

HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

TO THI HANH NHAN

**THE PARTY'S STEADFAST LEADERSHIP IN
INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE DURING THE
RESISTANCE WAR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES FOR
NATIONAL SALVATION**

(1954 - 1975)

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**MAJOR: HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
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**The dissertation will be defended before the Academy-level
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At ... o'clock, on ... day ... month ... year 20...

**The dissertation can be consulted at: the National Library and
the Library of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics**

INTRODUCTION

1. The topic urgency

The Party's unwavering leadership in upholding independence and self-reliance from 1954 to 1975 was a continuation and development, reaching new heights, of the experiences and lessons learned from the previous revolutionary period regarding steadfastness in upholding the banner of national independence and socialism, as well as a continuation of the nation's patriotic tradition. At the same time, it was also the result of the creative application of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought on continuous revolution, revolutionary warfare, and resolving the relationship between revolutionary strategy and tactics. This was an extremely difficult issue because, during this period, the socialist and imperialist blocs were both fiercely opposed and experiencing conciliatory movements.

In-depth, systematic research on the Party's unwavering leadership of independence and self-reliance (1954-1975) helps us better understand the complexities and intertwined nature of the historical context, the challenging problems that the Party had to constantly solve and adapt to. Today, reform and international integration are inevitable trends, but unwavering independence and self-reliance remain the decisive factors for the sustainable development of each nation. To date, there have not been many systematic and in-depth studies on this important and interesting issue with multifaceted significance.

In terms of theoretical significance, the dissertation contributes to further clarifying the leadership and governance capacity of the Party during wartime. In particular, it helps to reconstruct the picture of the process of formulating the Party's steadfast policy of independence and self-reliance, and its guidance and organization in implementing that policy from 1954 to 1975.

In practical terms, this dissertation contributes to providing additional resources for research and teaching of the History of the Communist Party of Vietnam. At the same time, it helps to strengthen and enhance faith in the Party's leadership in the present and future; serving as a basis for countering false and distorted arguments that deny the Party's leadership role in the revolutionary war. For this reason, the doctoral candidate chose the topic "**The Party's Steadfast**

Leadership in Independence and Self-Reliance during the Resistance War against the US for National Salvation (1954-1975)" as the subject of this doctoral dissertation in the field of the History of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

2. Purpose and objectives of the dissertation

2.1. Purpose of the dissertation

To clarify the Party's steadfast policy and independent leadership during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954-1975), and to draw some lessons that can be applied to the current cause of national construction and defense.

2.2. Objectives of the dissertation

To achieve the research objectives, this dissertation focuses on the following main tasks:

- Overview of research related to the topic of the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954 - 1975).

- Clarify the factors that influenced the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance from 1954 to 1975.

- Systematizing and clarifying the Party's policies and directives on steadfastly maintaining independence and self-reliance in the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954 - 1975).

- Review the advantages, limitations, and draw some lessons from the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954-1975).

3. Research Subjects and Scope of the dissertation

3.1. Research Subjects

The Party's unwavering policy and guidance on independence and self-reliance during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation from 1954 to 1975.

3.2. Scope of the research

- *Regarding content:* The dissertation focuses on researching the Party's policy and the process of steadfastly leading the independent and self-reliant struggle. Based on this, the dissertation clarifies the advantages, limitations, and draws some lessons from the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954-1975).

The concept of unwavering independence and self-reliance encompasses many areas including politics, diplomacy, national defense, economy, culture, and other related issues. The Party's unwavering leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance during the national liberation war can be understood as follows:

Firstly, from a scientific standpoint, the steadfast leadership's independence and self-reliance in the resistance war against the US were based on new developments both domestically and internationally, especially the unpredictable dynamics of the US-Soviet-China strategic triangle.

Secondly, maintaining independence and self-reliance throughout the period 1954-1975 was essential to completing the national democratic revolution in the South and to protect and implement the socialist construction in the North. Through this, it contributed to promoting the progressive movement of humanity for freedom, justice, and peace.

Thirdly, Vietnam independently decided on all matters related to the war, from its determination to resist; strategic objectives; immediate tasks; to the methods of organizing and commanding the war, as well as its foreign policy, without intermediaries, and without allowing any country or faction to dominate, control, or manipulate it.

Fourth, we must firmly uphold independence and self-reliance, but without denying international solidarity, especially solidarity with progressive nations, organizations, and forces worldwide.

Fifth, maintaining independence and self-reliance is crucial not only in the face of major powers and the unpredictable changes in the international situation, but also in the struggle to criticize extremist manifestations within the country.

- *Regarding space*: Within the territory of Vietnam.

- *Regarding the timeframe*: From the signing of the Geneva Accords (July 21, 1954) to the end of the resistance war against the US, for national liberation (April 30, 1975). However, to ensure systematicity and achieve the research objectives, the dissertation expands the scope of research to include the period before 1954 and after 1975.

4. Theoretical basis and research methodology of the dissertation

4.1. Theoretical basis

Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought on national independence; on the right to national self-determination; on

continuous revolution; on People's war and war to defend the homeland; and on international relations, foreign affairs, and diplomacy.

