



東南亞研究中心
Southeast Asia Research Centre

COLLEGE OF
**LIBERAL ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Carlyle A. Thayer

The Apparatus of Authoritarian Rule in Viet Nam

Working Paper Series

**No. 118
January 2012**



The Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC) of the City University of Hong Kong publishes SEARC Working Papers Series electronically

©Copyright is held by the author or authors each Working Paper.

SEARC Working Papers cannot be republished, reprinted, or reproduced in any format without the permission of the papers author or authors.

Note: The views expressed in each paper are those of the author or authors of the paper. They do not represent the views of the Southeast Asia Research Centre, its Management Committee, or the City University of Hong Kong.

Southeast Asia Research Centre Management Committee

Professor Mark R. Thompson, Director
Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing, Associate Director
Dr Chiara Formichi
Dr Nicholas Thomas
Dr Bill Taylor

Editor of the SEARC Working Paper Series

Professor Mark R. Thompson

Southeast Asia Research Centre

The City University of Hong Kong
83 Tat Chee Avenue
Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong SAR
Tel: (852) 3442 6106
Fax: (852) 3442 0103
<http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc>

The Apparatus of Authoritarian Rule in Viet Nam

Carlyle A. Thayer

Introduction

This essay examines the repressive role of four key state organs in buttressing Viet Nam's one-party state: Ministry of Public Security, People's Armed Security Force, General Directorate II (military intelligence), and the Ministry of Culture and Information. The analysis that follows explores how authoritarian rule is actually implemented by examining the methods and tactics used to repress pro-democracy activists, bloggers, journalists and religious leaders in the period from 2006 to 2010. This examination reveals that Viet Nam's one-party is a divided entity and that its organs of repression are sometimes manipulated by leaders engaged in factional in-fighting. This study also reveals the influence of China and its security organs on the apparatus of repression in Viet Nam.

Vietnamese security authorities invariably charge these activists under the vaguely worded Article 88 of the Penal Code on "Conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam." Article 88 states:

1. Those who commit one of the following acts against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam shall be sentenced to between three and twelve years of imprisonment:
 - a) Propagating against, distorting and/or defaming the people's administration;
 - b) Propagating psychological warfare and spreading fabricated news in order to foment confusion among people;
 - c) Making, storing and/or circulating documents and/or cultural

products with contents against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Socialist Republic of Vietnam 1999, 22).

Repression in Vietnam consists of three overlapping components monitoring and surveillance, harassment and intimidation and arrest, detention, trial and sentencing. Each of these components is used to repress politically active citizens whose views and/or actions are arbitrarily deemed unacceptable by party and state officials.

Political repression in Viet Nam has been largely neglected in the scholarly literature by political scientists who focus on relations between society and the state. The number of political dissidents, pro-democracy activists and religious freedom advocates in Viet Nam is quite small, yet the state devotes enormous resources to monitor and repress this tiny group. One reason may be that Viet Nam's one-party state's claim to legitimacy on rational-legal and ideological grounds is weak (Thayer 2009a and 2010a). This heightens the state's sense of vulnerability and the vigor of its response to dissenting views. Thus the state relies on repression to silence individuals and groups constituting "political civil society" to shore up its authority and prevent the undermining of the authoritarian basis of its rule (Thayer 2009b).

The Apparatus of Repression

Ministry of Public Security. The Ministry of Public Security (MPS, *Bo Cong An*, formerly the Ministry of Interior) is the lead organization responsible for national security. The MPS forms a bloc on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam's (CPV) representing 4.4 per cent of its 160 members elected at the tenth congress in 2006.ⁱ The Minister of Public Security is also a member of the party's Politburo. From 2006 until July 2011 this position was held by General Le Hong Anh. Anh was listed first in protocol rankings after the party Secretary General based on voting results at the 2006 national party congress. The Minister of Public Security is assisted by six deputy ministers, all of whom are members of

the party Central Committee.

The MPS currently comprises six General Departments: Police, Security, Strategic Intelligence, Education and Personnel, Logistics, and Science and Technology. The General Department of Police is primarily a law enforcement agency and is estimated to have 1.2 million officers nationwide (Thayer 2008, 303). The General Department of Security has responsibility for collecting information related to national security and advising on policy, protecting political and economic security, protecting cultural and ideological security, immigration control and international terrorism.

The General Department of Security has a specialist unit, A42, that monitors telephones, emails and the Internet (Hayton 2010, 122).ⁱⁱ In 2002, Viet Nam acquired the Verint mobile phone monitoring system. In 2005, the MPS acquired additional sophisticated mobile/cell phone monitoring equipment known as the Silver Bullet system that included two P-GSM portable mobile phone monitoring devices.ⁱⁱⁱ

The General Department of Strategic Intelligence focuses on Viet Nam's "enemies both foreign and domestic" and has responsibility for collecting and processing information to identify external threats to national security, including international terrorism.^{iv}

People's Armed Security Force. The People's Armed Security Force (PASF, *Cong An Vu Trang Nhan Dan*), established in 1959, operates primarily in rural areas at district and in some cases village level. It is charged with responsibility for dealing with ordinary crime, illegal political activity, and insurgency.

According to one authoritative account, in the 1980s the PASF largely bypassed or coordinated only laterally with the Ministry of Interior (now Public Security) its nominal superior and reported directly to the party Secretariat (Library of Congress 1987). In this sense, the PASF may be viewed as an extension of party control at the local level where it comes under the direction of the People's

Committee. In recent years the MPS has assumed greater vertical control over the PSAF.

General Directorate II. The Ministry of National Defence (MND, *Bo Quoc Phong*) has primary responsibility for the external defence of Viet Nam's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Units under its control coordinate closely with the Ministry of Public Security and other agencies on internal security matters.

The MND comprises an Office of the Minister and six major divisions: General Staff Department, General Political Department, General Logistics Department, General Technical Department, General Department of National Defence Industry, General Department II, "and other directly subordinate agencies" (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2004, 42). The General Political Directorate contains an internal military security component (*To Chuc va An Ninh*). General Department II (GD II) is the military intelligence service of the MND.

General Department II was reportedly established in the early 1980s when General Le Duc Anh was Minister of National Defence. Under the terms of Decree 96/ND-CP (September 1997) Viet Nam's military intelligence is charged with collecting news and documents related to national security with special attention to foreign countries, organizations and individuals, at home or abroad, "who plot or engage in activities aimed at threatening or opposing the Communist Party of Viet Nam or the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam" (quoted in Nguyen Nam Khanh 2004). According to Chapter 1, Article 1 of the Ordinance on Intelligence (1996), General Department II is empowered to be "active in the fields of politics, defence, security, foreign relations, economics, science and technology, industry and the environment, science and culture" (quoted in Nguyen Nam Khanh 2004). General Department II was reportedly upgraded in the 1990s with Chinese technical assistance to enable it to better monitor internal threats to national security.^v

Very little was known about the operations of General Department II until

March-April 2001 when it attracted public attention for its role in tapping the telephones of senior party officials. Party Secretary General Le Kha Phieu reportedly used the dossiers compiled by a specialized wire tap unit known as A10 within GD II to influence factional in-fighting on the eve of the ninth national party congress.^{vi}

According to the then Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet:

[t]here was a general reminder to the Politburo that they should not use this instrument [military intelligence wire tapping] for personal purposes after some allegations made by people and the public. Normally in the tradition of the communist party here, the general secretary has the right to use party and state organisations to monitor the domestic and foreign situation. The important thing is to use that apparatus to cope with the internal situation. It is unacceptable for anyone, and I mean anyone at all, to use this instrument for personal purposes. It's something that should be roundly criticized because it is forbidden.^{vii}

Le Kha Phieu failed to gain re-election as CPV Secretary General at the ninth party congress in April 2001 in part due to the wire tapping scandal. The Chief of the General Staff and the head of the General Political Department were both reprimanded but their careers were not affected otherwise (Thayer 2003).

