

EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND UNDERSTANDING THE OPPONENT OF COMBAT - AN IMPORTANT FACTOR TO WIN THE VIETNAM WAR

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Abstract

The Vietnamese people have a long history of building and defending the country. The written history of Vietnam is known from the 2nd century BC. Throughout the country's history, Vietnamese people are associated with the wars against aggression to win back, preserve and protect national independence. In total, the Vietnamese people have waged 17 wars against foreign invaders in 12 centuries. Therefore, it can be said that the history of Vietnam is the history of resistance against aggression. During those wars, Vietnam won in 14 resistances¹. There are many reasons for this result: nationalist sentiment, the unyielding will to not yield to the enemy, historical tradition, determination to fight for independence and freedom... Which, one of the factors contributing to victory is identifying and understanding the opponent in combat. In the anti-US struggle for national salvation (America and the West called the Vietnam War), the people, and armed forces soon identified the right opponent for combat, properly evaluate and compare the enemy's forces, strengths, and weaknesses, from which to propose a policy, appropriate ways, and countermeasures, step by step defeat the enemy's plots and actions, win the final victory. The article divides the process of perceiving combat objects as the American imperialist of the Leadership, Vietnamese army, and people through 4 periods from 1945 to 1975.

Keywords: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, America, France, war, combat object.

Introduction

Regarding the issue of conspiracy perception, the action of the combatant (The combat object here is the US imperialist), there are many books and documents mentioned. In the last years of World War II, the Viet Minh Front and the Indochina Communist Party leadership knew about it and agree with the views of US President Roosevelt openly opposed the French colonial domination in Vietnam and Indochina over the past decades, as well as Roosevelt's intention to put Indochina under the international mandate after the end of World War II. This was one of the reasons the Viet Minh Front wanted to cooperate with the American army, in the name of the Allies. This relationship and cooperation took place from the end of 1944 until the General Uprising of August 1945, quite closely and effectively in

fighting against the common enemy, the Japanese fascists in Vietnam. Leader Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh Front advocated saving American pilots when their plane crashed in the air at the mountain's base of Tonkin, this gesture of goodwill has opened opportunities for cooperation between the two sides. The Viet Minh side provided intelligence informations on Japanese troops to the US. The US side provided weapons, equipment, and training to the armed forces of the Viet Minh Front. After that, the two sides agreed to establish a joint unit named "Vietnam-American Company", to cooperate to fight the Japanese army during the days of the General Uprising in August 1945. The development of these collaborative events is covered in the books of Hoang Van Hoan, Activities of overseas Vietnamese in Yunnan and Guangxi in the years 1939-1945, typed documents, 1990; by American author

Archimedes L.A. Patti, *Why Vietnam? Prelude to the America's Albatross*, Danang Publishing House, 2007 and by Dixie R. Bartholomew - Feis, *OSS and Ho Chi Minh – Surprise allies in the war against Japanese fascists*, World Publishing House, Vo Thi Culture and Communication Company, 2006.

However, this cooperation ended soon after Vietnam declared independence. US President Truman and the US government did not respond to the letters, the message sent by President Ho Chi Minh suggested that the US, as a democratic power, prevent the French military from returning to invade Vietnam. America was pragmatic, calculating benefits, changed their attitude to France: from objecting to not object, then “turn on the green light” to help vehicles bring French forces to Vietnam. Vietnam was aware of the change in attitudes and policies of US towards Vietnam and Indochina

At the end of 1946, the resistance war against the French colonialists broke out nationwide. Because there was a right perception of the conspiracy, and actions of the French colonialists, the America's attitudes, intentions, and actions as well as the world situation at that time, the Vietnamese leadership soon out a long-term, comprehensive, and all-people resistance war, leading the people and army to both fights and build the country, let the resistance gradually develop through the stages, combined military strikes at Dien Bien Phu with diplomatic negotiations in Geneva, won the final victory. The cognitive process and then assess the role, plots, and actions of the US in the Indochina war has been many works and the article specifically mention. Books series: Complete Party Documents, from volume 15 to volume 34; Ho Chi Minh Complete Documents, includes 15 volumes; Summary of the resistant war against the French - Victory and Lessons compiled by the War Review Board under the Politburo; The History of the resistance war against the French colonialists 1945-1954 includes 7 volumes, compiled by Vietnam Military History Institute, Ministry of Defense; the books in General Vo Nguyen Giap's Memoirs: Unforgettable years, Fighting in the siege; Dien Bien Phu historical rendezvous ...; The History of the Indochina War by French General Yves Gras, Plon Publishing House, Paris, 1979, etc... All mentioned, clearly and specifically reflected the perception of the

Vietnamese leadership about the French colonialist and American imperialist in the period 1945-1954.