4.2. Research methodology

+ Historical method: Primarily used to present the research situation; the process of the Party's steadfast leadership of independence and self-reliance in the resistance war against the US, saving the nation through the periods 1954 - 1967 and 1968 - 1975.

+ Logical method: Primarily used to summarize the research results of previously reviewed works, identify issues the dissertation should further investigate; comment on and evaluate relevant events and documents; summarize chapters; and draw conclusions and lessons learned.

- At the same time, the dissertation also uses other research methods such as analysis, synthesis, statistics, comparison, document survey, and the specific research method of Party history science, which is based on documents, resolutions, directives, etc., of the Party.

4.3 . Sources of materials

- Resolutions, reports, directives, telegrams, etc., of the Politburo, the Secretariat, the Central Committee of the Party, the Central Military Commission, and the Central Bureau of the Southern Region have been published in the Complete Party Documents, the Documents of the Southern Regional Party Committee, and the Central Bureau of the Southern Region related to the research topic.

- Documents from the National Assembly and the Government; decisions of relevant ministries, departments, and agencies related to the research topic.

- Articles and speeches by President Ho Chi Minh published in the Complete Works of Ho Chi Minh related to the research topic.

- Documents and materials are stored at the Central Party Office Archives, the National Archives Center, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Library, the Ho Chi Minh City General Library, the Library of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, etc.

- Books and articles by politicians, generals, and historical witnesses in Vietnam and around the world.

- Scientific works, dissertations, and research articles on the Vietnam War, both domestically and internationally, that are relevant to the dissertation.

5. Contributions of the dissertation

Firstly, the dissertation has initially clarified, in a more systematic way, the factors influencing the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance.

Secondly, the dissertation contributes to presenting the process of the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance during the resistance war against the US and for national salvation (1954 - 1975).

Thirdly, the thesis presents observations and draws valuable historical lessons that can be applied to the process of building and defending the Fatherland in the new circumstances.

6. Theoretical and practical significance

In terms of theoretical significance, the dissertation contributes to further clarifying the Party's leadership and governance capabilities during wartime; its administrative capacity, as well as its leadership role and the art of directing revolutionary warfare in the cause of national liberation.

In practical terms, this dissertation contributes to providing additional resources for research and teaching on the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam. At the same time, it helps to strengthen and enhance faith in the Party's leadership; and serves as a basis for countering false and distorted arguments that deny the Party's leadership role in the revolutionary war.

7. Dissertation structure: In addition to the Introduction, Conclusion, List of the author's published works related to the dissertation topic, bibliography, and appendices, the dissertation consists of 4 chapters and 10 sections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH SITUATION RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1.1. GROUP OF RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1.1.1. Research works related to the dissertation topic by domestic authors

Research works related to the Party's steadfast, independent, and self-reliant leadership (1954-1975) include representative works by domestic agencies and authors such as: The Steering Committee for the Summary of the War under the Politburo (2015) , *Summary of the*

Resistance War against the US, for National Salvation: Victories and Lessons; Nguyen Chi Thanh (1965), *Maximizing Revolutionary Heroism, Decisive Battle, Decisive Victory against the American Invaders;* Le Duan (2013), *Under the Glorious Banner of the Party, for Independence and Freedom, for Socialism, Advancing to Achieve New Victories;* *Why the US Failed in the War of Aggression against Vietnam* (1985); Le Van Yen (2008), *Ho Chi Minh and the Strategy of International Solidarity in the National Liberation Revolution* ; The Steering Committee for the Summary of the War under the Politburo (2000), *The Vietnamese Revolutionary War 1945-1975 - Victories and Lessons;* Nguyen Phuc Luan (editor) (2001), *Modern Vietnamese Diplomacy for the Cause of Gaining Independence and Freedom (1945 – 1975)*; Nguyen Phuc Luan (2005), *Vietnamese Diplomacy in Historical Confrontations* ; Nguyen Dinh Bin (editor) (2002), *Vietnamese Diplomacy 1945 – 2000* ; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2007), *Diplomatic Front and the Paris Peace Talks on Vietnam*; Tran Nham (2005), *The Battle of Wits at the High Level of Vietnamese Intelligence* ; Nguyen Khac Huynh (2010), *Vietnam's Resistance War Against the US: The Impact of International Factors* ; Luu Van Loi - Nguyen Anh Vu (co-editors) (2012), *The Le Duc Tho - Kissinger Negotiations in Paris* ; Nguyen Quy (2010), *History of the Southern Regional Party Committee and the Central Bureau of the South (1954 - 1975)* ; Vietnam Military History Institute (2013), The book series *History of the Resistance War Against the US, for National Salvation (1954 - 1975)* in 9 volumes; Nguyen Thi Mai Hoa (2013), *Socialist Countries Supporting Vietnam's Resistance War Against the US, for National Salvation (1954 – 1975)* ; Pham Quang Minh (2015), *The Vietnam-China-Soviet Union Triangle in the Resistance War Against the US (1954-1975)* ; Nguyen Van Huong (2017), *Judgment: How did the great powers intervene in the Vietnam War?*; Vu Duong Ninh (2017), *The Vietnamese Revolution on the International Chessboard - History and Issues*; Vietnam Military History Institute (2019), *Factors Constituting Vietnam's Strength to Defeat the US* (second edition, revised and supplemented), volume 12; Nguyen Van Quyen (2020), *Vietnam's Efforts to Gain Support and Assistance from Socialist Countries in the Years 1954-1968*; Tran Thi Thu Huong (2007), “Vietnamese courage and intelligence in the resistance war against the US, saving the country”, *Journal of Science and Education*, No. 4-

2007; Doan Thanh Thuy (2020), *The Party's leadership of Vietnam's relations with the Soviet Union in the resistance war against the US (1954 - 1975)*, Doctoral dissertation in History of the Communist Party of Vietnam, ...

