



Vietnam Creatively Applies Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on the National Unity in the Fight against Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: President Ho Chi Minh is the genius leader of the Vietnamese Party and people. He is also the Hero of Vietnam's national liberation. Although he passed away, his guiding ideology for the revolutionary movement is eternal and becomes the guideline in the cause of the Vietnamese nation. Ho Chi Minh's ideology is a system of comprehensive and profound views on basic issues of the Vietnamese revolution, such as national liberation, socialism construction, Party building, cultural and human development. The great national unity in his ideology is a core content, making an important mark of President Ho Chi Minh in the process of leading the Vietnamese revolution. President Ho Chi Minh's ideology of the great national unity has been successfully applied by the Communist Party of Vietnam during the national liberation struggle, the process of national constructing and developing in the renovation period. In the current period, the world and Vietnam are facing a tough battle caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic not only caused a global economic recession but also claimed the lives of millions of people around the world. In this extremely tense and persistent war against the Covid-19 Pandemic, once again Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the great national unity has been creatively applying by the Party, State, Government and the people of Vietnam. The article is structured into three parts: the first is Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the great national unity; the second is how creatively the Party, Government and the Vietnamese people apply Ho Chi Minh's ideology in the Covid-19 pandemic prevention and control; and the third one is correctness and creativity in the application of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the Great National Solidarity in the war against the Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh's ideology, national unity, Vietnam, covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

Solidarity is a precious tradition of Vietnam, which has been formed and preserved throughout more than four thousand years of history as well as during the struggles against natural disasters and the invaders of Vietnamese people. It has also been inherited and developed in the nation-building phase nowadays. Right since the early days of leading the Vietnamese revolution, Ho Chi Minh recognized the power of national unity. He always appreciated and gave directions to promote that spirit of national unity, making it the root for Vietnam to obtain many victories in the struggle for national liberation. Inheriting and developing the ideology of President Ho Chi Minh, the Communist Party of Vietnam has always been upholding and promoting the power of national unity in the renovation period. The practice has shown that the solidarity of Vietnamese people brightly shone through every time Vietnam is in difficulty. In the context of the worldwide outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, to face the extremely dangerous "invisible enemy Covid-19" claiming the lives of millions of people around the world and dangerously spreading throughout Vietnam, once again the united power of Vietnamese people rose very strongly in the determination to join hands to defeat the Covid-19 enemy.

1. Ho Chi Minh' ideology on the Great National Unity

Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the great national unity is a system of theses, principles and methods of gathering the masses of people and organizing revolutionary forces in order to promote the great power of the whole nation. In the ideological history of Vietnam, many people mentioned to the national unity, but when it came to Ho Chi Minh, unity became the great unity of the whole people. Solidarity can be understood as a gathering, forming a unified bloc, working together for a common purpose. And the great solidarity is the broad solidarity, which means to emphasize the composition, size and force of the solidarity bloc. The word "solidarity" is more than two thousand times repeated and the phrase "great solidarity" more than eighty times by Ho Chi Minh in his ideology. That proves his concern for the issue of the solidarity and the great solidarity in all historical conditions, all circumstances, and he affirms that the solidarity can multiply the great power of the entire nation, which is the indispensable foundation in the struggle and development of the country and the people of Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the great national unity is expressed in the following points:

First, Solidarity is a precious tradition of the Vietnamese nation.

Generalizing the development of Vietnamese history, Ho Chi Minh affirmed that solidarity is a precious tradition of the Vietnamese nation. Therefore, he always called on every Vietnamese, especially cadres, to always cherish that tradition and preserve the good tradition of the nation like preserving "the pupil in one's eyes". He said to his people and comrades, "Unity is an extremely precious tradition of the Party and of our people, which needs to be preserved and maintained by all of you, the communists from the Central Committee to the cell branches as the way you protect the pupils of your eyes."¹

Second, Great Solidarity is gathering the power of the whole nation, in which the alliance among farmers, workers and intellectuals is the core.