During the war of resistance against the US for national salvation (1954-1975), the process of the Vietnamese leadership's awareness and assessment of US plots and actions, through the actual deployment of strategies and war plans by the US side. Currently, it has been reflected in the works of both Vietnam and the US side and authors from other countries. On the Vietnamese side, typically: the Complete Party Document; The Ho Chi Minh Complete Document; Summary of the resistant war against the America for national salvation - Victory and Lessons compiled by the War Review Board under the Politburo; Vietnam's diplomatic history 1945-2000 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; The diplomatic history of Vietnam in the period of resistance against the US: 1954-1975 compiled by the Diplomatic Academy; About the Vietnam People's War; Letter to the South by First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labour Party Le Duan; The Great Spring Victory of General Van Tien Dung; The diplomatic front in the period of anti-American war for national salvation 1965-1975 of former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Duy Trinh; The history of the resistance war against the America for national salvation 1954-1975, includes 9 volumes, compiled by the Institute of Military History of Vietnam, Ministry of Defense; General Vo Nguyen Giap: Headquarters in the spring of victory; The negotiations Le Duc Tho - Kissinger in Paris by Luu Van Loi, Nguyen Anh Vu...

The American side has The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969, memoirs of former US President L.B. Johnson; The Memoir of Richard Nixon, memoirs of Former US President Richard Nixon; The White House Years by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Looking Back - The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam by Former US Secretary of Defense Mac Namara; A Soldier's Report by former US commander in Vietnam William Westmoreland; A Missed Victory by Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) William Colby; Pentagon Papers and Memoirs of the Vietnam War by Daniel Ellsberg; Vietnam - Ten Thousand Days War by Michael Maclear; Anatomy of a War by Gabriel Kolko...

Research questions

The article focuses on clarifying research questions, which is also the orientation in which the report conducts research:

1. The basis for assessing the perception of the combat object was the US from 1945 to 1975?

2. The process of perceiving and evaluating the combat object through 4 stages?

3. Evaluation of the results of the perception of the combat object (advantages, limitations)?

1. The basis of perception and assessment of the combat object is the United States.

The Vietnamese leadership perceives and evaluates the US audience based on the following contents:

Firstly, based on the point of view of Marxism-Leninism, judgment about the nature of warlike, domination and exploitation of capitalism, imperialism, the force that caused two world wars: the first (1914-1918) and the second (1939-1945) and other wars.

Secondly, based on the results of direct cooperation with the American Allied forces to fight Japanese fascist, during and after the General Uprising of August 1945, through statements of views, policies, attitudes, and actions of the US Government, the US army with Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap... as well as other countries such as Japan, France, the Republic of China, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and other political parties and organization in Vietnam.

Thirdly, based on the views, guidelines, plans, policies, attitudes, and actual actions of the US Government and the US military towards Ho Chi Minh's Government, the Vietnamese people's resistance against the French invaders; the process of the US Government calculating benefits, changing views and attitudes to support and increasing aid to France and intervene more and more deeply and directly in the Indochina war when it realized France failed.

Fourth, based on the US attitude during the Geneva Conference on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam and Indochina in 1954;

through specific statements and actions step by step replacing the French colonialist, waging a war of aggression in Vietnam, plotting to permanently divide Vietnam to impose neo-colonialism in the South, approved war plans and strategies to be implemented in both South and North Vietnam, send American combat troops and entice the Allies to join the war in the South,...

Fifth, based on the timely and specific monitoring and assessment of the US situation, attitudes, and reactions of the America Government officials and the people to the war; relations between the major powers the US, the Soviet Union, China, and other countries involved in the war (such as Laos, Cambodia); the internal government situation, the army of the Republic of Vietnam and the South Vietnamese people's attitude towards the war...

