

HO CHI MINH DIPLOMATIC METHOD: DIALECTIC PHILOSOPHY AND CREATIVE INHERITANCE IN THE ERA OF NATIONAL RISE AND INTEGRATION

[O MÉTODO DIPLOMÁTICO DE HO CHI MINH: FILOSOFIA DIALÉTICA E HERANÇA CRIATIVA NA ERA DA ASCENSÃO E INTEGRAÇÃO NACIONAL]

Nguyen Thi Tuong Duy¹

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method represents the crystallization of Vietnam's diplomatic traditions, the quintessence of human cultural values, and a scientific revolutionary mindset. Central to this method is the principle of "unchanging fundamentals, flexible responses," which prioritizes national interests while consistently linking them with peace, friendship, and cooperation. His approach harmoniously combines steadfastness in strategic principles with flexibility in tactics, leveraging the power of justice and popular support while mobilizing international solidarity. Through this, Ho Chi Minh laid the foundation for an independent, self-reliant, peaceful, and humanitarian foreign policy. In the context of globalization and deep international integration, as Vietnam enters a new era of national development, the application of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method holds significant strategic relevance. It not only strengthens the country's position and capacity but also enhances its international standing, while fostering a peaceful and cooperative environment for sustainable development.

KEYWORDS: Ho Chi Minh, diplomatic method, international integration, sustainable development

RESUMO: O método diplomático de Ho Chi Minh representa a cristalização das tradições diplomáticas do Vietnã, a quintessência dos valores culturais humanos e uma mentalidade revolucionária científica. O princípio de "fundamentos imutáveis, respostas flexíveis" é uma figura central deste método, priorizando os interesses nacionais assim como vinculando-os consistentemente à paz, amizade e cooperação. Sua abordagem combina harmoniosamente a firmeza nos princípios estratégicos com a flexibilidade nas táticas, valendo-se da força da justiça e do apoio popular enquanto mobiliza a solidariedade internacional. Por meio disso, Ho Chi Minh estabeleceu a base para uma política externa independente, autossuficiente, pacífica e humanitária. No contexto da globalização e da profunda integração internacional, à medida que o Vietnã entra em uma nova era de desenvolvimento nacional, a aplicação do método diplomático de Ho Chi Minh mantém relevância estratégica significativa. O método não apenas fortalece a posição e a capacidade do país, mas também eleva sua relevância internacional, promovendo um ambiente pacífico e cooperativo para o desenvolvimento sustentável.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ho Chi Minh; método diplomático; integração internacional; desenvolvimento sustentável

1. INTRODUCTION

Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic methodology represents a distinctive contribution to both Vietnam's revolutionary cause and the global theory of diplomacy. Rooted in the nation's long-standing tradition of harmony, resilience, and humanity, Ho Chi Minh creatively combined Eastern cultural

¹ Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Email: duyntt@huit.edu.vn

values with Western progressive thought and Marxist-Leninist principles. His approach emphasized independence and self-reliance while simultaneously fostering friendship, cooperation, and peace with the international community.

The core principle, often summarized as “unchanging fundamentals while flexibly responding to variations”, reflects not only political wisdom but also strategic adaptability in complex historical contexts. It enabled Vietnam to navigate critical moments in the struggle for independence, sovereignty, and national reunification, while garnering broad international support.

In today’s era of globalization and deepening international integration, Vietnam faces new opportunities and challenges. The legacy of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic thought provides essential guidance for shaping a modern Vietnamese foreign policy that is independent yet open, resilient yet adaptive, and deeply committed to peace and sustainable development. This article aims to analyze the key features of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic methodology, assess its enduring value, and discuss orientations for its creative application in the current era of national development and international cooperation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method constitutes an essential component of his overall ideological system on the fundamental issues of the Vietnamese revolution. Recognizing the scientific and practical value of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method, scholars and researchers have conducted numerous studies on this subject. To date, a wide range of research projects and publications have been produced, which can generally be categorized into several directions.