1.1.2. Research works related to the dissertation topic by foreign authors

Works related to the dissertation topic have been published by many foreign researchers, including notable works such as Robert S. McNamara (1995), * *Looking Back: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* *; Ilya V. Gaiduk (1998), * *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* *; Anatoly Dobrynin (2001), * *Especially Trusted* *; Neil Sheehan (1990), * *The Glamorous Deception* *; Thomas J. Mc. Cormick (2004), * *America Half a Century - US Foreign Policy During and After the Cold War* *; Richard Nixon (2004), * *Richard Nixon's Memoirs* *; Ly Kien (2008), * *China-Soviet-American: A Historical Confrontation* *; Daniel Ellsberg (2018), * *The Pentagon Papers and Memories of the Vietnam War* *; Gregory A. Daddis (2021), * *Withdrawal: A Look Back at America's Final Years in Vietnam* *; ...

1.2. RESEARCH RESULTS OF THE REVIEWED WORKS AND ISSUES THAT THE DISSERTATION FOCUSES ON ADDRESSING

1.2.1. Research results of the previously reviewed works

Regarding documentation

These works have provided a rich and diverse system of documentation, especially original documents, records, and declassified texts related to the relationship between the major powers of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China at that time. This is valuable material for doctoral candidate to refer to when approaching and exploring research subjects, as well as carrying out research goals and tasks.

Regarding research methodology

These works have employed a diverse range of methods, including historical, logical, comparative, statistical, inductive-deductive, analytical-synthetic approaches, and philosophical-political and philosophical-historical perspectives on the war. They also utilize data and documents from various sources. These are methods the author can build upon during the development of the dissertation.

Regarding content

The published works, both domestic and international, related to or on the topic of this dissertation are diverse and abundant. In these works, authors have analyzed and explained the initial causes, developments, and conclusion of the Vietnam War from various perspectives, but all highlight the decisive factors: the leadership of the Party and the fighting spirit, courage, and creativity of the Vietnamese people. Works by foreign authors, limited by their viewpoints and influenced by political motives, may offer assessments and perspectives that are not entirely objective, but they have partially explained the reasons why the US did not achieve its objectives in the war. This is valuable material and an important source of reference, providing insight for the doctoral candidate to dissect and analyze the research subject and content in a more multifaceted and profound way.

1.2.2. Issues the dissertation focuses on addressing

Firstly, the factors that influenced the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance from 1954 to 1975.

Secondly, the development of the Party's awareness and policies on steadfastly maintaining independence and self-reliance through two periods: 1954-1967 and 1968-1975.

Thirdly, the specific guidance of the Party and Party committees at the central and local levels on steadfastly maintaining independence and self-reliance throughout the 21 years from 1954 to 1975.

Fourth, objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses, and draw some lessons from the process of the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance (1954-1975).

Chapter 2:

**THE PARTY'S STEADFAST LEADERSHIP IN
INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE DURING THE
WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE US, TO SAVE THE
COUNTRY FROM 1954 TO 1967**

**2.1. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PARTY'S STEADFAST
LEADERSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE**

2.1.1. The practical experience of the Party's steadfast leadership in independence and self-reliance before 1954

Before 1954, the Party steadfastly overcame the fierce attacks and destruction of colonial and imperialist powers; persistently led the entire nation in developing its forces, practicing struggle, and seizing the opportune moment for a general uprising; calmly and wisely guided the nation through nine years of protracted resistance against the French. At the Geneva Conference in 1954, due to a lack of full understanding of the strategic intentions of the great powers; limited information sources; limited means of diplomatic activity; and a cadre with limited experience, Vietnam could not fully exercise its initiative and autonomy in negotiations. Nevertheless, with unwavering determination and flexible tactics, Vietnam successfully achieved its basic objectives.

2.1.2. Domestic and International Context

** Domestic*

While the North focused on the task of restoring and healing the wounds of war, gradually advancing towards socialism, the South continued to fight against the invading enemy to complete the national democratic revolution. Both of these arduous revolutionary strategies in the two parts of the country were led simultaneously by the Party.

** International*

The power of the era, with its three revolutionary currents, continued its offensive. However, in the process of building socialism, alongside achievements, socialist countries began to experience shortcomings and limitations, especially internal disagreements within the bloc, ranging from discreet to overt, from fierce debates on policy to diplomatic and military confrontations. In early 1965, the US launched a "limited war," further demanding that the Party remain steadfast in its independence, self-reliance, and creativity in its leadership.

