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PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH AND THE GREAT SOVIET UNION

Abstract: Nguyen Ai Quoc (another name of President Ho Chi Minh) is determined to follow Vladimir Lenin's path and stick with the country and people of the Soviet Union thanks to his outstanding wisdom and intense practical knowledge in his journey for a way to national liberation. In this article, the author emphasizes Ho Chi Minh's profound and valuable sentiments for Vladimir Lenin's country and the October Revolution. Moreover, the writer also shows President Ho's role in forging the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh, Russia, Soviet Union, October Revolution, Vietnam - Soviet relations

Ho Chi Minh is considered the politician who has traveled the most globally with an extensive understanding of many regimes ranging from colonialism and feudalism to capitalism and socialism in the twentieth century. However, Soviet Russia is still a “training place for revolutionary thinking” in his life and revolutionary career. This country plays a decisive role in building an eminent thinker - an outstanding leader of Vietnam. He not only commits heartfelt affection to the country and people of the Soviet Union but also establishes the historical relationship between the two countries, following the custom, that is, “when you eat a fruit, think of the man who planted the tree.” The ups and downs of history have proved this relationship's sustainability.

The consecutive failures in the national liberation movement of his predecessors prompted Nguyen Tat Thanh (another name of President Ho Chi Minh)

to decide to go to the West to seek a new path to save the country. However, it was not easy for him to find a reasonable and timely way to gain success. In the early 20th century, many well-known patriots in Paris, such as Phan Chu Trinh, Phan Van Trinh, Nguyen Tha Tien, and Nguyen An Ninh, were better educated, had higher degrees, and had better French than him, but in the end, the young man, Nguyen Ai Quoc, who “unknew about the party, the trade union, the difference between socialism and communism” [11, p. 583] gained access to the truth of the times. This event proves that although knowledge is fundamental, the way of thinking, sensitivity to the times, the cognitive ability of the laws of motion of history to act appropriately are more crucial. He succeeded in finding the way to national liberation because he recognized the nature of the new era, the transition from capitalism to socialism, and actively placed the national liberation revolution in Viet Nam into the “practice” of the proletarian revolution.

In the history of humankind, a new era opened by the October revolution is an objective rule. However, it’s obligatory to have a “signpost” to be properly aware of it. Nguyen Ai Quoc cannot find a new direction to end the crisis of national salvation in Vietnam unless there is the transcendent idea of Marxism-Leninism, the October Revolution, and the Third International. Without the Soviet Union, a strong base for peace, and the “future” of the socialist countries, the resistance struggle of the Vietnamese will lose tremendous support. Like “a port in a storm” [8, p.173.], Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh gives the great Soviet Union the warmest and most sincere feelings.

1. Ho Chi Minh emphasized the importance of the October Revolution and affirmed the indispensable role of Vladimir Lenin and the Soviet Union for humankind and Vietnam.

With the comparative method and considerable attention to the poor, Nguyen Ai Quoc recognized the incompleteness of the bourgeois revolution and knew that: “In the current world, only the Russian Revolution has succeeded literally. It means that the people can enjoy true happiness, freedom, and justice, not the false ones like the French imperialism shows off in Annam” [6, p. 304]. After mastering the “truth

value” of the glorious revolution, the topic of the October Revolution was mentioned many times in his works. He emphasized the importance of the October Revolution from a variety of perspectives in his articles, such as Russian Revolution and Colonial Peoples (1924), The October Revolution, and the liberation of the Eastern nations (1957), The Great October Revolution opened the way for national liberation (1967). The October Revolution created a new era in human history - the transition from capitalism to socialism globally. In addition, it was like a “thunderbolt,” making colonial peoples awake and building the era of anti-imperialism for national liberation. For the Vietnamese revolution, he affirmed: “The Vietnamese cannot complete their August Revolution without the heroic October Revolution” [8, p.12.]. Understanding the comprehensive and substantial influence of the October Revolution on human history in general and the Vietnamese revolution in particular, he praised it with the most fervent words: “The October Revolution is like the Sun, shining on five continents and awakening millions of the oppressed and exploited in the world. It is the first revolution of numerous and dominant significance in human history” [11, p. 387].

