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PRESIDENT HO AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION REVOLUTION

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[Text] We celebrate the 85th anniversary of the birth of President Ho at a time when our people have won an extremely large victory by totally liberating beloved South Vietnam and completing the national democratic revolution throughout the country.

This is the victory of the determined struggle waged by President Ho since the early 1920's and, in particular, it is the victory of the long struggle waged by our party since its founding, a struggle waged under the light of the revolutionary thinking and line of President Ho. By creatively applying Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of Vietnam, President Ho, together with the Party Central Committee, set forth the line for the national democratic revolution and the socialist revolution in our country, established the role of the working class in leading the revolution, founded, led, and trained our party to be a Marxist-Leninist party, established the alliance of workers and farmers as the foundation of the National United Front, adhered to the viewpoint of the violent revolution and built the people's armed forces, established and consolidated the revolutionary government, and constantly worked to strengthen international unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

On this occasion, we seek to examine and gain an understanding of a number of the fundamental revolutionary viewpoints of President Ho which advanced the Vietnamese revolution to victory after victory.

Before there was the leadership of the working class, the people of Vietnam staged many brave uprisings against the French colonialist aggressors and their lackeys, the traitors, in an attempt to win independence for the fatherland. However, all of these uprisings ultimately ended in defeat because our people did not have a correct national salvation line during this period.

It was in this situation and in order to overcome the limitations of patriotic scholars and politicians with their contemporary bourgeois tendencies that President Ho visited the countries of the West where he was active in the communist movement in the capitalist countries; he went to many colonial countries, lived with the working class and laboring people of all races, examined their situation, and examined world revolutionary experiences including the "latest discoveries" of Europe and the United States in order to find the truly correct road to liberation.

The victory of the October Russian Revolution opened a new prospect for the world revolution and had a decisive effect upon the life of President Ho and the Vietnamese revolution. To the people of Vietnam, beginning with President Ho--the first Vietnamese communist--the Russian October Revolution was like "water and food to a thirsty and hungry traveler." He eagerly studied Marxism-Leninism and the Russian revolutionary experience, particularly Lenin's "Draft Platform on the National and Colonial Problems."

Through Lenin's works, President Ho discovered the greatest truth of the age: only with socialism and communism is it possible to liberate the oppressed nations and

laboring people of the world from the yoke of slavery. National independence must be closely linked to socialism. From this realization, President Ho later reached a conclusion in the nature of a principle: "There is no other way to save the country and liberate the people than by the proletarian revolution."(1)

The first great service performed by President Ho was to introduce Marxism-Leninism to Vietnam, set forth the correct line for the Vietnamese revolution, and closely link the Vietnamese revolution to the international worker movement. He was very deeply aware of and gave his attention to establishing a relationship between the national liberation revolution in the colonial countries with the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries. He considered these two revolutions the two integral, inseparable parts of a whole, he considered them the "two wings" of the "bird" which is the world proletarian revolution.

At that time, many people in the international communist movement, unaware of the revolutionary potential of the people of the colonial countries, maintained that the liberation of colonies was totally dependent upon the proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries or they failed to realize the close relationship between the two revolutions in deciding the fate of the common enemy, imperialism; therefore, they gave little attention to helping colonial revolutions. To the contrary, President Ho, who had thoroughly accepted the spirit of Leninism, maintained that the proletariat in the capitalist countries and the people of the colonial countries must join together, support one another in the common struggle, and form a united front against imperialism on a worldwide scale. This militant alliance has been of important strategic significance throughout the long history of the world revolution. In an article entitled "The October Revolution and the Liberation of the Nations of the East," President Ho said: "The revolutionary struggle of the workers of the capitalist countries directly helps oppressed nations liberate themselves because this struggle is directed against the heart of the oppressors... Meanwhile, the revolutionary struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples directly helps the proletariat of the capitalist countries in their struggle against their ruling classes to liberate themselves from the yoke of slavery of capitalism. Unity of the struggles against imperialism insures the victory of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and the victory of the proletariat in the capitalist countries."(2)

Under the new historical conditions following World War II, the "two wings" of the "bird" developed into the three revolutionary currents in the world which have combined to form one force which has effectively and continuously attacked imperialism, gradually repulsed it, and overturned whole segments of the imperialist system and will eventually bring about the total collapse of imperialist capitalism led by U.S. imperialism.