2.2. THE PARTY'S FIRMLY ADHERING POLICY TO INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE FROM 1954 TO 1967

Before the Geneva Accords were officially signed, the 6th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (2nd term) identified the United States as the main and direct enemy of the Indochinese countries. The Politburo meeting in June 1956 determined that political struggle was the primary form of resistance. The revolutionary outline for the South, drafted by Comrade Le Duan, emphasized that there was no other path besides the revolutionary path. Resolution 15 (1959) was the first official

document expressing the Party's open stance on choosing the path to liberate the South. The 3rd National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (September 1960) clearly outlined two different revolutionary strategies for the two regions of the country and noted that the spirit of self-reliance must be maximized to build an independent economy.

In December 1963, the Ninth Conference of the Central Committee of the Party clearly stated the Party's position on several principled issues concerning strategy and tactics. The 11th Party Conference (March 1965) issued a (special) Resolution on the immediate situation and urgent tasks. The 12th Central Committee Resolution (December 1965) outlined important strategic decisions in the new context. The 13th Conference of the Central Committee of the Party (January 28, 1967) noted: In diplomatic struggle, our Party always maintains its independence, although we still pay attention to consulting with fraternal parties. In December 1967, the Politburo issued a historic Resolution, shifting the revolutionary war in the South to a new phase (advancing to achieve decisive victory through a general offensive and general uprising against all enemy cities throughout the South).

2.3. THE PARTY'S FIRM GUIDANCE ON INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE FROM 1954 TO 1967

2.3.1. Maintaining the Resistance Strategy from 1954 to 1967

2.3.1.1. Unwavering determination to resist, protect national independence, and unify the country.

The unwavering determination to resist was synonymous with the unwavering aspiration for North and South Vietnam to be a unified entity. The achievements of the Đồng Khởi Uprising firmly consolidated that determination. To concretize the Party's strategic resolve, the Central Bureau of the Southern Region promptly issued a specialized resolution on ideological work and launched a political mobilization campaign, elevating revolutionary heroism to a new level.

2.3.1.2. Firmly assess friends and foes, promote international solidarity.

Through practical experience, the Party gradually developed a more comprehensive assessment of the United States and the extent of the impact of disagreements within the socialist system. The Party directed the coordination of diplomacy between the two regions; Party

diplomacy with state and people-to-people diplomacy; coordination of diplomacy with media campaigns; and, in particular, always doing its utmost to strengthen consensus among countries in the socialist bloc.

2.3.1.3. Remaining steadfast in two strategic tasks

The Party's unwavering commitment to these two strategic tasks stemmed from its combination of two types of laws: the laws of revolutionary warfare in the South and the laws of socialist revolution in the North. Both were governed by the common contradiction of the entire nation: the antagonism between the Vietnamese people and the invading American imperialists. The Party resolutely upheld the banner of nationalism—in a dialectical relationship with the banner of democracy, built socialism in the North.

2.3.2. Maintaining the correct method of conducting war

2.3.2.1. Directly attacking the Americans to find a way to defeat them.

Directly attacking the Americans to find a way to defeat them was a manifestation of a radical revolutionary spirit. Movements such as "heroes who kill Americans," "seek out the Americans to fight, seek out the puppets to destroy," "cling to the enemy's waist to fight," and "stretch the enemy to fight, surround them to destroy" arose across all battlefields. The Playme campaign, which took place from October 19th to November 20th, 1965, ended in resounding victory. This campaign opened up the possibility of annihilating American units.

2.3.2.2. Conducting a people's war involving the entire population and encompassing all aspects, relying primarily on one's own strength.

Firstly , implement the "two legs, three prongs, three regions" tactic; *secondly*, combine military offensives with mass uprisings; *thirdly*, combine "fighting and negotiating" to end the war; *fourthly* , proactively weaken the enemy's will to invade; *fifthly*, mobilize the entire nation and all resources in all fields to serve the cause of national liberation.

2.3.3. Firmly adhering to an independent and self-reliant foreign policy

2.3.3.1. Combining national strength with the strength of the times, and securing international sympathy and support

While national strength plays a decisive role, the strength of the times serves as a driving force to maximize internal resources. The fundamental and effective method for mobilizing national strength is to form the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and

consolidate and expand the Fatherland Front in the North. Furthermore, it involves expanding and strengthening the solidarity among the three Indochinese countries and progressive peoples worldwide.

2.3.3.2. Balancing the relationship between the Soviet Union and China based on the principle of "maintaining constancy while adapting to change."

The essence of balanced diplomacy is not taking sides in various conflicts and not creating any enemies, all for the sake of genuine national interests. Based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, Vietnamese leaders persistently campaigned for the international community to have a correct understanding of the nature of the Vietnam War; at the same time, emphasizing that the support and solidarity given to Vietnam was a vivid expression of human responsibility and conscience.

2.3.3.3. Assisting the revolutions in Laos and Cambodia according to the principle of "helping a friend is helping oneself."

Each Indochinese country held a different position and role in the overall American strategy. Among these, Vietnam was always considered the primary battlefield. In its operations to assist and coordinate combat with Laos and Cambodia, the Party consistently adhered to the genuine proletarian internationalism line, emphasizing the principles of solidarity, equality, and the right to self-determination and independence of each country.

