

Strategic Plan Of The Major Countries At The Geneva Conference On Indochina And The Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

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Abstract:

On July 21, 1954, the Geneva Accords on Indochina was signed in Geneva, Switzerland, ending the Vietnamese people's long-term resistance war against the French colonialists, completely liberating North Vietnam, opening a new phase of the Vietnamese revolution with the aim of reunifying the country. The signing of the Geneva Accords on Indochina confirmed the first international legal recognition of the three Indochina countries signed and recognized by the major countries attending the Conference. In particular, for Vietnam, this is also the first time that major countries have had to recognize Vietnam's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, creating a very important premise and legal basis for Vietnam to continue its struggle against the intervention and aggression of the US imperialists.

Many foreign and Vietnamese scholars have researched and published many works in the form of books and articles from different perspectives and approaches regarding the Geneva Conference and Accords on Indochina. In this article, the author approaches from the perspective of a researcher about the two wars against France and the US of the Vietnamese people on the basis of accessing published domestic and international open sources with the hope of clarifying three issues: 1. Analyzing and clarifying the international context at the time of the Geneva Conference on Indochina; 2. Clarifying strategic intentions and purposes of major countries attending the Geneva Conference on Indochina; 3. Clarifying the position of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam towards the Geneva Conference on the restoration of peace in Indochina.

Keywords: Geneva Accords, Geneva Conference, Indochina, Vietnam, France, USA, the Soviet Union, Britain, China.

1. The international context before the Geneva Conference

Vietnam's resistance war against the French colonialists entered its final stage in the years 1953-1954 in a very complicated international context. Especially, from the middle of 1953, new factors appeared affecting the development direction of the war in Indochina.

The cold war was in a fierce period. Two opposing political systems fought each other fiercely.

American anti-communism grew wildly after the success of the Chinese revolution, Besides, the Korean War broke out, and Communist parties successively won in a number of Western European countries. The national liberation movement that thrived, especially in Indochina, was viewed by the US and European colonial powers as another attack point of the red wave directed by Moscow to collapse the rear of Western colonialism. Facing that situation, the US anti-communist ruling group led by Eisenhower - Dulles switched from the "flexible response" strategy to prevent and repel communism of the Truman administration to the strategy of "massive retaliation" and the foreign policy of "the brink of war". In Asia, the US intervened in North Korea and supported France in the Indochina war. In Europe, after the establishment of NATO, the US tried to form forces to establish a European defense community to rearm Germany and prepare to bring Germany into NATO.

Negotiations on the Korean War started from August 1951 to July 1953 on the basis of maintaining the status quo of the two Koreas. The outcome of the Korean War promoted the tendency to resolve armed conflicts in the Far East by peaceful negotiation and initiated the process of major powers seeking to resolve the Indochina problem through an international solution.

According to the Soviet Union and China, the armistice in Korea showed that international disputes can be resolved by negotiation and the armistice in Korea could prompt an end to the war in Indochina. In a note sent to major countries on August 4, 1953, the Soviet Union first suggested convening a conference of five major countries, including Britain, the United States, France, the Soviet Union and China, to study measures to reduce tensions in the Far East. Due to being mired in a war of aggression and increasingly strongly opposed at home, the French Government expressed interest in a negotiated solution to Indochina within the framework of a plurilateral conference.

Dr. Tham Thi Hoang / Strategic Plan of The Major Countries at The Geneva Conference on Indochina And the Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

After the death of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Stalin in March 1953, the new leadership of the Soviet Union adjusted its foreign strategy and promoted international détente to strengthen domestic strength, and competed with the US to gain advantages in all fields.

The People's Republic of China implements the first year of the first five-year economic development plan to lay the foundation for building socialism in China. It promoted the policy of peaceful coexistence, first of all with Asian countries, in order to break the blockade and embargo imposed by the US against China since 1951, after China sent volunteer troops to Korea to aid the North to fight the US.