In 1924, in complete agreement with Lenin's brilliant prediction concerning the role of the national liberation revolution in the world proletarian revolution, President Ho pointed out in speeches delivered during the sessions of the 5th Congress of the Communist International: "The fate of the international proletariat is dependent, to a large extent, upon the colonies which supply grain and soldiers to the large imperialist countries. If we want to defeat these countries, we must first of all deprive them of their colonies"(3) because "the poison and the vitality of imperialism are concentrated in the colonies, not in the mother country."(4)

President Ho became clearly aware of the strategic position and revolutionary prospects of the colonial countries at an early date when the peoples of these countries were still being tread upon and held in abject poverty by the imperialists and the communist parties in the capitalist countries were not giving appropriate attention to the colonial problem. He had absolute confidence in their revolutionary potential. The swords and cannons of the imperialists could not smash the will to fight of the people of Vietnam and the other oppressed nations. As early as 1921, President Ho predicted: "The Indochinese are concealing something which is boiling and raging within them and, when the opportunity arises, it will explode in a terrifying manner."(5) The national liberation revolution is very closely related to the proletarian revolution in the "mother country"; however, it is absolutely not dependent upon the proletarian revolution. This conclusion based on Lenin's theory concerning the law of uneven development of countries in the age of imperialism and the possibility of a revolution breaking out and winning victory in any country is the weakest link in the chain of imperialism. Particularly after the victory of the Russian October Revolution, the colonial system and market of imperialism shrunk and the imperialists had to intensify their exploitation of the colonial and vassal countries which, in turn, inspired the people of these countries to arise in struggle to liberate themselves. The communists in the colonial countries had

to mobilize and organize the laboring masses and be ready to create or take advantage of the opportunity to lead the masses in an uprising to liberate themselves from the ruling yoke of imperialism. President Ho said: "The elite unit has the task of hastening the arrival of this opportunity. The violence of capitalism has prepared the ground; socialism need only perform the job of sowing the seeds of liberation."(6) Therefore, President Ho appealed to the communists and the peoples of the colonial countries to not rely on others, display a high spirit of self-reliance, and unanimously agree "to liberate ourselves through our own efforts."

That which was the hope and the goal expressed by President Ho in the early 1920's became reality in our country some two decades later. In August 1945, despite the fact that the revolutions in France and Japan had not achieved success, President Ho and our Party Central Committee took advantage of the opportunity arising from the defeat of world fascism by the Soviet Red Army to promptly mobilize all our people to stage a victorious general uprising throughout the country. The victories won by the people of our entire country in the war of resistance against the French and the war of resistance against the United States for national salvation together with the brilliant development of the national liberation movement throughout the world offer further eloquent proof of the above mentioned basic conclusions reached by President Ho.

Due to their uneven level of development, the colonial and vassal countries are different in many respects. Therefore, Lenin often advised communists to skillfully apply the principles of Marxism to the specific circumstances of each country. By applying Lenin's theory to the conditions of the colonial countries, President Ho deeply analyzed the characteristics shared by these countries and their own individual characteristics. Generally speaking, commerce and industry were not developed in the colonial countries, the people primarily worked as farmers, the vast majority of them were mercilessly exploited by the imperialists and the feudalists, and their lives were very miserable. However, these countries were also different in many respects: "Although the natives in all the colonies are equally oppressed and exploited, their cultural, economic, and political levels vary very greatly from place to place. With the exception of misery, there is no similarity between Vietnam and the Congo, Martinique, or the New Hebrides Archipelago."(7) In addition, each imperialist country has different ways and methods of ruling each colony. Consequently, the communists in each colonial country must set forth a suitable revolutionary strategic and tactical line based on the specific conditions of their country and not mechanically follow the revolutionary line of other countries.