With the ideology of "regarding the people as the root", Ho Chi Minh always appreciates and upholds our people's role and power of solidarity: "There is nothing in the universe as precious as the people. There is nothing in the world stronger than the united force of the people."² In Ho Chi Minh's ideology, "the people" has a very broad connotation, to refer to all the people of Vietnam in general. Therefore, the great national unity in Ho Chi Minh's ideology is to unite all people, all classes, all political parties, all organizations, all ethnic groups and religions, including those who previously had erroneous thoughts to the country now have repented and returned to the cause of the nation, "We have to be sincere and united with whoever sincerely advocates peace, unification, independence, and democracy despite their being anti-government in the past. We stand in solidarity with the talented, the virtue and the strong, with those who desire to serve the Fatherland and serve the people."³

According to Ho Chi Minh, the core of the great national unity bloc is the working class, initially farmers, workers and intellectuals. He affirmed, "The Great solidarity means firstly to unite the majority of the people, of which mainly workers, farmers and other working classes"⁴. Among the other working classes mentioned, Ho Chi Minh focused on the intellectuals, "In the cause of the revolution and of socialist construction, intellectual labors play an important and glorious role; and workers, farmers, and intellectuals need to be closely united into one block"⁵.

Thus, Ho Chi Minh foresaw the great role of the working class and pointed out the need to unite and gather them into a unified bloc, together with other classes in society to create a great national unity bloc. Ho Chi Minh's progressive thought is on the basis of inheriting the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint on the role of the masses and expresses his vision in upholding the power of the entire nation in the revolutionary cause.

Third, Great Solidarity is an important strategy of the revolution, a decisive factor for all successes.

In Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the great solidarity is not a subjective and emotional will but a vital strategy of the revolution to gather the power of the whole nation to achieve success. He once affirmed, "Solidarity is a national policy, not a political trick"⁶; that is solidarity is not a measure to be applied in a certain situation but a long-term strategy of the revolution. As a result, the great national unity is both the goal and the top task of the revolutionary cause. In his speeches and writings, he always emphasized the point: Unity is the power, unity is an invincible force. From that viewpoint, he came to affirm a truth of the times, "Solidarity, solidarity, great solidarity, Success, success, great success"⁷. During his revolutionary leadership, Ho Chi Minh kept requiring to focus on creating the great national unity bloc at all time to build and develop the country.

From the fact that Vietnam is a small and poor country with small population, but often faces many invaders with superior economic and military advantages, Ho Chi Minh always affirmed that only by gathering the great power of national unity can we create great strength to confront and defeat these enemies. He affirmed about the great unity of the Vietnamese people with all pride, "All Vietnamese people are together with the only determination of not to be slaves, with the only will of not losing the country, and with the only purpose of fighting for the reunification and independence of the country. This only determination of our compatriots is considered a solid bronze wall surrounding our Fatherland to defeat all kinds of enemies in spite of their ferocious and insidiousness."⁸

¹ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 5, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.611

² Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 10, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.453

³ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.244

⁴ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.244

⁵ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.376

⁶ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.244

⁷ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.120

⁸ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.178 - 179

Fourth, the way to realize the great national unity is to unify the similarities and counter the differences.

Not only affirming the role of the great national unity, Ho Chi Minh also pointed out a way to spread solidarity to all classes of people. He said that every class has its own characteristics in terms of lifestyle, level and awareness: "Of course, the people are not the same with different classes, different levels as well as different opinions. There are advanced, intermediate, and backward classes as well".⁹ These differences sometimes are the causes of their conflicts of interest. However, in order to gather them into a great solidarity, it is necessary to seek, to appreciate and to promote the similarities, so as to counter and resolve the differences as well as contradictions. Ho Chi Minh recognized that the similar factor to gather the power of the whole nation is a reflection of the burning aspiration of all Vietnamese patriots; that is the spirit: "Sacrifice money, time and even blood for the benefit of oppressed peoples; be selfless and unselfish, to adhere to the motto "Fatherland is the first" everywhere and at all times".¹⁰ Finding the key connection among classes of Vietnamese people, which is the patriotic spirit helped Ho Chi Minh shortly gather the power of all people, forming a stable solidarity bloc. It is the great achievement that not every leader has.