Chapter 3

THE PARTY'S POLICY AND STEADFAST GUIDANCE ON INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE FROM 1968 TO 1975

3.1. NEW FACTORS AFFECTING THE PARTY'S FIRM LEADERSHIP OF INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE

3.1.1. Domestic situation

The insidious plots and escalating military actions of the United States posed serious new challenges to the Party's steadfast, independent, and self-reliant leadership during the 1968-1975 period; requiring the Party to uphold a high degree of independence and self-reliance throughout its leadership.

3.1.2. International situation

The period from 1968 to 1975 was a historical phase in which

the strategic triangle of the US, the Soviet Union, and China underwent unpredictable new developments. In particular, the agreements, arrangements, and negotiations that the US reached with Soviet and Chinese leaders revealed the insidious, deceitful, and treacherous nature of the US administration during the Vietnam War.

3.2. The Party's unwavering commitment to independence and self-reliance from 1968 to 1975

The 14th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (January 1968) set forth the task of "bringing our revolutionary war to its highest stage of development, using the method of general offensive and general uprising to achieve decisive victory." The Politburo's resolution of March 01, 1968, called for raising the spirit of independence and self-reliance, not fearing protracted fighting, and not fearing sacrifice and hardship. Politburo Resolution No. 188-NQ/TW of May 10, 1969, analyzed the fundamental weaknesses of the "Vietnamization of the war" strategy. In May 1969, First Secretary Le Duan clearly stated: We remember gratitude, we unite our side, but without independence and self-reliance, we cannot win. The 20th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (January 27 to February 11, 1972) demanded: We must firmly grasp the correct, independent, self-reliant, and creative international line of our Party. Maximizing the spirit of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, relying primarily on our own strength. The Resolution of the 21st Conference of the Central Committee of the Party (October 1973) emphasized: Maintaining the strategic offensive line and flexible leadership to advance the revolution in the South.

Regarding the North, the 22nd Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, held in late 1975 and early 1975, discussed the direction and tasks for economic development in the two years 1974-1975. The Politburo (expanded) conference, held in two sessions in late 1974 and early 1975, discussed the plan for the complete liberation of the South. Telegram No. 592 dated April 29, 1975, sent to the regions, cities, and provinces, emphasized: We will certainly liberate Saigon and the entire South.

3.3. THE PARTY'S FIRM GUIDANCE ON INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE FROM 1968 TO 1975

3.3.1. Firmly adhering to the resistance line

3.3.1.1. Resolutely determined to carry on the resistance until the final victory.

Implementing the Central Party Committee's new strategic resolve, on the night of January 31st and the early morning of February 1st, 1968, the people and armed forces of South Vietnam launched a general offensive and simultaneous uprising. Although the revolutionary forces eliminated many enemy combat forces and equipment, they did not achieve the greatest victory. In the second phase, the shift in the main direction of attack towards the south and southwest was correct; however, many units did not reach their targets according to the planned schedule, resulting in uneven offensive directions. In the third phase, the main direction of attack shifted to the outskirts of urban areas, but then continuously received directives to continue the general offensive and general uprising; the leadership and command at all levels in South Vietnam lacked the quick and decisive proposal to shift to rural areas, allowing the enemy to recover.

From April 1973, the Central Committee was established to assist the Supreme Command of the Army in researching and planning strategic operations for the liberation of South Vietnam. Nixon's resignation as US President (August 1974) due to the Watergate scandal reinforced confidence in the possibility of liberating South Vietnam as soon as possible. The revolutionary forces' destruction of the Thuong Duc military sub-district in Zone 5 (July 29, 1974 to August 7, 1974), liberating the Thuong Duc district capital, created a new situation: the Saigon army was no longer capable of recapturing lost positions.

3.3.1.2. Firmly adhering to the two strategic tasks and the roles of the two regions.

Continuing from the previous period, the Party steadfastly pursued the construction of socialism in the North and the national democratic revolution in the South; each region played a distinct role in the overall strategic direction of revolutionary development, with the North playing the most decisive role, while the South played a more direct decisive role.

3.3.1.3. Upholding international solidarity

In its foreign relations with the Soviet Union and China, Vietnam adopted flexible, adaptable, and conciliatory policies, creating a balance with both countries; respecting their roles and

voices; and informing them about major issues of the war. Vietnam clearly presented its steadfast stance on a protracted war strategy; conducted a comprehensive struggle across all three fields: military, political, and diplomatic; gradually achieved victory; controlled the situation, and aimed to defeat the United States on the battlefields of Vietnam and Indochina.

3.3.2. Maintaining the correct method of conducting war

3.3.2.1. Directly attacking the Americans to find a way to defeat them.

Directly fighting the enemy to find ways to defeat the United States and gradually transform the course of the war. The Party continuously reinforced its strategic resolve in a timely manner, keeping pace with the rapidly evolving situation on the battlefield; preserving many towns and cities intact, and achieving the greatest victories in the shortest time with a series of campaigns: Route 14- Phuoc Long; Central Highlands; Tri-Thien-Hue; Da Nang; Xuan Loc; and the glorious milestone of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign.

3.3.2.2. Combining striking and negotiating effectively

On the one hand, the Party directed the fronts to continue the offensive; on the other hand, the Party left open the possibility that Vietnam would negotiate if the US unconditionally stopped its airstrikes in the North. At the same time, the Party also advocated actively promoting diplomatic activities to gain the support of progressive people around the world for the strategy of "fighting and negotiating simultaneously."