In 2004, two of Viet Nam's most respected retired military generals raised the issue of GD II's interference in internal party affairs in private letters to the senior leadership.^{viii} No less a figure than General Vo Nguyen Giap demanded an investigation into the "extra-legal" activities of GD II. Giap noted that the party Central Committee, Politburo, Secretariat and Central Control Committee had all considered the matter without taking any corrective action. Giap charged that for many years GD II had tried to manipulate factionalism within the CPV to its advantage and had smeared the political reputations of many leading figures including himself (Vo Nguyen Giap 2004).

General Giap's allegations were supported by retired Major General Nguyen Nam Khanh in a letter to the senior party leadership on the eve of a plenary meeting of the Central Committee. Khanh accused the GD II of "slandering, intimidation, torture, political assassination" and manipulation of internal party factionalism for its own partisan purposes. Khanh provided excerpts from the GD II's classified *News Bulletin (Ban tin)* to back up his accusations (Nguyen Nam Khanh 2004).

Ministry of Culture and Information. The Ministry of Culture and Information (MCI) traditionally has played a major role in controlling information available to society at large. The Ministry has oversight of the publishing industry, including books, periodicals and newspapers, and uses its powers to censor views and ban publications that were perceived as at odds with party policy. The rise of the Internet has posed major challenges to the traditional role of the Ministry of Culture and Information and it is unsurprising that the MCI has become one of the most proactive institutions in promulgating regulations to counter the use of the Internet by so-called cyber dissidents, politically active individuals and groups and bloggers.

Since 2001 the MCI has issued a stream of directives in an attempt to keep up with advances in and the spread of Internet technology in Vietnam. For example Decree 55/2001 ND-CP on Internet Management and Use (August 23, 2001) made the owners of cyber café legally responsible for monitoring their clients and reporting breaches of the law. Another MCI regulation, issued in August 2005, prohibited the use of Internet resources to oppose the state; destabilize security, the economy or social order; infringe the rights of organizations and individuals; and interfere with the state's Domain Name System servers.^{ix} A third MCI Decision (October 10, 2007) required that all businesses obtain a license before setting up a new website and that they could only post information for which they had been licensed. The Decision also made it illegal

to post information that incited people against the government or caused hostility between different ethnic groups. A fourth MCI Circular, No. 7 (December 2008) mandated that bloggers must restrict their postings to personal matters and that blogs commenting on politics, matters considered state secrets, subversive or a threat to social order and national security was proscribed.^x

In 2007, the MCI conducted a national audit of Internet access sites in all provinces and major cities in order to determine whether the Ministry's directives were being complied with. This survey identified nearly 2,000 subversive Internet sites, including *Thong Luan*, *Han Nam Quan*, *Con Ong*, *Con Vit*, *Vietbaoonline* and *Ky Con*.

The MCI took immediate steps to reinforce firewalls to block material deemed subversive and harmful to national security. The Ministry directed Viet Nam Data Communications Co., Viet Nam's only Internet gateway, block websites based on a list drawn up and regularly updated by the Ministry of Public Security. This was an onerous requirement because the Viet Nam Data Corporation could only manually filter these sites.

The MCI also issued further regulations requiring Internet café owners to obtain special licenses requiring checks into their family, professional and financial backgrounds. The Ministry also announced that Internet service providers would be held responsible for blocking anti-government web sites. They were required to obtain photo IDs and monitor and store information on the online activities of users.

In 2008, Chinese bauxite mining activities in Viet Nam's Central Highlands attracted widespread criticism by a diverse network of citizens who used social websites, such as *Facebook*, to express their views. This new manifestation of protest on the Internet led public security officials in late that year to aggressively interfere with if not shut down *Facebook* and other sites where anti-bauxite mining blogs had been set up.^{xi} In this respect Vietnamese security

authorities were mimicking China where authorities blocked *Facebook* in July 2008, and subsequently imposed restrictions on *Twitter* and *YouTube*. When Vietnamese Catholic activists set up websites to publicize their land disputes with government authorities, public security officials blocked these sites.^{xii}

In another manifestations of the state's attempt to gain control over an ever changing Internet, the Hanoi People's Committee issued Decision No. 15/2010/QD-UBND (April 26, 2010) requiring the installation of Internet Service Retailers Management Software (or Green Dam) in all computers used by Internet cafés, hotels, restaurants, airports, bus stations and other locations providing access to the Web by the end of the year.^{xiii} This software will allow the government to track user activities and block access to websites.

Under Decision 15, Internet users in Hanoi are prohibited from doing anything online to

oppose the government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; endanger national security, stability, public safety; disrupt the unity and harmony of the people; propagate war; create hatred, conflicts between minority groups, religious groups; provoke violence, pornography, crimes, social unrest, stereotypes; impair cultural values; or call for illegal demonstrations, boycotts, unlawful gatherings for grievances and complaints.^{xiv}

Groups Targeted for Repression

This section reviews state repression directed against four distinct groups: political activists, Catholic land rights activists, Zen Buddhists and the Christian Degar ethnic minority group.

Pro-Democracy Activists

During the late 1980s and 1990s political dissent in Viet Nam was mainly the province of individuals or small groups (Thayer 2006). In 2006, Viet Nam's

network of pro-democracy activists and groups coalesced into an identifiable political movement. On April 6, 2006, 116 persons issued an Appeal for Freedom of Political Association that they distributed throughout Viet Nam via the Internet. On 8th April, 118 persons issued a Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Viet Nam. These pro-democracy advocates became known as Bloc 8406 after the date of their founding manifesto.

Bloc 8406 issued a number of statements that called upon the Vietnamese state to respect basic human rights and religious freedom and to permit citizens to freely associate and form their own political parties (Thayer 2009b).^{xv} They argued that these freedoms were rights guaranteed by the 1992 state constitution and by international agreements and covenants the Vietnamese government had signed. Bloc 8406 was the most prominent political network but other political groups and networks were also active at this time.

In August 2006, Bloc 8406 publicly announced a four-phase proposal for democratization including the restoration of civil liberties, establishment of political parties, drafting of a new constitution and democratic elections for a representative National Assembly. On October 12, 2006, members of Bloc 8406 issued an open letter to the leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leadership Summit, who were scheduled to meet in Hanoi in November, asking for their help in promoting democracy in Viet Nam. Four days later, Bloc 8406 attempted to transform itself into a political movement by uniting with the outlawed Unified Buddhist Church of Viet Nam (UBCV) to form the Viet Nam Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights.

Vietnamese security authorities held off taking action against Bloc 8406 until the eve of the APEC Summit. Once the summit concluded, security authorities rounded up key leaders of the network. They were summarily tried in court and sentenced to imprisonment. In 2009, Viet Nam renewed its crackdown on political dissent by arresting up to thirty political activists.

In some respects the crackdown in 2009 represented a mopping up operation of Bloc 8406. But in other important respects it reflected a new development in domestic politics. In the past, political activists focused their protests on issues relating to freedom of expression, association and belief. In 2009, political dissidents expanded their reform agenda to include environmental issues raised by bauxite mining, relations with China, corruption by senior officials and other issues. These issues were quickly picked up by individual bloggers who posted commentary on the Internet and initiated a discussion with their readers. No issue had more salience than the South China Sea where Chinese assertiveness raised the hackles of Vietnamese nationalists.

