THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

VIETNAM'S NATIONAL DEFENSE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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FOREWORD

Mankind has embarked upon the 21st century with hopes and longing for a stable world living in peace and co-operation for development.

Vietnam is an independent and sovereign nation. Its territory is an inviolable integral entity in which there are 80 million people comprising 54 fraternal ethnic groups cohered in the Great Family of the Vietnamese Nation.

Carrying on its long-standing tradition of peaceful neighbourly relations, Vietnam always wishes for maintaining internal stability and co-existing in peace and friendship with all other nations so as to focus its efforts on socio-economic development with a view to bringing about prosperous welfare and happiness for all strata of its people, and to build an equitable, democratic and civilized society.
With the achievements obtained in the process of building the country in conformity with the guideline of renovation, the Vietnamese people have been firmly embarking on the path of industrialization and modernization of the country, of developing the relations of friendship and co-operation with their neighbouring nations as well as with all others in the region and the world over. While upholding the tradition of building-up coupled with defending the country, Vietnam, like other countries all over the world, needs to strengthen its national defense strong enough to firmly safeguard its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity; to protect national security, social order and safety, and culture; to preserve the Party, the State, and socialist regime; and to defend the cause of renovation and national interests of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

PART ONE
THE NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY
OF VIETNAM

1. Overview of the Security Situation

1.1. The world and the Asia Pacific Region

Major events occurring over the world in the last decade of the 20th century and in the early years of the 21st century have shown that although the main trend remains peace and co-operation for development, the security environment in some regions has seen complicated developments. Although world war or a war in which weapons of mass destruction might be used can hardly break out, local wars and armed conflicts between nations or within a nation originated from long-standing contradictions among races, ethnic groups, religions, political tendencies, territorial and natural resources disputes, etc., frequently occurred. The efforts for disarmament, especially nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass destructions, still
leave much to be desired. The number of countries already in possession of nuclear weapons or having technological ability to quickly develop nuclear weapons of their own has not diminished. On the contrary, it is ever on the rise. Meanwhile, the development of conventional high-tech weapons is giving a drive to new arms races, especially among industrialized countries.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and subsequent developments have affected the relations among major powers. Terrorism and anti-terrorism, hegemony and anti-hegemony are becoming pressing problems. Peace- and justice-loving nations the world over find it necessary to reach a common perception of terrorism and other matters of global dimension on the basis of which to co-ordinate and co-operate in solving those matters within the framework of the United Nations in accordance with the fundamental principles of the U.N Charter and international laws.

The techno-scientific revolution whose main driving force is the information technology will keep on boosting the dynamic development in such fields as production, services, and management, leading
mankind to the so-called knowledge-based economy. The trend of economic globalization will bring about the increasingly interdependent relations which require co-operation, and yet the difference in nations' interests may lead to competitions, sometimes extremely intense. Owing to the different levels of development in infrastructure, in science and technology, in the capacity to apply new technoscientific achievements, and in the unequal relations between developed and developing countries, the differential between wealth and poverty, shown in the difference in GDP per capita, will still be very large.

The tendency to regional co-operation manifested in the establishment of many free trade areas (FTA) requires every country to enhance their competitive ability so as not to lag behind.

Asia-Pacific has been considered the most dynamic region in terms of economic development, which is attracting the interest of ever increasing number of countries, especially the major powers. After the financial crisis by the end of 1997, most countries in this region have restored their economies and achieved high rates of economic growth.
In South-East Asia, the ASEAN members are strengthening their co-operation to promote the Initiative of ASEAN Integration (IAI) in order to narrow the gap in the level of economic development between the old members and the new ones, thus step by step reaching the objective of establishing ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and the declaration of “Bali Concord II”. The prospect of economic co-operation between ASEAN and other nations within the framework of APEC is an important factor contributing to the enhancement of regional peace and stability.

ASEAN has played an active role in the process of evolutionary development and movement of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) according to the principles of “willingness”, “consensus”, and “non-interference in each other’s internal affairs.” Concerning the disputes on the claims to sovereignty in the East Sea, the countries concerned have managed to release a joint Declaration of Conduct, a major step toward an agreement on the Code of Conduct.”

Nevertheless, in the Asia-Pacific region, there exist such factors that may cause unstability and latent dangers of armed conflicts as border and territorial
disputes bequeathed by history, and recently, violent activities of various groups of terrorists and secessionists.

1.2. Vietnam

In Vietnam, after nearly two decades effectuating the renovation policy, Vietnam has obtained great achievements. Owing to the relatively high rate of economic growth, the living standard as well as the cultural life of all strata of people have been improved, the socio-political situation stabilized and national defense maintained.

After so many years carrying out the fierce and arduous struggles for independence, freedom and national reunification, the Vietnamese people have concentrated their efforts to overcome the aftermath of war. Still, Vietnam's low level of economic development in comparison with many other nations in the region requires that it must guard against the danger of lagging further behind economically.

Concerning national defense and security, Vietnam is facing the threat of schemes and ploys by external hostile elements in collusion with internal reactionaries
to interfere in Vietnam’s internal affairs and to cause socio-political instability in Vietnam.

The unsettled problems relating to the disputes on border, land and maritime territories, especially the conflicting claims on sovereignty over the East Sea, together with other non-traditional security issues such as illegal drug trafficking and transportation of weapons, piracy, transnational organized crimes, terrorism, illegal immigration and migration, and degeneration of ecological environment, etc., are also security concerns of Vietnam.

2. The National Defense policy of Vietnam

Vietnam always considers maintaining the peaceful environment, stability for socio-economic development, carrying out industrialization and modernization in the direction of socialism to be its vital national interests.

The nature of the national defense of Vietnam is peace and self-defense. Vietnam applies all necessary measures to achieve the goal of national defense as mentioned above while respecting the independence, sovereignty and interests of other nations in conformity
with the basic principles of the U.N Charter and international laws.

Vietnam advocates combining the national defense build-up with economic development while strengthening the national defense capabilities, coordinating activities in national defense, security and diplomacy so as to create favourable conditions for the cause of renovation, industrialization and modernization of the country, and for a fast and sustainable economic development. The national defense might of Vietnam is the combined strength of the great national unity and the entire political system under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam. It is the combination of the force and posture of all-people's national defense with the force and posture of people's security.

In the field of foreign affairs, Vietnam has consistently carried out the foreign policy of independence, diversification, multilateralization in international relations after the motto "Vietnam is ready to be a friend and a trustful partner of other countries in the international community, striving for peace, independence and development." Vietnam has
increasingly made active contributions to regional and international organizations and fora such as ASEAN, ARF, APEC, etc., thus contributing to the maintenance of an environment of peace and stability in the region and the world in general.