First, some authors have examined and analyzed the concept, conditions, and prerequisites for the formation of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method. In essence, these scholars contend that Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method is a system of approaches, measures, and styles of conduct in foreign affairs that he applied creatively and flexibly during the leadership of the Vietnamese revolution. This method aimed at safeguarding national interests, promoting peace, gaining international friends and allies, and enhancing Vietnam’s legitimacy and prestige on the global stage. Representative works in this direction include *President Ho Chi Minh and Diplomatic Work* (Institute of International Relations, Truth Publishing House, Hanoi, 1990); *Ho Chi Minh’s Thought on Foreign Affairs: Some Fundamental Aspects* (Do Duc Hinh, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2007); and *The Formation of Ho Chi Minh’s Thought* (Tran Van Giau, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1997). These studies analyze the conditions and premises for the emergence and development of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method. They also provide fundamental insights into his childhood, the influence of patriotism and national cultural heritage, and the practical experiences he absorbed in the West, all of which played significant roles in

shaping his diplomatic approach.

Second, many scholars have delved into the core content of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method from different perspectives, such as the combination of strategic steadfastness with tactical flexibility; proactive forecasting of situations and seizing opportunities; exploiting the contradictions of adversaries while rallying allies and "increasing friends, reducing foes"; and upholding justice, peace, and fairness. Notable works include *Ho Chi Minh's Diplomatic Thought* (Nguyen Dy Nien, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2002), a highly detailed and valuable study, and *Ho Chi Minh's Diplomatic Thought* (Tran Thi Minh Tuyet, National Political Publishing House – Truth, Hanoi, 2016). The latter presents a comprehensive account of the formation and development of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic thought and method, synthesizing, evaluating, and analyzing their diverse aspects. It highlights the humanistic values embodied in his ideas, which he sought to pass on to future generations of Vietnamese in their journey toward global integration.

It can be said that Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method has been extensively and comprehensively studied across multiple fields. Among these, the inheritance and creative application of his diplomatic thought in the context of international integration have also received considerable scholarly attention. Representative works include *Exploring the Value of Ho Chi Minh's Diplomatic Thought in the Renovation Period* (Nguyen Phuc Luan, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1995) and *Exploring Ho Chi Minh's Thought on the Era* (Phan Ngoc Lien, chief editor, Labour Publishing House, Hanoi, 2000).

In summary, existing studies have provided broad and in-depth analyses of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method. However, there has yet to be a systematic study that thoroughly examines this method and clarifies its application in the current era of Vietnam's national rise. This article seeks to contribute toward filling that gap.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs analytical and synthetic research methods. To ensure data accuracy, textual analysis is applied to examine original works and cross-reference different versions, maintaining objectivity and consistency in analyzing Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic methodology. The analysis is further conducted using historical information, along with historical materialism and dialectical materialism methodologies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The ideological foundations of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic

method

First, the diplomatic tradition of the Vietnamese nation

Vietnamese diplomacy has a long history of formation and development, marked by distinctive characteristics. Prominent among these are the values of concord, benevolence, and a profound commitment to peace. These ideals form both the philosophy and the essence of Vietnam's diplomatic tradition.

In practice, the Vietnamese people have skillfully employed the philosophy of flexibility, epitomized by the proverb "water wears away stone," combining firmness with adaptability, and demonstrating agility and resourcefulness (Trang, 2023). In relations with other countries, Vietnam consistently displayed a spirit of goodwill, mutual respect, humility, courtesy, and tact. The nation's heritage of benevolence, peace-loving, and tolerance provided a strong foundation for Đại Việt diplomacy to withstand powerful and aggressive invaders. This was a diplomacy rooted in justice, humanity, and peace. These noble traditions became one of the most important premises for the formation of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic thought, an approach that placed concord at the forefront and relied on benevolence and moral persuasion as its guiding principles.