On the basis of the nature and special characteristics of the society of Vietnam, a country which was a colonial and semi-feudal country but had a long history of national development, our party and President Ho set forth the line of the national democratic revolution and the direct advance to socialism. This line was totally consistent with Lenin's prediction concerning the future development of the national liberation revolution in the present age.

In reality, immediately after it was totally liberated in 1954, North Vietnam, under the leadership of the party and President Ho, entered the period of transition to socialism. Although they did not have much of a material-technical base, the people of North Vietnam had favorable basic conditions for creating this material-technical base and could, as a result, advance directly to socialism without passing through the stage of capitalist development. These favorable basic conditions were: the correct leadership of our party, the party of the working class which had been tempered and challenged; the people's democratic state carrying out the historic task of the dictatorship of the proletariat; a strong alliance of workers and farmers which formed the foundation for the National United Front; the assistance of the fraternal socialist countries. Today, as we review the basic revolutionary viewpoints set forth by President Ho and our party at the very beginning in "The Revolutionary Road" (1925), the platform and policy outline (February 1930), or the political platform (October 1930), we see that reality has proven all of them to be correct.

President Ho and our party not only set forth the correct strategic line, but they also promptly and flexibly changed both strategy and policy during each period of change of the revolution.

After World War II broke out, our party and President Ho clearsightedly and promptly pointed out: "At present, the national liberation question is higher than all others. Let us unite! Let us join efforts to overthrow the Japanese, the French, and their lackeys in order to save our nation from disaster."(8)

In order to direct all efforts toward overthrowing the imperialists and their lackeys, it was necessary, in conjunction with guiding the new strategy, to adopt new revolutionary forms and methods designed to make full use of the national factor and assemble each and every national and democratic force. Our party and President Ho then set forth a number of new slogans and established appropriate forms of organizing the struggle; from the slogan of confiscating the fields of landowners they shifted to only confiscating the fields of reactionary landowners; from the slogan of establishing a worker-farmer soviet state they shifted to the slogan of establishing a democratic republic; and they shifted from the Indochinese democratic front and the Indochinese Anti-Imperialist United National Front to the Vietnamese Independence League (called the Viet Minh). Evaluating the historical significance of this shift in strategy and tactics in an article commemorating the 45th anniversary of the founding of the party, Le Duan stated that he considers the assembling of all national and democratic forces within the Viet Minh "a major initiative of the party and President Ho in the national salvation movement of the years between 1940 and 1945, one of the basic factors insuring the success of the August Revolution."

Following the August Revolution, our country was attacked by foreign and domestic enemies on all four sides in a vain attempt to destroy our young revolutionary government. In order to maintain and consolidate the revolutionary government, it was necessary, on the one hand, to be firm in guiding revolutionary strategy and, on the other hand, to have very flexible tactics for dealing with each specific enemy in each specific situation. Once, President Ho advocated a temporary detente with the Chiang Kai-shek army (behind which were the U.S. imperialists) in order to free our hands to deal with the French colonialists; at another time, he made temporary concessions to the French in order to drive the Chiang Kai-shek army beyond our borders, smash their lackeys, and actively prepare forces for a lengthy war of resistance against the French colonialist aggressors which he knew was surely unavoidable. "These extremely clear-sighted measures are recorded in the revolutionary history of our country as perfect models of the Leninist tactics of taking advantage of conflicts within the ranks of the enemy and concessions based on principles."(9)

Following the victory of Dien Bien Phu and the 1954 Geneva Convention, North Vietnam was totally liberated; however, South Vietnam was still under the ruling yoke of the neo-colonialism of the U.S. imperialists. Our party and President Ho wisely set forth a common revolutionary line for the entire country. Our country's revolution was carrying out two strategic tasks at the same time: carrying out the socialist revolution in North Vietnam and struggling to complete the national democratic revolution in South Vietnam and advance to the peaceful reunification of the country.

