

# The Party's leadership combines national strength with the strength of the times in the Vietnamese revolution: Achievements and experiences

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● **Abstract:** Combining national strength with the strength of the times is one of the decisive factors in the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. Over 95 years of revolutionary leadership, the Communist Party of Vietnam has maximized the nation's comprehensive strength, effectively combining it with the strength of the times to gain national independence, build socialism, unify the country, and carry out the renovation process with the goal of a prosperous people, a strong country, democratic, equitable, and civilized society. The process in which the Party led the combination of national strength and the strength of the times has achieved great accomplishments and yielded valuable lessons and experiences.

● **Keywords:** national strength; strength of the times; foreign policy; foreign affairs; independence, autonomy.

## 1. Introduction

Combining national strength with the strength of the times is a consistent strategic guiding ideology of the Party throughout the Vietnamese revolution. Closely combining national strength and the strength of the times has created a combined strength, helping the revolution overcome all challenges and difficulties. Over 95 years of revolutionary leadership, the Communist Party of Vietnam has strongly promoted all internal resources in combination with the strength of the times made to achieve historically significant accomplishments, enhancing the country's position and prestige in the international arena. The experiences from this process should continue to be applied and promoted in light of the country's new development demands.

## 2. Content

**2.1. Under the Party's leadership in combining the national strength with the strength of the times, the Vietnamese revolution gained victories of historical significance and epochal stature**

*Vietnam regained independence, sovereignty and national reunification*

The August Revolution in 1945 - one of the nation's greatest events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century - brought Vietnam into the era of national independence associated with socialism. The strength that made the victory of the August Revolution was the strength of great national unity, led by the correct and creative path of national liberation. The August Revolution exemplifies the art of creating opportunities, seizing opportunities, combining the national strength with the strength of the times by the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Party's leadership capacity was clearly demonstrated at the decisive moment of changing the fate of the nation from slavery to independence and freedom. The strength of the classes and the entire nation was multiplied to the highest level with the spirit of initiative and self-reliance.

At the end of 1944, leader Ho Chi Minh predicted: "The invaders are close to being destroyed (...) The opportunity for our nation's liberation will come within a year or a year and a half. Time is of the essence. We must act quickly!"<sup>(1)</sup>. President Ho Chi Minh instructed the Party committees and the people to apply appropriate forms of struggle. The Party determined that the Indochinese revolution was a part of the anti-fascist democratic front, closely related to the anti-fascist struggle of the Soviet Union and the anti-Japanese resistance of the Chinese people.

The end of World War II created opportunities for people of all nations to fight for independence. But in Asia and Southeast Asia, no country achieved victory like Vietnam. The victory of the August Revolution was not a "stroke of luck" due to World War II or Vietnam seizing power in a "power vacuum" as claimed by some foreign scholars.

With the spirit of "relying on our own strength to liberate ourselves"<sup>(2)</sup>, the Indochinese Communist Party and the Viet Minh Front led the people in seizing the opportunity to launch a General Uprising to take power nationwide, demonstrating the height of national intelligence combined with the strength of the times. The victory of the August Revolution in 1945 contributed to the trends of development and growing strength of the times. It was a just and progressive revolutionary movement, securing national independence and human freedom, advancing toward a civilized society for the right cause and contributing to the progressive development of humanity. The birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam strengthened the forces of peace, national independence, and social progress.

The victory of 30 years of revolutionary war (1945 - 1975) completed the people's national democratic revolution, bringing the Vietnamese Fatherland into a new era - the era of independence, freedom, unification and socialism<sup>(3)</sup>.

The core driving force that strongly attracted and united the entire community of Vietnamese ethnic groups was the just struggle of the Vietnamese people to defend independence and resist colonialist and imperialist aggression. The Party put forward a revolutionary line grounded in the aspiration for national independence and reunification, which gained the people's trust and support. The people's resistance

against aggression won broad sympathy, support, and material and spiritual assistance from progressive peoples around the world. That was the strength of a thousand-year tradition of the Vietnamese people - a peace-loving nation that never succumbed to any foreign power.