From 1950 to 1954, in the context of the new national economic recovery, especially when China had just undergone the North Korean war against the US, both the Soviet Union and China gave the Democratic Republic of Vietnam very important material aid, including weapons, ammunition, military equipment, military medicine, information, and engineers (shown in Table 1).

Table 1: International aid to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam

Year	Weight	Value
1950	3,983 tons	
1951	6,086 tons	
1952	2,156 tons	
1953	4,400 tons	
1954	4,892 tons	
Total	21,517 tons	136 million yuan (34 million rubles)

(Source: War Review Steering Committee under the Politburo: Summary of the resistance war against the French colonialists, victories and lessons. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 1996, p.459.)

In Indochina, the French army's morale declined. Their policy of using the Vietnamese to fight the Vietnamese, using the war to feed the war did not bring France the desired results. Massive aid from the US also did not help the French expeditionary army in Indochina to turn the tide of the war. The US increased its intervention and involvement in Indochina, providing weapons and money to France, along with puppet troops and puppet power. From 1950 to 1953, The US's war supplies to France increased tenfold. The US placed Indochina in the anti-communist line of The US in the Asia-Pacific, as Secretary of State Dulles stated on January 13, 1954: "Strategically, The US's interests in the Far East are closely linked to the islands on the coast of that region. Those islands have two bases on the mainland: to the north is Korea and to the south is Indochina. Between those two fortresses are the islands of Japan, Ryukyu, Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand..." [1]. On the other hand, the US both pressured and enlisted the French government to ratify a treaty on defense in Europe and restoring West Germany.

American financial aid to France also increased continuously, accounting for an increasing proportion of France's war costs in Indochina. In 1950 it was 19%, in 1952 it increased to 35%, in 1953 it increased to 43% and in 1954 it increased to 73%, (specifically shown in Table 2).

Table 2: Military equipment transferred without charge from the US to France in Indochina

Year	Weight	Value	Note
1950	11,009 tons		<i>Source: Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Asia-Oceania, Memorandum of Understanding on American Aid to Indochina, November 30, 1953).</i>
1951	72,021 tons		
1952	94,041 tons		
Feb 1953	137,000 tons	2,600 (million USD)	<i>Source: Pentagon Papers, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, t.1, p.200.</i>
Jul 1954	150,000 tons		

Thus, in order to enlist France to actively fulfill its obligations in NATO and join European Defence Community, the US increased aid to France, which was bogged down in Indochina. Aid skyrocketed in the last years of the war, starting with 10 million USD in 1950, which increased to over 2 billion USD in 1954, accounting for 80% of all French military spending in Indochina.

In July 1953, the Pléven government sent Navarr to be the commander-in-chief of the French army in Indochina with a complete grand military strategy to win a great military victory to end the war within two years, creating strength for negotiations. This plan is supported by the US government.

The military and diplomatic calculations of the French government were set against strong internal pressures. The war lasted, the French socio-economic situation became increasingly difficult. Besides, the French people's movement against the war developed strongly and spread, with many strikes and huge demonstrations. The French Communist Party won a great victory in the National Assembly elections. Bao Dai Solution failed. At the end of October 1953, the French National Assembly heatedly discussed the

Dr. Tham Thi Hoang / Strategic Plan of The Major Countries at The Geneva Conference on Indochina And the Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

Indochina war. Many French parliamentarians demanded that the government immediately negotiate with Ho Chi Minh's government.

In order to strongly influence France's internal affairs and take advantage of world opinion, when answering the Swedish newspaper *Expressen* on November 26, 1953, President Ho Chi Minh declared: "At present, if the French colonialists continue the war of aggression, Vietnamese people are determined to continue the patriotic war to the final victory. But if the French government has learned lessons from the war in recent years and they want to come to an armistice in Vietnam by negotiating and settling the Vietnamese problem in a peaceful way, then the people and government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are ready to follow that wish... The basis of the armistice in Vietnam is that the French government sincerely respects the true independence of Vietnam".[2] President Ho Chi Minh also added: "The truce negotiation is mainly a matter between the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the government of France" [3].