Second, the cultural and diplomatic heritage of both East and West

Throughout his revolutionary career, Ho Chi Minh studied and absorbed the progressive and positive aspects of diverse intellectual currents across the world (Trang and Ha, 2024). His profound erudition was a synthesis of the finest cultural and intellectual achievements of humanity, spanning both East and West, antiquity and modernity. These values broadened his vision and enriched the foundations of his diplomatic thought.

From the East, Ho Chi Minh embraced the values of tolerance, human sentiment, and the philosophy of harmony in international relations. From the West, he acquired the ideals of democracy, liberty, equality, and fraternity, universal values of progressive humanity. He deeply understood humanism, the yearning for freedom, and the struggle against exploitation, oppression, and injustice. Influenced by Rousseau, he engaged with Enlightenment-era philosophical and political thought, as well as the democratic ideals of the French Revolution. His study of the United States Declaration of Independence and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen allowed him to assimilate the concepts of liberty and democracy embodied in these seminal documents, which he later cited in the *Declaration of Independence* of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In this synthesis lies a profound assertion of the right to life, liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness for all peoples, including the Vietnamese. These universal principles became a crucial foundation for Ho Chi Minh in developing profound diplomatic ideas and facilitated his subsequent embrace of the perspectives of proletarian internationalism.

Third, the Marxist–Leninist perspective on relations among nations

Marxism–Leninism provided Ho Chi Minh with a critical theoretical framework for conceptualizing international relations and shaping Vietnam’s foreign policy (Ha, 2025). From *The Communist Manifesto*, he absorbed the insight that the development of productive forces would inevitably globalize and socialize human life, laying the groundwork for interconnected international structures. Equally important was the Marxist–Leninist emphasis on the global strength of the working class in the struggle against imperialism. The principle of international solidarity, uniting peoples and oppressed nations against colonial domination, became a cornerstone in Ho Chi Minh’s understanding of the intimate link between national liberation and the world proletarian revolution.

Ho Chi Minh’s reception of Marxism–Leninism was not passive. He internalized its spirit of proletarian internationalism and creatively adapted its principles to Vietnam’s conditions. His perspective located the Vietnamese revolution as an inseparable part of the global revolutionary movement, while his diplomatic practice demonstrated a flexible and pragmatic application of Marxist–Leninist norms to international issues. This theoretical grounding thus provided both ideological legitimacy and practical orientation for his foreign policy, enabling Vietnam to navigate the complexities of global politics in the twentieth century.

4.2. Core elements of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic method

4.2.1. Strategic consistency combined with tactical flexibility and creativity

Well-versed in both Eastern and Western philosophies and guided by dialectical materialism, Ho Chi Minh demonstrated exceptional skill and flexibility in diplomacy and in international activities more broadly (Do, 2020). He consistently upheld strategic principles while applying tactical flexibility, maintaining firm goals yet adopting creative measures to achieve them. This approach was epitomized in his dictum “*unchanging fundamentals, flexible responses*” (*đĩ bất biến, ứng vạn biến*). For Ho Chi Minh, the achievement of enduring objectives required adaptability to specific historical contexts and circumstances. However, such flexibility was always bound by principle; tactical adjustments could never compromise the immutable goal of national independence, closely linked with socialism.

The hallmark of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomacy lies in this synthesis: unwavering adherence to principles and objectives, combined with adaptability in methods and supple handling of situations. In all circumstances, he safeguarded revolutionary goals with determination, resolving crises intelligently and tactfully, balancing strategic firmness with tactical softness. He warned against sacrificing long-term revolutionary

aims for short-term gains.

For Vietnam, a nation historically engaged in diplomacy from the position of a smaller state negotiating with larger powers, certain concessions were often unavoidable. Ho Chi Minh viewed concessions as a tactical necessity, an expression of the “flexible” element of his approach, but one that must be limited and principled. Its boundary, he emphasized, was national sovereignty and core national interests.

