

THE PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING A PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC STATE ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT HO CHI MINH DURING THE WAR OF RESISTANCE AGAINST FRENCH COLONIALISM (1945–1954)

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Abstract

Over 15 years (1930–1945), under the leadership of the Party, the Vietnamese nation overcame numerous challenges to seize power in the 1945 August Revolution and establish the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In this article, the author synthesizes and systematizes materials, studies, evaluates, and draws out some fundamental principles that the Party and President Ho Chi Minh applied in the process of building a state of the people, laying the foundation for the long-term revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people. Vietnam has favorable conditions for comprehensive national development in the context of renewal and deep international integration. However, difficulties and challenges persist, external forces oppose the state-building efforts, and the degeneration and corruption of some officials and Party members have significantly affected the leadership role and credibility of the Party and government. Therefore, understanding the principles in building and organizing the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under the direct leadership of President Ho Chi Minh during the First Resistance War (1945–1954) is certainly of practical significance, providing further experience for the construction and organization of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, a state of the people, by the people, and for the people in the current context of national development.

Keywords: People’s democracy; President Ho Chi Minh; Principles; State-building; The period from 1945 to 1954.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The success of the August Revolution [*Cách mạng tháng Tám*] in 1945 overthrew the Japanese fascist regime and reclaimed independence for the Vietnamese nation. President Ho Chi Minh, along with the Communist Party of Vietnam (generally referred to as the Party), established a state unprecedented in Vietnamese history: a democratic republic—the first people’s democratic state in Southeast Asia. This state emerged from the national liberation movement, distinguishing it from the establishment of the revolutionary government in the Paris Commune of 1871, which was the first revolution of the working class and laboring people that toppled the bourgeois government, or from the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, which overthrew the ruling class and established the Soviet republic.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam [*Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa*] itself organized, operated, and safeguarded the achievements of the 1945 August Revolution and won the war against French colonial aggression (Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, 1986; Viện Lịch sử quân sự Việt Nam, 1994). Under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam laid the foundation for the long-term revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people.

To date, there have been several studies addressing the immense value and significance of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [*Chính phủ lâm thời Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa*]. Some of the issues discussed include the significance of the August Revolution for building socialism in the North (Nguyễn, 1961); evaluating and clarifying the theoretical foundations for the formation of the people’s democratic state [*Nhà nước dân chủ nhân dân*] in Vietnam (Trần, 2015); preserving national unity during the prolonged resistance (Nguyễn, 2020; Nguyễn, 2022); and the changes in the political system since the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Phạm, 2017). The author argues that the principles of building and organizing a government of the people, by the people, and for the people during that period remain highly relevant for the Party and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in their state-building efforts amidst deep international integration today.

2. PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING A PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC STATE

2.1. National independence, sovereignty, and the commitment to serving the country being the fundamental principles guiding the organization and functioning of the government

The establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the people’s democratic state thwarted the ambitions of various political parties in Vietnam that relied on external forces to undermine the national liberation movement of the Vietnamese people under the banner of the Viet Minh (Hồ, 2000, p. 528).

The revolutionary government emphasized the principle of national independence. In the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed and announced to the

world the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Tổng bộ Việt Minh, 1945, p. 1). He pointed out the significant values of human equality stated in the United States Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen from the French Revolution, asserting that these are legitimate rights of every individual—human rights. However, at that time, Vietnam was a nation under foreign domination, and the country had lost its independence, so individual equality within the community depended on the interests of the entire nation. National independence was prioritized above the interests of particular groups, social classes, and the democratic rights and equality of each person. The Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945 expressed a fundamental truth for the Vietnamese people as a constant: The equality and democracy of individuals is a process that must originate from and be based on the equality of society as a whole and the independence of the entire nation. The responsibility of the revolutionary government at that time was to protect the government and safeguard the independence of the country. This was the sacred duty and responsibility of the people’s democratic state.

In the early days of independence, the young people’s democratic state faced numerous difficulties, as domestic reactionary forces relied on hundreds of thousands of northern troops to carry out their scheme of “eliminating communism and capturing Ho Chi Minh” [*diệt Cộng, cầm Hồ*] (Bộ Công an, 2006, p. 93). After these forces withdrew from the North, the most dangerous enemy of the nation at that time was the French colonialists, who, with the support of their British allies, launched a war aimed at annihilating the revolutionary government and re-establishing colonial rule.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was isolated amidst the encirclement of imperialism. At the time, in Southeast Asia and across Asia, no state had seized power through a national liberation movement in a proletarian revolution, progressing towards class and social liberation like the revolution of the Vietnamese people.¹ Meanwhile, some influential figures in the international communist and labor movements did not fully understand the revolutionary process in Vietnam, leading them to doubt that Ho Chi Minh—the leader of the Vietnamese revolution—despite being part of the international communist movement, still favored national liberation.

