



DIPLOMATIC STRUGGLE FOR MAINTAINING THE REVOLUTION AND STRENGTHENING THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN VIETNAM FROM SEPTEMBER 1945 TO THE 1946 PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT

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Abstract:

After the successful August 1945 Revolution in Vietnam, the imperialist forces and reactionary henchmen in Vietnam conspired together to attempt to overthrow the newly established revolutionary government and destroy the achievements of the Vietnamese revolution. In this extremely dangerous situation, relying on the revolutionary momentum and strength of the newly liberated nation, the diplomatic struggle was soon deployed with clever and flexible strategies and measures that contributed to an important part in creating a temporary pause in order to maintain and strengthen the revolutionary government and to take advantage of preparing the strength for the national resistance war. The article focuses on clarifying the process of peaceful diplomatic struggle with Chiang Kai-shek's army in North Vietnam and stepping up the resistance against the French colonialists' re-invasion in South Vietnam by the Indochinese Communist Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The process of diplomatic struggle was deferred with France, coming to a preliminary agreement on March 6, 1946, pushing Chiang Kai-shek's army out of Vietnam.

Keywords: Indochinese Communist Party, diplomatic struggle, Chiang Kai-shek, French colonialist, North Vietnam, South Vietnam

1. Peaceful diplomatic struggle with Chiang Kai-shek's army in the North and stepping up the resistance against the French colonialists' re-invasion in South Vietnam

Before launching the General Uprising to seize power in August 1945, the National Conference of the Indochinese Communist Party met and set out the right policy of diplomatic struggle in case the imperialist countries of the Allied faction pull troops into Indochina: "*The conflict between the allied countries on the Indochina issue is something we need*

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to take advantage of"; "Britain and America made concessions to France and let France return to Indochina"; "Our policy is to avoid the case in which we have to deal with many Allied forces (Chiang Kai-shek, French, British, American troops) flooding into Vietnam"; "against the plot of the French to restore the old position in Indochina and the scheme of some warlords of China to occupy Vietnam"; "For the weak countries and the people of Chiang Kai-shek and France, we must contact and enlist their help" [1]. Regarding the basis for diplomatic struggle, the Indochinese Communist Party also pointed out: "after all, only our strength can determine the victory of us and the Allies" [1].

The policy of diplomatic struggle on the basis of the above correct judgments of the Indochinese Communist Party has really contributed to bringing the Vietnamese revolutionary boat out of the country's dangerous and difficult situations.

In fact, in September 1945, the imperialist countries in the name of winning allied troops rushed into Vietnam. Specifically, in the south of Vietnam, the British imperial army arrived in the name of stripping. However, the British army actually wanted to help the French carry out the plot to retake Vietnam. In the North of Vietnam, Chiang Kai-shek's army pulled in also on behalf of the Allies to disarm the Japanese fascist army, but when entering Vietnam, Chiang Kai-shek's army set three goals: to destroy the Party, destroy the Viet Minh and help Vietnamese reactionaries to overthrow the people's government to set up a reactionary government as their henchmen. Meanwhile, the revolutionary government was just born, therefore, the armed forces to protect the government are not strong enough. The domestic economy was exhausted, accompanied by a famine that occurred at the end of 1944, killing more than 2 million compatriots in North Vietnam. Besides, 9 provinces of North Vietnam were flooded. Therefore, the vital issue at this time is to make quick decisions, to use all methods, including "painful" methods, to save the situation and maintain the people's revolutionary government.

Chiang Kai-shek's army pulled into the North of the 16th parallel of Vietnam with the intention of annexing Vietnam, making many unreasonable claims and trying to help domestic counter-revolutionaries to overthrow the current government. However, when entering Vietnam, Chiang Kai-shek's army encountered many internal difficulties. The henchmen were brought back to Vietnam with a small force, no basis among the people, no prestige among the people, and no access to people's support. Moreover, more than twenty thousand Chiang Kai-shek troops in the North, although very domineering and dangerous, were actually a corrupt and weak army. Meanwhile, Chiang Kai-shek's army witnessed first-hand the unity of the Vietnamese people around the Indochinese Communist Party and President Ho Chi Minh's government, but Chiang Kai-shek's army still had to make peace with the government of President Ho Chi Minh.