History confirmed that in revolutionary struggle, especially in diplomacy, the enemy’s aims remained unchanging while their tactics were infinitely variable and often sophisticated. Thus, to achieve revolutionary objectives, diplomatic struggle had to be equally flexible and resourceful. Diplomats, he argued, must act with prudence and foresight, maneuvering adversaries into passive positions and compelling them, willingly or otherwise, to accept conditions favorable to Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh himself embodied this art of negotiation, practical, pragmatic, and always able to identify common ground in dialogue.

He affirmed: “Our immutable objectives remain peace, unification, independence, and democracy. Principles must be firmly upheld, but our tactics must remain flexible” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). For him, diplomacy required patience and perseverance rather than haste; victories were to be secured step by step. Even when adversaries were forced to yield, they would retreat gradually for the sake of prestige, and Vietnam had to be prepared to win incrementally. Consequently, for diplomats, the task was twofold: to hold fast to principles while exercising creativity and dynamism in seizing every opportunity to secure victories and elevate the nation’s standing in the international arena.

4.2.2. Foresight and seizing opportunities in diplomatic practice

In Ho Chi Minh’s diplomatic methodology, the ability to foresee and seize opportunities occupies a position of paramount importance (Toan, 2024). Accurate forecasting, as well as the creation of favorable opportunities, must be grounded in careful observation, research, and analysis of international, regional, and domestic developments. Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized that the Vietnamese revolution formed an integral part of the global revolutionary movement, and thus its trajectory could not be separated from the broader dynamics of world revolutionary struggles and the evolving landscape of international relations in each historical period. He recognized that global trends and major transformations in international relations exerted profound influence on the course of the Vietnamese people’s struggle. Consequently, only by discerning shifts in both global and domestic contexts could one accurately identify the potential pathways for the Vietnamese revolution at specific junctures.

From this perspective, Vietnamese diplomacy was tasked not only with recognizing but also with proactively creating opportunities, adopting a forward-leaning stance to secure step-by-step victories that

would eventually culminate in complete success. To achieve this, Ho Chi Minh approached international developments comprehensively, analyzing political, economic, and cultural dynamics while also examining the role and interrelations of individual factors that exerted dialectical influence on Vietnam's revolutionary cause. The ultimate goal of such analysis was to clarify developmental trends, anticipate possible trajectories, and thus make timely and sound strategic decisions capable of generating decisive breakthroughs for the advancement of the revolution.

In identifying opportunities, Ho Chi Minh paid particular attention to two domains: the development of productive forces driven by scientific and technological progress, and profound socio-political transformations. He observed the rapid strides of science and technology, noting: "In those fifty years, inventions such as cinema, radio, television, and even atomic power have emerged. Humanity has taken a long step forward in mastering the forces of nature" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). At the same time, he highlighted major political and social shifts: "Capitalism, once characterized by free competition, has become monopoly capitalism, advancing into imperialism. Meanwhile, nearly half of humanity has entered the path of new democracy, as oppressed nations rise against imperialism to demand independence and freedom" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). For him, scientific progress not only transformed human life but also acted as a bridge connecting nations and reshaping international relations: "As science advances, vehicles and ships become more refined, transportation more convenient. Thousands of oceans shrink to a span; towering mountains and dense forests cease to be obstacles. Even the vast sky and eternal ice are no longer beyond reach. Soon, the world will be as one family" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

In the political sphere, Ho Chi Minh gave careful attention to the emergence of new centers of power and the contradictions among them, recognizing their significance for predicting the directions of international relations. Alongside foresight, he consistently prepared the revolutionary forces to exploit favorable international conditions, ensuring that when opportunities arose, Vietnam could respond promptly and decisively. He underscored the need to combine *strength* (lực), *position* (thế), and *timing* (thời) in both revolutionary leadership and diplomatic practice. For him, the close coordination of these factors was essential for mobilizing forces, transforming an unfavorable balance of power into a favorable one, and gradually advancing from weakness to strength toward complete victory.