2. The process of perceiving and evaluating US plots and actions.

2.1. From 1945 to 1954:

After the success of the August Revolution in 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was established, President Ho Chi Minh has repeatedly sent letters and telegrams to US President Truman and US Secretary of State James Byrn, asking the US to recognize the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and prevent the French colonialists from re-invading Vietnam. But American leaders at that time turned a blind eye, on the contrary, gradually helped the French colonialists to return to invade Vietnam. America's attitudes and actions are based on anti-communist ideology, on the one hand, wanting to draw France against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, then the People's Republic of China, prevented the influence of communism and the socialist regime in this region.

The French colonialists opened fire to invade Vietnam for the second time with the help of British troops and US. By the beginning of 1950, the US intervened more and more deeply and directly in the Indochina war through the aid of weapons, equipment, means, and money to France and the army, the government of Bao Dai. America's involvement in Indochina was for three main reasons: first, to prevent the "red wave" from the People's Republic of China which was established on October 1, 1949, and which had just recognized the Government of

the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on January 18, 1950, spilling over into Southeast Asia; second, help the French destroy the Ho Chi Minh resistance government, and prevent the Vietnamese communists from winning on the whole country; third, step by step replace the French when conditions permit. From 1950, America's aid to France during the Indochina war gradually increased and culminated in 1954 (In 1950, America's military aid to France in Indochina was 52 billion francs, accounting for 19.5% of the total cost of the war. In 1951 it was 62 billion, accounting for 16.1%; in 1952 was 200 billion, accounting for 35.4%; in 1953 was 285 billion, accounting for 43.8%; in 1954 was 555 billion, accounting for 73.9%) (The War Review Board under the Politburo 1996, p.447).

Thus, from the end of 1945, especially from the beginning of 1950 onwards, the Vietnamese people had to fight against the French colonialists, with the increasingly active help and direct intervention of the US. Vietnam has had to confront the US, so it understands more and more the plot, calculation, and actions of the combatant who was showing up are the US. On February 22, 1954, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Labour Party of Vietnam issued a directive emphasizing that in the face of the heavy defeats of the French army, America is very concerned, tried to push the French to continue the war, take another step-in intervening in the Indochina war. The purpose of the United States was both to help France while France was in trouble to gradually encroach on French interests in Indochina (Vietnam Communist Party, 2001, Vol.15, p.30-31).

On May 7, 1954, the Vietnamese army and people defeated the French army, with strong support from the US, in the Dien Bien Phu campaign. After the end of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed: This victory is just the beginning because Vietnam will have to continue to contend with a new subject, the US. The 6th Conference of the Central Committee of the Party was held from July 15 to 17, 1954, affirmed: America not only destroys world peace but is becoming the main and direct enemy of the people of Vietnam - Cambodia - Laos. Therefore, the motto and Vietnam's struggle strategy in the new period has directed the spearhead of the struggle at US imperialist and warlike French, to destroy the

US plot to prolong and expand the war, and to consolidate peace. The Conference determined: if the US imperialist were to directly participate in the Indochina war, the forces of comparison might change unfavourable of Vietnam (Vietnam Communist Party, 2001, Vol.15, p.166-225).

2.2. From 1954 to 1964

The Geneva Agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Indochina was signed by parties on July 21, 1954, but American representatives did not participate in the Final Declaration of the Conference. This is the reason for the US to think that the US is not legally bound to the Geneva Agreement, therefore it is not obliged to implement the terms of the Agreement. The US government quickly brought Ngo Dinh Diem, a man trained by the US, to become the prime minister and then the president of the Republic of Vietnam. Through the construction of Ngo Dinh Diem's government, the US has completed its plan to replace France. The US stood behind anti-communist activities, brutally suppressed patriots, refuses to negotiate a general election to unify the country according to the provision of the Geneva Agreement. The American intention was to build South Vietnam into an anti-communist outpost in Southeast Asia, into a place of implementation of neo-colonialism.