When the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys unleashed the "special war" and then the "limited war" in South Vietnam and, at the same time, waged an air war of destruction against North Vietnam, President Ho and our party determinedly led all our people in resisting the United States for national salvation. President Ho clearly stated the strategic determination of all our people: "The war might drag on for 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, or longer. Hanoi, Haiphong, and a number of cities and enterprises might be destroyed but the Vietnamese people are determined not to be afraid! There is nothing more precious than independence and freedom. On the day of victory, our people will rebuild our country to be grander and more beautiful!"(10)

The general offensive and uprising staged by the army and people of South Vietnam during the Mau Tan Tet in 1968 and the victory won by the army and people of North Vietnam in their fight against the war of destruction waged by the U.S. Air Force forced the U.S. imperialists to unconditionally halt their bombings and attacks against North Vietnam and negotiate with representatives of the PRG at the four-party conference in Paris.

In the face of the attitude of the Nixon administration which obstinately pursued its plan of carrying out aggression against South Vietnam through the new "Vietnamization" of the war strategy, our party and President Ho advocated the policy of determinedly advancing the war of resistance against the United States for national salvation to total victory by closely coordinating the three fronts of the struggle, the military, political, and diplomatic fronts, and developing the combined strength of socialism and the national democratic revolution, the strength of our people coordinated with the strength of the age. In the Testament he left behind for our entire party and all our people, President Ho stated: "Whatever difficulties and hardships lie ahead

for our people in the war of resistance against the United States for national salvation, we are sure of winning total victory. This is a certainty. "

Implementing his Testament through the victory of the offensive and uprising in 1972 on the battlefield of South Vietnam and the brilliant counter-offensive which defeated the strategic offensive waged by U.S. B-52's against the capital of Hanoi and Haiphong at the end of the year, the army and people of our entire country forced the Nixon administration to sign the Paris Agreement on 27 January 1973; they also achieved the "force the withdrawal of the United States" part of the goal set forth by President Ho. Two years later, through the general offensive and uprising in the spring of 1975, our army and people, in the space of only 55 days and nights, destroyed and routed the entire puppet army comprised of 1.1 million troops and more than 1 million civil guard troops and caused the collapse of the entire puppet government system from the central to the street, township, and hamlet levels. Thus, our army and people achieved the remainder of the goal set forth by President Ho, namely, "bringing about the collapse of the puppets" thereby totally liberating South Vietnam and winning total victory for the national democratic revolution throughout our country. For the first time in 117 years (since the day the French colonialist army began to invade our country) all the territory of our country, from Dong Van to Cape Ca Mau, has been cleared of aggressor and lackey troops.

The brilliant success of our people's war of resistance against the United States for national salvation has proven an important line of thinking of President Ho as well as the truth of the age: "...Under the favorable conditions which exist in the present age for the revolutionary movement, any nation, regardless of how small it might be, can, if it closely unites, is determined to fight in accordance with a correct political and military line, and enjoys the positive support and assistance of the socialist camp and the revolutionary people of the world, surely defeat any imperialist aggressor, even the ringleader of imperialism, the U.S. imperialists."(11)

Throughout his active life, President Ho was always a noble symbol of genuine patriotism coordinated with deep proletarian internationalism. Even during the first years of his wanderings in search of the road to national salvation, President Ho reached the important conclusion that the working class and laboring people in all countries are friends and that imperialism everywhere is the enemy. Overcoming the limitations of contemporary Vietnamese patriotic scholars who were bound up in narrow nationalist and xenophobic thinking, President Ho, taking the stand of the proletariat, coordinated patriotism and the love of his people with the love of the working class and the laboring people of the world. He not only struggled to liberate his nation and his own people, but he also participated in the struggle to liberate oppressed and exploited mankind.

