



## THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM LED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF COUNTRY REUNIFICATION IN 1972

Nguyen Thi Le Thuy<sup>i</sup>

Vietnam Women's Academy,  
Vietnam

### Abstract:

During the war of resistance against the US, to save the country 21 years of hardship for the Vietnamese people, the year 1972 held a particularly important position, creating a major turning point of the war with decisive victories in both South and North Vietnam, both military, political and diplomatic struggles. Due to the heavy defeat, the US imperialists were forced to return to the negotiating table, sign the Paris Agreement, end the war, and restore peace in Vietnam. With this victory, the Vietnamese army and people fulfilled President Ho Chi Minh's instructions to "*fight for the US to get out*", to "*fight for the puppets to get out*", and to regain independence and reunify the country.

**Keywords:** Communist Party of Vietnam; leadership; the possibility of peace; reunification; Vietnam war

### 1. Introduction

The historic victory of Road 9 - Southern Laos in 1971 was a great and comprehensive victory, defeating a fundamental step in the US imperialist's strategy of Vietnamization and the Indochina war, contributing to changing the situation. war in all three countries on the Indochina peninsula. The US imperialists were forced to take a step back, from actively opening offensive operations on the battlefields of the three countries of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, they had to retreat to maintain a strategic and campaign defensive posture, and passively resist the offensive of the Vietnamese army and people. The landscape of the battlefield changed rapidly. On the basis of analyzing and properly assessing the situation, plots and new tricks of the US imperialists, the Communist Party of Vietnam decided to adjust the plan of conducting a strategic offensive in 1972 throughout the South in order to lead the implementation of the possibility of peaceful reunification of the country.

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence email: [thuyntl@vwa.edu.vn](mailto:thuyntl@vwa.edu.vn)

## 2. Historical circumstances

In the two years 1970-1971, the US imperialists devoted themselves to implementing the Nixon Doctrine by building a strong Saigon army capable of serving as the core for the implementation of the strategy of Vietnamization of the war, pacifying the South and Laos, in order to destroy the main block of the Liberation Army, destroy the “*holy land of the Viet Cong*”, encircle, isolate and suffocate the revolutionary movement in the South. However, the main force of the Saigon army was destroyed on road 9 - Southern Laos and Northeast Cambodia, the Saigon army lost the battle, and the fighting spirit was low, which greatly affected the efforts to implement the special pacification plan, the program of community self-defense and rural development by the Saigon government and the US Embassy and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The US strategy of the Vietnamization of the war was pushed back by a fundamental step.

Meanwhile, in the US, US social classes continued to promote activities against the war of the Nixon administration and demand the withdrawal of US troops from the Vietnam War. The US people lost faith and were deeply opposed to the government. The movement weakened America's rear and America as a whole, and harmed US's global strategy. The anti-war movement in the US created a deep and constant crisis in the heart of the US. The US must shift its strategy from escalation to de-escalation and sit at the negotiating table with Vietnam. The anti-war movement of the US people gave great political and spiritual support to the Vietnamese revolution.

Failing to win on the battlefield and at the Paris Conference, the US imperialists used cunning shuttle diplomacy to entice the Soviet Union, China, and limit the assistance of the socialist countries to the resistance war of Vietnam, isolate Vietnam and use the Soviet Union and China to force Vietnam at the Paris negotiations. However, the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries all supported the Vietnamese people's cause of resistance against the US, both spiritually and materially. Tens of thousands of tons of weapons, hundreds of thousands of tons of food and medicine from the Soviet Union and China were transported to Vietnam, making an important contribution to the Vietnamese people to maintain and strengthen their military potential and resistance power.

With the comprehensive victories of the Vietnamese army and people on the military, political, diplomatic and anti-pacification fronts, the US imperialists had to take a step back and continue to gradually withdraw US troops back home. But they still stubbornly tried to find ways to maintain Nguyen Van Thieu's government to continue implementing the strategy of Vietnamization of the war, ensuring the US “*drawn out in victory*”, “*drawn out with honor*”.

### **3. Perception of the Communist Party of Vietnam on realizing the possibility of country reunification in 1972**

From the basic development of the situation and the comparison of forces between Vietnam and the US and the Saigon government in the South, especially after the victory in the spring campaigns in 1971, the Communist Party of Vietnam commented: *“We are in a winning position, an advantageous position, an upward position. We are holding the initiative on the battlefield. The enemy is in a losing position, a difficult position, a downward position, conflicts within the US and Saigon governments is getting deeper and deeper”*. This is a favorable condition, a basis for the Party to continue to assess the possibility of peace for the revolution: *“The fact that the US has to withdraw more troops by the end of this year and the US presidential election in 1972, those events coincide. The international situation is also favorable for us, which opens up the prospect of greater victory for us in the coming year”*. A new opportunity to bring the revolution forward to a decisive victory has appeared. Assessing the possibilities and developments of the situation, right from May 1971, the Politburo Conference closely assessed the actual situation on the battlefield and the plots of the US and the Saigon government. A strategic opportunity was emerging, making a policy to take advantage of and promote the opportunity, and prepare all aspects for the 1972 strategic offensive.