On December 19, 1953, in his appeal on the occasion of the 7th anniversary of the national resistance war (December 19, 1946 - December 19, 1953), President Ho Chi Minh once again declared to the Vietnamese and French people: "Because the French colonialists continued the war of aggression, the Vietnamese people were determined to fight harder, to destroy more enemy vitality, and to fight to the final victory. But if the French government wants to come to an armistice in Vietnam by negotiating and wants to solve the Vietnamese problem in a peaceful way, then the people and government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are also willing to talk".[4]

President Ho's statement resonated greatly in the world, especially in France. Many French organizations and politicians eagerly demanded that the Laniel government negotiate with Ho Chi Minh's government. Under pressure from public opinion, on November 12, 1953, Prime Minister Laniel had to declare: "If an honorable solution emerges in the local or international context, France will gladly accept a diplomatic solution to the conflict". On December 3, 1954, the French government announced that they wanted to know the position of the "other side" (ie, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) by official means and expressed its consideration of restoring peace and ensuring the independence of "associated countries" in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

To deploy the Navarr plan, on November 20, 1953, the French sent their troops to parachute to Dien Bien Phu. At the same time, the Vietnamese Army successfully conducted campaigns in the Northwest, Area V, and coordinated with the Pathet Lao troops to carry out the Autumn-Winter campaign, winning in Central Laos, Upper Laos and many other places. From the beginning of 1954, the Vietnamese army formed a siege position to prepare to attack and surround Dien Bien Phu with the determination to destroy a large group of strongpoints where most of the French mobile forces were concentrated, creating a new transformation for the situation of the resistance war to save the country.

At the foreign ministers' conference of the four major occupiers in Germany in Berlin from January 25 to February 18, 1954 on the settlement of major outstanding international political issues, after the West rejected the Soviet Union's proposals to neutralize and settle the German and Austrian problems and sign a European treaty on common security without the US, the Soviet Union proposed to hold a new meeting of foreign ministers of four major countries and with the participation of foreign ministers of the People's Republic of China to discuss the Korean and the Indochina issue. Because of the North Korea issue, the US agreed to the participation of Foreign Minister of China but cautioned that this should not be considered diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China. Britain and France completely agreed to the proposal for the Chinese Foreign Minister to attend the Conference. On February 18, 1954, the Conference ended with a final statement, proposing to convene the Conference in Geneva for an international conference on North Korea including delegates: the US, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China on April 26, 1954, the two Koreas and other countries having armies engaged in war in Korea in order to find a political solution to the Korean issue. This conference, with the participation of delegates from the US, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, China and "other concerned countries" also considered the issue of restoring peace in Indochina.

World public opinion welcomed the announcement on February 18, 1954 of the four countries. On February 20, 1954, Prime Minister of India Neru called for a ceasefire in Indochina to facilitate the discussion of the Indochina issue at the Geneva Conference. On February 25, 1954, Foreign Minister of Indonesia announced his support for Prime Minister Neru's call. China approved the meeting of the International Conference in Geneva.

France was authorized by Britain and the US to negotiate with the Soviet Union on the composition of "other concerned countries" attending the International Conference on Indochina in Geneva. On April 27, 1954, in Geneva, the two foreign ministers of France and the Soviet Union discussed this issue. Foreign Minister of France Bidault proposed to invite five countries according to the Berlin Communiqué, the "three linked countries" in Indochina and possibly Thailand and Burma. Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union Molotov proposed to invite 5 countries as stated in the Berlin Communiqué and 4 concerned countries in Indochina (including the Kingdom of Laos, the Kingdom of Cambodia, Bao Dai's State of Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam). On May 2, 1954, Britain, France, and the US agreed to the Soviet Union's 9-party plan.

