, spreading revolutionary information, and exerting widespread psychological pressure as the campaign approached its climax.

Overall, the reinforcement of cadres and the political–military mobilization network in both the inner and suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh reflected the strategic vision and organizational capacity of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). These preparations contributed to altering the balance of forces, creating favorable conditions for launching the general uprising in coordination with the military offensive, and represented one of the key factors leading to the rapid and decisive victory of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

2.2. Military Mobilization Offensive in the Suburban Areas of the Key Battlefield Saigon–Gia Dinh

After the Paris Agreement was signed on 21 July 1973, the United States and the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) sought to exploit the “half-peace, half-war” situation to consolidate RVN forces, continue pacification efforts to seize territory and control the population, advance the Vietnamization strategy, and strengthen their administrative grip on communes and villages, considering this a decisive and existential stage for their regime. However, RVN soldiers and officials exhibited signs of declining morale, mental fatigue, and disillusionment even in weak or suburban areas.

During the dry season of 1973–1974, revolutionary forces dealt a significant setback to RVN pacification and expansion plans, dismantling the control apparatus in communes and villages over a wide area. The military mobilization front rose within the broader “three-pronged offensive” at the grassroots level, empowering communes and villages to independently neutralize outposts, enabling districts to open liberation zones, both liberating territory and reducing RVN manpower through disintegration and desertion.

According to statistical data from the draft outline of the military mobilization offensive in the “three-pronged” campaign, the mobilization efforts in the suburban and inner-city areas of Saigon–Gia Dinh “created over 300 political strongpoints. In these, revolutionary forces exercised varying degrees of control over RVN militias, police, and outposts, undermining the RVN self-defense forces, mobilizing soldiers’ families, developing armed political–military mobilization networks, and organizing desertion of soldiers and young men evading conscription in the RVN armed self-defense units” [2, p.3]. In suburban strongpoints, revolutionary forces eliminated hostile elements and disrupted enemy control, advancing to establish a united front of workers, peasants, and soldiers at different levels, seizing grassroots control and laying the groundwork for the uprising and coordinated offensive.

Implementing the directives of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Vietnam, the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), and the Regional Military Commission—and in alignment with the general offensive momentum across the southern battlefields—between 24 April and 29 April 1975, the military-mobilization assault advanced in coordination with the main-force units and the general uprising of the armed forces and population of Saigon–Gia Dinh. In the suburban and outlying areas, the populace rose up and seized complete control of all hamlets in 83 communes.

As part of the military-mobilization thrust, “the masses rose up to raise flags at district military posts and administrative centers, called on enemy troops to surrender, organized weapon-collection points, and issued certificates of surrender to tens of thousands of enemy soldiers who laid down their arms” [3, p.180].

In Thủ Đức District, on 24 April 1975, a Marine Brigade set up a field camp along the Long Bình River, intending to cross the river to reinforce Xuân Lộc Town. On the morning of 25 April 1975, the district military-mobilization committee mobilized the local populace and soldiers’ families to conduct propaganda and persuasion efforts. By the morning of 26 April 1975, the brigade had disintegrated on site.

On the night of 28 April 1975, the people called for the disbandment of hundreds of cadets at the Thủ Đức Military Academy. The District Party Committee directed the mobilization of local parishes to surrender over 2,000 firearms and persuaded the Security Federation 301, consisting of 600 members, to surrender. On the morning of 30 April 1975, at the Thủ Đức water plant, internal operatives of the Saigon–Gia Dinh Military Mobilization Committee, including engineer Mạnh and several core workers, raised the revolutionary flag and persuaded the RVN armored unit guarding the plant to abandon their weapons and flee.

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The populace rose up to liberate the communes, coordinated with self-defense forces to seize the water and power plants, and by 9:00 a.m. on 30 April 1975, had taken control of the district headquarters and Thủ Đức Town. Local armed forces, together with the people, launched military-mobilization attacks, capturing the 3rd Airborne Brigade base and the Sóng Thần base, leading to the immediate disintegration of the two Sóng Thần Marine Brigades.

In Hóc Môn District, on 29 April 1975, the populace rose up to liberate the communes of Xuân Thới Sơn, Tân Thới Nhứt, Tân Xuân, and Tân Hiệp, coordinating with military units to successfully seize control. The people of An Phú Đông collaborated with specialized commando units to neutralize militias and police, seizing power. Residents of Trung Mỹ Tây, together with internal operatives, persuaded a portion of soldiers at the Quang Trung Military Training Center to surrender.