3.3.2.3. Resolutely carrying out the people's war, forcing the enemy to fight passively according to our strategy

When the US launched its "Limited War" strategy aimed at destroying the main revolutionary forces, the Liberation Army unexpectedly opened fire throughout the cities of South Vietnam, forcing the US to shift from an offensive to a strategic defensive posture, completely disrupting the war plan. When the US implemented "Vietnamization of the War," we concentrated our attacks on strategically important areas (Quang Tri, the Central Highlands, and the Southeast) to break the enemy's defenses. In particular, the Ho Chi Minh Campaign was the pinnacle of people's warfare; the enemy completely lost its strategic initiative.

3.3.3. Firmly adhering to an independent and self-reliant foreign policy

3.3.3.1. Proactively negotiate and make concessions to sign an agreement ending the war.

The "two-step" strategy, which did not yet demand the removal of the Saigon government, was a breakthrough in resolving the deadlock and bringing the positions of both sides closer together at the Paris Conference. This proactive approach demonstrated Vietnam's creative thinking and strong ability to control the situation.

3.3.3.2. No compromise in the face of external pressure.

As the war entered its final stages, the major powers sought every means to conspire and reach agreements with each other to hinder Vietnam's reunification. The Party resolutely refused to compromise under any pressure, especially from its socialist allies, and was determined to accelerate the pace of the war towards complete victory.

3.3.3.3. Combining national strength with the strength of the times.

The Party strengthened the linkages between three levels of fronts: *firstly*, the national united front; *secondly*, the united front of the three Indochinese countries; and *thirdly*, the united world front supporting Vietnam. With a balanced, independent, and self-reliant foreign policy, along with a sincere, humble, reasonable, and compassionate attitude, Vietnam continued to receive great, comprehensive, and effective support and assistance from the international community.

Chapter 4

COMMENTS AND EXPERIENCES

4.1. COMMENTS

4.1.1. Advantages

Firstly, steadfastly upholding independence and self-reliance is a very appropriate and scientifically grounded policy, formulated based on national traditions; the viewpoints of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought on war and revolution; and based on the actual situation of the war.

Secondly, in the process of steadfastly leading with independence and self-reliance, the Party has always upheld the principle of "relying on its own strength" to build its capabilities; at the same time, it consistently employs appropriate strategies to successfully achieve its ultimate goals.

Thirdly, regarding the results: *firstly*, unwavering independence and self-reliance have brought revolutionary heroism to the highest level; strongly arousing the strength of self-reliance, the ability to protect

oneself, and self-sufficiency of a nation; *secondly*, thanks to unwavering independence and self-reliance, Vietnam has continued to gain comprehensive and effective recognition and assistance from progressive humanity worldwide.

Fourth, in its relations with major powers, the Party has convincingly demonstrated its independent, self-reliant, and self-determined character; contributing to refuting the erroneous arguments that Vietnam is merely a "pawn" or "bargaining chip" in the "bargaining" between major powers, lacking leadership capacity and incapable of independence and self-reliance.

4.1.2. Limitations

Firstly, domestically, the period from 1954 to 1958 was a time when Vietnam had to struggle to overcome the influence of external forces. The conflicting viewpoints of the Soviet Union and China posed significant challenges to the Party's policy of unwavering independence and self-reliance. *Secondly*, in dealing with the Soviet Union and China during 1963-1964, the Party had not yet fully upheld its commitment to independence and self-reliance in handling complex and delicate situations.

4.2. SOME EXPERIENCES

4.2.1. Accurately assess the domestic and international situation, the balance of power, and the strategies of major powers in order to formulate appropriate policies and countermeasures.

Each major power, while assisting Vietnam, has its own objectives, policies, and methods. Therefore, the Party needs to assess the interests, potential for involvement, and long-term strategies of these countries; the alliances and conflicts between them; and establish mechanisms for regular monitoring, evaluation, and timely adjustments. Today, to maintain independence and self-reliance, Vietnam must have a firm grasp of the situation; correctly understand and assess partners and stakeholders directly related to the nation's internal strength; possess a strategic vision, the ability to comprehensively anticipate both opportunities and threats.

4.2.2. Unity and solidarity in the context of fierce war and complex international circumstances.

Unity and cohesion within the Party are prerequisites for ensuring centralized leadership and unified will and action. Self-criticism sessions regarding delays and shortcomings after the Geneva Accords, the Tet Offensive of 1968, and the Paris Agreement of 1973 served to unite the entire Party, accelerating and leading the resistance

war against the US to complete victory. Only when the Party is strong and united internally can the full strength of the entire political system be mobilized and utilized, especially in neutralizing the negative impacts of the strategic calculations of major powers.

4.2.3. Building revolutionary strength according to the principle that independence leads to self-reliance, and self-reliance leads to creativity.

We must build up our strength to be able to control the situation. At the same time, we must seize opportunities, launch surprise attacks against the enemy, win each battle, each campaign, each war strategy, and advance towards total victory. Currently, economic strength plays a decisive role. Therefore, building an independent and self-reliant economy is an objective requirement.