On the revolutionary side, while making peace with Chiang Kai-shek's army, Vietnam concentrated its fighting forces on the main enemy. The French colonialists were opening fire to invade the South, the country avoided fighting with many enemies. Therefore, as soon as Chiang Kai-shek's army pulled into Hanoi, as President of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Minister of Foreign Affairs, President Ho Chi Minh met Tieu Van (Commander cum Deputy Commander of

Chiang Kai-shek's army in Vietnam). President Ho Chi Minh promised Tieu Van that he was willing to accept parties to join the government and ensured cooperation with China. This diplomatic contact between President Ho Chi Minh and Tieu Van on September 18, 1945 not only caused the enemy a certain illusion, but this contact also had important effects that French historian Philippe Devillers said. President Ho met Tieu Van immediately and reached peace with the Chinese army, stopping the first step of Chiang Kai-shek's plot to overthrow the Provisional Government, which made the Viet Quoc and Viet Cach bewildered [2].

To support the peaceful diplomatic struggle with Chiang Kai-shek's army, when Ha Ung Kham (Chief of the General Staff of Chiang Kai-shek's army) and American General McLure arrived in Hanoi (October 2, 1945), the Government immediately organized a rally of nearly 30,000 people to join the ostensibly to welcome the US - Chiang Allied mission, but in fact to show the people's revolutionary forces in support of the revolutionary government and the government of President Ho Chi Minh. This forced Ha Ung Kham and the American Allies to maintain a peaceful attitude towards the revolutionary government, the meetings of President Ho Chi Minh and the representative of the revolutionary government with General Luu Han (commander of Chiang Kai-shek's army in Vietnam), causing Luu Han to respect the Vietnamese Revolutionary Government and act less aggressively (unlike when he first pulled troops into Vietnam). Regarding the abduction, sabotage, bossy and extortion actions of Chiang Kai-shek's army in Vietnam, especially in Hanoi, the Indochinese Communist Party advocated *"to avoid provocations as much as possible, not to have a conflict with the Chinese army. If there is to be a conflict, it is necessary to turn a large conflict into a small conflict, turn a small conflict into a non-conflict"*. Despite the policy of avoiding provocations, the Indochinese Communist Party also actively mobilized mass forces to fight to expose the face of reactionaries of the Viet Quoc Dan Dang and the Vietnamese Revolutionary Allies and took advantage of the time to use the police force and the army to punish or arrest a number of reactionary and dangerous Vietnamese crooks. This made Chiang Kai-shek's army gradually realize the fact that the more they use henchmen to sabotage the revolution and overthrow the government, the more the Vietnamese people resist. President Ho Chi Minh commented on this peaceful diplomatic struggle: *"Our Democratic Republic of Vietnam is very new, everything is new, diplomacy is even more new... at that time, Chiang Kai-shek sent his army. He went on to say "Ho Chi Minh's ten great sins", then demanded that Ho Chi Minh be abolished, destroyed the Indochinese Communist Party, and replaced by the revolutionary Vietnamese reactionary group, the Nguyen Hai Than Association. But then, when they went down the streets and towns, there were red flags with yellow stars everywhere. They clearly see that the people support the Party and the Government, but their dark intentions are still there. We understand their weakness is that they are greedy for money without us losing a single penny. How could President Ho Chi Minh not say that this was a diplomatic secret, in the end they abandoned Nguyen Hai Tha. At that time, there was also Huynh Thuc Khang as Minister of the Interior, they had to meet Lu Han stationed at the Presidential Palace. He taught and talked for an hour,*

on the face of criticism... President Ho Chi Minh and Huynh Thuc Khang were silent, didn't say anything. When he left, Mr. Huynh said, "*I can't stand it anymore, just go ahead and do what we want*"... President Ho Chi Minh had to tell him privately: "*now in Vietnam, we had 200,000 troops of the Chinese Nationalist Party, and some Vietnamese nationalists are ready to rob the government, need to take advantage of time to consolidate the government, and then see what happens next*" [4].