At the Quang Trung Military Training Center, multiple attacking units advanced, causing piecemeal disintegration and eventually complete occupation. On 28 April 1975, comrade Tám Hữu directed the grassroots cell in the Chợ Cầu area of Đông Hưng Thuận commune to gather 100 young men evading conscription and deserters at Thiên Minh and Giác Vương Pagodas, organize them into a battalion, arm themselves, and make flags. At 6:00 a.m. on 29 April 1975, this force rose to capture the Chợ Cầu sub-district, establishing a revolutionary committee with Út Ngôi as chairman, Tám Thọ in charge of security, and Tư La responsible for communications. The committee called upon local civil defense units to surrender their weapons, collecting numerous arms, five typewriters, and one calculator. By noon, flags were raised, and two units advanced to induce surrender in the southeast area of Quang Trung, with over 1,000 soldiers surrendering at Thiên Minh Pagoda, discarding their uniforms and returning to their families. By the night of 29 April 1975, this force had fully controlled the Chợ Cầu area and southeast Quang Trung.

On 29 April 1975, Unit 735, under the leadership of comrade Lương Thị Mười, cut through barbed-wire defenses, and by the morning of 30 April 1975, had disbanded the entire military school, raising flags across all camps. Twenty thousand soldiers, officers, and cadets removed their uniforms and returned to their families, while Party cells, core cadres, and sympathizers occupied the school, handing it over to the advancing revolutionary forces.

At the Quang Trung Military School headquarters, internal operative Nguyễn Văn Huân, deputy commander of the training center, managed operations. On 29 April 1975, the commanding general, Major General Trần Tấn Di, fled, and Nguyễn Văn Huân ordered the camps not to fire. At 10:30 a.m. on 30 April 1975, Trường Sơn unit troops entered, and Nguyễn Văn Huân greeted them and facilitated the takeover of the entire base, including depots and weapons.

In Bình Chánh District, on 28 April 1975, the people of Tam Tân (three communes: Tân Tạo, Tân Túc, Tân Nhứt) rose up, and Vĩnh Lộc commune was liberated. On the morning of 30 April 1975, the populace of all communes simultaneously rose to seize power, and by 1:00 p.m., the people and local armed forces had liberated the entire district.

In Cần Giuộc District, on 29 April 1975, military-mobilization operatives coordinated with Captain Mùi, who raised a white flag in surrender and welcomed the cadre team to take over the sub-district at 10:00 a.m. On the same day at noon, the populace, together with armed forces, conducted military-mobilization operations and completely liberated all 11 communes of the district.

On the morning of 28 April 1975, internal operative Lê Quang Ninh (codename 110), a major and commander of Battalion 1, Regiment 50, 25th Division of the RVN Army, led a mutiny, bringing 270 soldiers over to the revolutionary side. This act of military defection contributed to the rapid collapse of the northwestern suburban defensive line of Saigon, significantly reducing casualties for both the Liberation Army and enemy troops, and enabled Corps 3 to approach the inner city of Saigon with greater ease.

At the Đồng Dù base (Củ Chi), internal operative Huỳnh Ngọc Sạn, serving in the staff of the 25th RVN Division, provided the Liberation forces with the defensive layout of the base. This facilitated the rapid capture of this strategically important position at the northwestern gateway to Saigon. At the Quang Trung training camp, through the military-mobilization offensive, 20,000 cadets were persuaded to lay down their arms and abandon their uniforms. “At the command center, when the brigadier general fled, the deputy colonel, having been contacted by our operatives, assumed command, ordered subordinates not to fire, safeguarded the facilities, weapons, and documents, and then received our troops to occupy the base” [3, p.180].

In Củ Chi District, at noon on 29 April 1975, revolutionary cadres and secret self-defense forces, directed by Nguyễn Thị Lành (Má Bảy), launched an assault, seizing control of the district headquarters, military sub-districts, and police posts. Simultaneously, local residents rose up, compelling the surrender of all outposts in the district, thereby opening avenues for revolutionary advances toward northwest Saigon.