The expanded reform agenda represented a new challenge to the legitimacy of Viet Nam's one party state. In addition to the challenges to rational-legal and performance legitimacy, the state now found its claim to legitimacy based on nationalism under challenge. This represented a serious threat to the authority of the party-state as the growing anti-China backlash spread from the political fringe to the political elite who questioned the state's perceived inadequate response to Chinese heavy-handedness in the South China Sea (Thayer 2009a).

Catholic Church Land Protests

Viet Nam's Catholic community numbers approximately six million. Church authorities estimate that Viet Nam's communist regime confiscated 2,250 church properties since 1954. In recent years friction has arisen between church and state over land ownership of confiscated property. In late 2007 and continuing throughout 2008, for example, the Catholic Church in Hanoi and local government authorities became embroiled in disputes over land claimed by Thai Hoa parish and property of the former Vatican representative in Hanoi. Local officials rejected these claims and this sparked non-violent mass protests in the form of prayer vigils and other public religious ceremonies.

In 2009, the Catholic Church became embroiled in another major land dispute

this time with local authorities in Dong Hoi town, Quang Binh province. At issue was ownership of land that surrounded Tam Toa Cathedral. Tam Toa Cathedral was bombed by the United States during the Viet Nam War. Local authorities took possession in 1996 and the following year designated the Tam Toa ruins an American War Crimes Memorial Site.

The issue of land ownership over Tam Toa continued to fester over the next twelve years. In 2009, Catholic Church officials became more assertive in their claims by holding open air masses on the grounds of the Cathedral and calling for the return of church land. This prompted the official state Commission on Religion to declare that the government “has no intention of returning any property or goods to the Catholic Church or any other religious organization” that was confiscated by the state.^{xvi}

Throughout the remainder of 2009 matters escalated. In July when 150 local Catholic parishioners erected a tent chapel on the contested land they were promptly evicted by police who arrested eleven Catholic activists. These arrests sparked a series of massive public protests by Catholics in the provinces of Quang Binh and neighboring Nghe An and Ha Tinh in late July. Catholics marched behind flags bearing the Vatican’s colors.

By early August Catholic media reported that the entire diocese of Vinh, numbering up to half a million persons from 178 parishes, rallied to protest police violence.^{xvii} In mid-August, on the Feast of the Assumption, the Catholic Church held another show of force by staging a rally of 200,000 in front of the Bishopric of Vinh in Nghe An province.^{xviii} Banners and placards protested police brutality and persecution and called for justice. The rally was addressed by leading church dignitaries and was probably the largest religious protest in Viet Nam’s history.

Zen Buddhists

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Zen Buddhist and religious activist, was one of the founders

of the Unified Buddhist Church of Viet Nam in South Viet Nam during the Viet Nam War. He opposed the war and went to France to live in exile where he founded Plum village, a Zen Buddhist monastery. After reunification in 1975 the UBCV refused to give up its autonomy and merge with the state-sponsored Buddhist Church of Vietnam. The UBCV was declared illegal and its leaders subject to house arrest. They have nevertheless posed a continued thorn in the side of the Vietnamese state.

In 2005, Viet Nam permitted Thich Nhat Hanh to return to Vietnam. He was welcomed by government officials who may have hoped to use his message of reconciliation to undermine the leadership of the UBCV. Thich Nhat Hanh's followers were invited by the Abbot of Bat Nha monastery in Bao Loc, Lam Dong province, to take up residence and worship. Soon crowds as large as 800 from surrounding provinces and further afield gathered for monthly services.

In 2007, Thich Nhat Hanh returned to Viet Nam on a second visit and incensed government officials by presenting to the state president a ten-point proposal calling for greater religious freedom. Thich Nhat Hanh's proposal stated:

Please separate religion from politics and politics from religious affairs. Please stop all surveillance by the government on religious activities, disband the Government Department for Religious Affairs but first of all disband the Religious Police. All religious associations should be able to operate freely in accordance with laws and regulations, just like any cultural, commercial, industrial and social associations.^{xix}

Thich Nhat Hanh further angered government authorities by his public support for the Dalai Lama and condemnation of Chinese persecution of the Dalai Lama's followers in Tibet. Thich Nhat Hanh's comments resulted in unwelcomed Chinese diplomatic intervention with the Vietnamese government. In these circumstances, the government's attitude towards Thich Nhat Hanh and his followers turned vindictive and they were violently expelled from Bat Nha

monastery.

Degar Ethnic Minority

Vietnam is a multiethnic state. Ethnic minorities comprise about fifteen percent of the total population. During the Viet Nam War several ethnic minority groups (also known as montagnards) formed a collective sense of identity in response to the migration of lowland Vietnamese into the Central Highland. Collectively they adopted the name Degar. In the mid-1960s the Degar ethnic minority formed a political movement known as Front Uni de Lutte des Races Opprimées or FULRO to advance their cause. After unification some elements of FULRO resisted the imposition of communist rule, but by the mid-1990s they were a spent force.

In February-March 2001 a major outbreak of unrest involving several thousand Degar took place in three provinces in the Central Highlands. National security authorities were quick to blame “outside hostile forces” whom they identified as the Montagnard Foundation in the United States and FULRO remnants.

The regular Vietnam People’s Army (VPA) has been very circumspect about becoming involved in internal security that involves a direct confrontation with the public. The VPA prefers to see the People’s Armed Security Force assume primary responsibility for internal security. Nevertheless, at least thirteen army regiments were posted to the Central Highlands to provide area security by manning checkpoints and securing the border with Cambodia to prevent the flight of ethnic minorities (Thayer forthcoming). Soldiers were billeted with local families and political cadres directed a campaign of public education designed to calm the situation and prevent illegal departures. Further waves of unrest broke out in the Central Highlands in August 2001 and April 2004.^{xx}

In 2009, one hundred Degar, who had been arrested and imprisoned following disturbances in 2001 and 2004, were released. International human rights groups claim that several hundred ethnic minority demonstrators associated with the

2004 Central Highlands protests still remain incarcerated. These same sources claim that the Degar, who converted to Christianity, are subject to religious persecution and continued political repression (Human Rights Watch 2011).

The Three Components of Repression

This section analyzes the main components of state repression: monitoring and surveillance; harassment and intimidation of individuals of concern, family members and employers; and arrest, detention, trial, imprisonment, and house arrest after release.

Monitoring and Surveillance

Vietnamese security forces employ both a widespread territorial surveillance network and sophisticated electronic monitoring technology to identify and surveil individuals and groups that are considered politically subversive. Once sufficient information has been gathered to confirm that an individual or group has engaged in activities in violation of Article 88 (or other articles) of the Penal Code, the individual or group is then subjected to repression.

The Ministry of Public Security's General Department of Public Security is organized territorially with offices in all of Viet Nam's fifty-nine provinces and five municipalities (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, Da Nang, and Hai Phong). Public Security officers are also assigned at district and city ward levels where they conduct surveillance and report on the activities of pro-democracy and religious freedom advocates. Territorial surveillance includes the extensive use of local informants.

The case of Bloc 8406 is illustrative of how public security conducts monitoring and surveillance. Prior to and during the APEC summit in Hanoi in November 2006, for example, the security police cordoned off the streets where members of Bloc 8406 lived, disconnected their phones and restricted their movements. Notices were posted barring foreigners from entry and uniformed police were

conspicuously posted to enforce these measures.

When the Internet was first introduced in Viet Nam government authorities set up firewalls to prevent access to sites they considered politically subversive. These included sites maintained by overseas Vietnamese anti-communist groups, international human rights organizations and international news outlets such as the Vietnamese language services of Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America. The restrictions on Voice of America were relaxed in 2009 but remain in place for Radio Free Asia. In late December 2009, these firewalls were extended momentarily to the Vietnamese service of the BBC and intermittently to *Facebook*. The Ministry of Public Security and General Directorate II regularly monitor telephones, facsimile transmissions, post, e-mail, Internet and mobile phones. Members of Bloc 8406 have attempted to evade detection by utilizing digital telephone and encryption technology on websites provided by Voice Over Internet Protocol providers such as *PalTalk*, *Skype* and *Yahoo!Messenger* to organize chat room discussions within Viet Nam as well as overseas.