As a true communist who understood the power of the Vietnamese people stemming from a profound love for their country and a strong spirit of national independence, President Ho Chi Minh had a clear understanding of how class liberation and national liberation were interconnected in the Vietnamese revolution. Therefore, immediately after seizing power, Ho Chi Minh—serving as both president and prime minister—raised the strategic slogan “The fatherland above all, the nation above all” [*Tổ quốc trên hết, dân tộc trên hết*] for the government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This was the supreme principle in the resistance and state-building efforts of the Vietnamese nation under the leadership of Uncle Ho (*Bác Hồ*—the colloquial name of

¹ From July 1954 onwards, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam transitioned to building socialism.

President Ho Chi Minh) throughout the nine years of resistance against French colonialism.

The process of implementing the policy that the interests of classes, groups, and individuals must be subordinate to the survival and existence of the entire nation, as advocated by leader Ho Chi Minh, created the great unity of the entire Vietnamese people during the August Revolution. Throughout the period of resistance against French colonialism (1945–1954), this policy continued to be upheld and elevated by the people’s democratic state. The government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam prioritized national independence and sovereignty as the supreme principle, serving the nation above all. This established the immense strength of the Vietnamese people, ultimately defeating the invading professional army of the French colonialists.

National independence is the sacred aspiration of the entire Vietnamese people. It is the common thread running through all government activities since the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. From the directives of leader Ho Chi Minh regarding the Vietnamese revolutionary cause before 1945 to the period of resistance against American colonialism: “Even if we have to burn down the entire Annamite Range, we must resolutely secure our independence” [*Dù phải đốt cháy cả dãy Trường Sơn cũng phải kiên quyết giành cho được độc lập*] (Võ, 2011, p. 129). The spirit of national salvation became the enduring truth: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom” [*Không có gì quý hơn độc lập tự do*] (Hồ, 2011b, p. 131).

From the practical historical context of the modern world, with events occurring that reflect both deep international integration and an increasing risk of conflict (in all aspects, including politics, economics, military, and culture) present across every continent, the ideology of building a state that prioritizes national independence and sovereignty as the supreme principle, with serving the nation and the people above all, has become the highest responsibility of the government of the modernday Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

2.2. Building a lean, intelligent, and dynamic administrative apparatus

According to the 1946 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the government consists of the president, the vice president, and the cabinet. The cabinet includes the prime minister, ministers, and deputy ministers, and may also include a deputy prime minister (Lê et al., 2006, p. 403). During the resistance war against the French (1945–1954), the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam included one president, one vice president, one prime minister (with the president also serving as prime minister), one deputy prime minister, and about 13 to 15 ministries (Trần, 1984, pp. 109–110). Through four rounds of government restructuring, nearly 69 members participated in this body. On August 27, 1945, at the suggestion of President Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Committee [*Ủy ban Dân tộc Giải phóng*] was restructured into the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. On January 1, 1946, the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was reorganized into the Provisional Coalition Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [*Chính phủ Liên hiệp lâm thời nước Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa*] (Việt Nam Dân chủ Cộng hòa,

1946, p. 1). On March 3, 1946, the Resistance Coalition Government [*Chính phủ liên hiệp kháng chiến*] was established and presented to the national assembly (Tổng bộ Việt Minh, 1946a, pp. 1–2). On November 3, 1946, Ho Chi Minh established a new government and affirmed: “This government embodies the spirit of national unity, emphasizes practicality, and is dedicated to achieving independence and territorial integrity while working to build a new Vietnam” (Tổng bộ Việt Minh, 1946a, p. 1).

Due to the objective of building a streamlined administrative apparatus, the personnel in government agencies and ministries are typically kept small and often face reductions.² According to the government’s overall policy, the ministries are responsible for advising the Council of Government [*Hội đồng Chính phủ*] on managing activities within their specific sectors. After several years of operation, the government has advocated for strengthening interministerial cooperation. Economic, political, and social sectors hold interconnected conferences and coordinate activities in the issuance and implementation of interministerial directives.