While giving attention to the interests of his nation, President Ho also paid attention to the interests of other nations. He resolutely struggled against each trend of chauvinist and narrow nationalist thinking in the revolutionary movement within our country as well as the world and worked as hard as he could for international unity based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. He was very active in the worker movement in Europe and the revolutionary movement in the colonial countries. He wrote books and newspaper articles, used legal and illegal forms, he used "every available means" to condemn and indict the imperialist's colonial system, he appealed for class unity and for the heightening of the revolutionary awareness of the peoples of oppressed nations. He founded the Inter-colonial Union in France, participated in the founding of the Union of Oppressed Nations in East Asia, suggested the establishment of the Colonial Studies Department of the Communist International (the French Bureau), etc. At the 5th Congress of the Communist International, he resolutely struggled against each mistaken viewpoint which gave light attention to the colonial question; on the other hand, he suggested that the Communist International adopt a plan for quickly training cadres for the countries of the East, that the communist parties in "mother countries" must intensify their propaganda activities and select party members from native populations, that the rest of the party must regularly print news concerning the situation in the colonies, that it be made a specific task of each party member to be more concerned with colonial questions, etc,

He also constantly gave his attention to teaching the peoples of the colonies to differentiate between the imperialist colonial rulers and the working people of the "mother country," considering the former the enemy and working and progressive

people friends. President Ho used the image of the "elephant" with "two trunks" to teach the spirit of international unity between the working people of the "mother country" and the people of the colonies against their common enemy, imperialism. This important strategy not only originated in the communist humanitarianism of the proletariat, but also in the interests of the entire world proletarian revolution as well as the interests of each nation.

The thinking of President Ho and our party concerning international unity developed more and more in keeping with the development of our nation's struggle. During the period of the democratic campaign which lasted from 1936 to 1939, our party and President Ho taught our people to support the French people's front and, together with the French democrats, to struggle against the reactionaries in the "mother country" and the colony; it also taught them to support the Chinese people in their resistance against Japanese fascism. During the period of the national liberation campaign from 1940 to 1945, our party and President Ho led our people in the struggle to support the Soviet Union and took the side of the allies against the fascists, thereby contributing to the defeat of fascism in the world.

In the two wars of resistance against France and the United States, President Ho and our party gave much attention to strengthening international unity. To begin with, our party and President Ho were very concerned with establishing a united front of the three nations of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos so that they could rely upon and help one another resist the common enemies, the French colonialists and the U.S. imperialist aggressors, until total victory was won, thereby helping safeguard peace in Southeast Asia and the world. The Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia union which formed in the realities of the fight against the French and then against the United States was a beautiful expression of proletarian international unity; each party participated in the union in a voluntary manner and all parties did everything they could to help one another and contribute to the common struggle on the basis of complete respect for one another's independence and sovereignty.

In the war of resistance against the United States for national salvation and in order to win victory over the extremely powerful and cruel enemy not only of our people, but of mankind as well, our party and President Ho advocated the policy of strengthening the United Front of the People of the World Against U.S. Imperialism which formed in the realities of the struggle. The various socialist countries, communist and worker parties, and the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries and nationalist countries must support and help one another in the common struggle for peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism on the basis of equality and mutual respect. We consider this an international obligation, it is absolutely not a matter of doing a favor for another country. The world revolution was a very important factor in the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. At the same time, the victory of our people in the resistance against the French and the U.S. aggressors contributed to the common victory of the world revolution.

Our party and President Ho gave particular attention to unity with the Soviet Union, China, and the other fraternal socialist countries and focused attention upon unity within the international communist and worker movement, considering it a sure guarantee of the victory of the Vietnamese revolution in each stage of its development. In the speech opening the 3rd National Party Congress (1960), President Ho emphasized: "Unity among the forces of the socialist countries and unity and solidarity among the communist and worker parties of all countries are matters of most important significance."