In 2008-09, Vietnamese officials faced a growing challenge to their authority by bloggers who posted political commentary on the Internet and who had no discernable connections to pro-democracy activists (Hoang, Nguyen and Huynh 2009). For example, in early 2009 a group of seven hundred individuals signed up to a *Facebook* site to promote their opposition to bauxite mining.^{xxi} Other environmental activists founded an extremely popular website devoted to the bauxite mining controversy. A number of independent bloggers also appeared and attracted popular interest in their blogs.

CPV leaders were placed in the uncomfortable position of having to defend their handling of Viet Nam's relations with China from criticism by nationalist-minded patriotic citizens including members of the political elite. The regime responded by cracking down on its critics and moved to curtail blogging on the Internet. In May 2010, Lt. Gen Vu Hai Trieu, Deputy Director of General

Directorate II, announced to a press conference that his department had “destroyed 300 bad internet web pages and individual blogs.”^{xxii}

Government critics charged that GD II had come under Beijing’s political influence and was using its sophisticated electronic equipment to identify anti-China activists.^{xxiii} In 2010, a series of Denial of Service Attacks on *Thong Luan*, a political commentary website, and *Dong Chua Cuu The Viet Nam*, a Catholic website, were traced to Internet Protocol (IP) addresses belonging to Viettel, a company owned by the Ministry of National Defence.^{xxiv}

It is likely that specialists units within the MPS were also involved in the unprecedented cyber attacks directed against independent blog sites that began in September 2009 and intensified in April-May 2010. During this period cyber attacks were launched against more than two dozen websites and blogs maintained by Catholic land activists, political discussion forums, opposition political groups and environmentalists concerned with bauxite mining.

Hackers invaded the *Osin* blog site in January 2010 and posted fabricated messages stating that the owner, journalist Huy Duc, was retiring because he “ran out of new ideas.”^{xxv} A fabricated note also appeared on *DCVOnline*, a news and discussion site, announcing the site’s closure due to internal conflict. Hackers accessed the discussion forum *x-cafevn.org*’s database and posted the login names, email, location and IP addresses of over 19,000 users on the web. Fabricated profiles of administrators and activists associated with *x-cafevn.org* were posted on www.x-cafevn.db.info. In sum, “[t]he objective was to make the web community believe that Hanoi’s intelligence agents working with hackers could obtain dossiers on virtually any Vietnamese activist or internet user.”^{xxvi}

Independent investigations by Google and McAfee, a reputable major Internet security company, determined that the majority of command and control servers involved in the cyber attacks were executed through IP addresses inside Viet Nam. McAfee’s chief technical officer, George Kurtz, concluded, “we believe that

the perpetrators may have political motivations and may have some allegiance to the government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam... This is likely the latest example of *hacktivism and politically motivated cyber attacks*.”^{xxvii}

The Google and McAfee, investigations determined that the cyber attacks used botnet malware (W32/Vulvanbot) disguised as Vietnamese language software VPSKeys to invade blog sites, gather information on users, and then direct massive denial-of-service attacks against offending websites and overseas Vietnamese computer users who accessed these sites. Neel Mehta, a member of Google’s security team, concluded that the cyber attacks were directed “against blogs containing messages of political dissent. Specifically, these attacks have tried to *quell opposition to bauxite mining efforts* in Viet Nam.”^{xxviii} Indeed, in December 2009-January 2010 Distributed Denial of Service attacks caused the website *bauxiteViet Nam.info* to crash.

Harassment, Intimidation and Violence

The use of harassment and intimidation as tactics of repression is not a phenomena unique to Vietnam, they are employed worldwide by authoritarian regimes. In the case of Vietnam, intimidation and repression have a legacy as old as the communist state itself. These tactics remain in place and are employed by security authorities with no apparent accountability despite a general loosening of state controls over society in the years following the formal adoption of *doi moi* or renovation.

Vietnamese state security agencies regularly employ an array of techniques designed to harass and intimidate politically active citizens with the aim of dissuading them from continuing their criticism of government policy. Such techniques include, but are not limited to, cutting telephone service, confiscation of passports and refusal to grant permission to travel overseas, visits by security officials to the homes of individuals of concern, pressure on family members, visits to employers, public denunciation, media vilification, raids on homes and

confiscation of electronic devices, long working sessions to interrogate activists, and the use of violence by gangs of plain clothed police, army veterans, revolutionary youth and others. The U.S. State Department reported in 2009 “[c]redible reports suggested that local police forces used ‘contract thugs’ and ‘citizen brigades’ to harass and beat political activists and others, including religious worshippers, perceived as ‘undesirable’ or a ‘threat’ to public security” (United States Department of State 2010).

Prior to and during the APEC summit in Hanoi in November 2006, as noted above, the police harassed several of the more prominent signatories of the April 8, 2006 manifesto by sealing off their homes, restricting their movements and disconnecting their phones. Other Bloc 8406 members were picked up for interrogation and detained for varying periods. Employers who were pressured to terminate the employment of Bloc 8408 members complied. For example, in July 2008, as a result of pressure from state security officials, Bloc 8406 activist Vu Van Hung was dismissed from his teaching job.

The experiences of two prominent members of Bloc 8406 illustrate the use of harassment and intimidation by the Ministry of Public Security’s A42 unit.

A Hanoi-based journalist reported with respect to lawyer Nguyen Van Dai:

In September 2006 Nguyen Van Dai was called by his father and told that if he continued to act as a lawyer for dissidents, the two of them wouldn't be allowed to meet. One of the staff in Dai's office, a young woman, described how the police had met her friends and told them that she was working for a bad person and they should try to make her stop (Hayton 2010, 124).

The same source provided these details on Le Thi Cong Nhan, a lawyer, supporter of Bloc 8406, and founding member of the Viet Nam Progression Party:

Almost immediately after she joined the Progression Party, Cong Nhan

was visited at home by officers from A42. She was taken to the police station, told that she was guilty of plotting to bring down the state and questioned for three days, in the course of which she says she was told that, 'many bad things could happen to me'. When she refused to attend any more questioning sessions the police bombarded her with calls and text messages threatening her with arrest. One officer reminded her that the police were listening to all her phone calls. But then suddenly, the tactics changed. 'They sent me flowers, invitations to dinner and the cinema, even a new mobile phone'. The emails now called her brave and kind and asked her to explain her motivations and dreams for the country. As the same time, though, A42 were leaning on her family and friends to press her to stop her activities (Hayton 2010, 124).

The tactic of public denunciation involves the mobilization of neighbors to shout abuse – and occasionally use physical force – to intimidate an individual targeted by public security officials. The examples of Hoang Minh Chinh, Tran Khai Thanh Thuy and Nguyen Van Dai are illustrative.

In 2005, Hoang Minh Chinh, the organizer of the revived Viet Nam Democratic Party (XXI), went to the United States for medical treatment. While in the U.S. Chinh testified before the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives. This resulted in an orchestrated campaign of denunciation in the Vietnamese state media during the second half of October.

In December 2005, when Chinh returned to his home in Hanoi, he was confronted by a crowd of several dozen demonstrators who denounced him for his action. Members of the crowd threw tomatoes and others struck Chinh with plastic water bottles. The entire incident was filmed by six cameramen. The crowd pursued Chinh into his courtyard and demanded entry into his house. When family members called for police assistance they received evasive replies. Eventually three members of emergency police Unit 113 showed up but declined

to take action. According to Chinh's account:

the crazy crowd ordered us 'to open the door in five minutes or it will be destroyed.' My children continued to stand fast as some members of the mob successfully broke the window panes, jumped in and tried to force the door down while others used sticks to hit other windows and threw bottles of stinking shrimp paste inside my house. It was a scary horrible moment.