All American intentions and actions were monitored by the Vietnamese leadership, thoroughly analyze and make accurate judgments and assessments. Here are some examples: After the Geneva Agreement was signed, on July 25, 1954, the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labour Party issued a Call to denounce the US imperialist as plotting to turn Vietnam and Indochina into colonies and military bases, trying to destroy the armistice, destroy the peace (Vietnam Communist Party, 2001, Vol.15, p.234-236). On December 17, 1954, the Central Committee of the directive on propaganda to fight against US imperialist; overcome subjectivism, praying for peace and enjoyment, as well as pessimistic, fluctuating thoughts, afraid of America, and submissive to America; make the people understand clearly that the America imperialist is the main enemy (Vietnam Communist Party, 2001, Vol.15, p.411-413)...

The telegram of the Central Committee of the Party, dated April 28, 1960, sent to Southern

Party Committee and the Inter-regional Party Committee V emphasized: The first problem is to identify the reality, the strong and weak base of the opponent in terms of politics, economy, and culture, it is possible to properly assess the comparative force in the process of general development. Militarily, the enemy is having the upper hand, the enemy's strength is still long-lasting if we don't know how to fight properly (Vietnam Communist Party, 2002, Vol.21, p.291-292).

Political Report of the Central Committee of the Party at the 3rd National Congress, on September 5, 1960, was clearly defined: With the policy of "aid" in military and economic, by the system of "advisor" and inspection agency, US controlled the South in all aspects. In terms of politics, the government apparatus in the South was completely controlled by the US; the "national policies" of this government are decided by the US. Regarding the military, the US directly built, trained, and equipped the South Vietnamese army and use the Military Aid Advisory Mission (MAAG) system to directly command. American aid to the South in military was increasing, accounting for 80% of the South's defense budget properly (Vietnam Communist Party, 2002, Vol.21, p.513-515).

In a letter to the Central Committee of the Southern Department on July 18, 1962, the First Secretary Le Duan stated that: Vietnam knew well that it had to deal with a recalcitrant and violent empire, have the most forces and abilities to oppose the revolution, but Vietnam can win if it knows how to control the revolution properly (Vietnam Communist Party, 2002, Vol.23, p.711 and 812-813).

Next, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labour Party met from December 6-10, 1962, to issue a resolution on the situation, direction, and tasks of the revolution in the South. The resolution states: The US directly intervened armed in South Vietnam in the form of a kind of "special war". This is a major shift in American strategy. But in general, this armed intervention is defensive. The US expressed confusion in finding a suitable way to fight; new American weapons and equipments are showing inefficiency when dealing with guerrilla warfare and topographical features in South Vietnam. The expansion of the war in the South by the US made the US-Diem conflict deeper and the world people's resistance stronger. The Southern

revolution can change the force comparison in favor, although under very difficult and complicated conditions.

Resolution of the 9th Conference (Term III) of the Party Central Committee, December 1963 expected the possibility of the US expanding the war in the South into a local war. Particularly within the framework of "special war", there are also two possibilities: first, if the US participates more strongly but still uses Saigon's army as the main, the war in the South will still be a "special war" type; second, if the US uses the US military as the main role or both use US forces and sends forces from the Southeast Asian military bloc, the war in the South will turn into a local war. Therefore, Vietnam needs to take advantage of the first possibility, and actively prepare for the second possibility, Vietnam will still win properly (Vietnam Communist Party, 2002, Vol.24, 820-821), although it will face more difficulties, the battle will be longer and more arduous.

2.3. From 1965 to 1968

On August 5, 1964, using the reason that the American destroyer Maddox was attacked by the Vietnamese Navy outside international waters, US President Johnson ordered planes to bomb several locations in North Vietnam and push the US Congress to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, giving the US President full authority to retaliate with military actions against the North. Event of August 5, 1964 marked an important milestone in the expansion of the US war throughout the territory of Vietnam.

Immediately after the August 5 event, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labour Party issued Directive No. 81-CT/TW on strengthening combat readiness against all US conspiracies and actions; the US is contemplating three solutions: 1- To further intensify the war in the South while at the same time intensifying provocation and sabotage activities in the North, preventing the North's aid to the South. 2- Attack the North, expand the war to the whole of Vietnam. 3- Using a certain political solution to solve the problem in the South. However, in that situation, the US cannot yet apply the second and third solutions but focuses on implementing the first solution. The US will increase forces, step up military activities, use limited war actions against the

North. The comments and assessments of the Vietnamese leadership on the intentions and actions of the US towards the two South and North are timely and accurate. Therefore, the Vietnamese side made early and specific preparations to cope, quickly shifting all production activities and life in the North from a state of peace to a situation of war right after the events of August 5, 1964. By early March 1965, when the US increased bombing of the North with Operation Rolling Thunder and poured 2 battalions of Marines into Da Nang, the US war in Vietnam entered a new phase.