Human resources are considered the subject and driving force of the revolution, so the stature of the revolution represents the leader’s one. Moreover, the influence of Leninism has spread beyond Russia and become the ideology and theoretical weapon of working-class and working people in the world. Therefore, praising Vladimir Lenin and defending Leninism is his consistent view. With the motto of “The revolutionaries must uphold the doctrine they have enlightened to,” he has shown absolute loyalty to Leninism throughout his life. He said that when he was in France, although he did not know enough French to express his opinions, he “rejected the opinions against Vladimir Lenin and the Communist International” [9. p. 562.]. He affirmed that Leninism, a revolutionary doctrine, was the most genuine in the world. He especially appreciated Vladimir Lenin’s role in the national liberation revolution: “In the viewpoint of the colonial peoples who have suffered misery and lost their rights, Vladimir Lenin has brought a new life. He is like a “beacon” guiding the way to liberation for the enslaved” [6, p. 148.]. Ho Chi Minh

also pointed out the impact of Leninism on the Vietnamese revolution and himself. He said: “Leninism is not only a miraculous guidebook for us, the revolutionaries and the Vietnamese but also the sun guiding us to the final triumph and towards socialism and communism” [9, p. 563].

His love and attachment to Vladimir Lenin are also vividly expressed through specific details. In 1941, when he returned to Pac Bo, he composed a poem, as follow:

“Our country is far away

Beautiful, but in slavery

Lenin stream and Marx mountain

Combining to build a country.”

Vietnamese folk poetry says:

“Father’s painstaking is as big as the Thai Son mountain

Mother’s love is as bountiful as water flowing from its source”.

Via that verse, he affirmed that the Vietnamese revolution shall be built on the origin of Marxism - Leninism and emphasized its presence in Vietnam. He also told a Russian director, Roman Carmen, that he learned Russian because a “revolutionary had to understand Lenin’s voice” [13, p. 87.]. A few months before his death, he asked the Communist Party of Vietnam not to celebrate his 80th birthday. However, it was needful to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lenin’s birthday solemnly. He said: “Celebrating the 100th birthday of V.I. Lenin is the right decision, but my birthday isn’t” [12, p. 488.] This was really touching. Because he considered Leninism an “irreplaceable weapon,” he was willing to be Lenin’s “little student.” In his Will, he talked about leaving the world with the image of “going to meet Mr. Marx, Mr. Lenin, and other seniors.” Obviously, in his opinion, he and Lenin had a close relationship because of the similarity in the goal of human liberation and moral values that were beautifully reflected in both two leaders.

Ho Chi Minh considered Russia (the former Soviet Union) the “revolutionary fatherland,” the stronghold of peace and revolutionary movement in the world, and the “first brother” of the socialist system. Therefore, praising Russia, the homeland of

Lenin, and October Revolution was his consistent idea. From the 20s of the twentieth century, he was amazed at the fact that “in a faraway place, a nation can defeat their exploiters and master itself” [5, p. 256.]. He wrote about how unique and different it was from the rest of the world, as follows: “Russia has a peculiar story / Turning slaves into free ones.” He also praised Russia’s generous help: “Despite confronting challenges at home and abroad, revolutionary Russia is ready to make nations awakened with a brave and triumphant revolution” [5, p. 320]. He claimed that the national liberation movement in the colonies strongly developed thanks to the assistance of the Soviet Union. Moreover, this country saved humanity from the danger of extinction caused by Fascism. He has produced several works under the title of “Great Soviet Union” to extoll this country’s socialist building, revolutionary heroism in the national defense, and scientific and technological achievements since establishing diplomatic relations. As head of State, he strived to promote this nation’s achievements across the world. He stated that Soviet Union’s culture and education were the best in the world. Children living here were the happiest in the world. Its science and technology aimed for peace. He considered these achievements the common ones of the socialist system. He also watched, rejoiced, and was proud of its attainment, especially in the new field of space science. In 1963, after this country had successfully launched two spaceships, Vostok 5 and Vostok 6, into space, he planted two orchids in the Presidential Palace and called them “space orchids.” In an interview with Truth (Pravda), the Soviet Union’s official newspaper and Moscow radio on the occasion of the New Year 1964, President Ho said that the most memorable event in science and technology last year was the dual flight of two spacecraft, Vostok 5 and 6.