The victorious resistance war against the French colonialists was the result of the Party's leadership in a comprehensive people's war, promoting national strength in combination with the strength of the times in the new context. The people's democratic regime was gradually established. The revolutionary government apparatus, the people's government at all levels from the central to the local levels, was established, consolidated and brought into effect. The resistance economy took shape alongside democratic reforms in the fields of culture and society; important elements of the new regime were established. Overcoming years of blockade by imperialist forces, Vietnam actively pursued diplomatic policies to counter disadvantages and seize opportunities for international engagement.

From 1950, the Vietnamese people's resistance war received valuable support and assistance from the socialist and people's democratic countries, along with the active support of the Communist Party and the working people of France, the colonized people, and the world peace and democracy movements. The just and progressive nature of the resistance, the unity of Vietnam's fundamental interests with the development trend of the times, along with the Party and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's correct, transparent international line, connected the Vietnamese people's struggle with that of revolutionary and progressive forces worldwide in the cause of national liberation, social liberation and human liberation.

After the victory over French colonialism, the Vietnamese revolution entered a new stage, carrying out two revolutionary strategies: the people's national democratic revolution in the South and the socialist revolution in the North. Never before had Vietnam had to deal with such enormous, complex and fierce difficulties as in the resistance war against American imperialism. Confronted with a powerful, insidious enemy, Vietnam also faced very serious challenges in the international sphere, due to growing disunity in the international communist movement, particularly between the Soviet Union and China. The U.S. imperialists strove to exploit this situation to expand the war and sought every means to isolate and crush the Vietnamese people's resistance. By upholding the banner of national independence and socialism, the Party mobilized and gathered all the vitality of the nation into the cause of resistance against America and national salvation.

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*President Ho Chi Minh - The founder of the Communist Party of Vietnam \_ Photo: IT*

Upholding independence, self-reliance, steadfastly and creatively implementing the resistance line and foreign policy, persevering in international solidarity, the Party maximized the strength of international unity against U.S. imperialism and defeated the U.S. Vietnam turned favorable factors into strengths and mitigated difficulties, transforming international and epochal factors into real power. A broad front of the world's people united with Vietnam and supported Vietnam against the US invasion took shape and expanded. Alongside the front of great national unity and the fighting alliance of the three Indochinese countries, that international front contributed to creating a broad alignment of forces that defeated the war of aggression.

Our army and people firmly defended national independence and the cause of socialist construction in the North, creating a solid foundation for the struggle for national reunification. The North excellently fulfilled its duty as the great rear base for the great front line; and excellently fulfilled its international duty for the Lao and Cambodian revolutions. The victory of the Vietnamese people's resistance against America for national salvation strongly promoted the global anti-colonial movement and significantly enhanced the strength and momentum of the communist movement, the international workers' movement, and the movements for peace, democracy, and social progress.

The victory of the renovation process has brought the country out of socio-economic crisis, promoted industrialization, modernization and international integration, gradually establishing Vietnam's position in the international arena.

The 6<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress (December 1986) - The Congress of comprehensive renovation - ushered the country into a new era of construction and development with a new mindset. The Congress identified the primary task as taking advantage of favorable international conditions for the cause of building socialism

and defending the Fatherland. The foreign policy and diplomatic policies of the Party and the State of Vietnam have contributed to creating favorable conditions for economic and social development, strengthening internal resources while promoting the strength of the times, gradually expanding international relations, and enhancing the country's position in the international arena. Resolution 13-NQ/TW dated May 20, 1988, by the Politburo (6<sup>th</sup> term) on foreign tasks and policies in the new situation marked a breakthrough in renovating foreign policy thinking, marking the initial formation of the policy of multilateralization and diversification.

The 7<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress (June 1991) continued to develop the Party's foreign policy thinking, identifying the core task of maintaining peace, expanding international friendship and cooperation, contributing to building and defending the Fatherland. The Platform for National Construction in the Transitional Period to Socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) clearly states: "Combining national strength with the strength of the times, domestic strength with international strength. In any circumstance, it is necessary to firmly maintain the will of independence and self-reliance and uphold the spirit of international cooperation, promote internal strength to the fullest extent, while taking advantage of external strength, combining traditional elements with modern elements"

The 12<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress (January 2016) reviewed 30 years of implementing the renovation policy, continued to emphasize the lesson of "combining and promoting national strength with the strength of the times to firmly build and defend the socialist Vietnamese Fatherland"<sup>(4)</sup>. The comprehensive renovation has made great accomplishments, with the face of the country changing rapidly.