Faced with that serious situation, the Central Committee of the Vietnam Labour Party held its 11th Conference from March 25–27, 1963, commented: with the new actions of the US, the special war in the South has been pushed to a high level, including some elements of local warfare; the war has gone beyond the South and spread to the North, in the immediate future in the form of bombing, air bombardment. To save the special war from total defeat, the US may send more US and Allied combat units to the South; can increase bombing activities to bomb the North more often, by larger, more extensive air forces and target for more. The conference emphasized the need to defeat the special war of the highest degree of America in the South; defeat the war of sabotage and blockade with increasingly fierce air and naval forces in the North. At the same time, be extremely alert and prepared to respond successfully if the US turns the current war in the South into a local war or extend a local war in both the South and the North.

It is thanks to the timely assessment of the situation, accurate assessment of the intention's capabilities and actions of the US, right after the US switched to implementing a local war strategy, The Vietnamese leadership was not passive, unexpectedly, on the contrary, directed the Liberation Army units to be proactive attack American troops in Nui Thanh (May 26, 1965); direct combat, in adverse conditions, with US Marines at Van Tuong (August 18, 1965); fought for a long time with the US 1st Airborne Cavalry Division in Pleime - Ia Drang (October-November 1965), etc... with a very realistic point of view: You must fight directly with the US army to know how strong and weak they are, from there, find a suitable and effective way to hit.

These are the victorious opening battles of the Liberation Army, expressing the will to fight and win, drawing the first experience in fighting the American army. Those battles are the basis for affirming that the Liberation Army can defeat the US troops. First Secretary Le Duan assessed: "If the battle of Ap Bac in early 1963 indicated the possibility of defeating the US's use of the "helicopter" and "armored vehicle" tactics to support large forces of the Saigon army sweeping in the delta; If the battle of Binh Gia at the end of 1964 marked the maturity of our main army in destroying large combat units of the Saigon army, then the battle of Van Tuong proved eloquently our ability to defeat the US army in the condition that they have absolute superiority in weapons and firepower" (Le Duan, 1985, p.131)

The above battles were an important basis for the 12th Conference of the Central Committee of the Party, meeting at the end of December 1965, to make accurate assessments of the American troops. In the Conference, First Secretary Le Duan said: Currently, the US has sent nearly 200,000 US troops and Allied troops to the South. That situation made the war in the South have new characteristics and a series of new problems as well: How will the war situation develop? What has changed in the nature, purpose, and form of war? Can we beat America? How do we decide to win? What has changed in our direction, motto, and strategic determination?, ect.. Those are big and complicated issues that Politburo has discussed many times. First Secretary Le Duan summed up America's 4 failures in Vietnam: firstly, the US intervened in the Indochina war in 1950, borne nearly 80% of the war costs for France; secondly, failed to use Ngo Dinh Diem's government to suppress the revolutionary movement in the South; thirdly, failed to implement the special war strategy; forth, initially failed when sending combat troops to the South and using the air and navy force to bombard and blockade the North.

Therefore, the fact that the US sent troops to the South demonstrated the passiveness of the strategy to turn the situation around, while the southern revolution is still in an offensive position both militarily and politically. Conference affirms: Although the US imperialists sent tens of thousands of troops into the South, the comparative forces between both

sides remained unchanged because US troops were forced to disperse their forces across the battlefields, becoming more and more passive. Although the war is becoming more and more fierce, Vietnamese people have a solid basis to maintain and continue to take the initiative on the battlefield, with the forces and conditions to defeat the plot of the enemy (Vietnam Communist Party, 2003, Vol.26, p.630-633). This is a very important statement, with a scientific basis, based on the analysis of the specific situation and strengths and weaknesses of the two sides. This is also the basis for the Vietnamese leadership to set forth appropriate policies and measures, leading the troops and people of the two South and North to win step by step, defeating the will to continue America's aggression war.