Ho Chi Minh realized that recognizing the similarities between classes is not easy, so the Party and Government must regularly propagate and educate the citizens, focusing on solving problems among the ethnic groups, the religions and beliefs. In order to gather people from different regions and backgrounds, it is essential both to eliminate animosities, respect other cultures, customs and practices, and uphold the unified common interests of the nation, resolutely fight against narrow nationalist ideology. Ho Chi Minh once reminded, "Our Party and Government have always called on all ethnic groups to eliminate frictions caused by imperialism and feudalism to closely unite on the basis of equality of rights, interests and duty"¹¹. It is necessary to eliminate all prejudices, to sincerely unite, to help one another to progress and to serve the people together.¹²

Thus, the great national unity according to Ho Chi Minh's ideology is the great unity of all ethnic groups, all religions, all classes, all genders, all age groups, all regions of the country, uniting all members of the great family of Vietnamese people to form a firm unity. The special thing is that Ho Chi Minh not only gave this thought but also directly led and directed the building of the great national unity bloc. In Ho Chi Minh era, all classes of people throughout the country, including compatriots living abroad, joined hands to unite and unify, forming a great power for Vietnam to defeat the invaders and achieved the goal of independence for the nation and freedom for the people. This is also a unique point both to make the value of Ho Chi Minh's ideology and to make Ho Chi Minh's ideology a "guideline" to guide and lead the Vietnamese revolution.

2. The Vietnamese Party, Government and the entire nation creatively apply Ho Chi Minh's ideology in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

The world and Vietnam have experienced many fierce wars with different sizes, characteristics and levels of destruction. Many decades have passed by since the end of World War II, peace and stability as well as mutual development are always the main trends despite riots and disputes still in some parts of the world. Humanity has been enjoying a peaceful life and an increasingly higher standard of living until the end of 2019, when a newly dangerous war with no gunfire started. This terrible war not only degrades the global economy but also claims the life of millions of people worldwide. It is the Covid-19 pandemic. Up to now, Covid-19 has officially become a global pandemic and every country has to fight against that virus to save people's lives and to stabilize the socio-economic status of the country. On January 22nd, 2020, when the first case of Covid-19 from Wuhan-China appeared in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam has identified the dangerous level of this disease on the first days and proactively proposed urgent and effective measures to prevent and combat against the Covid-19 pandemic. The Party and Government of Vietnam have determined that this is a war, so Vietnam needs to uphold the spirit: "Fighting against the pandemic is like fighting against the enemies". With the initiative spirit, Vietnam has come up with many effective solutions such as social distancing, 5K slogan (medical facial masks, disinfection, distance, and no gathering, medical declaration), Vaccine fund... One of the main reasons of these highly effective solutions is thanks to the obedience of a large number of people, the consensus, determination and power of solidarity of the whole nation during the process of controlling and fighting against Covid-19.

The policy of the Party and Government to mobilize the strength of the entire nation to participate in epidemic prevention and control

Studying and applying Ho Chi Minh's ideology on great national unity, as soon as the pandemic occurred in the country, Vietnam called on the entire nation of to unite, unify the will and action to fight against the pandemic with great determination and efforts. On January 29th, 2020, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of Vietnamese Communist Party issued Official Letter No. 79-CV/TW to provinces, cities and central agencies requesting that the prevention and

⁹ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.336

¹⁰ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.513

¹¹ Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.371

¹² Ho Chi Minh, *Complete Volume*, volume 9, National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, 2011, p.144

control of the Covid-19 epidemic must be considered the "central and urgent" task. On March 30th, 2020, General Secretary and State President Nguyen Phu Trong made a call for national unity to overcome all difficulties and challenges to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic. He said, "With the top priority of people's lives and health, I call on all Vietnamese people, domestic and abroad, to unite, unify in will and actions, in drastically and effectively implementing the guidelines of the Party and State as well as the directions and administrations of the Government and the Prime Minister. Every citizen is a soldier in this battle to fight against the disease." His words are the call for national solidarity of Vietnamese people in the epidemic prevention and control.

Along with the Party and State's focus on epidemic prevention and control and to have more resources of measures to prevent, to treat diseases and to ensure social security, on March 17th, 2020 the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Fatherland Front issued a call "All people support the prevention and control of the Covid-19 epidemic". The purpose of the Call is to promote the spirit of solidarity and unanimity of all Vietnamese people in the prevention and control of the epidemic.

It can be seen that the Vietnamese Party and Government have inherited President Ho Chi Minh's ideology on great national unity. In the context of the Covid-19 epidemic with many complicated developments, the Party and Government have taken many measures to rally all citizens and promote the power of the whole nation. This is the inheritance and promotion of Ho Chi Minh's ideology of the great solidarity in the new era.