From a country severely devastated by war, experiencing a prolonged and severe socio-economic crisis, with inflation reaching 774.7% in 1986 and people's lives facing extreme difficulties and severe food shortages - after nearly 40 years of implementing the renovation policy, Vietnam has achieved significant, historically meaningful, and comprehensive accomplishments in all fields. By 2023, Vietnam's economic scale reached approximately 430 billion USD, ranking 35<sup>th</sup> globally and 5<sup>th</sup> in ASEAN<sup>(5)</sup>. In 2024, GDP per capita reached about 4,700 USD<sup>(6)</sup>. The people's standard of living continues to improve, "the poverty rate fell from 58% (in 1993) to 9.88% (in 2016), then to under 3% (in 2020)"<sup>(7)</sup> and in 2021, it dropped further to 2.23%<sup>(8)</sup>.

Regarding the human development index (HDI), in 2022, Vietnam reached 0.726, an increase of 50% compared to 1990<sup>(9)</sup>, placing it among the high HDI group globally, especially compared to countries at similar development levels. The political model and general operating mechanism of "Party leadership, State management, people's mastery" are increasingly being improved, promoting their role, effectiveness and efficiency. The work of preventing and combating corruption, wastefulness and negativity from the 12<sup>th</sup> term through to today has achieved very important results, consolidating and enhancing the people's trust in the Party and the State. National defense, security, national sovereignty and national interests are maintained.

Vietnam's foreign relations and international integration are increasingly deep and broad. From a country under siege and embargo, Vietnam has affirmed its important position in the international arena. By January 2025, Vietnam had established official diplomatic relations with 194 countries and territories, of which Vietnam established comprehensive strategic partnerships with 9 countries; established strategic partnerships with 11 countries, comprehensive partnerships with 13 countries, and has relations with all 5 permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the entire Group of Seven (G7) and all ASEAN member countries.

Vietnam is an active and responsible member of more than 70 important international organizations and forums such as the United Nations, ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, WTO<sup>(10)</sup>. On the multilateral level, Vietnam has increasingly affirmed its capacity, role and responsibility in international issues. The international community highly appreciates Vietnam's responsible contributions to global issues such as climate change response, peacekeeping, cyber security, etc. Achievements in multilateral foreign affairs have significantly contributed to enhancing national potential, affirming Vietnam's new position in the international arena; at the same time contributing to mobilizing international resources to serve the goal of socio-economic development. The 13<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress affirmed that "Our country has never had such a foundation, potential, position and international prestige as today"<sup>(11)</sup>.

## ***2.2. Lessons learned from the process of the Party's leadership in combining national strength with the strength of the times***

Correct and objective awareness and assessment of the content and nature of the era and the movement of the world

In the context of globalization, with increasing interdependence among nations, the combination of internal and external factors becomes increasingly important, decisively determining the success or failure of each country's policy. International relations are multidimensional and complex, not only shaped by bilateral relations between two countries, but in many cases strongly influenced by the axes of relations among countries, especially relations among major powers. Therefore, it is necessary to be sensitive and accurately grasp the situation to propose sound foreign policy lines that can best harness the strength of the times to serve the cause of building and defending the Fatherland.

The major current trends are: the growing consensus within the international community in building and consolidating a rules-based, multipolar, multilateral, democratic, fair, and equal world order; the strength of hundreds of countries striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the strength of the civilized world in Industrial Revolution 4.0, knowledge economy, globalization... The achievements that humanity has gained in the modern world are extremely important factors for the country's development. Therefore, on the one hand, it is necessary to modernize internal factors, while on the other hand, it is necessary to proactively and positively selectively absorb modern external factors that represent the spirit of the times and are suitable to the country's development conditions.

*Focus on consolidating and enhancing national comprehensive strength*

The requirement to combine national strength with the strength of the times in promoting the renovation process continues to be urgent. National strength includes internal resources and their supplementation through external ones. It is necessary to promptly identify major issues that could restrict, hinder, or weaken national strength, the strength of the times, and their combination into a driving force to further promote the industrialization and modernization of the country.