Faced with the tricks of the Viet Cach and Viet Quoc reactionaries, they accused the Vietnamese Revolutionary Government of refusing to reform the government, accusing the Vietnamese government of "red terror" and "Communist dictatorship". To deal with the tricks of these reactionary groups, the Indochinese Communist Party and the Vietnamese government advocated sending people into reform, relying on a few progressive figures to isolate the Viet Cach leaders. On October 23, 1945, Viet Minh and Viet Cach (reformed) agreed to unite to support Ho Chi Minh's government, fight for national independence, and oppose colonialism. The reformed Viet Cach Association reversed the position of the Tuong army in Vietnam, and at the same time destroyed the reactionary Viet Cach organization from within. On November 11, 1945, the Indochinese Communist Party announced its self-dissolution, but actually withdrew into secret activities to protect the Party and ensure the Party's leadership during the ongoing struggle between Vietnam and hostile forces, breaking the enemy's tricks to proclaim the Communist nature of the revolutionary government. On December 22, 1945, the Vietnamese government announced that it would give Viet Cach and Viet Quoc 70 unelected seats in the National Assembly out of 350 seats. On January 1, 1946, a provisional coalition government was established. On January 6, 1946, the National Assembly won the General Election. Thus, those clever, condescending, but resolute measures stopped the malign intentions, overthrowing the government of the army of Chiang Kai-shek and Henchmen, and at the same time causing a rift in the relationship between France and Chiang Mai in financial and monetary terms, causing partial damage to France, while the Chiang army competed to sell weapons to the Viet Minh to make money by their own way.

The peaceful struggles with Chiang Kai-shek's army in North Vietnam gave the Revolutionary Government a precious leeway to build up the people's political and armed forces, sending units of the South Vietnamese army to the front, preventing the invasion of the French colonialists in the South and the southernmost part of Central Vietnam.

On November 25, 1945, the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party issued the Directive "*resistance to build the nation*", setting out the tasks of comprehensive struggle for the army and people of the whole country. The Directive emphasized persevering in the policy of diplomacy with other countries on the principle of "*equality and mutual assistance*", paying special attention to these things: "*First, diplomacy is to make one's country least enemies and most allies; Second, if we want diplomacy to succeed, we must show your strength*" [5].

During the period from September 1945 to February 1946, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had a number of diplomatic activities with other countries in order to win international opinion, enlist support or affection for the independence of Vietnam and research and probe the state of the countries on the issue of Vietnam and Indochina. On October 17, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh had a conversation with US President Truman asking Vietnam to join the United Nations' Far East Advisory Council and protested against France representing Indochina at this council. On October 22, 1945, the Vietnamese Government sent a note to the United States Department of State accusing France of violating the Atlantic Charter and the Resolution of the San Francisco Conference. Ho Chi Minh sent telegrams to the leaders of the Soviet Union, the US, the Republic of China, Britain, the President of the United Nations Council (January 15, 1946) and a letter to the President of the US (February 27, 1946) requested other countries to recognize and support Vietnam's independence and apply to join the United Nations [6]. It can be seen that domestic and foreign policies that are suitable for the people and circumstances have created the ability to add friends and reduce enemies, create the legal basis and strength of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to cope with the ferocious forces of Chiang Kai-shek and the French colonialists.

In order to continue the ambition to dominate Vietnam, the French colonialists on the one hand stepped up their aggression in the South and South Central of Vietnam, ignoring the negotiations on October 2, 1945 with the Provisional Government of Vietnam in the South. At the same time, they tried to contact the reactionaries to prepare to send troops to invade North Vietnam. The French representative met with Nguyen Hai Than twice (October 12 and 15, 1946) and assessed him as an incompetent, powerless and incapable character. The French representative asked to meet Vinh Thuy twice, both times Vinh Thuy (Bao Dai) avoided meeting. The French representatives had to draw the following conclusion: "*It is clear evidence that France wants to negotiate, they can only negotiate with President Ho Chi Minh who has the foresight and direct all its efforts on the path of peace. If the political problem is solved, it can only be solved with the Viet Minh, which is the mainstay of a new policy towards France*" [7].

At the end of February 1946, the French colonialists wanted to pacify and consolidate the occupied areas in the South, and at the same time advance to the North. However, in order to pour troops into North Vietnam, the French expected to need an expeditionary army of 350,000 people. That's something that an exhausted France after the second world war can hardly do. If the army invaded North Vietnam, the French would surely be resisted by resistance forces much stronger than the forces they encountered in the South.

The peaceful diplomatic activities of Vietnam with the Chiang in the North caused the French to doubt the role of the Chiang army and it was possible that when they sent their troops out, the French would confront the Chiang army. Finally, the French colonialists carried out a number of measures at the same time. On the one hand, they compromised with the Chiang forces to avoid a collision with the Chiang troops in the North of Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. On the other hand, they tried to

send troops to the North to gradually put military pressure on the Government from the end of February 1946. Faced with that situation, the Party and Government of Vietnam advocated entering a new phase of diplomatic struggle, which was the struggle to come to peace with the French colonialists, to push the entire Chiang army out of Vietnam.