After sending tens of thousands of American and Allied troops to the South, opening two consecutive strategic counterattacks in the dry season 1965-1966 and the dry season 1966-1967 with two pincers were mainly to search and destroy and pacify, in order to regain the initiative on the battlefield, but failed to achieve the set goal, could not destroy the Liberation Army, meanwhile suffered great loss of force; The bombing and bombardment of the North did not prevent or cut off the support from the North to the South..., at the last time 1967, the US government is facing an impasse on the strategy of waging war. Grasping the embarrassment of the US, the Vietnamese leadership considered this a strategic failure of the US imperialists. The US army had to switch from a strategic counterattack to a strategic defensive position, from search and destroy, must return to scan and hold. Therefore, need to find a way to defeat America's will to continue the war. This is the basis for the 14th Conference of the Central Committee of the Party (January 1968) to propose a bold policy: mobilize the greatest efforts of the entire Party, army and people in both regions, bring our revolutionary war to the highest stage of development, and use the methods of total offensive and total uprising to win...; destroy and disintegrate the vast majority of the Saigon troops, overthrow the enemy power at all levels, take the entire government into the hands of the people; destroy an important part of the force and means of war of the United States, force the US to be defeated in the South, stop all acts of war towards the North

enemy (Vietnam Communist Party, 2004, Vol.29, p.50).

In that spirit, after a period of secret preparation, the general offensive and the uprising suddenly broke out simultaneously throughout the South at the time of New Year's Eve 1968, with the primary target of key locations in cities, towns, bases, airports, ports, treasures ... causing the US, the Allied forces and the army of the Saigon government to be surprised, embarrassed, and lose. The second general offensive and uprising still took place (May 1968) and in the 3rd phase (August 1968), although not achieving the highest goal set out, the Southern revolution suffered great losses in terms of forces and posture but forced the US government to admit that it could not win militarily, to propose negotiations, to de-escalate the war, to limit and then stop bombing the North. The general offensive and uprising changed the course of the war, marking the turning point of America's decline in the Vietnam War.

2.4. From 1969 to 1975

On January 20, 1969, Richard Nixon takes office as US President, proposed a strategy "Vietnamization war", step by step withdrawing troops to the country, handing over to the army of the Republic of Vietnam the main responsibility on the battlefield with the help of money, weapons, and firepower from the US. The Vietnamese leadership focused on directing the combination of military struggle with diplomatic struggle with the immediate goal of signing the Agreement, forced American and Allied troops to withdraw from the South, make a favorable comparison of forces to the Liberation Army. After more than three years of restoring the base, forces, and posture, by the beginning of 1972, based on the domestic and international situation; the compromise of interests between China, the Soviet Union, and the United States; due to the sensitivity of the US presidential election year, the Vietnamese leadership decided to launch a strategic offensive on the Southern battlefield, and at the same time stepped up the diplomatic struggle, proactively issued a draft Agreement with the great concession.

However, the US overturned, demanding to change many provisions in the draft Agreement. When Vietnam did not accept, President R. Nixon decided to use strategic aircraft B.52 to

drop carpet bombs on Hanoi capital, Hai Phong, and some other localities in the North to force Vietnam to accept US terms. However, the US was severely defeated in this air raid, forced to sign the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam on January 27, 1973, with the main contents unchanged from the previous draft.

When the Paris Agreement was signed, the US and other countries committed to respect Vietnam's independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, end the war of aggression, and withdraw all troops home. Resolution of the 21st conference of the Party Central Committee on October 13, 1973 assessed: The Vietnamese people have won in the war of invasion with the largest scale, longest duration, fiercest and most brutality..., failing an important step in the military strategy of "Spiritual response active", upset the global strategy of the US imperialists enemy (Vietnam Communist Party, 2004, Vol.34, p.220) Although, The Resolution of the Conference still determined that the situation in the South could develop in two ways: first, because Vietnam actively fought on three fronts political, military, and diplomatic, forcing the US to implement the Agreement Paris, peace is truly restored; second, due to the reactionary and stubborn nature, the US will continue to be involved in the military, helping the Saigon government and army to strengthen their forces, violating the Paris Agreement, so the military conflict is increasing, the intensity of the conflict is increasing. The scale of the war is getting bigger and bigger, the South Vietnamese army and people must continue to wage the war fiercely to gain complete victory. It is necessary to take full advantage of the first possibility and be prepared for the second. The path of the Southern revolution is the path of revolutionary violence. Regardless of the any situation, one must seize the opportunity, maintain the strategic offensive line and give flexible direction to move the revolution forward enemy (Vietnam Communist Party, 2004, Vol.34, p.226-231).