In building the national defense might, Vietnam relies on its national resources and manpower, combining the national strength with the strength of the times while regarding as important the co-operation and assistance of friendly countries as well as all like-minded nations striving for peace, independence, and development in the region and the world over.

Vietnam consistently advocates neither joining any military alliance nor giving any foreign countries permission to have military bases in Vietnam. Vietnam will never take part in any military activity that uses force or threatens to use force against any other country, but Vietnam is prepared for self-defense against any action encroaching upon the territory, airspace and territorial waters, and its national interests. Vietnam will not be embroiled in any arms race but needs to build national defense might strong enough for self-defense.
Vietnam supports the efforts of the international community to prevent and push back the threats of war and armed conflicts, welcomes the initiatives for disarmament that creates eventually a nuclear weapon free world; opposes the development, production, storage and use of other weapons of mass destruction such as biological and chemical weapons. Vietnam resolutely condemns and opposes any terrorist action by any form. However, Vietnam insists that the anti-terrorist measures and international co-operation in the fight against terrorism must be carried out within the framework of the United Nations Organization, and in compliance with U.N Charter and international laws. Vietnam is ready to co-operate with other nations in the region and in the world in the efforts to solve non-traditional security issues such as transnational organized crimes, illegal drug trafficking, piracy, environmental and ecological degeneration, etc., to ensure the capacity of sustainable development of Vietnam and other nations as well. In fact, Vietnam has been carrying on co-operative activities, primarily with other ASEAN members, in exchanging information and experience to combat crimes,
including transnational organized crimes and terrorism. Vietnam and Thailand have exercised joint patrol in the sea and will put into effect that form of bilateral co-operation with Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, etc., to prevent piracy, illegal drug trafficking, arms transportation, and trade in women and children.

Signing ceremony of land-border Agreement between Vietnam and China

In regard to the disputes on the claim to territorial sovereignty on land and in the sea bequeathed by history or newly emerged, Vietnam is always ready to
enter into peaceful negotiations to find reasonable and sensible solutions. Regarding the disputes about sovereignty in the East Sea, the consistent standpoint of Vietnam is that Vietnam has sufficient historical evidence and legal basis to assert its undisputable sovereignty over the territorial waters and islands of Vietnam in the East Sea, among them the Paracels and the Spratleys. Nevertheless, for the common security interests of the parties concerned, Vietnam is ready to enter into peaceful negotiations to settle the problem, first and foremost to reach an agreement on the “Code of Conduct” pending the final solution.
Vietnam approves the settlement of other flashpoints which might break out into armed conflicts in the region through dialogues and peaceful negotiations without resort to force or threat of using force.
PART TWO
BUILDING THE ALL-PEOPLE’S NATIONAL DEFENSE

The all-people’s national defense of Vietnam, built up by the whole people, is an all-round and ever more modern national defense mainly based on self-reliance with a view to firmly safeguarding the country, maintaining peace and stability, and facilitating the successful implementation of the cause of industrialization and modernization to realize the objective of making the “people rich, country strong, society just, democratic and civilized”

In the thousands of year long history of founding and defending the country, thanks to the might of the all-people’s national defense, the Vietnamese people have carried out successfully their resistance wars against foreign aggressors.

Nowadays, the task of building the all-people’s national defense consists of building up the national
defense potential, establishing the posture of national defense, and the State management of national defense.

1. Building the National Defense Potential

The national defense potential of Vietnam is composed of politico-spiritual, economic, scientific and technological, and military potential.

The politico-spiritual potential is the basic component of the national defense potential. It is inherent in the quintessence of the Vietnamese personality, in the cultural tradition of the nation, and in the political system. With the will power manifested in President Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts: “We would rather sacrifice everything than resign ourselves to losing the homeland and slavery”, and imbued with the truth “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom”, the Vietnamese people have built a tradition of ardent patriotism, the self-supporting, self-resilient, valiant and indomitable spirit during the long process of struggle for survival and development.

Building the politico-spiritual potential, first and foremost involves the building of confidence among people of all walks of life in the superiority nature of
the regime as well as in the success of the cause of national construction and defense.

Building the politico-spiritual potential calls for carrying out an intensive and far-reaching education about national defense, heightening the sense of national defense for the whole people, first of all for youth generation, students, and pupils, improving national defense and security awareness for the most important cadres in all branches and at all levels, and broadening democracy conformable to the motto of letting "people know, people discuss, people execute, and people check." Moreover, broadening democracy must go hand in hand with instilling into the people the sense of preserving social disciplines and law-abiding together with the sense of responsibility towards the cause of national defense.

The State of Vietnam implements consistently the policy of respecting and ensuring the rights of religious freedom, follow or not follow any religion, the rights of participating in any normal religious activities in accordance with regulations provided for by law; strictly forbidding unlawful activities that aim at exploiting ethnic and religious issues to incite and sow division among people, particularly among ethnic
groups, to create social disorder to the detriment of national security. In Vietnam now, there are 20 million religious followers and about 56,000 dignitaries belonging to six major religions: Buddhism, Hoa hao Buddhism, Catholicism, Caodaism, Protestantism and Islam. Vietnam is named a "museum" of various religions in the world. According to the religious statistics in year 2002, there are 33,066 Buddhist monks and nuns, 14,043 pagodas and temples, 1,838 parishes, 6,003 churches in Vietnam.

Border troops teaching H’mong children
The State of Vietnam always supports the rightful implementation of the policies on nationalities so as to ensure equality, unity, mutual assistance, helping each other for common development, improving the quality of material and spiritual life, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty, broadening the intellectual standard of the people, preserving, enriching and bringing into play the nation's cultural identity and fine tradition.

**Economic potential** is the material foundation for the all-people’s national defense built in accordance with the strategic planning of the State on the basis of an independent, self-supporting economy that develops at a rapid and sustainable rate.

In many consecutive years, Vietnam’s economy has achieved a high rate of growth. In comparison with the year 1990, the GDP of the year 2000 increased by 2.07 times; the economic growth rate of the year 2001, 2002 and 2003 are 6.89, 7.04%, and 7.24% respectively. Value of forestry, agriculture and fishery production of the year 2003 increased by 4.1%; that of industry by 16%, services by 6.57%; export turn-over increased by 19%, reaching US$ 19.9 billion in value; total capital investment of entire society attained 35.6%
GDP; 1.5 million people have been given new jobs; the ratio of poverty-stricken families has been reduced to 12%; economic structure continues to change in the direction of industrialization and modernization: the percentage of industrial production value in GDP increased from 36.7% (year 2000) to 38.13% (year 2001), 38.55% (year 2002), and 40% (year 2003); that of agricultural production value decreased gradually from 24.53% to 23.24%, 22.99% and 22.6% in respective years, but absolute value of this sector increased substantially in comparison with the previous years.