2. Peaceful diplomatic struggle with France, reaching a preliminary agreement on March 6, 1946 and pushing the Chiang army out of Vietnam

With the Sino–French accords signed on February 28, 1946 in Chongqing, the purchase between Chiang and France reached a price point. France agreed to return to Chiang the concessions in Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou, and Guangzhou, return leased land in Guangzhouwan and sell the Yunnan railway line. Besides, Hai Phong would be a free port, free of tax on goods for Chiang and France bribed Chiang with a large amount of money. In exchange for that benefit, Chiang also agreed to allow the French to send troops to replace Chiang in the North during the period from March 1-15, 1946, at the latest March 31, 1946. After the treaty had just been signed, General Salan immediately returned to Hanoi to prepare for the French army's return to North Vietnam. On March 1, 1946, Leclec ordered to put paratroopers on alert and the French fleet pulled troops to North Vietnam.

Thus, the Sino–French Accords signed between the French representative and Chiang Kai-shek's government was essentially an exchange of benefits with each other on the backs of the Vietnamese people without regard to the sovereign rights and independence of the Vietnamese people. That situation put the Vietnamese revolution in front of an urgent predicament in which the two enemies, Chiang and the French, had colluded with each other to in a new plot against Vietnam. Domestic reactionaries with dark intentions coordinated psychological warfare with France very closely. That situation put the Indochinese Communist Party in front of a choice of fighting or withdrawing. On March 3, 1946, the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party met and commented: "*The Sino-French Accords of February 28, 1946 proves that in order to save the common interests of the empire, against the proletarian revolutionary movement and the colonial revolution of Britain, France, the US, and Chiang temporarily put an end to internal conflicts in Indochina...whether the Indochinese people wanted it or not, they would certainly implement that treaty*" [8]. Analyzing the situation, President Ho Chi Minh and the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indochina decided to choose a conciliatory solution because they were aware that the problem at this moment is not whether they wanted to or did not want to fight. The problem is knowing yourself, knowing people, objectively assessing the conditions of domestic and foreign profits and making the right policy. It can be seen that the Indochinese Communist Party's policy of diplomatic struggle and reconciliation with the French colonialists has two great benefits. "*It could destroy the intrigues of the white Chinese and the fascists to preserve the strength. It brought a break to prepare for a new battle and coordinate with the struggles of the French people, towards achieving complete independence*" [9].

At the same time, the Indochinese Communist Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are also of the same opinion: while expanding negotiations with France, we must do our best to promote that preparation and determined not to let negotiations with France dampen the spirit of the nation's determination to fight.

On March 5, 1946, negotiations between Vietnam and France still revolved around two major issues, namely independence and territorial integrity. "Independence" for Vietnam was unacceptable to France because they were afraid to recognize Vietnam's independence, then all French colonies would follow Vietnam's example to demand independence immediately, which would cause a chain reaction in French colonies. Therefore, France only wanted to acknowledge "self-reliance", restraining Vietnam within a certain framework of colonialism. The Vietnamese government reaffirmed the principled position that gives it a total solution: France must recognize Vietnam's independence and territorial integrity. But on March 5, 1946, France only recognized Vietnam as a country with its own government, parliament, army and finances. According to the British newspaper Manchester Guardian, on March 12, 1946, *"with the preliminary agreement of March 6, 1946, one can see the wisdom and foresight of the parties involved"* [10]. The British newspaper Economic of May 11, 1946 commented, *"the French were lucky, but they were also not commended for their grasp of the difficult reality of their situation after the surrender of Japan. They had to humble themselves before the obvious fact that the nationalism of the Vietnamese people never died, so they negotiated with the Government of Vietnam, chaired by Ho Chi Minh"*. [10]

The signing and implementation of the Preliminary Agreement on March 6, 1945, brought the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese from an armed struggle against the French colonialists to a political and diplomatic struggle to maintain the fragile but very precious peace and quickly fight to push Chiang Kai-shek's army out of the North and prolong amicable relations with the French colonialists to strengthen the government and build up a basic force in all aspects. On March 9, 1946, the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Indochinese Communist Party issued the Directive *"make peace to advance"* which determined: *"The country is facing difficult steps, but the revolutionary boat is gliding over the cliffs to surf. We "make peace" with the French to gain time, preserve our strength, maintain our stance, and quickly move towards complete independence"* [11]. Choosing to negotiate with France was aimed to force Chiang Kai-shek's army to immediately withdraw from the country, to avoid having to confront many enemies at once, to preserve its strength, take advantage of the time to prepare for a new battle and advance to win.