4.2.4. Combining national strength with the strength of the times, achieving international solidarity on a rational and compassionate basis.

The Party's fortitude lies in the fact that even when caught "between two fires"—facing pressure and criticism from both strategic allies, the Soviet Union and China—Vietnam maintained good relations with both countries. However, if either side made mistakes, Vietnam would still criticize them without hesitation. Today, Vietnam's diplomatic approach remains characterized by reason and sentiment, and by the principle of "unchanging in response to ever-changing circumstances," remain a distinctive hallmark of Vietnam's diplomacy.

CONCLUSION

1. The Party's unwavering leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance in the cause of protecting the achievements of the revolution, liberating the South, and unifying the country (1954-1975) was a process full of difficulties, challenges, and complexities; reflecting the extraordinary efforts of the Vietnamese people under the Party's leadership. Both theoretical and practical foundations show that only by maintaining a spirit of self-reliance and self-determination can creativity and breakthroughs be achieved; only then can respect and admiration from powerful nations be earned; and only then can international solidarity be realized.

The unwavering commitment to independence and self-reliance demonstrates the profound sense of responsibility of a genuine Marxist-Leninist party towards the international communist movement; it is the creative, non-dogmatic, and non-rigid application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, which the Party uses as a guiding principle, to the specific circumstances of its own country. In particular, as long as the Party remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles of self-reliance and self-determination, maintains its self-strength and self-determination, and persistently upholds its independent and self-reliant stance, then genuine national interests will not be violated, the Vietnamese revolution will achieve creativity and breakthroughs in its policies, organization, and practical implementation, and will inevitably succeed.

Following the Geneva Accords (July 1954), Vietnam's combat objectives changed. Neo-colonialism, led by the United States, under the guise of "protecting the free world," coupled with economic aid and military and diplomatic threats to deceive the world and conceal its belligerent and aggressive nature, posed numerous challenges to Vietnam's national independence. Therefore, the urgent issue at this time was to resolve two major newly emerging contradictions: firstly, the antagonism between the Vietnamese people and the US imperialists and the South Vietnamese government dominating the South; secondly, the contradiction between the choice of socialist or capitalist development in the North. Furthermore, the Vietnam War was situated on the axis of three pairs of relationships: the US-Soviet Union, the US-China, and the Soviet Union-China, each with its own agenda. Therefore, unwavering independence and self-

reliance were an objective necessity. A policy consistent with objective laws; a principle that serves as a guiding principle for the Party's thinking, ideology, and practical activities.

Thus, in the context of extremely complex international relations, the Party's steadfast, independent, and self-reliant leadership must go through many winding and lengthy stages, achieving victories step by step in order to achieve complete victory. This is a fundamental principle of revolution.

2. In the process of formulating the policy of steadfast independence and self-reliance, the Party did not immediately possess a system of related viewpoints and principles. Instead, it required considerable time, effort, resources, and numerous "tests," ranging from simple to complex forms, from combinations to a single system, before it could shape, establish, and gradually perfect the theoretical system of steadfast independence and self-reliance in the complex domestic and international context at that time.

Based on the theoretical foundations of Marxist-Leninist classics, the nation-building and national defense traditions of our ancestors, the experience of previous revolutionary stages, and especially the changes in the world and domestic situation, the requirements and tasks of the Vietnamese revolution, the Party gradually shaped the policy of persistently pursuing the path of self-reliance and independence with the goal of liberating and unifying the two parts of the Fatherland.

Resolution 15 of 1959 marked a shift in the guiding ideology of the revolutionary struggle, a strong redirection in the forms and methods of the Party's struggle. From an international perspective, while the Soviet Union and other socialist countries advocated "peaceful coexistence" and détente with the US and the West, Resolution 15 demonstrated independence and self-reliance in defining the strategy for the Vietnamese revolution. This creativity showed proactiveness, a firm grasp of the situation, and the formulation of a strategy combining political and military struggle, in accordance with the realities of the Vietnamese revolution.

Shortly after the conclusion of the Third National Congress of Delegates, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was established (December 20, 1960) with a peaceful and neutral stance, aiming for peaceful reunification of the Fatherland. The "neutral

"South" stance was a flexible strategy of Vietnam, a policy consistent with the international situation aimed at gathering forces against US imperialism and the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, and gaining widespread support from many countries and peaceful, democratic forces around the world. However, the liberation of South Vietnam still had to rely on its own strength; national strength remained the decisive factor in the struggle against the US. Therefore, no matter how the great powers tried to influence it, the Party persistently pursued the path of self-reliance and independence as President Ho Chi Minh said: "The people of the South have experience in guerrilla warfare against the French - that is their own experience, the experience of the whole country and learning from the experience of China, but they have known how to be creative, not dogmatic, and not influenced by revisionism" [164; p.181]. Through this statement, he affirmed the self-reliance and steadfastness in the history of the struggle for independence and freedom of the Vietnamese nation, but knew how to inherit and develop the experience of other countries, without dogmatism and without revisionism. Through flexible, persistent but resolute diplomatic policies and strategies, Vietnam achieved solidarity with the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries, taking advantage of aid sources for the resistance war against the US to save the country.