Ho Chi Minh understood deeply that opportunities are never infinite. In both revolutionary and diplomatic endeavors, opportunities arise only within specific temporal and spatial conditions, contingent upon the convergence of objective and subjective factors. This awareness led him to place great emphasis on foresight and situational awareness, carefully assessing the nation's circumstances in relation to the constantly changing international environment to leverage diplomatic struggles toward decisive gains for the Vietnamese revolution. His method of forecasting and seizing opportunities continues to guide the Vietnamese people today, as they creatively adapt and apply it in the context of deepening international integration.

4.2.3. Exploiting the adversary's contradictions, securing allies, distinguishing friends from foes, and aligning Vietnam's diplomacy with like-minded nations

The strategy of exploiting the adversary's contradictions and consolidating alliances constituted one of the most judicious and effective diplomatic methods employed by Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese revolution. This approach proved not only instrumental during the struggle against colonialism and imperialism but also relevant in the contemporary period of national construction and development.

According to Lenin, contradictions among capitalist and imperialist powers exist objectively. Even when they appear as allies, such contradictions do not disappear, as their roots lie in the very essence of capitalism, private ownership of the means of production, and the exploitative nature of the system. In studying Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh inherited, creatively adapted, and effectively applied this perspective on leveraging the contradictions of enemies. He affirmed that “Marxism–Leninism teaches us that for a revolution to succeed, one must clearly distinguish who is a friend and who is a foe, and strive to gain more friends while reducing enemies” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). In line with this principle, the November 1945 Directive on Resistance and Nation-Building stated that “the art of diplomacy is to secure the fewest enemies possible and the greatest number of allies possible” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

For Ho Chi Minh, the exploitation of adversarial contradictions and the consolidation of allies in diplomatic struggle held strategic significance, particularly when confronting more powerful enemies. Contradictions within the enemy's ranks exist objectively, and revolutionaries must know how to exploit these contradictions - even the smallest fissures - to weaken the enemy while strengthening revolutionary allies, however fragile those alliances may be.

To achieve this, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the necessity of thoroughly analyzing and assessing the situation, including the balance of forces, the relationships among different adversarial groups, and the principles guiding their foreign policies. Such careful evaluation enabled the revolution to take advantage of pre-existing contradictions or actively foster new divisions within enemy ranks, thereby creating favorable conditions for the Vietnamese cause.

Before the August Revolution, Ho Chi Minh closely observed the rivalries among imperialist powers in Indochina, seeking to exploit those contradictions most beneficial to the Vietnamese struggle. Through his strategic acumen, he guided the revolution to achieve its objectives.

After the success of the August Revolution, Vietnam faced a dire situation of “internal enemies and external aggressors.” Despite these immense challenges, Ho Chi Minh discerned one major advantage: the Allied forces had defeated fascist Germany and Japan, a circumstance the Vietnamese revolution could leverage. Accordingly, the Party and Ho Chi Minh determined that the guiding principle of diplomacy at that time must

be perseverance in dealings with foreign powers based on “equality and mutual assistance,” while skillfully exploiting the contradictions between the Kuomintang and the United States, as well as between Britain and France, to win external recognition of Vietnam’s independence.

Ho Chi Minh’s keen assessment of the Kuomintang forces in Vietnam highlighted their fundamental weaknesses: lacking political support, despised by the Vietnamese people, and internally fragmented despite their numerical strength. Moreover, preoccupied with China’s own civil war, the Kuomintang troops constituted a force vulnerable to division (Tran, 2024). Recognizing this, Ho Chi Minh adopted the policy of “peace to advance” (*hòa để tiến*), confident that the Kuomintang would have no choice but to accept Vietnam’s conditions.