Then, as suddenly as it began, the crowd dispersed as if on cue. Eyewitnesses reported that a group of ten policemen stood in the alley outside but took no action. Chinh later concluded, 'it was the police who organized the disturbances'.^{xxix}

The second example concerns Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, a noted novelist and political essayist. In 2006 she founded an association for victims whose land had been confiscated (*Hoi Dan Oan Viet Nam*) and the Independent Workers' Union of Viet Nam. She was also an active blogger and member of the editorial board of an underground pro-democracy bulletin, *To Quoc* (Fatherland). In 2006, Thuy was forced to participate in a so-called people's court at which police mobilized 300 people in a public stadium to shout insults at her. She was arrested in April 2007, released in January 2008. Since then she has been subjected to

relentless harassment from police, local officials, and orchestrated neighborhood gangs.

During 2009, for example, thugs attacked her house at least 14 times, throwing excrement and dead rodents at her gate. They also inserted metal into her front door lock on two occasions, locking her out of her own home. When she went to the police to file a complaint, they refused to take any action, even though neighbors reported that police were watching some of the attacks on her home.^{xxx}

On February 8, 2007, lawyer Nguyen Van Dai was brought before a meeting of

200 elderly residents of Bach Khoa Ward in Hanoi and subject to two and a half hours of abuse and accusations. The denunciation session ended after approving a motion finding him guilty of violating articles 88 and 258 of the Penal Code and calling for the revocation of his law license, disbarment, the closure of his law office and criminal prosecution (Hayton 2010, 124).

Over the seven-month period from November 2009 to May 2010, Viet Nam detained four independent bloggers and subjected them to extended interrogations. In 2009, journalist Huy Duc blogged under the pseudonym *Osin* and wrote commentaries about human rights in the Soviet Union. He was fired from his job with *Saigon Thiep Thi* (Saigon Marketing) newspaper as a result of pressure from security officials. Bui Thanh Hieu, who blogged under the name *Nguoi Buon Gio* (Wind Trader or Wind Merchant), posted commentary critical of Viet Nam's handling of relations with China, Catholic land disputes and bauxite mining. Hieu was repeatedly interrogated by police in 2008-09 for his role in instigating anti-China protests and arrested in August.^{xxx}

Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, who blogged under the name *Me Nam* (Mother Mushroom), also posted blogs that discussed relations with China, bauxite mining and territorial disputes in the South China Sea. She was questioned by police for her involvement in printing t-shirts with the slogan "No Bauxite, No China; Spratlys and Paracels belong to Viet Nam."^{xxxii}

And finally, blogger Pham Doan Trang was detained under provisions of Viet Nam's national security law for her postings on the South China Sea, the 1954 partitioning of Viet Nam, and China's role as a hegemonic power.^{xxxiii} She was later released when police concluded that she was not linked to any political dissident network. For her part, Trang stated she would only discuss personal matters on the Internet and vowed to steer clear of political topics.

In 2007-08 a land dispute erupted between the Catholic Church and the state over property claimed by Thai Hoa parish and the property of the former

Vatican representative in Hanoi. On two occasions crowds were organized to ransack the chapel at the Hanoi Redemptorist Monastery. The first attack took place on September 21, 2008 and involved a group of 200 youths wearing blue Communist Youth League shirts.^{xxxiv} The second attack took place under cover of night on November 15, 2008. Local church officials had no doubt that the gangs were organized by local security officers. During the second incident hundreds of police armed with stun guns stood by and took no action.^{xxxv}

During the Catholic Church land protests in Tam Toa parish in central Viet Nam in 2009, local authorities resorted to similar heavy-handed tactics. On July 20, after Catholics erected a tent chapel on the cathedral grounds, they were evicted by police who used tear gas and electric stun guns. Local church officials accused the police of brutality and demanded the release of eleven parishioners who had been taken into custody.^{xxxvi}

On July 21, 2009, government authorities launched a media blitz in virtually every state outlet characterizing the Catholics who had been arrested as “stubborn, organized criminals” who had disturbed public order and directly challenged the national security and integrity of the state.^{xxxvii} For example, state media reported that the police charged those arrested with “counter-revolutionary crimes, violating state policies on American War Crimes Memorial Sites, disturbing public order, and attacking officials on duty.”^{xxxviii} When local authorities summoned Church officials, they refused to comply and demanded the release of those detained, the return of Church property, compensation, and a halt to vilification by the state media.

During July and August 2009, Catholic media reported repeated attacks on parishioners and priests by plain clothed police and gangs of thugs. On July 26, Father Paul Nguyen Dinh Phu and Father Peter The Binh, were beaten by a gang reportedly acting on police instructions when the priests attempted to intervene in a physical confrontation between police and three Catholic women

demonstrators in Vinh. Both priests were admitted to hospital in Dong Hoi. The gang of thugs forced their way into the hospital and allegedly threw Father Phu out the second floor window. Witnesses claimed that thirty police stood by and took no action.^{xxxix}

The state further responded to Catholic land protests with an unprecedented campaign of vilification in the state media and by blocking Catholic websites.^{xl} The state media also carried government assertions denying any responsibility or involvement in any act of violence. The Catholic land protests in Hanoi and Tam Toa were both ended when local authorities dispatched bulldozers to level the land in order to convert the disputed sites into public parks.^{xli}

Thich Nhat Hanh's Zen Buddhist followers faced similar tactics of intimidation and violence. When the Abbot of Bat Nha rescinded his invitation to Hanh's followers to stay at Ba Nha monastery they refused to leave. The Abbot ordered his monks to cut off power, water and telephone connections. When these tactics failed, local authorities set a deadline of September 2 for them to leave. This deadline passed. On September 17, the District People's Committee in Lam Dong province issued a confidential memo alleging that Hanh's followers were engaged in illegal activities and "abusing the religious regulations of the Communist Party and the Government, to sabotage the Government and oppose the Viet Nam Buddhist Church."^{xlii} Government officials were instructed to force Hanh's followers to leave Bat Nha and disperse them to Buddhist pagodas that were under the control of the Viet Nam Buddhist Church or to return to their home villages.

On September 27, a mob estimated at between 100-150, including plain clothed police, armed with knives, sledge hammers and sticks, invaded the monastery and forcibly evicted 150 monks and then ransacked the place. Uniformed police sealed off the area but took no action to curb the violence. Hanh's followers were bundled into buses, trucks and cars and driven some distance away and left by

the side of the road. Others were forced to flee on foot. On the following day, the mob returned and set upon 200 mainly youthful nuns and female novices forcing them to flee to nearby Phuc Hue temple where they were placed under police guard. Three leaders were held in detention incommunicado. Uniformed police set up checkpoints to prevent Hanh's followers and local supporters from returning to Bat Nha.^{xliii}

Although the general security situation in the Central Highlands has been brought under control since 2004, there have been continual reports of violent incidents between local security forces and the Degar ethnic minority people up to the present (Montagnard Foundation 2008 d 2010). During this period security forces have continued to raid the homes of Degar Christians when religious services were being held, and arrest and detain those considered leaders. In 2009, for example, the U.S. State Department reported police harassment of Protestant house churches in Dak Lak and Gia Lai provinces. In other instances, security forces reportedly summoned Degar villages to public meetings and pressured them into renouncing their religion. In April 2010, three Degar Christians were arrested and interrogated for using their homes for worship and refusing to join the official government approved Protestant Church.^{xliv}

Degar taken into custody report a range of pressures from intimidation to physical abuse to force them to sign a document renouncing their faith and/or declaring their membership in the state-approved Evangelical Church of Vietnam. There are also numerous but unverified reports of regular public protests by Degar outside commune and district offices. On occasion police use chemical sprays and electric stun guns to disperse crowds.