President Ho was greatly saddened over the disagreements which occurred within the communist and international worker movement. He tried to maintain the unity of fraternal parties and countries on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Until the final days of his life, he was concerned about the international communist and worker movement as well as the great socialist family. In his Testament, he instructed our party to "do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in a way which conforms to both reason and sentiment."

It can be said that throughout his life of revolutionary activity, in his feelings as well as his thoughts, in his revolutionary line as well as in his practical work, from the first days of his revolutionary activities until the end of his life, President Ho always expressed a smooth and living coordination of patriotism and proletarian internationalism. He was the embodiment of the struggle to implement Lenin's great strategic slogan: "Proletariat of all oppressed countries and nations, unite!"

President Ho frequently emphasized: "Ardent patriotism is inseparable from proletarian internationalism"(12); "a genuine spirit of patriotism...cannot be separated from proletarian internationalism."(13).

President Ho was a great patriot. His patriotism was genuine and thorough because it was based on the working class stand and, therefore, was inseparable from proletarian internationalism.

President Ho was a great international warrior. His international feelings were very pure, very revolutionary. His proletarian internationalism cannot be separated from his genuine patriotism.

During the past several years, a number of Western authors have written books about President Ho. Besides some relatively correct opinions and observations, they have also expressed a number of observations and viewpoints which are incorrect. One person states that President Ho "was not a thinker" and "never a theoretician," rather, "he was only a skilled tactician," "a pure nationalist wearing a red shirt"; "for Nguyen Ai Quoc, Marxism was primarily a method, the international communist movement was a lever."

Due to limitations regarding their stand, viewpoint, and understanding, the authors referred to above do not understand the correct and talented strategic and tactical thinking and viewpoints of President Ho. They separate theory and practice and separate his genuine patriotism and his proletarian internationalism. They also separate his leadership role and the collective leadership in our party. Independence, creativity, democracy, and collectivity are the revolutionary leadership traditions and principles of our party. President Ho always respected these principles. All the decisions of the party and President Ho were based on the legitimate aspirations of the masses and the actual situation of the revolution in our country. President Ho frequently reminded the various party and governmental echelons: "Leadership must be collective and democratic, united and centralized."(14)

In reality, President Ho's major thinking concerning revolution is being proven to be correct more with each passing day. As the funeral oration of the Party Central Committee stated about President Ho: "With a heart burning with patriotism, President Ho soon became a disciple of Marxism-Leninism and found in Marxism-Leninism the light illuminating the road to the salvation of the people and the country. President Ho, the first Vietnamese to creatively apply Marxism-Leninism to the circumstances of our country, charted the course for the gradual advance of the Vietnamese revolution to victory after victory."

The great thinking and pure feelings of President Ho will forever serve as a shining beacon showing us the way forward. The more enthusiastic each Vietnamese revolutionary and patriot becomes over the great victory won by the nation, the more he must direct his energies toward studying and becoming imbued with the thoughts and feelings of President Ho so that he can take correct actions and actively contribute to our people's revolution in the new stage.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1960, p 705.
2. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," p 650.
3. Article written in THU TIN QUOC TE Journal, Number 4-1924, the Archives of the Department of Party History Research of the Central Committee.
4. Notes on the 5th Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, 1924. Shorthand notes, pp 210-211, the Archives of the Department of Party History Research of the Central Committee.
5. Ho Chi Minh: "For Independence, Freedom, and Socialism," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1970, p 18.
6. Ibid., p 18.
7. Nguyen Ai Quoc: "Colonialization on Trial," Su That Publishing House, Hanoi, 1959, p 12.

8. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," p 199.
9. Le Duan: "Advancing Under the Glorious Banner of the Party To Win New Victories for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism," HOC TAP, No 2-1970, p 38.
10. Ho Chi Minh: "For Independence, Freedom, and Socialism," p 282.
11. Ibid., p 307.
12. Ho Chi Minh: "Selected Works," p 594.
13. Ibid., p 650.
14. Ibid., p 524.

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