A prime example of Ho Chi Minh’s brilliant diplomatic maneuvering was his decision to sign the March 6, 1946, Preliminary Agreement with France. This move exemplified the successful exploitation of adversarial contradictions: Vietnam compelled the French government to recognize it as a free state with its own government and finances within the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. At the same time, Vietnam took advantage of Franco–Kuomintang contradictions to expedite the withdrawal of Kuomintang troops from Vietnam, eliminate domestic reactionary collaborators, and gain valuable time to consolidate revolutionary forces and strengthen the domestic base in preparation for the protracted resistance that was certain to come.

4.2.4. The diplomatic method of “Winning Hearts and Minds”

Alongside exploiting the contradictions among adversaries to divide them, Ho Chi Minh placed great emphasis on rallying and consolidating allies in support of the Vietnamese revolution. To achieve this, he stressed the necessity of adopting appropriate diplomatic strategies and measures, particularly clear and principled methods grounded in both reason and sentiment, “*having both justice and compassion*”. Among these methods, one of Ho Chi Minh’s most distinctive and successful practices was the diplomacy of “*tâm công*”, or diplomacy aimed at “winning hearts and minds”, a strategy that appealed to human conscience and compassion.

This form of diplomacy can be understood as the art of touching the human heart, employing righteousness, humanity, and moral reasoning to persuade and move opponents, awakening the innate compassion within people. It represented not only a unique feature of Ho Chi Minh’s diplomacy but also a continuation and creative development of Vietnam’s historical tradition of humanitarian diplomacy practiced throughout the nation’s struggles for survival and independence. Ho Chi Minh’s diplomacy of “winning hearts and minds” may be summarized in the following aspects:

First, it was grounded in humanism and compassion, aimed at peace and friendship. Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “In both the East and the West, all people hate wars of aggression and long for peace” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

Whether in revolutionary leadership, diplomatic engagement, or daily life, he consistently treated others with tolerance and benevolence. By emphasizing humanity and morality, he sought common ground among nations, awakening the conscience of humanity and garnering international support for Vietnam's just cause.

Second, Ho Chi Minh never equated an entire people or nation with the war-making rulers of that state. For him, only the militaristic and aggressive cliques were true enemies, while innocent people could still be considered friends of the Vietnamese nation. Thus, he deemed it essential to win their sympathy and support. Through this approach, he successfully awakened the compassion of the French and American people, convincing them to side with the Vietnamese struggle for independence, freedom, and national unity. As he stated, "We bear no hatred toward the French people. On the contrary, we admire that great nation which was the first to widely propagate the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and which has contributed much to culture, science, and civilization. Our struggle is not against France as a nation, nor against the honest French people, but only against the brutal colonial regime in Indochina" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). Likewise, regarding the American people, he affirmed: "The Vietnamese people regard the American people as friends. Our struggle is against the interventionist policy of American imperialism" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). He further emphasized Vietnam's desire for friendship with the American people, who embodied noble ideals of justice and international humanism and whose modern technological achievements held great appeal for Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

At the same time, Ho Chi Minh consistently underscored the just cause of the Vietnamese nation while forcefully condemning the brutality of the aggressors (Kien, 2021). By doing so, he sought to expose the true nature of colonialism and imperialism to the peoples of aggressor nations themselves, encouraging them to stand with Vietnam against unjust wars. Toward Vietnam's allies, fellow communists, democratic forces, and progressive peoples worldwide, he demonstrated sincerity, loyalty, and transparent internationalism, fostering solidarity and friendship that extended from statesmen to ordinary citizens.