The magnificent tradition on the great solidarity of Vietnamese people in the epidemic prevention and control

In the face of complicated developments of the COVID-19 pandemic, inheriting the tradition of the great national unity and responding to the call of the Party and Government, Vietnamese people again join hands and unite to fight against the epidemic. All provinces, cities, ministries, branches, localities, agencies, units, organizations and individuals have enthusiastically and actively participated in the epidemic prevention and control.

At the forefront of this epidemic battle is the force of health officials and employees who have been working days and nights, testing, screening and treating patients with Covid-19. Many of them are infected, but with the spirit of "all for the community", doctors and nurses at the front lines keep working in the quarantine camps to help and treat the patients with a high spirit of sharing and solidarity. Especially, lots of under-graduated medical students voluntarily participate in the epidemic prevention and control in the localities as well as in the severely epidemic areas as to assist the doctors and nurses there.

All forces of officials at all levels and branches in the localities have been working together, continuously tracing, zoning out epidemic in residential areas. Many community groups with the participation of police, civil defense force, the front force, women, the youth...have been formed. They propagate and mobilize the citizens, encourage them to strictly abide by the State's regulations on epidemic prevention and control. They also actively provided food and the necessities to people in quarantine camps, blockaded epidemic areas or with difficulties.

Police and military forces have actively participated in spraying disinfectants as well as volunteered to epidemic areas to help out the health officials and patients. To have the best observing and treating conditions, many military barrack camps are requisitioned as the quarantine camps for the infected. As a result, officers and soldiers have to station in the forests. They are both the instructors and the care taker to the patients when needed as in one family, which is the proof of the tradition "soldiers and citizens are like fish and water".

With the spirit of "fighting against the pandemic is like fighting against the enemies", the whole political system of Vietnam has been together to protect the health and life of the people. Responding to the call of the Party, Government and Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vietnamese people not only contribute their efforts but also actively donate money, food, the necessities to support the epidemic prevention and control. The special ATMs of rice, noodles, medical facial masks and free shops have been appeared throughout the country. The famous singers, the models, the actors and actresses, the musicians... now also take part in charity work by raising funds, delivering food and necessities to patients or those who are in the severely epidemic zones. The charitable kitchens run non-stop with thousands of meals a day like the intimacy and sharing to the unlucky people. All these activities make the great value and the power of Vietnam which have been maintained and upheld until the next generation.

Vaccine Fund - a gorgeous symbol of the great national solidarity in the fight against Covid-19

When the epidemic broke out, the Party and Government of Vietnam had many initiatives to mobilize the people's contribution in its prevention and control. This is the application of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on solidarity, calling for the sharing of the whole nation in difficulties. Many individuals and organizations domestic and abroad have actively donated money and things like masks, disinfecting gels, medical equipment... to help out the community. The 4th outbreak (from April 27th, 2021 up to present) is extremely dangerous with new strains and nationwide spread; so along

with the applied epidemic prevention measures, Vietnam needs to vaccinate the entire population to create community immunity step by step to repel the pandemic.

According to estimation by the Ministry of Health, 75% of the population are expected to be vaccinated with 150 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine needed. The total estimated amount for purchasing and transporting the vaccine is about VND 25,200 billion. If the purchase of vaccines just relies on the State budget, the target of 75% of population vaccinated surely faces difficulties, or even impossibilities. Therefore, the Government decided to establish the Vaccine Fund as a necessary and effective initiative of Vietnam to mobilize the large contributions of the people inside the country and abroad.

On May 26th, 2021, the Prime Minister of Vietnam signed a decision to establish the Vietnam Fund for Vaccination Prevention of Coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as VFVC. The purpose of the Fund is to receive, manage and use the monetary and vaccine funding, supporting and contributions from domestic and foreign organizations and individuals as well as other lawful capital sources in purchasing and importing vaccines, in researching and producing vaccines domestically to protect Vietnamese citizens from Covid-19. This fund operates for non-profit purposes, uses capital for the right purposes and complies with the laws of Vietnam.