Vietnam’s economic situation from seriously lacking consumer goods has improved markedly with the productivity now strong enough that not only meets the vital requirements of the people but also increases exports and reserves. The development of infrastructure has been speeded up. In an active way, the Vietnamese economy has gradually been integrating itself into the regional and world economy. The investment environment has been more and more improved, thus attracting a rather large funds of foreign direct investment (FDI), and at the same time acquiring advanced technology and management experience.
Owing to the fact that the per capita GDP, especially in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), has remarkably increased, the material and spiritual life of all strata of people, including the armed forces, has been noticeably ameliorated. Consequently, the intellectual standard of the people in general, the quality of the human resources and the dynamism in society have been heightened considerably.

Regarding the strengthening of the economic potential, one of the important guidelines of the State is to combine closely economy with national defense and vice versa in the process of industrialization and modernization of the country. This guideline is completely embodied in the project and overall planning for socio-economic development of the entire country as well as of each region and each locality.

The efforts to build economic potential that supports the all-people's national defense over the past years have brought about impressive results. At present, Vietnam has a reserve of food grains and foodstuffs, military supplies and equipment, etc., abundant enough for any contingency case. The system of infrastructure, which is becoming more and more perfected and modern, is bringing into play its effect
on both economic growth and national defense activities. The State budget, still limited as it stands, has set aside an appropriate part for national defense in general and for the development of the national defense industry in particular with a view to ensuring essential equipment for the armed forces.

Scientific and technological potential is a factor that plays an ever more important role in the national defense potential. The basic elements of the scientific and technological potential lie in the ability and the level of techno-scientific development, in the quantity and quality of the contingent of techno-scientific workers, in the material facilities for research and development (R&D), dissemination, and application of techno-scientific achievements.

The Vietnamese Government considers techno-scientific development, together with educational and training development as the primary national policy, the foundation and driving force for socio-economic development, for the stepping up of industrialization and modernization of the country, and regards them as requisite conditions for maintaining national independence and making the country strong and prosperous.
The two basic factors that the Government pays special attention to in the field of building the techno-scientific potential are the forming of a contingent of talented and virtuous cadres, full of ambition and high determination to lead the country to a new apex and the creation of material-technological basis for meeting the requirements of the techno-scientific research and development for the key projects in the process of industrialization and modernization, and for making the feasibility study to provide scientific arguments for the State's guidelines and policies relating to the economic development and national defense consolidation.

In order to boost the building of techno-scientific potential, the Vietnamese Government has promulgated the Law on Science and Technology; issued and carried into effect appropriate policies to encourage and motivate scientists; increased investment for opening training and refresher courses so as to heighten the quality and quantity of personnel; and applied various ways of praising and honouring the social position of leading scientists and technical experts. The Government also encourages the application of numerous forms of usage and methods
of making full use of the elderly intellectuals' capacity. The appropriate forms of organizations, the rationality of the methods and operational mechanism of the institutes for techno-scientific development have brought into full play the collective intellect and personal talent of scientists.

The Vietnamese Government has also taken measures to create step by step a techno-scientific market, increased investment for techno-scientific development from various sources of capital, attached much importance to the application of techno-scientific achievements to the promotion of economic growth, broadened international co-operation in the field of science and technology and pushed up the activities of academic information and dissemination of techno-scientific knowledge among the people.

In despite of its difficulties and limitations, the scientific and technological potential of the country is being intensified step by step, thus contributing more and more effectively to economic development and consolidating national defense and security.

**Military potential** is the core component of the national defense potential, built on the basis of
economic, politico-spiritual, and techno-scientific potentials.

Vietnam builds up its military potential in accordance with the strategic planning to meet the demands of the task of defending the motherland; constantly care for the maintenance, perfection, and incessant development of the combat capacity as well as the enhancement of the combat readiness of the Armed Forces in such aspects as human resources, organization, staffing, equipment, facilities for ensuring logistics, and military art and science. Special attention is paid to two basic factors: man and weapon, of which man is decisive.

Thanks partly to the abundance of manpower resources, Vietnam has a strong military potential. The annual recruits not only have strong constitution but higher level of education and sense of national defense. They are always willing to serve the cause of national defense. Upon the completion of their military service, they will return to their former civil life and take part in various fields of social life. Those ex-servicemen constitute a powerful reserve force always ready to supplement the standing force when needed.
Vietnam’s military potential is also shown in the capacity to mobilize various industrial branches, science and technology, communications and transport, and other public services to meet the demands of national defense in case of emergency.

The State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam advocates the combination of building military potential with building politico-spiritual, economic and techno-scientific potential, and regards it as indispensable to the building of potential of the all-people’s national defense to ensure the capacity of mobilization to create the combined strength enough for a firm defense of the Socialist Vietnamese Fatherland.

2. Building the Posture of National Defense

The posture of all-people’s national defense is the disposition of forces and potentials for national defense throughout the territory conformable to a certain strategic design to ensure victory over any armed riots, any invasions or acts of violence encroaching upon the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the national interests of Vietnam.
The posture of national defense is built on the basis of the master plan of the nation as well as of provinces and cities in accordance with the guideline of close combination between economy and national defense and vice versa. Special attention is given to the adjustment of manpower, the arrangement of economic and technical structure, the combination of economic zoning with defense posture, the construction of infrastructure, defense works, field equipment, strategic rear areas, etc., thus forming strategic zones politically stable, rich in economics, and strong in defense and security. The core of the posture of the all-people’s national defense is the strategic disposition of the armed forces and the provincial and municipal defense zones.

On the basis of the adjustment of the strategic arrangement of the economy on the national scale, the State increases investment in the establishment of provincial and municipal defense zones to ensure that in peacetime they can deal with local contingencies by themselves. In wartime, they are capable of taking initiative in fighting invaders right at the very beginning, wearing down enemy’s strength, driving them to passivity or a bogged down situation, thus
creating opportunities that can be exploited by local forces fighting in close combination with main force units to annihilate them. Special attention is paid to building grassroots bases at hamlets (mountain villages), communes (precincts), littoral areas and islands, and key areas, making them stable and strong in all aspects.