Third, Ho Chi Minh relied on righteousness and morality to persuade, inspire, and awaken the conscience of others, while also appealing to their national pride to gain support for Vietnam's struggle. With progressive French and American people, he consistently invoked their traditions and contributions to humanity, affirming their value while urging them to act in accordance with those ideals. He once declared: "We want to have friendly and brotherly relations with the American people, whom we respect as a talented nation that has contributed greatly to science, and who, more recently, have spoken out against the war of aggression in South Vietnam" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

With tact, humility, and persuasive reasoning, Ho Chi Minh employed arguments that, even if they failed to completely win over his audience, left them with no grounds for rejection or hostility. Whether addressing generals

or ordinary soldiers, he approached them with sincerity, warmth, and friendship. His gestures of simplicity and cordiality deeply moved French officers and soldiers. Despite being the head of state, he readily shook hands with each French officer, expressing profound gratitude to the French people and government. He touched the soldiers' hearts by conveying the sentiments of their families: "During my time in France, I met many fathers, mothers, sisters, and lonely wives of French officers and soldiers serving in Indochina. They all wished for their sons and husbands to remain healthy, safe, and to return home soon to reunite with their families and rebuild their homeland. I promised them that, upon returning to Vietnam, I would faithfully convey their heartfelt wishes to you" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011). His words were so powerful that "several rifles slipped from hands, and the French honor guard was visibly shaken" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

Toward prisoners of war, Ho Chi Minh displayed great magnanimity. Many former French and American soldiers later testified to having been treated humanely, with some even sending letters of gratitude to him. Visiting a prison camp, he once removed his own coat and gave it to a French officer shivering shirtless in the cold. He expressed deep sympathy for French and American women whose husbands and sons were sent to Vietnam as cannon fodder, and for soldiers who had lost their lives unjustly in colonial wars. To African prisoners, he offered words of compassion: "Surely among you there are some who still have elderly parents and small children. Please send them warm embraces from Uncle Ho" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011).

Such heartfelt words were not rhetorical flourishes but the genuine expression of a profoundly humane personality and a sincere aspiration for lasting peace and friendship among nations. Through the method of diplomacy aimed at "winning hearts and minds," Ho Chi Minh not only neutralized hostility but also garnered broad international sympathy and solidarity for the Vietnamese revolution.

4.3. The process of inheritance and creative application in Vietnam's era of ascent and integration

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the twenty-first century - characterized by a multipolar and multicentric order, intense strategic competition among major powers, and the growing complexity of non-traditional security challenges - Vietnam has demonstrated remarkable flexibility and creativity in applying Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic methodology. The principle of "*unchanging in fundamentals, adaptable in response*" - first articulated by Ho Chi Minh in the early days of nation-building - is today embodied in the policy of "*diversification and multilateralization*" of international relations. This approach aims to ensure strategic balance, safeguard core national interests, and avoid dependency.

Whereas multilateral diplomacy once played a complementary role to bilateral diplomacy, in the era of global integration, Vietnam has elevated multilateralism into a strategic pillar. The country's tenure as ASEAN

Chair in 2020 and its two terms as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council attest to the maturity of Vietnamese diplomacy. In these fora, Vietnam has not only safeguarded its own national interests but also stood in solidarity with the international community in upholding peace, stability, and sustainable development. This reflects Ho Chi Minh's enduring vision: aligning national interests with humanity's common good, preferring dialogue over confrontation, and promoting cooperation over division.

At the same time, Vietnam has expanded a broad network of strategic and comprehensive partnerships with nearly all major global power centers. From Ho Chi Minh's guiding philosophy of "*more friends, fewer enemies*," Vietnam has cultivated a multidimensional web of interwoven interests. This network enhances the country's international standing while strengthening its capacity for strategic autonomy in a volatile world.

Contemporary Vietnamese diplomacy has also transcended traditional concerns of politics and security to evolve into a comprehensive diplomacy. Economic diplomacy serves as a driver for deeper integration into global supply chains; cultural diplomacy projects national identity and strengthens soft power; science and technology diplomacy opens avenues for knowledge exchange; while climate diplomacy underscores Vietnam's responsible engagement with global challenges. These developments enrich and broaden the content of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic method, transforming it into a holistic instrument for national development.