Entering 1972, the year of the US presidential election, a sensitive year in US politics, during the opening of negotiations, the Communist Party of Vietnam was rightly aware of the opportunity and proposed appropriate measures to preserve forces, restore posture, restore bases, create footholds, and resolve to launch a political and diplomatic strategic offensive. The Party commented: *“We have the advantage of victory, the initiative and the advantage of going up, although there are still fundamental difficulties and weaknesses that must be overcome”*. Meanwhile *“The enemy is in a losing position, a passive position, a difficult position, although they still have a lot of forces and have temporary strong points”*. Thus, in terms of military forces in the South and Indochina: Our army is much stronger than the enemy in all aspects, takes the initiative on the battlefield and is in a favorable strategic position, always under siege. The enemy army is in a passive position and we are winning big, all-round, and the power and position are increasing. Although we have not completely defeated the Saigon main army, we have created a strategic opportunity that allows us to step up our subjective efforts and deals a drastic blow to the will of the US imperialists.

Along with that, the US was condemned at the Paris Conference as a *“speaker of peace, but acts of war”*. The whole US is at a hot moment in the presidential election campaign. Therefore, the Communist Party of Vietnam considers this a favorable new opportunity for the Vietnamese revolution. A new opportunity to move the revolution forward has appeared. On that basis, the Party promptly launched a strategic offensive throughout the South in order to greatly annihilate the enemy, expand the liberated area, and contribute to changing the comparison of forces and changing the situation of the war in the South.

Based on the assessment of the enemy's situation and plots, the 20th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (February 1972), commented: *"The resistance war against the can develop under two possibilities. The first possibility: we won, the enemy suffered heavy defeats and faced many difficulties on the battlefield as well as in the US and around the world, internal conflicts within the US empire and its minions developed seriously, and the Nixon Corporation tried to win the presidential election again, finding that if the war dragged on, the defeat would be worse. In that situation, the US imperialists were forced to end the war with a political solution proposed by us that they could accept. Our people's revolutionary struggle has entered a new phase. It should be emphasized that, even in the condition that the first possibility becomes a reality, the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people and the people of Laos and Cambodia will continue. It was a long and complicated struggle until the task of the people's democratic national revolution was completed. The second possibility: the Nixon group still tried to implement the "Vietnamization of the war" and the Nixon doctrine in Indochina, solving the Vietnam problem on the basis of military victory. We have not basically defeated the strategy of "Vietnamization of the war", the enemy has not suffered a heavy loss, but can still overcome the immediate difficulties. The war continued. In this case, Nixon could still be elected and continue the current plots. It is also possible that the Nixon administration was overthrown and another one took over. How the situation developed depended on the efforts of the two sides, mainly because of the resistance war of the Vietnamese people and the people of Laos and Cambodia. We must be prepared for both of these possibilities. What is certain is that no matter what the political situation in the US is to come, in their war of aggression, the US imperialists cannot escape defeat. Our people's resistance war will definitely be won."*

In October 1972, based on military victories on the battlefield and the situation in the US before the election, the Communist Party of Vietnam advocated issuing a draft Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam (October 8, 1972) with some concessions to speed all US troops out of South Vietnam. The Party understands that, at this point, the US wants to end this costly war, withdraw all its troops in order to gain votes in the presidential election so that Nixon can be re-elected, the US must make concessions. Moreover, the Party also clearly saw that the US did not want to sign an agreement to end the war before the presidential election. Because the US wanted to hit the military to force Vietnam to make concessions and negotiations were only used by Nixon for the purpose of his election campaign. Faced with that situation, the Politburo of the Party Central Committee instructed the negotiating team in Paris: Take advantage of the war to end the war before the election in the US, force the US to sign an official agreement with a ceasefire, withdraw troops, and release prisoners. To do so, we need to be proactive about requirements, solutions, content, timing, signing, and negotiation.

However, contrary to the agreement committed by the US, Nixon in the days before and after his re-election as President (November 8, 1972) overturned and delayed the signing of the agreement to pass the election and proposed to amend the basic provisions of the draft agreement already agreed. Moreover, in order to force Vietnam to submit and accept the new conditions set forth by the US at the negotiating table, the US ruling group ordered to launch a strategic air raid, using a large air force and tactical

troops to massively attack Hanoi, Hai Phong and many other places in the North in the last days of 1972.