Arrest, Detention, Trial, and Imprisonment

The third major component of state repression involves arrest, seizure of property, interrogation, plea-bargained confession, perfunctory trial, sentencing, imprisonment, rejection of appeal, physical abuse in prison, and house arrest

after release. In 2008, government security officials involuntarily committed political activists to mental hospitals as a tactic of repression.

After the APEC summit in 2006, Viet Nam brought to trial the leaders of Bloc 8406. For example, seven members of Bloc 8406 who had been arrested were put on trial during a six-week period commencing in May 2007. On May 11, 2007, Le Thi Cong Nhan and Nguyen Van Dai, were given a trial lasting four hours and sentenced, respectively, to four and five years in prison for “spreading anti-state propaganda.” Their sentences were slightly reduced later in the year.

Three other political dissidents (Vu Van Hung, Pham Van Troi and Tran Duc Thach) were given separate trials in Hanoi. Hung was arrested on September 14, 2008 for hanging a pro-democracy banner from an overpass in Hanoi. He was reportedly beaten by police while in custody and in protest went on a hunger strike during which his health deteriorated badly. While in custody the police visited his family and pressured them to sign an affidavit indicating he was in poor mental health. They refused. Hung was sentenced on October 6 to three years in prison and three years probation for violating Article 88. Pham Van Troi and Tran Duc Thach were also tried and convicted under Article 88; they were sentenced, respectively, to four years in prison and four years probation, and three years in prison and three years probation.

In May-July 2009, Vietnamese public security officials rounded up seven political activists associated with a loose pro-democracy network. Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, Le Thanh Long, Le Cong Dinh, Nguyen Tien Trung, and Tran Anh Kim were charged under Article 88 of the Penal Code for conducting propaganda against the state or “colluding with domestic and foreign reactionaries to sabotage the state.” This offense carried a maximum penalty of twenty years imprisonment. Le Thi Thu Thu and Tran Thi Thu were not charged but detained pending further investigation.

In December 2009, lawyers representing the five arrested dissidents reported that

the state authorities had amended the charges to include violation of Article 79 of the Penal Code that carried a maximum death penalty for “carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people’s administration”.^{xliv}

On May 26, 2009, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc was the first to be arrested. He was charged under Article 88 with distorting “the policies, laws, and directions of the Vietnamese government.” Information gleaned from Duy Thuc’s interrogation led to the arrests of Le Thanh Long and Le Cong Dinh in June. Dinh’s arrest was executed by what public security sources called an “expedited procedure.”^{xlvi} Dinh served as the defence lawyer for Bloc 8406 activists and was a member of the Viet Nam Democratic Party.

The state’s handling of Le Cong Dinh’s case represented an unprecedented use of “information warfare” by security officials (Thayer 2010b). Dinh’s arrest was announced at simultaneous press conferences in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City by senior officials from the Ministry of Public Security.^{xlvii} An orchestrated propaganda campaign was conducted in the state-controlled press, radio and television. Dinh’s affidavit was released publicly and characterized as a confession. The Viet Nam Lawyers’ Association struck him from its books, effectively barring him from practicing law.^{xlviii} In sum, Dinh was virtually tried and convicted before appearing in court. Dinh was later subjected to perfunctory legal proceedings before being sentenced to jail.

In March 2008, after returning to Viet Nam, Nguyen Tien Trung was drafted into the army. He refused to swear the oath of allegiance and in mid-2009 was immediately arrested after being discharged for refusing to obey his superiors. The state media reported that Trung played a role in organizing anti-China student demonstrations in late 2007 and protests against China’s Olympic torch relay when it passed through Viet Nam in 2008. Tran Anh Kim was a retired military officer who became politically active in the pro-democracy movement. Trung and Kim were both arrested in July.^{xliv}

On August 19, 2009, the five above-mentioned defendants appeared on state television with their heads bowed and publicly admitted to “undermining and overthrowing the Vietnamese state.” The following day the state media triumphantly reported that the dissidents had “plead guilty and begged for leniency.”¹

In October 2009, security officials bundled the cases of nine other political dissidents together and conducted perfunctory trials in Hanoi and Haiphong. All defendants were found guilty, sentenced from two to six years’ imprisonment plus an additional two-three years under house arrest.

Six dissidents were tried as a group in court proceedings in Haiphong for their role in hanging banners in public in Haiphong and Hai Duong in August and September 2008, respectively. The banners displayed slogans reading “no democracy, freedom or human rights because of the communist regime.”^{li} The banners also accused the government of corruption, failure to control inflation and “losing the islands to China,” a reference to the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos in the South China Sea.

The “Haiphong Six” were charged under Article 88 of the Penal Code. The alleged leader of this group, Nguyen Xuan Nghia, was a writer associated with Bloc 8406. He was charged with posting fifty-seven articles on the Internet. Nghia was sentenced to six years imprisonment. Nguyen Van Tuc, a farmer and land rights activist, was sentenced to four years. Nguyen Van Tinh, an essayist, and Nguyen Man Son, a former party member who published twenty-two articles on the Internet, were each sentenced to three and a half years. Nguyen Kim Nhan, an electrician, was given a two-year sentence plus two years on probation. Ngo Quynh, a university student who planned a demonstration timed for the arrival of China’s Olympic torch in Ho Chi Minh City, was sentenced to three years.^{lii}

Degar Christians who were held in detention for long periods report regular

beatings and torture at the hands of local police. In May 2008, Y Ben Hdok, a Degar from Dak Lak, died while in detention without a satisfactory explanation. The U.S. Department of State reported that in 2009, unlike previous years, there were no credible reports of deaths in police custody. However, in March 2010, K'pa Lot, a Degar Christian, reportedly died after a long period of abuse and torture when he was released from custody and moved to a hospital. Human right activists report this is a common practice by police to conceal physical abuse in prison.^{liii}

The Degar advocacy group, Montagnard Foundation, sums up the situation for ethnic minority Christians in this way:

This tactic of harassing, beating and torturing Degar Christians is part of the Vietnamese communist government policy to repress house church Christians. Numerous incidents have been reported of security forces randomly summoning Degars for questions regarding their religious beliefs and activities. While some sessions involve Degars detained for long periods of time other involve release under house surveillance. Many arrests involve torture, beatings, imprisonment and even killings of Degars.^{liv}

Conclusion

As was noted in the introduction, the purpose of this essay is to address an aspect of Vietnamese politics that has largely been ignored by political scientists who focus on the interaction between state and society. This essay has attempted to break new ground by shifting the focus from political activists and their networks and nascent political groups and parties to the apparatus of state repression in contemporary Viet Nam.

This essay has presented a overview of the main organizations involved - the Ministry of Public Security, the People's Armed Security Force, General Directorate II and the Ministry of Culture and Information. The essay has also

explored three main components of state repression: monitoring and surveillance; harassment and intimidation; and arrest, detention, trial and imprisonment.

It is clear from this tentative analysis that Viet Nam devotes massive human and technical resources to monitoring and conducting surveillance over its citizens. Great effort is put into monitoring, controlling and restricting Internet usage. The enormity of resources devoted for these purposes contrasts with the comparatively small number of political activists, religious leaders, and bloggers who have been arrested, tried and sentenced to prison. The main exception has been the state's authoritarian treatment of the largely Protestant Degar ethnic minority in the Central Highlands.