2. Strategic intentions of major countries attending the Geneva International Conference on Indochina

The strategic goal of the US was to take advantage of the cold war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to impose an American-style peace on the whole world, first of all within the capitalist system. Despite the process of rising to occupy the position of world hegemony, the US had a great conspiracy, but its power is not limitless. The US lost its monopoly on nuclear weapons when the Soviet Union successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in August 1953 and continued to research and manufacture

Dr. Tham Thi Hoang / Strategic Plan of The Major Countries at The Geneva Conference on Indochina And the Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

missiles to cross the continent and after the Soviet siege and blockade of Berlin, the US found it impossible to continue unilaterally solving the existing problems of the second world war, mainly the issue of Germany entering Austria but must be resolved within the framework of negotiations between the four great powers occupying Germany (the Soviet Union, the US, Britain and France). Especially, the US finally pushed the Chinese-Korean forces back to their original starting position at the 38th parallel, the US came to the conclusion that "never engage in another war on the Asian continent". The famous American journalist Walter Lippmann said in a simile that "the US is like a whale and China is like an elephant", the two sides can do nothing about each other. Because of fear of another clash with China in Indochina, the Eisenhower administration rejected all plans proposed by the US military, such as hitting China's Hainan island or the "Falcon" operation proposed by American and French generals to save the French at Dien Bien Phu. Although the ability of the US is limited, the plot of the US is very malicious. After the armistice in North Korea, the US tried to help France and advised the French to fight to the end in Vietnam and Indochina. The deep, basic and main intention of the US is to try to keep Indochina from falling into communist hands so that later the US can jump in and knock the French out, turning Indochina into a new US colony. On the other hand, the US tried to promote the establishment of the US-led SEATO bloc to serve as a stronghold against communism in this region. The US plan was finally accepted by Britain and France, so SEATO was officially on September 8, 1954.

The greatest interest of Britain and France after the second world war was to restore the colonial system lost in the war. To achieve this goal, Britain and France on the one hand had to rely on the US for economic recovery after the war, on the other hand, they had to be wary of the "Americanization" plot of the British and French colonies. Therefore, although they still had to follow the US in international anti-communist policy, Britain and France tried their best to make peace with the Soviet Union (in matters of Germany and Austria) and with China (in matters in Southeast Asia). Britain has huge colonial interests in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong and believes that communist movements in Southeast Asian countries are manipulated by China. Therefore, Britain strongly opposed the intention of the US in the "falcon" operation to save the French at Dien Bien Phu and did not agree with the establishment of SEATO bloc before the Geneva Accords on Indochina for fear of losing Hong Kong and would be drawn into a confrontation with China in this area. Therefore, it was British policy at this time to support France to the best of its ability while avoiding being drawn into a collective military intervention. Solving the Indochinese problem calms the Far East in favor of consolidating the "Commonwealth" in Asia, at a time when Britain was dealing with a communist guerrilla movement in Malaysia. France had main interests in Indochina - where France and China signed many benefit-sharing Accords before 1954. On the other hand, France also prevented the US from taking advantage of helping France in Indochina to gradually push France out of Indochina. Therefore, despite being pressed by the US, France still limited the activities of the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG). France was reluctant to give the governments of Indochina under the French union (the puppet governments of Bao Dai, Laos and Cambodia), independence, and especially the building of their own armies led by American military advisers.

Regarding the Soviet Union, after Stalin's death, Khrushchev carried out a plan to seize power, creating fierce internal infighting in the Soviet government. "Beria was executed for "spying for the empire" and for advocating the sale of East Germany to the empire. Malenkov was stripped of his position as chairman of the Council of Ministers because he "was not qualified to lead a country as large as the Soviet Union" and had previously been harshly criticized for his "crime of speaking like Beria in East Germany". V. Molotov, the second figure after Stalin, was also criticized for the issue of Germany and Austria and opposing the policy of normalizing relations with Yugoslavia (according to secret documents that Yeltsin gave to Korea and published by the US in the international historical project on the cold war)" [5]. This infighting lasted from 1953 until 1975 after Field Marshal Giukov was deposed.