![Armymen instructing ethnic people to plant coffee trees](image)

The posture of all-people’s national defense is closely linked to the posture of people’s security in order to ensure its firmness and mutually linked-up position, thus bringing into play the strength of various
forces, combining different forms of armed and non-armed activities, creating mobility and flexibility, and ensuring the capability of fighting independently and in combined operations that may quickly turn into the posture of people’s war if necessary.

3. State Management of National Defense

The State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam carries out the management in the field of national defense in conformity with its Constitution and the laws. The basic contents of the work of State management in the field of national defense consists of promulgating a system of statutory documents on national defense, building master plans and programmes for national defense mobilization, organizing and guiding the implementation of national defense tasks and taking necessary measures to defend the Homeland.

Abiding by the stipulations of the Constitution, the National Assembly has promulgated the Military Service Law, the Service Regulations Law for Vietnamese People’s Army Officers, and the National
Frontier Law. President of SRV has ratified the State Laws on Ready Reserve Force, Militia and Self-Defense Forces, Border Guard Force, Maritime Police, People’s Police and Security Forces, on Protection of National Secrets, Safeguarding Works of Defense and Military Reservations, and on Industry Mobilization, etc. The Government has promulgated decrees, resolutions on implementing the above-mentioned State Laws. The system of laws on national defense and policies concerning the consolidation of national defense in general and build-up of the armed forces in particular are all in the process of perfection.

The overall scheme and plans of mobilization for national defense have been worked out and adjusted in conformity with the requirements of various situations. Other tasks such as education on national defense, international co-operation in the field of national defense and external military relations, ensuring material life for the armed forces and implementation of the policies regarding military dependents, and check up on the implementation of national defense tasks are all well performed.
Great importance is attached to the work of scientific research with a view to putting forward optimal solutions for the gradual modernization of national defense in accordance with the real capacity of the national economy.

On the basis of the ever more comprehensive system of policies and the ever more punctilious system of legal documents enlisting an active assistance of the whole people, the State management of national defense has been carried out in a consistent and effective way. Therefore, even though the State is still beset with a lot of difficulties, the budget for national defense makes up only 2.5 per cent of the GDP, and yet Vietnam’s national defense has been ever more consolidated.

In the new context, Vietnam keeps on carrying out the guideline of making full use of the concerted strength of the entire nation, of the political system for intensifying the allround potentiality and the posture of national defense so as to actively prevent and timely cope with complicated situations with a view to firmly
defending independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests, maintaining peace and political stability—a precondition for the development of the country.
PART THREE
BUILDING UP THE ARMED FORCES

Vietnamese People's Armed Forces, consisting of the Vietnamese People's Army, Militia and Self-defense Force, Maritime Police, and People's Public Security Force, are placed under the direct and absolute leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam in every aspect and managed by the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Nowadays, the task of the Vietnamese People's Armed Forces is to maintain combat readiness for safeguarding the socialist homeland and making contribution to the cause of national construction.

1. Components of the Armed Forces

1.1. Vietnamese People's Army

The Vietnamese People’s Army, the core of the Vietnamese People’s Armed Forces, is an army of new type, imbued with the working class nature, with the deeply national and popular characters, coming from
the people and being in the people's service with an unswerving purpose of fighting "for the independence and freedom of the homeland, for socialism and for the happiness of the people."

December 22, 1944 has been taken to be the Vietnamese People's Army Day. That was the founding day of the Armed Propaganda Unit of the Liberation Army, the first regular force of the revolution, under the directive of the late President Ho Chi Minh. Carrying on and heightening the military tradition of the nation, relying on the strength of the people and the people's war of Vietnam, on the solidarity and assistance of friendly countries' people and army, the Vietnamese People's Army, undergoing the process of fighting and building up the strength at the same time, has grown up from small to large units. The more it fights, the stronger it becomes and achieves ever greater successes and grows stronger by leaps. The fighting power of the Vietnamese People's Army manifested in the resistance wars against foreign aggressors had taken its source from the politico-ideological consciousness, from the unanimity of objective and ideal to fight for, from the unity between the army and the people and between officers and
soldiers, from the bravery and wisdom in fighting, from the creative dynamism in their use of weapons and technical equipment suitable to the Vietnamese military art and battle ground.

Since the country embarked upon the period of peace and construction, the Vietnamese People’s Army has continued to display its fine tradition and nature and has always fulfilled faithfully its function as an army ready for combat as well as for work and production worthy of the late President Ho Chi Minh’s praise: “Our Army loyal to the Party, pious to the people and ready to fight and sacrifice their lives to the homeland’s independence and freedom, to socialism, will fulfil any task, tide over any difficulty and defeat any enemy.”

Nowadays, while the country is keeping on carrying out the cause of renovation and intensifying the process of industrialization and modernization, the Vietnamese People’s Army is highlighting the key role in building and consolidating a strong all-people’s national defense and, together with other components of the armed forces, taking part in the consolidation of the great national unity to guard against all plots to sow division among religions and nationalities, maintainig
firmly the political stability, security and social order, protecting the peaceful life and labour achievements of the people, and building the country pursuant to the goal of making the “people rich, country strong and society civilized, democratic and equitable.”

1.1.1. **Organizationally**, the Vietnamese People’s Army, both standing and reserve forces, is composed of the main force and local force.

The standing force consists of all servicemen on active service, civil servants and employees being in service of the armed forces. In peace time, the strength of the standing force is maintained at a necessary minimum, just enough to meet the requirements of combat-readiness through regular training, maintaining weapons, technical equipment and material stock. The standing force plays an important role in the building-up of the reserve force so as to ensure a supplementary source of manpower for the standing force when necessary.

The reserve force is composed of all home reservists chosen and classified to meet the demands of the mobilization plan. In peacetime, the reserves are registered, administered and organized into reserve
units which are trained according to stipulated programmes and fulfil other tasks in their localities. The reserves have the same components as those of the standing force with officers, non-commissioned officers and privates of various arms and services of the main force and local force having completed their active service obligations, and a number of citizens listed as reservists.

Since the beginning of the period of national construction in peace, the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has decided to reduce two thirds of the numerical strength of the standing force, readjusted its strategy so as to concentrate its efforts on economic development with a view to ensuring a happy life of plenty for the people. The reduction of the numerical strength of the standing force and the adjustment of the strategy have been carried out simultaneously with the upgrading of quality in all aspects so that the army can cope with all situations of war or armed conflicts that may threaten the independence, sovereignty, national unity, territorial integrity and national interests of the SRV.