As soon as it was established, the Vaccine Fund quickly received the sympathy and support from a large number of Vietnamese people throughout the country and overseas. Just for a short time, the Fund has received great and enthusiastic support not only from agencies, units, enterprises, corporations... but also from all classes of people, including children, the elderly, the retired officials and many overseas Vietnamese. Up to 17:00 of August 4, 2021, there were many organizations and individuals supporting the Vaccine Fund with a total amount of 8.456 billion VND¹³.

It can be said that the Vaccine Fund is a gorgeous symbol of the great solidarity of Vietnamese people. The amount that organizations and individuals contribute not only has material value but also shows the spirit of solidarity, sharing and community responsibility of the people to the Party and Government. That helps Vietnam continue to be highly appreciated by the world for having unique initiatives in mobilizing people to participate in the epidemic prevention and control.

3. The correctness and creativeness in applying Ho Chi Minh's ideology on the Great National Unity in the fight against Covid-19 in Vietnam

Throughout the history, Vietnam has gained many victories in the wars against many stronger enemies in terms of military strength, economy and even quantity of forces, including US imperialists, French colonists, Japanese fascists and Mongols - Yuan. With the will, bravery, determination and, most importantly, the solidarity of the whole nation as well as the people's consensus with the Party's policy and the Government's activities, Vietnam became well-known throughout the five continents, moving every heart in the world. After the war and during the period of renewal, recovering from war consequences and building the country, the spirit of the national unity continued to be inherited, developed and became the root of Vietnam's power. Thanks to these precious traditions and characteristic, Vietnam has obtained one historical achievement after another after 35 years of reforming and revolution, step by step improves the potential, position and prestige of the country in the world arena.

In Ho Chi Minh's era, his ideology of the Great National Unity was not only a specialty but also the direct guideline in the struggle for national freedom and construction. In the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic nowadays, the great national unity of Ho Chi Minh's ideology has been applied and promoted as the effective solutions by the Vietnamese Party and Government. After General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's and the Government's call for the unity, every Vietnamese citizen with the high spirit of patriotism and responsibility to the community and society has become a soldier; every family, village, hamlet, village, and neighborhood has become a fortress to fight against the epidemic together. All have imbrued the eternal value of Ho Chi Minh's ideology in this struggle.

The successes in the Covid-19 pandemic prevention and control of Vietnam so far have proven the correctness of the anti-epidemic measures of the government and the value of the people's solidarity in Ho Chi Minh's ideology. Without the solidarity of the entire nation, and without the consensus between the people and the government, Vietnam could not have gained such victories with currently weak economic potential and low medical level. The tough battle is still ahead. The epidemic still has many complicated developments with many new outbreaks and the capacity of more fatality rate caused by the highly spreading new strains. Affirming the important role of the power of solidarity, on July 29th, 2021, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong once again had a call on solidarity and consensus to all Vietnamese people nationally and abroad in the epidemic prevention and control. He said, "With the spirit "fighting against the pandemic is like fighting against the enemies", protecting the health and life of the people is the top priority, on behalf of the Party

¹³ <https://www.quyvaxincovid19.gov.vn/>, accessed August 5, 2021

and State leaders, I earnestly appeal to the whole Party, the people, the army and our compatriots abroad: We have tried hard and now try harder; We have united and now united more; We have determined and now to be even more determined; all citizens are one, unites with the Party, Government, all levels and branches. At any cost, we prevent and repel the epidemic from spreading and breaking out in the community¹⁴. The spirit of the great solidarity will be the connection of the whole Vietnamese nation resiliently and persistently to overcome the epidemic. Thanks to that, the spirit of the great national solidarity once again is shining, becoming the motivation for Vietnam to step by step defeat the epidemic with the goal of "leaving no one behind".

On the progress of building a socialist Vietnam, in addition to the Covid-19 pandemic, Vietnam may face many other challenges. However, Vietnamese people always have a strong will and a spirit of solidarity and sharing. Just gathered and aroused, that spirit of solidarity will again become a great power to help Vietnam overcome all difficulties and challenges. The patriotism, the national pride and the great solidarity will be the connection to help the whole Vietnamese nation be continuously resilient and persistent in controlling the Covid-19 epidemic and in making Vietnam a richer and stronger country, a reliable friend and partner, and a responsible member of international friends.

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