In terms of foreign affairs, Khrushchev advocated conciliation with the West, first of all with the US. But in order to make peace on the strength, " Khrushchev used rhetorical, rough, even very aggressive words such as "will make imperialism die like a fish in a pan of boiling oil"[6]. On the other hand, they still keep the negotiation mechanism between the four major countries on the issue of Germany and Austria and let China play the main role in solving Far East issues. This is what many see as an international division between the Soviet Union and China. The intentions of the Soviet Union met China's desire to rise to become a great power in the region. Therefore, in finding a solution to the Indochina problem, the Soviet Union and China had a high consensus.

China expressed its approval and welcome to the meeting of the Geneva International Conference because in the 1950s, China had just liberated and quickly became the second largest country in the socialist system with the third largest country in the world but the population was the first in the world. On the international political chessboard, China did not have a commensurate political position. "China came to the Geneva Conference with an unclear status, not fully recognized international status, not accepted by the United Nations. China was recognized by only a small number of non-communist countries. Moreover, had relatively few economic relations with Western countries" [7]. Therefore, the Soviet Union's proposal at the Berlin Conference for the People's Republic of China to attend the Geneva International Conference was also China's wish to consider the Geneva International Conference as the first official step for China to step out into the world as a major country, establishing its position as a major power on the world political chessboard.

On the other hand, China came to the Geneva Conference not only to solve the Indochina problem. At the Geneva Conference, China also set two other quite important goals. The first is to normalize relations with Western Europe, first in terms of trade and diplomacy. China's goal in the economic field was, first of all, to deal with the US embargo policy (the US is besieging most of the gateways to the outside world). China tried to find a way to open up to the West, hoped to strengthen trade agreements with foreign

Dr. Tham Thi Hoang / Strategic Plan of The Major Countries at The Geneva Conference on Indochina And the Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

countries, especially with Western European countries, so that it can quickly develop its economy, carry out the project of industrialization and modernization of the country, and quickly establish an international position in the international arena. [8]. To achieve that goal, China believed that Indochina will be the best bridge for China to access Britain, France and Western European countries. China often emphasized European interests, especially those of France and Britain in Asia, and often contrasted them with American interests. The interests of Britain and France were markedly different from those of the US. During the Geneva Conference, China also directed its great diplomatic efforts to other Western European countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The second goal of China is to become a major member of the Geneva Conference. "China wants to reassure and exert political influence over Asian countries. The People's Republic of China has become not only an Asian power but also a world power, to discuss European and other international issues, and to join the United Nations. China's role as a great power in Asia must be recognized (i.e. no problem here can be resolved without China's contribution)" [9]. Zhou Enlai's trip to India and Burma in June 1954 was no exception.

China's primary goal at the Geneva Conference was to have a peaceful solution in Indochina, especially after the losses on the North Korean battlefield. According to Gabriel Kolko, after the armistice in North Korea in the summer of 1953, China endorsed the Soviet position that the Indochina problem should be resolved according to the North Korean solution. They were interested in a peaceful and quick solution to the Indochina war with two purposes. In the short term, they avoided re-igniting a crisis that is incompatible with China's interests, eliminated the possibility of direct Chinese intervention as well as the possibility of direct US intervention in the peninsula. The second goal was to build a new balance in Indochina, to "stretch" the Indochinese issue. "During its time at the Geneva Conference, China showed a tendency to create many separate countries in the Indochinese peninsula. According to China's calculations, only maintaining a certain presence of France can avoid massive US intervention in Indochina. Thus, with the diplomatic talent of Chinese leaders, China is a country that has gained many benefits during its time working at the Geneva Conference. However, China was not able to stop the US plot to replace France in South Vietnam and infiltrate Laos and Cambodia.