President of the SRV is the commander-in-chief; the Minister of National Defense is in charge of directing and administering the Vietnamese People's
Army and carrying out the function of State management in the domain of national defense. Under the Minister of National Defense there are such organs as the General Staff Department, the General Political Department, the General Logistics Department, the General Techniques Department, the General Department of National Defense Industry, the General Department II, and other directly subordinate agencies.

1.1.2. Components of the Vietnamese People's Army

1.1.2.1. Main Force

The main force is the core of the Vietnamese People's Army. It is composed of various services, army corps, arms and professional troops, with high mobility and combat-readiness to meet the requirements of combat missions under any circumstance, at any time and in any place. In addition to combat units, there are complete systems of logistic and technical units, academies, institutes, officers training colleges and vocational schools at all levels.

Ground Forces

Ground Forces, or the Army, are not organized into a separate command. They are composed of military regions, combined-arm army corps, and arms:
artillery, engineer, signal corps, chemical defense, tanks, commando, and other units directly belonging to the Ministry of National Defense. The military regions - organized in areas of strategic importance - consist of main force troops belonging directly to military region commands, and local units under the command of provincial and district military headquarters within the military regions.

Ground forces have come into being since the founding day of the armed forces. Under the overall command of The General Staff Department, they have played an important role in the Vietnamese People's Army through various stages and undergone the gradual process of development both organizationally and qualitatively in conformity with war circumstances, conditions, and the fighting mode of the people's war of Vietnam.

Ground forces are equipped after the motto "modern, light and compact" so as to achieve high mobility, strong striking power and great fire power, and the capability of fighting in the conditions, terrain, and climate of the homeland in conformity with the new fighting mode that is increasingly perfected. Having undergone a lot of trials during the wars for
national liberation and safeguarding the homeland, ground forces have step by step grown up, always fulfilled outstandingly their duties and built up glorious tradition. All the army corps, most of arms and numerous units of the ground forces have been awarded the title of Heroic Unit of the People’s Armed Forces.

![Infantry and tanks in combined arms training](image)

The biggest mobile unit of the ground forces for the time being is the army corp. Its numerical strength depends upon each period of fighting or being ready to fight for the defense of the country. Smaller units are
divisions, regiments, battalions, companies, platoons and squads.

**Navy**

The Vietnamese People’s Navy, whose predecessor was the Department of Coast Guard, was established on May 7, 1955, then turned into the Department of Navy (January 24, 1959) and officially became one of the services of the Vietnamese People’s Army on January 3, 1964, with the establishment of the Navy Command.

![Naval troops in combined combat training](image)
The responsibility of the Vietnamese People's Navy is to protect Vietnam's territorial waters and airspace above. During the fight to protect the North against the sabotage war launched by the US air force and navy as well as during the liberation war in the South, the Vietnamese People's Navy had taken part in naval combat activities fulfilling superbly its tasks. Especially, it has recovered most of the islands and archipelagoes - a part of the fatherland’s territory at sea - from the army of Saigon puppet regime during the Ho Chi Minh Campaign. In 1989, the Vietnamese People’s Navy was awarded the title of Hero of the People’s Armed Forces.

The Vietnamese People’s Navy is composed of different combat arms and combat support elements equipped with warships, weapons and other increasingly modern equipment so as to be able to engage in naval combat operations over Vietnam’s territorial waters. It is organized into naval areas.

The Vietnamese People’s Navy always plays an important role in the protection of Vietnam’s territorial waters, islands, continental shelves, and exclusive economic zones as well as other maritime economic interests. It is the key force that operates in close
combination with such other forces as Public Security Force, Customs, Border Guards, and Maritime Police to strictly control the territorial waters and maritime economic activities of the country in conformity with the Vietnamese and international laws.

Airforce troops after a training flight

Air Defense- Air Force

The Air Defense-Air Force is a service assuming the responsibility of both national air defense troops and air force. Its basic function is to fight against enemy air attacks in order to defend the national key facilities, to protect the people, and to take part in joint and combined operations or independently perform the
tasks it is entrusted with. The military transport air arm, besides the task of supporting combat and combat readiness, also takes part in relief operations in case of natural calamities and economic development activities.

![Image: Airforce troops in a search and rescue mission](image)

The Air Defense- Air Force Service has grown up from small units. At first, there was only a single anti-aircraft regiment founded on April 01, 1953 which had made an important contribution to the victorious ending of the Dien Bien Phu military campaign in 1954 resulting in the liberation of the North. During the
subsequent war of liberation, the Air Defense-Air Force Service, by performing outstandingly its missions, had contributed effectively to the task of defending the North, liberating the South, thus completing the cause of reunification of the country.

Nowadays, the Air Defense-Air Force Service is organized into air divisions and air defense divisions which are equipped with increasingly modern combat aircraft of various types, missiles, anti-aircraft artillery and other technical means. They are training to raise their combat-readiness for the defense and control of
the airspace of the country, and at the same time to fulfil other tasks entrusted to them by the State and the army. By virtue of their achievements in fighting and in performing other tasks, both the Air Defense and Air Force were awarded the title of Hero of the Armed Forces by the State of Vietnam. The Air Defense-Air Force Service celebrates its founding day on October 22- the day of merging the Command of Air Defense with the Air Department in 1963.

**Border Guard Force**

The Border Guard Force is a component of the Vietnamese People's Army. Its basic function is to play the key role in controlling, protecting national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and ensuring public order and security of border areas, islands, territorial waters, and frontier passes in conformity with Vietnamese laws and international practices.

The founding day of the Border Guard Force was March 3, 1959. Its regular tasks are: assuming the main responsibility for co-ordinating various branches and forces quartered in the vicinity to protect the borderlines, boundary markers; ensuring the implementation of agreements, regulations and laws.
on borders; discovering and fighting against all illegal activities and sabotage of all kinds of crimes to preserve sovereignty, security and social order in the border areas; carrying out the border guard external work by contacting concerned organs of neighbouring countries to solve the border related issues with a view to building peaceful and friendly borders, hence making contribution to the creation of a stable environment that actively supports the policy of expanding international co-operation.
Units of the Border Guard Force at each locality are also members of the armed forces in provincial and district defense zones.

The Border Guard troops are becoming an ever more standardized and professionally proficient force, clever at public relations, having a thorough grasp of Vietnamese and international laws and usual practices. They are equipped with increasingly modern professional instruments and weapons so that they can fulfil efficiently their tasks.

Due to its achievements in combat and work the Border Guard Force was awarded the title of Hero of the People's Armed Forces in 1979.