In short, Ho Chi Minh’s consistent thoughts and affection were conveyed in praising and defending the October Revolution, Vladimir Lenin, and the Soviet Union from 1920 until he “passed away”.

2. Ho Chi Minh always strived to establish a strong Soviet - Vietnamese friendship.

With the vision of a politician and the insight of a great man of culture, Ho Chi Minh realizes that the close relationship between nations is not created by temporary agreements and agreements but by training people with a “pure international spirit” and understanding each other’s cultures. (“pure international spirit” means the spirit of solidarity of the Vietnamese with the oppressed peoples, the working people of other countries, the progressive people who love peace and justice in the world). Therefore, from 1925, he wrote in a letter to the Comintern: “Tell me how many Annamite students can go to Moscow” [6, p. 153]. Many students sent to train at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East became General Secretaries of the Communist Party of Indochina, such as Tran Phu, Le Hong Phong, and Ha Huy Tap. Through cadre training work, Communist International’s guidelines and the Soviet Union’s policies exceedingly influenced the perception and views of Vietnamese leaders. On May 19, 1941, he defined the League for the Independence of Vietnam’s foreign policy as “supporting the Soviet Union” at the Eighth Conference of the Central Committee of the Indochina Communist Party (when this country was facing fascism). After the success of the August Revolution and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, he continued to build a close relationship with the Soviet Union. As the head of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, he sent telegrams to Marshal Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin repeatedly, requesting that this country recognize Vietnam’s independence and assist Vietnam. Although not receiving any response, on the October Revolution in 1946 and 1949, he still sent a congratulatory message to Stalin: “On the occasion of the Russia Day, on behalf of the Government and the Vietnamese, I wish you, your Government and people of the Soviet Union happiness and prosperity” [7, p. 241].

When diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Vietnam were officially established (on January 30, 1950), he was delighted and called it “an immense political victory.” He privately went to the Soviet Union three times (in 1950, 1952, and 1954) so that their Party and State leaders could comprehend and aid the Vietnamese resistance. Discussing this relationship, a Russian scholar stated: “It develops steadily, not quickly. Political relations and the relationship between the two

Parties are increasingly consolidated and become an alliance relationship” [1, p.13]. In July 1955, President Ho Chi Minh paid a first official visit to the Soviet Union, and he said touching words before returning: “We bring your love and friendship to our country. Although we are thousands of miles apart, our hearts are always together and in the same beat” [3, p. 100]. When the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, K.E. Voroshilov, finished his trip to Vietnam (in May 1957), Ho Chi Minh went to the airport to see off the delegation and read a poem: “All countries share “the same house.” / ‘Cause we are like family members”. In 1957, in a visit to the Soviet Union with eight other socialist countries, he said: “The two countries’ people are the closest friends. Our cordial relations are a magnificent example, embracing the noble principles of proletarian internationalism” [3, p.437]. In 1963, in his article on the anniversary of the famous October Revolution, he declared: “Since the Communist Party of Indochina formed, the Vietnamese have always looked towards the Soviet Union, the country of the great Lenin. We consider your country our revolutionary home and second homeland” [10, p. 198.]. He always insisted on its “leading” rank in the system of socialist countries and regarded relations with it as the “base” of Vietnam’s diplomacy.

President Ho Chi Minh eventually persuaded the Soviet Union’s leaders and people to comprehend, believe in, and render assistance to the Vietnamese revolution via his persistent efforts. In a visit to Vietnam in February 1965, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Aleksei Nikolayevich Kosygin, declared: “From now on, we completely support Vietnam’s fight against the US to rescue the nation” [15, p. 201]. With the prestige and power of a Permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and the significant role in the socialist system, the Soviet Union, always sought to enhance the position and protect the interests of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the international platform. It supplied Vietnam with tremendous material. According to summarized data, during Vietnam’s struggle against the US, 80-85% of heavy weapons used were aided by this nation [2, p. 601]. In addition to weapons, Soviet experts had contributed a lot to the victory of the Vietnamese. Based on the official data of the General Staff of the Soviet Union, between July 11, 1965, and

December 31, 1974, 6359 Soviet officers and generals and more than 4,500 soldiers participated in military operations in Vietnam [12, p. 475].