This study highlights that despite constitutional, legal and international treaty commitments to the rule of law, public security authorities in Viet Nam conduct their business with impunity and without accountability. The Ministry of Public Security operates within a legal system that curbs freedom of speech, publication and assembly. The MPS is free to determine which public manifestations of political dissent should be dealt with under the vaguely worded Article 88 of the Penal Code. The MPS also is not constrained by law from leaking information from its files that is then used by the state-controlled media to smear the reputations of political dissidents. In sum, constitutional and legal provisions are routinely observed in the breach. When all else fails "clubs are trumps" as the state stacks the deck with falsified information and manipulation of the media.

Notes

ⁱ At the eleventh national party congress held in January 2011, the public security bloc comprised eight members of the 175-member Central Committee or 4.6 percent. Le Hong Anh was joined on the Politburo by Tran Dai Quang, the Deputy Minister of Public Security. In July 2011, Anh was appointed head of the party secretary and Quang stepped up to become minister.

ⁱⁱ A 2006 study of Viet Nam's efforts to control Internet usage revealed that the Ministry of Public Security gave priority to blocking access to websites that contained information related to Viet Nam's 1999 land border treaty with China and other political sensitive commentary; OpenNet Initiative, *Internet Filtering in Viet Nam in 2005-2006: A Country Study*, August 2006.

<http://www.opennet.net/studies/vietnam/>. Accessed July 23, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert Karniol, "Vietnamese army enhances monitoring," *Janes's Defence Weekly*, October 31, 2005.

^{iv} Vietnam News Agency, July 12, 2001.

^v Shawn W. Crispin, "Chinese shadow over Vietnamese repression," *Asia Times Online*, September 13, 2009.

<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/China/KI12Ad04.html> Accessed September

14, 2009.

^{vi} Confidential email from diplomatic source in Hanoi to the author, March 26, 2001.

^{vii} Agence France-Presse, March 25, 2001; a slightly different translation appears in Agence France-Presse, April 23, 2001.

^{viii} General Department II was also criticized by leading dissidents, see: Nguyen Thanh Giang, “Ve vu an chinh tri sieu nghiem trong lien quan den Tong cuc 2” [About the Very Serious Case Involving Tong Cuc 2], August 19, 2004. This was a letter Giang sent to the leaders of the party, state, government and National Assembly. <http://www.lenduong.net>. Accessed September 9, 2006.

^{ix} In August 2007, the Ministry of Culture and Information temporarily closed a popular Hanoi website launched by VVT Innovative Solutions Co. Ltd. VVT was charged with permitting the publication of articles with “inaccurate information” that violated the Press Law and Government Decree No. 55. Authorities took particular exception to material on a web forum that criticized the government for reportedly making concessions to China during negotiations on the 1999 border treaty and material that discussed corruption in the CPV, relations with the United States, and demands for political change.

-
- ^x Agence France-Presse, "Amid crackdown, two blogs shuttered in Vietnam," February 12, 2010.
- ^{xi} Ben Stocking, "Viet Nam court convicts Catholics in land dispute," Associated Press, December 8, 2009. <http://googe.com/hotednews/ap/article> Accessed December 16, 2009.
- ^{xii} Thuy Huong, "Catholics Shocked by Press Award Announcement," *VietCatholic News*, January 22, 2009. <http://www.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/63467.htm> Accessed January 25, 2009 and Emily Nguyen, "Vietnamese Chairman's visit to Vatican under Catholics' watchful eyes," *VietCatholic News*, July 28, 2009. Email copy vnews-l@anu.edu.au. Accessed July 29, 2009.
- ^{xiii} People's Committee of Hanoi City, "Decision Promulgating situplations on the management, provision, and use of Internet services at retails locations in Hanoi City," Vietnam Tan Party, June 4, 2010. http://www.viettan.org/spip.php?page=print&id_article=9859. Accessed June 8, 2010.
- ^{xiv} Chloe Albanesius, "Google Criticizes Vietnam's 'Net Sniffing App'," *PC Magazine*, June 11, 2010.

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2364950,00.sap>. Accessed June 14, 2010.

^{xv} Members of Bloc 8406 produced a fortnightly publication, *Tu Do Ngon Luan* (Free Speech) that first appeared on April 15, 2006. A typical issue comprised thirty pages of text. *Tu Do Ngon Luan* was published in A4 format in both hardcopy and electronically. The on-line version was published as a portable document file. *Tu Do Ngon Luan* was edited by three Catholic priests, Nguyen Van Ly, Phan Van Loi and Chan Tin.

^{xvi} Quoted by *VietCatholic News*, May 26, 2009.

^{xvii} Thuy Dung and Trung Tin, "Fresh mass demonstrations in Vinh and in other parts of Viet Nam in support of Catholics," *AsiaNews.it*, August 3, 2009.

<http://www.asianews.it/viewprint.php?1=en&art=15953> Accessed August 4, 2009.

^{xviii} On August 12, 2009, the Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement expressing concern over rising tensions and calling for a peaceful dialogue. J. B. An. Dang, "Viet bishops call for peaceful dialogue," *VietCatholic ANews*, August 13, 2009. <http://www.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/70124.htm> Accessed August 15, 2009.

<http://www.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/61022.htm>. Accessed November 17,

2009 and Emily Nguyen, "Catholic sites blocked in Viet Nam," *VietCatholic News*, August 5, 2009. <http://vietcatholic.net/News/Html/69896.htm> Accessed August 7, 2009.

^{xix} Human Rights Watch, "Vietnam: Sharp Backsliding on Religious Freedom," *UNHCR Refworld*, October 18, 2009. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4add69001a.html>. Accessed July 22, 2011.

^{xx} In November-December 2004, over 200 Degar persons were arrested and detained.

^{xxi} "Bauxite bashers," *The Economist*, April 23, 2009.

^{xxii} Human Rights Watch Asia, "Viet Nam: Stop Cyber Attacks Against Online Critics," May 27, 2010.

^{xxiii} Crispin, "Chinese shadow over Vietnamese repression," op. cit.

^{xxiv} Human Rights Watch Asia, "Viet Nam: Stop Cyber Attacks Against Online Critics," op. cit.

^{xxv} Viet Tan Party, "Denial of Service: Cyberattacks by the Vietnamese Government," April 27, 2010.

http://www.viettan.org/spip.php?page=print&id_article-9749. Accessed April

29, 2010.

^{xxvi} Ibid.

^{xxvii} Human Rights Watch Asia, "Viet Nam: Stop Cyber Attacks Against Online Critics," *op. cit.*, emphasis in original.

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} Hoang Minh Chinh, "Urgent Report No. 2 by Citizen Hoang Minh Chinh of Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to: Secretary General Nong Duc Manh, Chief of State Tran Duc Luong, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, National Assembly Chairman Nguyen Van An, Director of Public Security, Hanoi, People's Court of Hanoi, People's Court of Investigation of Hanoi, Also to: Ms. Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, International human rights organizations, Democracies' Congress and Government, National and international media, Vietnamese inside and outside Viet Nam, and concerned people," December 2, 2005.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/saigonusanews/71011141/>. Accessed July 24, 2011.

^{xxx} Human Rights Watch Asia, "Vietnam: Expanding Campaign to Silence Dissent," February 4, 2010. Thuy was permitted to resettle in the United States in

July 2011. <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/02/04/vietnam-expanding-campaign-silence-dissent>. Accessed July 24, 2011.

xxxⁱ Stocking, "Viet Nam court convicts Catholics in land dispute," op. cit.

xxxⁱⁱ Ibid.

xxxⁱⁱⁱ Deutsche Presse Agentur, August 31, 2009

xxx^{iv} J. B. An. Dang, "Redemptorists threatened to be killed. Priests and faithful humiliated," *VietCatholic News*, September 22, 2008.