1.1.2.2. Local Force

The local Force is a mobile force engaging in military actions mainly within each locality, and together with the militia and self-defence units, plays the role of the core in the people's war at the locality under the direct order of the military commands of provinces (or centrally-governed cities) and the military commands of the districts (or provincially-governed towns and cities). The Local Force was
formally established on April 4, 1949 by the Decree of
the President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Local Force is closely linked to defense zones,
carrying out their combat operations in the general
defense posture of the whole country in consonant with
the requirements and characteristics of each area in the
people's war at the locality in combination with the
people's war of the entire country.

The staff and disposition of the local force depend
on the size and importance of various provinces (or
centrally-governed cities), districts (or provincially-
governed towns and cities). Conformable to their
organizational size, terrain conditions, and socio-
economic situations of each locality, the local force is
equipped with a suitable amount and type of weapons
for combat needs. The local force also has technical
units as well as air-defense, artillery, reconnaissance,
commando, and other support units.

Nowadays, the instruction and training of local
force units are regularly carried out with a view to
raising the sense of vigilance and readiness for the co-
ordination and combination with militia and self-
defence units in fighting for the protection of the people and local authorities. Local force units also combine their actions with those of the militia and self-defense force units to maintain order and security in their own localities, render assistance to militia and self-defense units in training, and contribute to the training work of the ready reserves.

1.2. Militia and Self-Defense Force

A self-defence machinegun unit in training

The Militia and Self-defense Force is the part-time force of the masses. As a component of the Vietnamese People's Armed Forces, it is placed under
the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the management of the Government and people's committees at various levels, the unified guidance and command of the Minister of Defense, and the direct command of local military headquarters.

Militia units are organized in villages, precincts or towns while self-defense units are organized in civil services, enterprises, economic organizations, politico-social organizations (generally called services, organizations)

The militia and self-defense force, consisting of the core and the general components, is organized into platoons, companies or battalions and equipped with appropriate weapons. In peacetime, the militia and self-defense force has its role to play both as a productive workforce and a vanguard in protecting productional activities, preventing and overcoming the aftermaths of natural calamities and enemy-inflicted destruction as well as other seriously accidental events. In normal situation, the militia and self-defense force combines with local security force to maintain social order and political security in the localities. In wartime, the militia and self-defense force becomes a strategic force
of the people's war, acting as the core in the enemy fighting movement by the whole people in the localities.

Ngu Thuỷ - Quang Binh militia artillery battery - a hero unit

In the two national resistance wars against foreign invaders, numerous units of the militia and self-defense force were awarded the title of Hero of the People’s Armed Forces. The traditional day of the militia and self-defense force is March 28, 1935.

1.3. **Maritime Police**

The Maritime Police, established on August 28, 1998, is a professional force of the State to execute
management function of security, order and safety, and ensure the implementation of the laws of the State of Vietnam and international treaties concerned that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has signed or participated in as a member within the territorial waters and continental shelves of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. All activities of the Maritime Police of Vietnam are directly organized, managed, and administered by the Ministry of National Defense.

1.4. People's Public Security Force

The People's Public Security Force, consisting of the People's Security Force and the People's Police Force, has two main functions: State management in the field of security and social order and directly conducting activities of combat, active investigation, prevention, and dealing with crimes, and offences against the laws on security and order. The Vietnamese People’s Public Security Force was established on August 19, 1945.

2. General Direction and Key Measures

Vietnam advocates maintaining its armed forces strong enough with a reasonably numerical strength,
and high degree of training proficiency, ready to meet the demand of safeguarding the homeland in the period of industrialization and modernization.

Putting into effect the measures to build up its armed forces in peacetime, Vietnam has drastically reduced the numerical strength of its standing force while building the reserve force conformable to the requirements of practical conditions in peacetime but at the same time being able to meet the demand of coping with local emergencies. The perfection of the staff and organization is conducted simultaneously with the work of education, training and raising the quality of various components of the armed forces in all respects. Training is regarded as pivotal work and is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the task of each component of the armed forces, suited to practical conditions of the country as well as the available weapons, equipment and the Vietnamese military art. Vietnam sets great store on raising the standard of knowledge of its armed forces members regarding military science, military technology, and Vietnamese modern military art. They must have a thorough grasp of the operational art of each arm, each service, and
each category of the armed forces as well as the art of their joint and combined operations.

- **Building the Armed Forces in Politico-Spiritual Aspect**

In building the armed forces, the intensification of politico-spiritual strength is regarded as the basis for making it strong in all respects. Because, to the final analysis, in any wars, the fighting spirit of the soldier is always the decisive factor in victory or defeat on the battlefield.

Vietnam advocates strengthening the work of political education in the armed forces in the spirit of "loyalty to the country and devotion to the people", bringing into play the tradition of patriotism and unity to fight the enemy handed down to us from our forefathers and constantly consolidating the ideological front, creating a healthy cultural environment, and building up a firm political standpoint for the armed forces. The fact that the Vietnamese People's Armed Forces are politically staunch, closely connected with the people, and always ready to sacrifice themselves in fighting for the independence and freedom of the homeland, for national interests, and making
contribution to the maintenance of peace in the region and the world over is the manifestation of the fighting power on the politico-ideological front. Vietnam resolutely counters all attempts of hostile elements who want to “depoliticize” the people’s armed forces.

- Training

In peace-time, on a par with the build-up of the armed forces in the politico-spiritual aspect, military training is indispensable to strengthen the might and combat readiness of the armed forces. In training, the Vietnamese People’s Army pays special attention to
individual combat skills, fighting in joint and combined operations, and making the best use of the performance and potentiality of available weapons and equipment through the application of the Vietnamese military art. It also attaches great importance to raising the knowledge about modern military technology and to outlining the training programmes in harmony with the organizational size, equipment and realistic conditions of each category of the armed forces.

- Building a Contingent of Officers and Technical Personnel

Building the people’s armed forces in general and building the people’s army with its contingent of officers and technical personnel in particular is a focal point. It is also an integral part of the “human strategy.” President Ho Chi Minh, during his lifetime, put special emphasis on the role of the contingent of officers and cadres when he said: “Cadres are considered as cornerstones for all kinds of work.”

The basic and long term objective of the training and education of the contingent of officers and technical personnel of the people’s army is to make them the firm foundation for the cause of building the
revolutionary, standardized, well-trained, and gradually modernized people’s army with fighting power strong enough to protect the peaceful construction of the people and firmly defend the Vietnamese Socialist Homeland.