Thus, the Sino-French Accords of February 28, 1946 and the Preliminary Agreement of March 6, 1946 ended the role of Chiang Kai-shek's forces in Indochina legally according to the decision of the Potsdam Conference. When the French army entered North Vietnam, there were some sporadic clashes between Chiang and French troops. But the game of power in Indochina had changed, which meant that Chiang's forces no longer acted as a counterweight to the French forces.

3. Some comments

The historical reality of the diplomatic struggle from September 1945 to the time the Preliminary Agreement was signed on March 6, 1946 in order to maintain and strengthen the revolutionary government, prolong the time to prepare for the resistance war of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Indochinese Communist Party was a process of arduous struggle with the strategy of trying to take advantage of the contradictions in the enemy's ranks to temporarily suspend and focus on spearheading the war. During the struggle against the main enemy, the French colonialists, the diplomatic struggle created conditions for the effective implementation of the art of fighting and negotiating, knowing how to win step by step correctly, specifically:

Firstly, in the situation of having to fight against many strong opponents and at the same time, there were conflicts of interest in the enemy's ranks, taking advantage of contradictions is a matter of strategic significance for the revolution. The meeting of cadres of the Indochinese Communist Party, from 10 to 11 September, 1945, stated a number of diplomatic undertakings: *"resolutely oppose the French De Gaulle's plot to retake Indochina; enlist the US to recognize Vietnam's complete independence and "reconcile with us""; "avoid military conflicts but only political conflicts" with China Chiang Kai-shek; "Japan's neutral attitude is in favor of Vietnam...they have completely changed their attitude towards Vietnam, they were no longer enemies of Vietnam, so we had to use them even more to our advantage"* [12]. The resolution of the Conference emphasized the exploitation of contradictions in the enemy's ranks.

Second, the Revolutionary Government and the Indochinese Communist Party used Chiang Kai-shek's forces present in Vietnam as a counterweight to the forces of the French colonialists, to restrain the policy of the Paris government to restore control of Indochina. At the same time, taking advantage of the bitter conflicts between the generals of Chiang Kai-shek and the French colonialists in Vietnam, the Government exploited the disagreements between these two forces on specific issues in Vietnam.

Third, the Vietnamese government's pacification and restraint of Chiang Kai-shek's forces in Vietnam gave North Vietnam a relatively stable period to carry out the policy of resistance war, national construction, building and strengthening the people's government, and at the same time defeating Chiang Kai-shek's deep intentions to establish a henchman government in Vietnam. Moreover, the Vietnamese government's clever use of the conflict between Chiang - the US and France contributed to slowing the French expeditionary army to North Vietnam and creating conditions for the resistance war of the South Vietnamese compatriots.

Fourth, the Vietnamese government cleverly took advantage of the disagreements between Leclerc, J. Sainteny and the war-democratic colonialists in Indochina, typically D'Argenlieu, Valluy, Pignon is strongly supported by General De Gaulle. However, on January 21, 1946, General De Gaulle left the government in Paris and on February 20, 1946, the Inter-ministerial Council on Indochina of the French Government agreed to

negotiate with the Government of Vietnam on a solution to send French troops into North Vietnam to replace Chiang Kai-shek's army.

Fifth, the signing of the Preliminary Agreement on March 6, 1946, deepened the conflict between French High Commissioner D'Argenlieu and French military commander Leclerc. High Commissioner D'Argenlieu criticized Leclerc for "*just preferring to negotiate and not want to fight*", while Political Advisor to the French High Commissioner L. Pignon commented on the French side that the Agreement was drawn up "hastily"[13]. After the contact between President Ho Chi Minh and D'Argenlieu on Ha Long Bay, the disagreement between the High Commissioner and the French Commander had developed to the point of being irreconcilable. D'Argenlieu succeeded in persuading Paris to transfer Leclerc from Indochina.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

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6. All 8 times President Ho Chi Minh sent letters, telegrams, messages and notes to the US Government, however, they were marked by the US State Department as "not responding" to avoid an official relationship with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. At this time, the US needed to enlist France to make an alliance against the Soviet Union, and to enlist Chiang Kai-shek to seize China, and urged Chiang to negotiate with France on the issues of Vietnam and Indochina.

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