Thus, although Vietnam's two main allies, the Soviet Union and China, participated in the Geneva Conference with the aim of enlisting France, both wanting a peaceful solution in Indochina, and both wanting to make peace with the US and the West, to calm the world situation in order to take advantage of the country's recovery and development. However, both the Soviet Union and China had different purposes. The Soviet Union had a need to enlist France to prevent France from joining the European Defense Community while China was concerned with keeping France in South Vietnam, preventing the US from jumping into Vietnam (threatening China's territory), avoiding confrontation with the US like in North Korea.

3. The position of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam towards the Geneva International Conference on Indochina

The negotiating position regarding Indochina of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was stated by President Ho Chi Minh in an interview with the Swedish newspaper Expressen on November 26, 1953. According to President Ho Chi Minh, "Resolutely resisting the war until the final victory, but also willing to negotiate for the purpose of peaceful settlement of the Vietnam issue"[11]. President Ho Chi Minh also stated that the position of the Vietnam Labor Party is that "peace cannot be separated from national independence. In order to solve the Vietnam problem peacefully, France must stop the war of aggression, respect the true independence of Vietnam, and talk directly to each other"[12]. The 92 Notice of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party dated December 27, 1953, stated: "Based on the relationship of forces between us and the enemy at this time, the conditions for peace negotiation are not yet ripe"[13]. President Ho Chi Minh's declaration was a political and diplomatic attack to isolate the enemy, divide the enemy's ranks, promote Vietnam's goodwill, and promote the possibility of a peaceful settlement of Vietnam and Indochina.

In February 1954, the four major countries agreed to convene the Geneva Conference on Indochina, and Vietnam welcomed and supported the convening of the Conference and considered it "a great victory for the democratic peace faction, to take a step forward to ease world tensions" [14]. At the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Union of Vietnam Committee on March 31, 1954, a decision was made to support the Geneva Conference and "People's Newspaper No. 181 published on May 1, 1954 wrote: The Geneva Conference in the current international situation has an important meaning. Nearly 10 years after the end of the second world war, there was a conference among the 5 major countries to find ways to reduce the tension in the world situation... The peaceful settlement of the North Korean issue and the restoration of peace in Indochina is an urgent requirement of the people of Asia and the people of the whole world. That is why the Geneva Conference is welcomed by the people of the world. The people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia welcomed and supported the Geneva Conference, supported the position of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China at the Conference, and together with the French people resolutely fight for the Geneva Conference to come to a good outcome.[15].

A week before the Geneva Conference began to discuss the issue of Indochina, on May 1, 1954, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party commented: "We do not overestimate the Geneva Conference, but we should not miss the opportunity, we must make the most of it so that the Geneva Conference can begin to go to other meetings"[16].

After Vietnam's military victory in the winter-spring campaign of 1953-1954, at the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Vietnam Workers' Party (July 15-18, 1954), the characteristics of the situation and position of Vietnam were clearly indicated.

Dr. Tham Thi Hoang / Strategic Plan of The Major Countries at The Geneva Conference on Indochina And the Position Of The Democratic Republic Of Vietnam On The Issue Of Restoring Peace In Indochina In 1954

Accordingly, there were currently two opposing paths: the line of peace proposed by the Soviet Union and the line of war presided over by the US imperialists. The Vietnamese people followed the path of peace. The situation in Indochina had two development possibilities: the possibility of prolonging and expanding the war and the possibility of restoring peace in Indochina by means of peaceful negotiation. The Vietnamese people were trying their best to make the second possibility real. When peace was realized, it would benefit the people of Indochina and the people of the world and thus break the long-standing plot to expand the Indochina war of the US imperialists and make the situation in Southeast Asia and the world less tense. Previously, Vietnam advocated a long-term resistance war. Now, due to the changing situation, Vietnam advocated using the negotiation method to restore peace in Indochina.