Correctly assess the country's position and strength after nearly 40 years of renovation. This includes the strength of the great national unity bloc and social consensus, the combined strength of economy, military, population, and territory; the strength of historical values, traditions, culture, patriotism, the spirit of hard work, creativity and the striving spirit of the Vietnamese people; resources that can be mobilized both domestically and internationally; mobilizable resources both domestic and international; cognitive, organizational capacity, adaptability, and receptivity to external cultural, civilized, and progressive values; the ability of the State and the people to seize development opportunities; the effective and flexible combination of all these to maximize national interests.

Peace, cooperation and development are the trends of the times that Vietnam needs and can take advantage of to combine with national strength to develop the country in the new situation. At the same time, complex developments containing unpredictable, risky factors threaten national and global security, requiring constant vigilance and proactive prevention in the integration process in order to overcome challenges and seize favorable international conditions.

The Asia - Pacific region, including Southeast Asia, continues to be a dynamic development center, with an increasingly important geopolitical position in the world. At the same time, this region is also an area of strategic competition among a number of major powers and contains many destabilizing factors. The path of peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region still faces many obstacles and challenges. The strong development of Industrial Revolution 4.0, spearheaded by artificial intelligence and automation, is changing the core foundations in all fields, especially economics, security and defense. The impact of the scientific and technological revolution is profound, creating opportunities but also posing great challenges, forcing countries to adjust their development strategies accordingly. Globalization strongly affects all aspects of social life, on all countries and ethnic groups; creating an increasingly greater interdependence among countries. Urgent global issues such as terrorism, migration, climate change, rising sea levels, extreme weather events, natural disasters, epidemics, environmental pollution, etc., have become non-traditional security challenges, which requires multilateral cooperation to resolve.

The foreign policy line during the renovation era of the Party maximizes external resources, combining them effectively to serve the goal of successfully building

socialism. The foreign affairs of the Party and the State need to continue to be implemented in a synchronous, effective and creative manner to continue to consolidate a peaceful and stable environment, contributing to promoting security and development interests and further enhancing the country's position in the international arena.

Maintain independence and autonomy, self-reliance, and place national and ethnic interests above all in the process of leading and implementing lines and policies, tapping external resources for national development.

Combining national strength with the strength of the times must always maintain national independence, autonomy and sovereignty, putting national and ethnic interests above all. Independence is first and foremost political independence, determining the development path from Vietnam's practical conditions, not subject to the influence of any force that wants to interfere in the country's internal affairs. Independence and autonomy also require building a highly competitive economy in the context of globalization. It is necessary to build a reasonable economic structure that is both adaptable to integration and protects economic independence, avoiding strong dependence on the world market, and capable of responding to all challenges when facing unfavorable situations. However, it must be recognized that in the era of globalization, economic independence can only be maintained when there is interdependence among countries, created by geo-economic position linked to geo-political position. The principle of "both cooperation and struggle" must be thoroughly grasped to best promote favorable international opportunities and limit disadvantages to serve the cause of renovation.

In the process of combining national strength with the strength of the times, promoting national strength is decisive. It requires not only fostering and developing each resource as a component of national strength but also combining these elements into a synergy. Whether opportunities are seized and challenges overcome depends on the capability, mindset, political bravery, and determination of the ruling party. President Ho Chi Minh pointed out: "self-reliance", "relying mainly on one's own strength", "if you want others to help you, you must first help yourself"<sup>(12)</sup>, "A nation that is not self-reliant but just waits for help from other nations does not worth of independence"<sup>(13)</sup>.

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Party Congress emphasized: "Maximize the combined strength of the entire nation and the entire political system combined with the strength of the times, to maximize the consensus and support of the international community to firmly protect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Fatherland, to protect the Party, the State, the people, the socialist regime, the culture and national interests"<sup>(14)</sup>.

### 3. Conclusion

The achievements and lessons learned from combining national strength with the strength of the times by the Communist Party of Vietnam continue to be

promoted in the current world context. The Party's mettle, intelligence, steadfastness, innovation, and wise leadership; the strength of great national unity combined with the strength of the times, the cultural identity of preserving Vietnam whose foundation is patriotism; these factors continue to be the strength for Vietnam to enter a new era - the era of national growth, confident in overcoming challenges, realizing aspirations, reaching goals, and attaining great achievements for the goal of a prosperous people, a strong country, a democratic, equitable, and civilized society ■

*Submitted: February 13, 2025; Revised: February 17, 2025; Approved for publication: February 20, 2025.*

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#### ● Endnotes:

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