By the end of 1974, the beginning of 1975, based on the preparation of position and strength, comparative assessment of forces, identification of opportunities, international situation, aid from China and the Soviet Union; in the unlikely event that the US would be able to provide large aid and return to the South, the Vietnamese

leadership approved the Strategic Plan for the Liberation of the South for two years 1975-1976 and planned to liberate the South within 1975 when the chance appear.

The general offensive and uprising began with the Central Highlands campaign (March 4, 1975) with the opening battle to liberate Buon Ma Thuot town. What followed was a series of rapid, strategically significant military victories: liberated the Central Highlands, Hue city, Da Nang city, liberated the Central coastal provinces, and finally liberated Saigon, the Mekong Delta provinces, islands, and archipelagos in the East Sea, the Gulf of Thailand, completely liberated the South, ending the 21-year resistance war.

3. Some comments on the process of perceiving the US conspiracy and actions.

3.1. The perception and assessment of the Vietnamese leadership on the plots and actions of the US imperialists is a long process, through many different forms: direct contact and coordination in fighting the Japanese fascists, negotiating in Geneva, Paris; through understanding the international situation and relationships with countries such as France, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union, the Allies of the United States and some related individuals; through the intelligence network to find out the inside of the United States, the anti-war movement in the US and around the world, how to resolve and end the war... to properly understand the US.

3.2. The perception and assessment of the US are correct and timely, based on the imperialism's view of the reactionary, aggressive, and enslaving nature of using military force to subdue other countries; on global strategy and war plans and strategies; America's relationship with pro-American governments in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia.

3.3. The perception of combat objects is mainly based on direct combat on the battlefield to understand strengths and weaknesses, capabilities and limitations, advantages and disadvantages, compare forces between the parties, thereby finding ways to promote our capabilities, strengths, and forte while limiting strengths, deepening weaknesses and contradictions of the enemy through the periods of war.

3.4. From early and timely awareness, the Vietnamese leadership has set out the right and appropriate guidelines, policies, and measures to gradually defeat the plots, actions, plans, and strategies war of the United States, not advocating annihilation but focusing on defeating the will of the United States to continue the war.

3.5. In the process of perception, there are stages and times when the assessment is not completely correct of the American plots and actions, showing the subjectivity and willpower in the assessment and comparison of forces that make the revolution difficult and damaging. (For example, the period after the Geneva Agreement 1954-1958; the general offensive and uprising of Mau Than 1968; the event of fighting to protect the Quang Tri Ancient Citadel; the event after the Paris Agreement to lose land, bases, and people...)

Conclusion

He who sees through life and death will meet with most success. The Vietnamese leadership, President Ho Chi Minh understands this very well and successfully applied it in the identification of combat objects, from there, advocating the right and appropriate line, leading the whole army and the people to win the fierce battle and longest period of the 20th century with the US imperialists, protecting national independence and unifying the country.

The article clearly outlines the process of the Vietnamese leadership gradually perceiving and evaluating the opponent in combat since 1945, when the US from a country that opposed the colonial rule of France, coordinated and helped the Viet Minh Front to fight the Japanese fascists, but due to pragmatic calculations, dominated by ideology, it gradually became a country that helped the French colonialists to invade Vietnam again, intervened more and more deeply in the Indochina war. When the French colonialists were defeated, the American imperialists quickly replaced France, becoming a dangerous enemy, combat object of the Vietnamese people in the war lasting up to 21 years. Due to the early and correct awareness of the enemy, the Vietnamese leadership, army, and people carried out a comprehensive, long-term, and comprehensive resistance war, gradually defeating an opponent with economic

potential, the most powerful military in the world with many machinations, tricks, and brutal war methods.

The article is based on historical developments, contributing to explaining one of the reasons for Vietnam's victory in the resistance against US for national salvation, at the same time, it pointed out that one of the reasons the US failed in the Vietnam War was because it didn't understand and underestimated the ability and determination to fight to protect the independence and unification of Vietnam while being overconfident to its military might.

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