Notably, today's diplomacy highlights a humanitarian ethos - one that views responsibility to the international community as inherently linked to national interests. If Ho Chi Minh's diplomacy emphasized *righteousness* and the *diplomacy of the heart* to garner international support, contemporary Vietnam has elevated this spirit into "*humanitarian and responsible diplomacy*." Participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, initiatives on food security and maritime security, and commitments to combating climate change stand as vivid examples. Thus, the creative application of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach not only safeguards Vietnam's national interests but also affirms its image as a responsible nation, actively contributing to global peace and sustainable development.

As Vietnam embarks on a new phase of development, aspiring to achieve high-income status by the mid-twenty-first century, the inheritance and creative application of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic methodology carry profound strategic significance. It provides both a solid foundation for sustainable growth and a driving force for enhancing Vietnam's international stature.

First and foremost, Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach ensures that Vietnam preserves its independence and autonomy throughout the process of deep integration. Globalization brings many opportunities but also entails the risk of dependence or being drawn into the orbit of major powers. The principle that "national independence is steadfast," as affirmed by Ho Chi Minh, serves as a compass for Vietnam in shaping its modern foreign policy: proactively engaging in integration, taking advantage of opportunities from

diverse partners, while resolutely safeguarding core interests and never compromising strategic autonomy.

Furthermore, Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach helps Vietnam maintain a peaceful and stable environment - an essential condition for socio-economic development. Vietnam consistently pursues a foreign policy of harmony and goodwill, relying on cooperation and dialogue to address disagreements. In sensitive issues such as the South China Sea disputes, Vietnam has adhered to peaceful solutions grounded in international law, while simultaneously expanding cooperation to turn challenges into opportunities. This demonstrates both resilience and the strategic vision of a diplomacy deeply rooted in Ho Chi Minh's spirit.

Moreover, inheriting Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach contributes to enhancing Vietnam's prestige and international standing. From a country once encircled and embargoed, Vietnam has now risen to become a responsible member with an increasingly important voice in the global community. Vietnam's soft power is reinforced not only by its rich cultural identity but also by the image of a resilient and humane nation that is always ready to stand with the international community in addressing global challenges.

Finally, the greatest value of creatively applying Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach in this era of national ascent lies in elevating Vietnam beyond the confines of national interests to become an active contributor to humanity's sustainable development. Participation in peacekeeping missions, initiatives on development cooperation, and commitments on climate change and energy security all affirm that Vietnam is not merely a beneficiary but also a shaper of global processes. In this sense, Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic thought - especially his approach - has evolved from being a weapon in the struggle for national independence to becoming a foundation for building a modern, humane, and responsible foreign policy that harmonizes national interests with those of humanity.

5. CONCLUSION

Diplomacy has always been one of the essential pillars ensuring the survival and development of the Vietnamese nation amid turbulent historical contexts. In the twentieth century, President Ho Chi Minh devised a distinctive diplomatic approach that skillfully blended the traditions of national diplomacy, the quintessence of human cultural heritage, and the practical demands of the revolution. This approach has become an invaluable theoretical and practical asset, continuing to illuminate Vietnam's foreign policy in the era of globalization and profound international integration.

Relations among nations are inherently sensitive and complex. To safeguard national interests and sovereignty, state leaders - particularly diplomats - must first master not only their own country's foreign policy guidelines but also those of their counterparts in order to adopt appropriate strategies. In today's rapidly changing world, despite its many complexities,

peace, national independence, social progress, and other global concerns remain at the forefront of humanity's aspirations. Yet, the manner in which each country engages with these common concerns inevitably reflects its particular perspectives and actions, shaped by its national interests.

For Vietnam, participation in international affairs must always be closely aligned with the nation's revolutionary mission and steadfast goals. Accordingly, the study and extraction of values from Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic approach, and their creative application in the context of globalization, constitute a vital requirement for Vietnam's contemporary diplomacy and international relations.

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