President Ho Chi Minh plays a critical part in transforming the Soviet-Vietnamese strategic partnership, from the two Parties and Governments' strategy to the consciousness and sentiments of their people. He is known as one of the few leaders visiting all 15 Socialist Republics in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and being close to the Soviet people. With love and trust in the Soviet Union, he persistently "creates small bridges" connecting hearts. He not only made the supreme leaders of the Communist International, the Soviet Communist Party, and the State clearly understand the legitimacy of the Vietnamese revolution and the mutual binding of interests between it and the national-revolutionary movement but also appreciated the adoration that Soviet citizens had given him and the Vietnamese. In 1962, when astronaut Gherman Titov visited Vietnam, he took him to Ha Long Bay and named a beautiful island "Titov" to prove the unity between the two nations. He also wrote a letter to thank Mrs. I. Ekaterina for writing to his "wife," and he sincerely confessed: "I haven't had my own family. My current family is the big one of Vietnamese ethnic groups" [4, p. 372]. His personal secretary, Comrade Vu Ky, recounted that he once reminded him to check if his letter for Soviet children had been sent [12, p. 502]. His thoughts and actions expressed the desire to establish the Soviet-Vietnamese friendship not only for the current generation but also for future ones and the long-term progress of the two nations.

Despite facing all the challenges of war, the vacillations of the world political situation, the impact, and pressure on many aspects, the friendship between the two nations is advancing and becoming more sustainable thanks to Ho Chi Minh's endeavor.

3. Ho Chi Minh appreciated the Soviet Union's support and taught the Vietnamese to be grateful for this great country.

After witnessing the stalemate of national liberation of his predecessors, directly embarking on an extraordinarily arduous and complicated journey to save the country, and living, studying, and operating in the Soviet Union for a long time (more

than six years), Ho Chi Minh was appreciative to Lenin's country, the birthplace of the October Revolution. This nation helped him find the best path. He declared: "No one gives us practical aid to get out of the slavery in which the "sowers of civilization" are holding us back." Many people have understood our incompetence, but no one, except the Russian revolutionaries, has shown us the way to liberation" [5, p. 466]. The orientation is the most important thing for a nation in a miserable situation "when there is no way out," and "the Russian revolution tells us that we must have a lasting Party. We shall persist, sacrifice, and unite so that the revolution wins." In short, we shall follow Marxism and Leninism" [6, p. 304]. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution, he stated: "By following the path outlined by Lenin and the October Revolution, the Vietnamese have won an inclusive victory. Therefore, the solidarity and appreciation of the Vietnamese for the glorious October Revolution, Lenin, and the Soviet people are insightful" [11, p. 397].

The Soviet Union provided Vietnam with not only the correct ideological weapon, Leninism, but also chivalrous, honest, and charitable favor, which Ho Chi Minh referred to as "unconditional help like a brotherhood." Its generous assistance, both monetary and spiritual, was vital in the Vietnamese revolution's success. The endless gratitude and admiration for this country from the 20s of the twentieth century were preserved during his life. He knew that the help, whether material or spiritual, workforce or property, that this nation proffered Vietnam was associated with sacrifice. Obviously, all sacrifice requires gratitude and understanding. Major-General Aleksandr Ivanovich Belov - Head of the Vietnamese military expert delegation, said that he had received a First Class Labor Medal and a pistol as a souvenir from President Ho Chi Minh after he had completed his international service in Vietnam and was about to return to his homeland. The thing that surprised him most was that President Ho Chi Minh said: "Comrade Belov, I would like to thank your wife. She has waited for you for two years when you have worked for us in Vietnam. Please, send my thanks to her. To express my respect and gratitude, please give her this set of silver jewelry with turquoise" [14, p. 152 - 153.]. Although the

present may not have a high monetary value, President Ho's devotion and thanks to those who have generously supported Vietnam are priceless.

Human life is limited, but history is not. President Ho Chi Minh has been deceased for more than half a century, but he has left one of the most valuable legacies of friendship with other nations, including the relationship between two countries. The Soviet Union no longer exists due to many ups and downs. However, the Russian Federation and Vietnam have become comprehensive strategic partners since 2012. The mission of the two countries' leaders and young generations is to continue to derive and enhance the traditional friendship that President Ho Chi Minh has strived to build to a new level. Thanks to that, they can give more profits to the two nations and the international community.

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