The contingent of officers and technical personnel of the Vietnamese People’s Army is trained and educated in all respects: political and moral qualities, ideological stand, manner, competence and general knowledge. The system of army schools, colleges and institutes, as an integral part of the overall system of training and educational establishments of the State, complies with the requirements and standards stipulated by the State. With 17 establishments of education and training at university level and 14 establishments of education and training at post graduate level, the system of colleges and institutes of the people’s army educates and trains annually hundreds of university graduate and post graduate officers of various specialities from military science, military technology, to medicine and political science. In the education and training of officers and technical personnel, there is a linkage between the schools of the armed forces and the training establishments of other ministries and branches so as to foster an abundant
supply of talented people, combining specialized training to meet the requirements of the armed forces with civil career training for officers and technical personnel, thus facilitating their accumulation of necessary knowledge of various field such as politics, economics, culture, sociology, law, techniques, technology, management, etc., so that when they are no longer in active service, they would easily put themselves in tune with the civilian life of the community. The proper policy on training has encouraged numerous brilliant young people to enter officers and technical personnel training colleges and schools, thus creating a supplementary source of talent in the long run.

- **Weapons and Military Equipment**

The common approach to ensuring weapons and technical equipment for the armed forces is to maintain and improve selectively the existing inventories on the one hand and produce or reasonably procure some necessary advanced weapons and technical equipment on the other hand to meet the demand of strengthening the fighting power of the people’s armed forces. The problem of weapons and equipment is always reckoned with and tackled from the viewpoint that man is always
considered as the decisive factor in battle. Devising clever ways of fighting, using suitable weapons available to achieve high combat effectiveness are by nature the typical characteristics of the historical process of application and development of the Vietnamese military art.

A research work for waste-water treatment at the General Department of the defense industry

Various programmes of research and development, and application of military technology, together with the establishment of the Vietnamese defense industry are meeting more and more satisfactorily the demands
of the armed forces for repairing, improving, and producing weapons and technical equipment.

The Vietnamese defense industry, a component of national industry, is being developed in the direction of mainly self-reliance but at the same time, various forms of associate and co-operative relations with friendly countries are being broadened so as to acquire advanced technologies with a view to bringing the Vietnamese defense industry to a higher level of development.

- Building and Developing the Military Science of Vietnam

Experience and lessons bequeathed by the long history of armed uprisings, wars of liberation and wars of national defense have been summed up and developed into the unique military doctrine of Vietnam. This systematic knowledge has been experimentalized and kneaded into rules for finding out the strength for safeguarding the country. One of the bases for creating this source of strength is the sense of national cohesion of Vietnam. That sense is shown fully and clearly in the patriotism, the independent, self-supporting, self-reliant, and self-strengthening spirit of the Vietnamese people, which can be summed
up in the motto: "liberate ourselves with our own strength." The military science of Vietnam always puts special emphasis on that great and profound lesson. That explains why the capabilities of the entire people and entire nation have been exploited and made full use in thousands of year long history of building and defending the homeland of Vietnam.

Nowadays, in the new circumstances and conditions, the military science of Vietnam is being enriched with theories of building the people’s armed forces and the all-people’s national defense in peacetime. The military science of Vietnam has been built on the basis of the military theory and practice of its own and at the same time, it has acquired the quintessence of world military science that would be applied in conformity with the specific conditions of Vietnam, especially those which are related to new factors emerging from the impact of the techno-scientific revolution in military affairs.

Together with the development of the military science, the military technology branch is also displaying the tradition of "initiative, creativeness, self-help for self-improvement" in the research, development and application of new technologies,
especially the information technology in the training and education of technical cadre with a view to meeting the demands of conducting people’s war to safeguard the homeland in hi-tech conditions.

The command system has met the requirements of commanding the army and has fulfilled its tasks superbly in recent wars. Nowadays, the technoscientific achievements, especially those in the field of information technology, have made great strides in manufacturing modern means of communications to the service of command, control, reconnaissance, and “information warfare.” The big challenges of this kind of warfare require the command system of the Vietnamese People’s Army to be modernized so as to be able to meet the need of any future war of national defense. Improving and raising the quality of the communications system play a critical role in building-up the strength of the all-people's national defense in general and the fighting power of the people’s army in particular.

**Broadening International Military Exchange and Co-operation**

In the interests of consolidating peace and in the consistent implementation of the foreign policy of
independence, sovereignty, door-opening, multilateralization and diversification of external relations of the State of Vietnam, the national defense policy of Vietnam advocates establishing and promoting relations of exchange and co-operation on the basis of equality, mutual understanding with other countries' armed forces.

Abiding by that line, the Vietnamese People’s Army has been stepping up military exchanges at various levels, participating in various seminars for the purpose of promoting friendship, mutual understanding, and confidence building with a view to consolidating peace, security, and co-operation for development of the region and the world on the basis of equality, respect for independence, sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Every year, officers of the Vietnamese People’s Army attend a lot of conferences and international workshops with a view to exchanging scientific research and viewpoints on regional and international security situations.

Many delegations from various military academies and institutes of numerous countries all over the world have had open-hearted and useful exchanges with their Vietnamese counterparts during their visits to Vietnam.
Warships sailing under different colours have called at Vietnamese ports.

A number of units of the Vietnamese People's Navy and Maritime Police have frequently been taking part in such joint activities as sea patrol against piracy and drug trafficking, maritime search and rescue, and disaster relief operations.

Co-ordination in search and rescue operation

Through military diplomacy activities, particularly the exchanges of viewpoints and academic researches, military circles of other countries have better understanding of the all-people’s national defense of
Vietnam as well as the nature of peace and self-defense of its national defense. This is a significant contribution to regional and world peace and security.

*

*     *

In today's world situation, as the trend toward peace and co-operation for development is gaining momentum, the cherished aspiration of the Vietnamese people is to maintain the internal socio-political stability and to contribute to the maintenance of peace in the region and the world over so as to focus their efforts on economic development on the basis of which to build Vietnam into a more and more wealthy and strong nation.

The release of the White Paper on Vietnam's National Defense in the early years of the 21st Century aims at making a contribution to the building of confidence between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and other countries in the international community. It is one of the important bases for the development of friendly relations and co-operation on the principle of equality and mutual respect for the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.
APPENDIX 1

VIETNAMESE PEOPLE’S ARMY’S PARTICIPATION IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT 1998-2003

From 1998 to 2003, under an overall program, the Vietnamese People's Army have taken part in socio-economic construction and development, national defense-security consolidation in areas of strategic importance including border areas, coastal and mountainous areas, remote and specially poverty-ridden areas.

After five years, the Vietnamese People's Army has established 16 defense economic zones.