On the same day, due to the rapid disintegration of RVN forces, the Standing Committee of COSVN issued Secret Telegram No. 506/TV, directing all levels to implement the seven-point military-mobilization policy of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (issued on 25 March 1975). The policy emphasized a benevolent and humane approach toward surrendering RVN soldiers and officials, while committing to strictly punish those who deliberately resisted.

Also on 29 April, following the flight of RVN Chief of General Staff Vĩnh Lộc, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh (an internal operative of the COSVN Military Mobilization Committee) effectively assumed command of the RVN forces, ordering a cease-fire while awaiting instructions from the president. On the morning of 30 April, Nguyễn Hữu Hạnh, together with Nguyễn Hữu Cốc, met with President Dương Văn Minh and Prime Minister Vũ Văn Mẫu to report the critical situation, urging the president to issue a cease-fire order.

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At 9:30 a.m., RVN President Dương Văn Minh declared a halt to hostilities and began discussions with the revolutionary forces regarding an orderly transfer of power. Although this order did not fully meet the revolution's demand for unconditional surrender, it significantly weakened organized resistance among obstinate units, creating favorable conditions for military, political, and mobilization forces to advance and liberate Saigon.

Facing the overwhelming assault by revolutionary forces, at 11:30 a.m. on 30 April 1975, President Dương Văn Minh declared unconditional surrender. The Liberation flag was raised atop the Presidential Palace, marking the complete victory of the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign and the full liberation of Saigon–Gia Định.

Following liberation, the Workers' Party of Vietnam directed all military-mobilization sectors, in coordination with military and police forces, to register surrendering remnants. Across Saigon–Gia Định, 347,742 soldiers and officers and 36,686 police, security, and intelligence personnel registered their surrender [2, p.163].

On 2 May 1975, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam decided to release the former RVN cabinet members, including President Dương Văn Minh, Vice President Nguyễn Văn Huyền, and Prime Minister Vũ Văn Mẫu. This decision was based on their cooperation and direct orders to surrender, facilitating the liberation process in the South.

CONCLUSION

During the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign in April 1975, the military-mobilization (binh vận) forces closely coordinated with the main armed units and the uprising population, gradually seizing control at the commune, district, and sub-district levels across Saigon–Gia Định. From the suburban and outer districts such as Thủ Đức, Hóc Môn, Bình Chánh, and Cần Giuộc to military training centers like Quang Trung and Đồng Dù, internal operatives directly persuaded soldiers and cadets to lay down their arms, causing the disintegration of numerous units and securing warehouses, bases, and weapon systems. Military mobilization activities also motivated the populace to rise, seize local administrative control, and coordinate with local armed forces and main troops to execute decisive offensive operations.

These outcomes demonstrate the decisive role of military mobilization in comprehensively weakening the administrative apparatus of the Republic of Vietnam, facilitating the advance of main assault forces toward Saigon, while minimizing casualties for both sides and the civilian population. This achievement underscores the strategic effectiveness of coordinating military mobilization, armed operations, and popular uprising, affirming the correctness of the leadership and direction of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Vietnam and COSVN during the Hồ Chí Minh Campaign.

The military-mobilization forces, political-mobilization operatives, and internal networks actively operated within enemy lines, persuading enemy units to surrender quickly and reduce unnecessary casualties, contributing to the overall success of the general offensive. The unconditional surrender of RVN President Dương Văn Minh reflected the results of the arduous and prolonged struggle of the entire Vietnamese army and people, in which the overwhelming strength of the revolutionary main forces decisively defeated the defensive capacity of the RVN army across all fronts. Likewise, the cease-fire at 9:30 a.m. on 30 April 1975 demonstrated the clear success of military mobilization, achieved through persistent, targeted, and strategically timed operations. The post-liberation implementation of military-mobilization policies played a crucial role in stabilizing political security and social order in Saigon–Gia Định. The leniency extended to RVN soldiers not only facilitated their reintegration into the new society but also reinforced public confidence and promoted national reconciliation. Consequently, the local community became more united in addressing the consequences of war and advancing toward state unification.

The practical experience of the military-mobilization offensive in the suburban areas of Saigon–Gia Định during the Spring 1975 Hồ Chí Minh Campaign left profound historical significance and lessons. These experiences continue to provide valuable guidance for fostering national unity among the Vietnamese people today.

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