At the same time, in the strategic decisive battle at Dien Bien Phu, the whole Vietnamese army and people were determined to win the historic campaign, which would have very important military, political and diplomatic significance, affecting the negotiations at the Geneva Conference and the entire war. On May 7, 1954, the French fortress group in Dien Bien Phu was annihilated. On May 8, 1954, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam delegation entered the Geneva Conference in the position of winner.

The delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam attended the Geneva Conference led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Van Dong. On April 10, 1954, reporting to the National Assembly of Vietnam on the policy of struggle at the Geneva Conference, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Van Dong stated: The position of the people and government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the issue of restoring peace in Indochina is peace, independence, unity and democracy.

Vietnam's resistance war for national salvation was a comprehensive, all-people war. The forces of both sides were intertwined, the battlefield was complicated and there was no front line so it was very different from the North Korean War. Therefore, in order to restore peace, there needed to be a total solution both militarily and politically. Military aspects must include issues of cease-fire, withdrawal of foreign troops, regulation and adjustment of the garrison area, gathering of troops, return of prisoners, etc.

The political solution was to solve the problem of independence, unity and democracy. The way to solve political problems was to hold a general election, specifying who organized and the time limit for conducting the general election.

The Vietnam War has extended to Laos and Cambodia. In these two countries, there were French troops, there was a Kingdom government associated with France, there were patriotic resistance forces, and there were Vietnamese volunteer troops fighting side by side. It was not possible to only solve the Vietnam war separately, but to solve the Laos and Cambodia battlefields at the same time, and restore peace throughout Indochina. Therefore, the initial general plan of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was to demand that the French recognize the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people, withdraw all troops from the Indochina. Vietnam was planning a temporary gathering area for armed forces on both sides. In Vietnam, the Vietnamese government initially planned to use the 13th parallel with Quy Nhon as the boundary of the gathering area on both sides.

In terms of politics, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam delegation proposed to hold free general elections by voting to form a unified government for each Indochinese country. The deadline for general elections is as early as possible. The major features of this option were reflected in the 8-point proposal presented by the head of the delegation Pham Van Dong at the Geneva Conference on May 10, 1954.

Although there was an agreement of major countries to convene the Geneva Conference on Indochina, however, when Dien Bien Phu was about to fall, before the urgent request of France, the American political and military circles discussed a number of military adventure plans to save the group of strongholds. The "hawks" in the US raised the idea of launching large-scale bombing raids in the area around Dien Bien Phu. They suggested atomic bombs on Chinese territory bordering Vietnam and sending the US army into the war... However, both President Eisenhower and leaders in the US Congress hesitated, asking for unified action with France and Britain. Meanwhile, France only wanted to use conventional bombing and use the threat of the US to block China's ability to directly intervene. They did not want the war to expand, which affected the prospects for peace negotiations at the Geneva Conference. The British government did not want to be dragged into the military escalation in Indochina, arguing that *if negotiations at the Geneva Conference were unsuccessful, then the Allies would consider collective military measures*.

Conclude

Thus, the Geneva Conference on Indochina in 1954 with the full participation of 5 major countries in the world and the complicated calculations and intentions of those countries when attending the Conference, partly reflected the trend of world politics and the relationship of forces between the two factions after the second world war, with the reality of dividing Germany and North Korea without a political solution. However, with Vietnam's resolute position at the Conference, major countries were forced to recognize the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people as independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, creating a legal basis for the Vietnamese people to fight against US intervention and aggression in the following years.

About the author

Hoang Thi Tham is currently a lecturer at the University of Commerce in Hanoi, Vietnam. She successfully defended her doctoral thesis and received a PhD in History majoring in History of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 2019. Her main research includes historical issues in the two resistance wars against French and American aggression in Vietnam from 1945 to 1975.

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