<http://222.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/58958.htm>. Accessed September 23, 2008.

xxx^v J. B. An. Dang, "Pro-government thugs attack Hanoi Redemptorist Monastery," *VietCatholic News*, November 15, 2008.

<http://www.catholic.net/News/Htmo/61022.htm>. Accessed November 17, 2008.

xxx^{vi} Agence France Press July 21, 2009, Associated Press July 21, 2009 and Reuters July 22, 2009.

xxx^{vii} Nguyen, "Vietnamese Chairman's visit to Vatican under Catholics' watchful eyes," op. cit.

xxx^{viii} J. B. An. Dang, "Half Million Vietnamese Catholics of Vinh Diocese protest

against police's brutality," *VietCatholic News*, July 26, 2009.

<http://www.vietcatholic.net/News?Html/69468.htm>. Accessed August 1, 2009.

^{xxxix} J. B. An. Dang, "Priest beaten into a coma by police. Catholics protest throughout Vietnam," *AsiaNews.it*, July 28, 2009.

<http://www.asianews.it/view4print.php?1-en&artk=15896>. Accessed July 31,

2009; J. B. An. Dang, "Anti-Catholic violence designed to hide crisis and graft in Vietnam's Communist Party," *AsiaNews.it*, August 5, 2009.

<http://www.asianews.it/view4print.php?l=en&art=15967>. Accessed August 7, 2009; and Nguyen, "Vietnamese Chairman's visit to Vatican under Catholics' watchful eyes," op. cit.

^{xl} Huong, "Catholics Shocked by Press Award Announcement," op. cit. and Nguyen, "Vietnamese Chairman's visit to Vatican under Catholics' watchful eyes," op. cit.

^{xli} Emily Nguyen, "Tam Toa parishioners helpless and in awe as their church land being bulldozed by Quang Binh government," *VietCatholic News*, August 22, 2009. <http://www.vietcatholic.new?News/Clients/ReadArticle.aspx?ID=70415>. Accessed August 24, 2009.

^{xlii} Martin Barillas, "Vietnam: Sharp Backsliding on Religious Freedom Harsh

Crackdown on Followers of Buddhist Peace Activist Thich Nhat Hanh,” October 19, 2009 <http://www.impactwire.com/a/517/Vietnam-Shart-Backsliding-on-Religious-Freedom>. Accessed November 9, 2009.

^{xliii} Human Rights Watch, “Vietnam: Sharp Backsliding on Religious Freedom,” op. cit..

^{xliv} Montagnard Foundation, “Three Degar Christians Arrested – one tortured for refusing to join the government Church – Security Policy Identified,” Press Release, May 21, 2010.

^{xlv} Deutsche Presse Agentur, December 11, 2009.

^{xlvi} J. B. An. Dang, “Lawyer arrested in an ‘urgent procedure’,” *VietCatholic News*, June 13, 2009. <http://www.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/68187.htm>. Accessed June 15, 2009.

^{xlvii} Dang, “Lawyer arrested in an ‘urgent procedure’,” op. cit. and Le Nga, Minh Nam and Thai Uyen, “Lawyer arrested for subversion, police say,” *Thanh Nien News*, June 14, 2009.

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/print.php?catid=3&newsid=49796>. Accessed June 15, 2009.

^{xlviii} Dam De and Vu Nhu, “Le Cong Dinh ejected by HCM Bar Association,”

VietNamNet Bridge, June 23, 2009.

http://vietnamnet.vn/service/printversion.vnn?article_id=1215620. Accessed June 24, 2009.

^{xlix} Ha Truong, "Two men arrested for anti-state activities," *VietNamNet Bridge*, July 7, 2009. http://vietnam.net.vn/service/printversion.vnn?article_id1220927. Accessed July 7, 2009.

^l "Confessions of crimes," *Nhan Dan On Line*, August 20, 2009.

^{li} Agence France Presse, October 8, 2009.

^{lii} John Ruwitch, "Nine convictions in Vietnam send signal before congress," Reuters, October 9, 2009. <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-43040520091009>. Accessed October 10, 2009.

^{liii} International Christian Concern, April 30, 2010.

^{liv} Montagnard Foundation, "Three Degar Christians Arrested," op. cit.

Bibliography

Hayton, Bill. 2010. *Viet Nam: Rising Dragon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hoang, Duy, Cuong Nguyen and Angelina Huynh. 2009. *Viet Nam's Blogger*

Movement: A Virtual Civil Society in the Midst of Government Repression.

Washington, D.C.: Viet Tan Party, April 1, 2009. [www.Viet Nam.org/en](http://www.VietNam.org/en).

Accessed March 30, 2009.

Human Rights Watch. 2011. *Montagnard Christians in Vietnam: A Case Study in Religious Repression*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Library of Congress. 1987. *Viet Nam*. Country Studies Series. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division. <http://lcweb2.log.gov/frd/cs>, Accessed July 24, 2007.

Montagnard Foundation. 2008. *Vietnam's Blueprint for Ethnic Cleansing: Report on the Persecution of the Indigenous Degar Montagnards*. Spartanburg, SC: Montagnard Foundation Inc.

Nguyen Nam Khanh. 2004. "Thu cua Thuong tuong Nguyen Nam Khanh gui Lanh dao Dang ve su long quyen cua Tong cuc 2" [Letter from Major General Nguyen Nam Khanh to the Party Leadership Concerning the Abuse of Power by General Department II]." June 17, 2004.

<http://www.queme.net/vie/print.php?numb=145>. Accessed September 4, 2010.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam. 1999. Penal Code, No. 15/1999/QH10, *Official*

Gazette, no. 8, February 29, 2000, 3-96.

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. 2004. *Viet Nam's National Defense in the Early Years of the 21st Century*. Hanoi: Ministry of [National] Defense.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2003. "Political Developments in Viet Nam: The Rise and Demise of Le Kha Phieu, 1997-2001." In *Consuming Urban Culture in Contemporary Viet Nam*, eds. Lisa B. W. Drummond and Mandy Thomas, 21-34. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2006. "Political Dissent and Political Reform in Viet Nam, 1997-2002." In *The Power of Ideas: Intellectual Input and Political Change in East and Southeast Asia*, eds. Claudia Derichs and Thomas Heberer, 115-132. Copenhagen S: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2008. "Viet Nam." In *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence: National Approaches*, Vol. 1, *The Americas and Asia*, eds. Stuart Farson, Peter Gill, Mark Phythian and Shlomo Shapiro, 300-317. Westport: Praeger Security International.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2009a. "Political Legitimacy of Viet Nam's One Party-State: Challenges and Responses." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 28, 4: 47-70.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2009b. "Viet Nam and the Challenge of Political Civil Society." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, 1: 1-27.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2010a. "Political Legitimacy in Viet Nam: Challenge and Response." *Politics and Policy*, 38, 3: 423-444.

Thayer, Carlyle A. 2010b. "The Trial of Le Cong Dinh: New Challenges to the Legitimacy of Vietnam's Party-State." *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 5, 3: 196-207.

Thayer, Carlyle A. forthcoming. Vietnam in Marcus Mietzner, ed., *Military Politics in Contemporary Southeast Asia*. London: Routledge.

United States Department of State, 2010. "Vietnam." In *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Vo Nguyen Giap, 2004. "Kinh qui: Ban Chap hanh Trung uong, Dong chi Tong Bi thu, cac dong chi trong Bo Chinh tri, Ban Bi thu va Uy Ban Kiem tra Trung uong" [Letter to Central Committee, Comrade Secretary General, Comrades on the Politburo, the Secretariat and Central Control Committee], January 3, 2004. <http://www.fifthcolumnmag.com/1204/domino.htm>. Accessed April 13, 2005.