Thus, the Party's unwavering commitment to independence and self-reliance remained consistent and steadfast throughout the resistance war to protect national independence and reunification. Regardless of favorable or unfavorable objective conditions, and no matter how unpredictable the strategic triangle between the US, the Soviet Union, and China became, the Party remained steadfast in implementing its two revolutionary strategies in the two regions of the country, steadfast in its methods of conducting revolutionary warfare, and steadfast in its independent, self-determined diplomatic strategy, free from external influence.

3. The key and overarching point in the process of directing and implementing the Party's unwavering policy of independence and self-reliance throughout 21 years from 1954 to 1975 was the unwavering direction of the resistance war; the unwavering direction of the model and methods of waging war; and the unwavering direction of implementing an independent and self-reliant foreign policy.

In the context of increasingly fierce global history, with the intense competition for military power between the capitalist and socialist blocs, and the Vietnam War becoming a hot spot attracting international attention, the Party still demonstrated its wisdom and skill in accurately identifying three "bottlenecks" in the process of implementing its steadfast policy of independence and self-reliance.

The unwavering leadership of the resistance line essentially meant unwavering determination to resist, protect national sovereignty and national unity; unwavering assessment of friends and enemies, and international solidarity; unwavering commitment to the two crucial strategies and the roles of the North and South in the process of national liberation and unification. Based on unwavering strategic and tactical resistance, the unwavering leadership of the methods and approaches to conducting the war essentially meant unwavering commitment to directly attacking the Americans to find a way to defeat them; conducting a people's war involving the entire population in all fields, relying primarily on internal strength; achieving success step by step; and skillfully combining fighting and negotiation.

The third guiding principle is the unwavering commitment to an independent and self-reliant foreign policy. This essentially means steadfastly combining internal strengths with the advantages and trends of the times, securing international support and approval; maintaining harmony in relations with the Soviet Union and China based on the principle of "unchanging in response to ever-changing circumstances" - being firm in principles, adapting to all changes, and being flexible in responding to and adapting to transformation; assisting the revolutions in Laos and Cambodia according to the principle of "helping others is helping oneself"; and proactively negotiating and making concessions to achieve peace agreements and end the war.

In particular, in directing the field of diplomacy, the Party has flexibly and successfully combined two elements: self-determination and independence with exploiting, arousing, and promoting the strength of international solidarity. These two aspects go hand in hand, but only with independence and self-reliance can international solidarity be effectively utilized. At first glance, these two aspects seem contradictory, as if independence and self-reliance mean not needing anyone or being able to unite with anyone. However, both

practice and theory prove that only independence and self-reliance can foster international solidarity and harness the power of the times in fulfilling national tasks. This clearly shows that the Vietnam Workers' Party is steadfast in its commitment to independence and self-reliance, not self-isolation, and to unity, not subservience or dependence.

4. Regarding the results and effectiveness of the Party's steadfast leadership in maintaining independence and self-reliance; in the early years of the resistance war against the American invasion, the Party gradually correctly identified the situation, accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the new combatants; gradually restored and promoted the economy and culture in the North; fought to preserve the forces and the Đồng Khởi movement; countered the "special war" strategy and initially thwarted the "local war," etc., demonstrating the value of steadfast independence and self-reliance; at the same time, consolidating and creating conditions for the Party to continue maintaining independence and self-reliance in the subsequent revolutionary stage.

In the next phase of the war, Vietnam not only avoided the isolation orchestrated by the US but increasingly expanded its solidarity with neighboring countries, allies, and friends around the world. This included alliances with Laos and Cambodia, based on Indochina as a battlefield; comprehensive and effective assistance from socialist countries, primarily the Soviet Union and China, along with friends who yearned for and promoted peace in the world, including progressive Americans. Never before in American history had there been a social movement as widespread, fierce, and powerful as the American people's demand for the government to end the brutal war in Vietnam; for the US to sign the Paris Agreement and withdraw its troops from Vietnam. The Vietnamese people completed the national democratic revolution throughout the country, ushering in a new era in national history – an era of peace, unity, and the entire nation moving towards socialism.

5. Besides its strengths, during its leadership, the Party sometimes lacked unwavering independence and self-reliance, which negatively impacted the revolutionary movement and forces. Not long after, the Party promptly recognized the situation, clearly identified friends and enemies, formulated a policy of unwavering independence and self-reliance, and effectively implemented it in the practical

resistance war; at the same time, it closely linked the cause of national construction and defense with the international situation, combining national strength with the strength of the times. Thanks to this, Vietnam minimized the negative impact of the Sino-Soviet conflict, while simultaneously securing practical support and assistance from socialist countries and progressive forces worldwide.

6. The process of steadfast independence and self-reliance (1954-1975) under the leadership of the Party has multifaceted and profound significance; it crystallizes valuable experiences in domestic and foreign affairs; and leaves behind many valuable lessons, especially in the context of Vietnam facing a historical opportunity to confidently enter a new era, an era of national progress, for a prosperous, strong, democratic, just, civilized, prosperous, and happy Vietnam. These lessons not only remind Vietnam to steadfastly maintain independence and self-reliance in all circumstances, but also affirm the importance of developing endogenous resources as a source, combined with the flow of human civilization, to create new momentum, preserving national identity and interests in a constantly changing world.

SCIENTIFIC WORKS RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

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