In the defense economic zones, units of the Vietnamese People's Army, together with local authorities, have created "green belts" for the country, making contribution to socio-economic development, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty, maintaining political stability and security in these areas.
Some specific figures:

- Construction:
  
  47,522 square metres of dwelling-house,
  9,683 square metres of civil - military medical stations,
  3,327 square metres of class - room,
  461,3 kilometres of traffic road,
  33 small and medium hydro-electric stations.

- Development of production and settlement:

  Achievements of the defense economic zones in production:

  The 15th and 16th Army Corps in Western Plateau (Tay Nguyen) have reclaimed waste land, growing over 30ha of rubber, coffee and cacao tree creating 17,000 jobs, in cluding 5,500 jobs for local ethnic minority people

  Settlement:

  From 1992 to the end of the year 2003: Sponsoring and receiving 72,203 families moving in and working in various defense economic zones.

  During the year 2003 only: helping 6.058 poverty-stricken families improve their living condition.
## APPENDIX 3

## MAJOR MILITARY EXCHANGES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN 2002-2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outgoing Visits</th>
<th>Visits to SRV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23-26, 2002</td>
<td>Minister of Defense, Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 31- Feb. 2</td>
<td>Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Command, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 10-12</td>
<td>Secretary-General of Ministry of Defense, Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 15-19</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense, Laos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19-22</td>
<td>Commander of Royal Forces, Cambodia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 20-22</td>
<td>Supreme Commander of Thailand Armed Forces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 24- Mar. 1</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Singapore to attend Asian Aviation Exhibition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 1-17</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense to Netherlands, Spain and Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Outgoing Visits</td>
<td>Visits to SRV</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 3-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of the Army, The Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 20-24</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Cambodia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.31- Apr.4</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to Laos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr.3-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of Border Military Area Command, China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 4-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chief of Joint Staff, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 8-11</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Malaysia to attend Defense Services Exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 19-24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff, the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>May. 4-12</td>
<td>Chairman of the National Defense Academy to Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>May.12-15</td>
<td>Commander of the Fifth Military Region to Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>May. 19-23</td>
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<td>Commander of the Air Force, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May. 28-31</td>
<td>Chief of the General Political Department to Laos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun. 9-16</td>
<td>Deputy chief of the General Staff to France to attend an exhibition</td>
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<td>Jun. 17-22</td>
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<td>Chief of the General Political Department, People's Army, Laos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 8-14</td>
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<td>Chief of General Political Department, Cuban Armed forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 21-28</td>
<td>Chief of the General Political Department to China</td>
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<td>Jul. 23-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of the Navy, The Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 26-30</td>
<td>Commander of the Border Guard Forces to Russia</td>
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<td>Aug. 18-25</td>
<td>Commander of the Border Guard Forces to Laos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 21-24</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense to Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 8-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of the Navy, Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 18-19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense, DPRK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep. 29-Oct.2</td>
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<td>Commander of US Marine Corps</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1-9</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to Malaysia and Brunei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 8-14</td>
<td>Commander of the Navy to Japan to attend International Naval Procession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 15-22</td>
<td>Chief of the General Political Department to China and DPRK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 27-29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of the Navy, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2-5</td>
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<td>Chief of the General Staff, Singapore</td>
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**Year 2003**

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<tr>
<td>Jan. 19-22</td>
<td>Commander of the Air-force, the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 21-24</td>
<td>Deputy Commander of the Royal Armed Forces, Commander of the Army, Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 9-21</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense to Laos, Thailand and Myanmar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar.18-25</td>
<td>Chief of the General Political Department to Laos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 8-10</td>
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<td>Deputy Commander of the Royal Armed Forces, Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 10-14</td>
<td>2 Japanese Naval Ships to Ho Chi Minh City Port</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 22-29</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff People's Army, Laos</td>
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<td>May. 19-21</td>
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<td>Commander of the Army, Thailand</td>
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<td>May. 25-28</td>
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<td>Commander of the Army, Australia</td>
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<td>Jun.1-7</td>
<td>Chief of the General Political Department to Cuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun.14-23</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to France to attend aerospace exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul. 9-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul.15-Aug. 2</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense to South Africa, Mozambique, Congo (Brazavin) and Angola</td>
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<td>Visits to SRV</td>
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<td>Jul. 14-22</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Political Department to Australia</td>
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<td>Jul. 15-18</td>
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<td>Command and Staff College of The Army, Thailand</td>
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<td>Jul.24-28</td>
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<td>2 naval ships of Thailand to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<td>Commander of the Navy, Malaysia</td>
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<td>Jul.29-31</td>
<td>Commander of AirDefense-Air Force to Laos</td>
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<td>Aug. 6-10</td>
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<td>Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Brunei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 19-24</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense and Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Russia to attend aerospace exhibition</td>
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<td>Aug. 21-26</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to Brunei to attend the Conference of ASEAN's Chiefs of General Saff</td>
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<td>Commander of the Army, Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug.20-30</td>
<td>Chief of the General Department of Defense Industry to India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug.30-Sept.4</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to South Korea to attend the Conference of Army Commanders of Asia-Pacific Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Srpt.4-10</td>
<td>Commander of the Navy to Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.8-15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Political Department, Laos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.7-13</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense to Great Britain to attend defense exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.8-17</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to Australia and Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.29-Oct.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naval ship of India to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.29-Oct.7</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense and Commander of the Navy to Malaysia to attend defense exhibition and visit to Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Outgoing Visits</td>
<td>Visits to SRV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.29-Oct.3</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of National Defense to Turkey to attend defense exhibition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.5-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Defense Institute, Great Britain</td>
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<td>Oct.08-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Defense Institute, South Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.22-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 naval ships of Australia to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.29-Nov.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commander of Pacific Forces of the French Navy</td>
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<td>Oct.27-Nov.1</td>
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<td>French naval ship to Hai Phong</td>
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<td>Nov.19-22</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S naval ship to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<td>Oct.30-Nov.2</td>
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<td>3 South Korean naval ships to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<td>Nov.5-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister of Defense, Thailand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.9-12</td>
<td>Minister of National Defense to USA, Brazil, and Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.26-Nov.2</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Outgoing Visits</td>
<td>Visits to SRV</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nov.2-7</td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff to Japan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.22-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary General of Defense, Italia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.9-12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister of Defense Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.30-Dec.3</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of the General Staff to Thailand to attend Thailand's National Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.2-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>First Deputy Chief of the General Political Department, Democratic People's Republic of Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.9-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naval ship of India to Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 17-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chief of the General Staff, India</td>
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