The Party soon predicted the US overthrow, so from October 1972, it directed the North to urgently prepare plans to deal with the US conspiracy after the election. The Party led the army and people of the North to defeat the strategic air raid by B-52 aircraft, along with the close coordination of “*fight and negotiation*”, failed to negotiate on the strength of the US forced the US to accept the signing of the Paris Agreement on January 27, 1973.

### **3. Policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 1972**

The military and political situation on the Indochinese peninsula, especially in South Vietnam, changed rapidly - especially the decline of the Saigon army and the victorious atmosphere of the Vietnamese army and people brought about great advantages and overcame difficulties. In early 1972, the 20th Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam assessed that in general, we are in a winning position. Initiatives and advantages despite difficulties to overcome. Con the contrary, the US is in a losing position, a passive position, a difficult position. 1972 was a very important year in the struggle between Vietnam and the US in all three aspects, politically, militarily and diplomatically. Comparing forces and strategic position is increasingly beneficial to Vietnam when the US has withdrawn about 400,000 troops. The strategy of “Vietnamization of war” has gone bankrupt an important step. Vietnam was facing a favorable opportunity to bring the resistance war forward strongly. The conference proposed: “*The urgent task of the entire Party, army and people in the current period is to persevere in the resistance war until complete victory, to mobilize all efforts, to make outstanding efforts, bravely advance to promote the resistance; unite and coordinate closely with the Laotian army and people, the Cambodian army and people*”.

In March 1972, the Politburo of Vietnam advocated launching a general offensive on military, political and diplomatic fronts to defeat the US imperialist policy of “Vietnamization of war”. The Politburo emphasized: “*Diplomatic struggle must also closely coordinate with the implementation of our strategic determination on the battlefield and determine close steps. The battlefield is where victory is decided. On the basis of the victories on the battlefield, we successfully ended the issue on the negotiating table*”. Therefore, the Vietnamese army and people must grasp the new opportunities and capabilities of the offensive and have high determination to win the decisive victory in 1972.

In the face of the rapid change of the situation caused by the general situation after the spring-summer 1972 victory of the Vietnamese army and people throughout the southern battlefield and in the international context in which the trend of reconciliation between countries was being pushed forward, the Communist Party of Vietnam saw that the possibility of ending the war in a solution that met our requirements was opening up, allowing Vietnam to “*shift from a strategy of war to a strategy of peace*”. In late June and early July 1972, the Politburo decided: “*Promoting victory on the battlefield, exploiting difficulties*

*from within the US, forcing the US government to accept a solution to end the war. Our army and people won an important victory and achieved the goal of "beating America out" so that the revolution could continue to move into a new stage of struggle - the stage of progressing to complete victory".*

The comparison of forces on the battlefield continued to change in favor of the Vietnamese army and people. Therefore, the Communist Party of Vietnam advocated: *"We need to force the US to go in to solve the problems posed for an agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam"*. Vietnam continued to promote the struggle on the military, political, and diplomatic fronts, and closely and rhythmically combined those three struggles, in order to take advantage of the possibility of forcing the US to sign an agreement before the open presidential election in the US. At the same time, Vietnam was ready to deal with the situation that the battle continued to drag on.

In September 1972, the Politburo and the Central Military Commission advocated launching a movement to win peace, step up a political struggle and military mobilization, and take advantage of the opportunity to push to the revolutionary climax in enemy areas. At the same time, Vietnam analyzed that *"fighting for peace is not only a necessary slogan in the immediate future to call on the masses in the enemy area to unite and fight, demanding that the US and Thieu end their war of crimes, but also is the top task of the people of the South during the transition period to come, prevent and crush all US plots - pretending to provoke aggression again"*. Having suffered heavy defeats both militarily and politically in South and North Vietnam, the US imperialists were finally forced to return to negotiations and sign the Paris Agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Firmly grasping the motto of *"fighting and negotiating"* to pull the US *"down the ladder"*, and win step by step towards complete victory, in 1972, the Communist Party of Vietnam led the Vietnamese army and people to win great victories on the political, military and diplomatic fronts, forcing the US to sign the Paris Agreement. This is an important milestone that determines the inevitable development trend of the South Vietnamese revolution, marking a very glorious revolutionary period for the nation, opening the southern revolution as a turning point. That is the realization of peace and reunification of the country.

#### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

#### **About the Author**

Nguyen Thi Le Thuy is currently working at Vietnam Women's Academy, Vietnam. She is doing research on the communist party of Vietnam's leadership on the country reunification.

## References

- Communist Party of Vietnam (2004). *Complete Party Document, Volume 33 (1972)*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Communist Party of Vietnam (2012). *Party Document on Anti-US and National Salvation, Volume 2 (1966-1975)*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Le Duan (2014). *Letter to the South*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi.
- Vietnam Military History Institute (2015). *History of the resistance war against the US, for national salvation 1954-1975, volume VI, VII*, National Politics Publishing House, Hanoi.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Social Sciences Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)