

Dien Bien Phu – The Most Difficult Decision, and other writings  
Vo Nguyen Giap  
The Gioi Publishers, Hanoi, 1992

**Pac Bo, Source of the Stream**

(Written to mark the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Army of Vietnam. December 1989??)

‘Forty five years had elapsed but Phai Khat village was still poor. Little had been done to help those who had devoted almost all their lives to the revolution.’ p20

‘Following his [Ho’s] path, we will have civilization, happiness and prosperity and will succeed in building a society in which the free development of each and every individual is the basic condition for the free development of all human beings.’ p21

**My Most Profound Memories**

(Excerpts from a paper delivered at the symposium “Uncle Ho and His Native Province of Nghe Tinh, the province of Nghe Tinh and Uncle Ho”. 18 September, 1989.)

“Our symposium is taking place at a time when the world situation is undergoing a complex period of change. The domestic situation is also taking a new direction in the light of the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of our Party.’ p50

‘Once the objectives had been defined as national independence and socialism, it was vital to resolutely stick to it and achieve it totally. ‘When making the revolution, we must make it to the end.’ p54

‘It was during these very talks that we would work through important issues such as mistakes made regarding land reform, and after exchanging views proposing ways of conducting investigations, such matters would be brought up before a formal meeting of the Politburo for resolution. If leadership is about preconceived ideas and foresight and overseeing subsequent implementation, then the issue must be about having to have foresight, and accurate foresight. Seen from this angle, as I still remember, these meetings often produced substantial results and at the same time helped a collective work ethic.’ p56

‘What stood out about him was the fact that theory went hand in hand with the practical. It was precisely through practical experience that he discovered the new, revolutionary and creative. We must always look for the new, he would say to us, by studying the new, advocating and implementing it we could do anything. Soon after the triumph of the

revolution, he wrote the book “New Life”. In the early years of the resistance, he wrote the book “Improving one’s way of working”. He wanted to renovate the style of the party leadership, the way of thinking and working of Party members, and the life of society. These days we were carrying out this work of renovation in accordance with the resolutions of the 6<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, thus continuing to develop his ideas about respect for the new.’ p57

‘Unity in the Party and international solidarity on a fair and reasonable bases is the tradition of our Party. All of you know that Uncle Ho did everything he could to restore unity among the fraternal parties. Comrade Andropov later said, ‘President Ho Chi Minh’s policy of unity is absolutely correct; he has said he is prepared to do anything possible to help restore Sino-Soviet unity’. The great thing was that, thanks to the spirit of international solidarity upheld by him and our Party, throughout our anti-US war of resistance, even though relationships between the Soviet Union and China were unsatisfactory, both fraternal countries united with us and gave total support to our people’s resistance. Unity is vital but must be realised on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in a fair and reasonable manner. Reason should come first and then fairness. That is a matter of principle. This issue is still one of burning importance today.’ p59

### **The World Keeps Changing, but the Thoughts of Ho Chi Minh Will Live For Ever**

(Speech delivered at the International Symposium on President Ho Chi Minh, held in Calcutta, India. January 1991)

‘This international Symposium, together with the erection of a statue of President Ho Chi Minh, constitutes a major event which adds to the richness of the fine annals of friendship between Vietnam and India.’ p62

‘Imbued with a profound love for his country and people, and with his deep sympathy for the plight of millions of wretched people, Nguyen Ai Quoc turned to Leninism in 1920. The road to national salvation is that of proletarian revolution. Patriotism is closely linked with genuine internationalism. National independence is linked with the liberation of society, of mankind. That is the essence of the thoughts of Ho Chi Minh.’ p63

‘But today, under the leadership of the Communist Party, it also continues to develop with imagination in order to find the road of transition to socialism, the road of renewal towards building a peaceful, civilized and happy life for the entire people of Vietnam, for every Vietnamese citizen.’ p64

‘Today, the ideal ‘Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom’ had retained its vitality. Having gained political independence, developing countries still have to struggle against all neo-colonialist forces which are making use of their financial, technical, and technological power to plunder them and keep them in a state of backwardness and dependence: in other words, they are, in fact, carrying out ‘re-colonization’.’ p67

‘For President Ho Chi Minh, national independence is always linked to the people’s freedom and happiness. He said, ‘The country may be independent, but if the people do not enjoy their freedom and happiness, that independence has no meaning’. He also said, ‘I have only one desire, the strongest desire, that is, to see to it that our country is fully independent and that all compatriots are well-fed, well-dressed and have the opportunity to learn’. This recalls Mahatma Ghandi, who also said that he would strive for an India where there would be no nobles and no pariahs, an India where all communities would live in harmony.’ p67

‘Steadfast in strategy, he proved to be extremely flexible in tactics, and many times he tried to make concessions, sometimes important ones, to preserve peace for his nation. But the greater the concessions he made, the more the enemy took advantage of them.’ pp71-72

‘We are doing our best to fulfil his last wish, that is, to develop a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, strong and prosperous Vietnam in favourable new conditions, but also in the face of immense difficulties. These difficulties arise from our backward economy and many decades of war, to which should be added economic blockade and embargo by imperialist forces, the influence of the changes in Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union and a very complex world situation.’ p72

‘India, a land of peace and friendship.’ p72

‘Nobody can predict what is going to happen in the Persian Gulf tomorrow and beyond.’ p72

‘..... there is a widening of the gap between the developed and developing countries. With their subtle ruses, the developed countries have been taking advantage of their technological, commercial and financial strength and the world’s most powerful mass media to control the political situation, infiltrate poor countries by economic, cultural and ideological means with a view to creating an ever-widening inequality in

the North-South relationship, heaping on to the shoulders of developing countries an enormous debt burden.’ pp72-73

‘The Vietnamese people are stepping up a multi-faceted process of renovation across the country. We understand all the more clearly the statement of President Ho Chi Minh: “his is a grim struggle against what is old-fashioned and useless, in order to create what is new and full of vitality; this struggle cannot come to a successful conclusion without relying on the strength of the entire people’. This cause of renovation has achieved significant initial results. Our Party is carrying out a policy of broadening democracy, encouraging the whole nation to take part in the platform and strategy for development of the economy and society to be presented at the coming 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress.’ p73