The members of the government are relatively young, with about 75% of them being middle-aged (between 31 and 50 years old). The number of older members (over 50 years old) accounts for about 25%. In the history of the Vietnamese government from 1945 to 2024, members of the Resistance Coalition Government (1945–1954) had the youngest average age (Bảo tàng Cách mạng Việt Nam, 2000; Lê et al., 2006, p. 403). At middle age, government members had sufficient health to endure the hardships of the resistance war while living and operating in mountainous regions.

In the years from 1945 to 1954, a total of 69 members participated in the government, including 30 members from the Communist Party, 22 from other political parties, and 17 who were nonpartisan³ (Lê et al., 2006, pp. 39–40, 53, 59, 149). Despite this structure, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was a united political organization, with members working to govern the country based on the principle of national unity.

In his highest capacity within the government, with his political sensitivity, President Ho Chi Minh entrusted particularly important tasks to members of the government, even when those individuals were not party members.

In 1946, before departing for a visit to France, President Ho Chi Minh entrusted the presidency of the government to Huynh Thuc Khang, a renowned intellectual who had previously worked at the House of Representatives of the People of Annam [*Viện Dân biểu Trung Kỳ*], despite being quite old and not being a party member. This decision by President Ho Chi Minh raised concerns among many who had worked closely with him, including some of his trusted comrades. Nevertheless, in the end, he chose to assign this important responsibility to Huynh Thuc Khang, accompanied by sincere words:

² In 1947, a policy was implemented to reduce personnel, leading the government to issue numerous directives aimed at cutting staff during the resistance war against France.

³ The figures cited were gathered from the list of government members released on the day of its formation.

I must journey far for the mission assigned by the nation, and I trust you and the comrades back home to address any challenges that arise. I hope you, “great-grandfather” Huynh, will thoughtfully assess the situation based on the ideology of *Đĩ bất biến, ứng vạn biến*—possessing strong determination, decisiveness, intelligence, adaptability, and promptness to effectively tackle various circumstances, situations, targets, cases, and issues while considering the specific contexts and timing. (Học viện Chính trị Quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh, 1993, p. 215)

With the trust of President Ho Chi Minh, Huynh Thuc Khang fulfilled his responsibilities diligently. He, along with the government, maintained political security and thwarted the coup attempts and sabotage against the revolutionary government by reactionary forces.

President Ho Chi Minh always had absolute trust when assigning tasks to members of the government. During the resistance war against the French colonialists, he entrusted the command of the entire army and the fate of the resistance war to General Vo Nguyen Giap, as he directly led the strategic decisive battles. President Ho Chi Minh granted him the title *tướng quân tại ngoại*—the general receiving absolute trust to handle all situations on the battlefield. This trust enabled General Vo Nguyen Giap to make decisive and accurate decisions in the critical battles against the French to achieve a great victory.

The communists who matured during the fierce war to overthrow the colonial government possessed enough revolutionary determination and became professional revolutionaries who led the entire nation to seize power in the 1945 August Revolution. However, once power was in the hands of the people, the question of how to build the country and the nation became a new and difficult challenge for the young state; this was a complex problem no less difficult than the process of seizing power.

During the process of establishing, organizing, and operating the government, President Ho Chi Minh, along with the Party and the state, wisely selected members with intellect and revolutionary ethics to participate in the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. From 1945 to 1954, among the government members, there were 35 individuals from the intellectual class. Several held doctoral degrees and professorships (four people), and there were many bachelor’s degree holders (about 20 people). Of these, the largest group consisted of those with literary careers (poets, writers, and journalists), totaling seven individuals. There were six graduates from law schools (including two with doctoral degrees), three agricultural engineers, two doctors, and four individuals with lower educational backgrounds (primary education during the French colonial period). Compared to the general educational level of the population at that time, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam truly comprised the most well educated individuals (Lê et al., 2006, pp. 39–40, 53, 59, 149).

With such an intellectual collective, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was superior to the puppet administrations established by the French in Vietnam during this period, providing favorable conditions to lead the people in the resistance against French colonialism.

2.3. Emphasizing commonalities and setting aside differences to enhance unity within the government, as a premise for national unity

Vietnam is a multiethnic and multireligious country with various classes, organizations, and political parties that hold differing views and political perspectives. This political and social complexity was exacerbated by the French colonial government's policy of "divide and rule" [*chia để trị*], which fragmented the unity of the nation into three regions—Central, South, and North—with different political systems to eradicate the tradition of national solidarity. The consequences of this policy led to deep and long-lasting divisions in politics, economics, and culture among various strata, regions, religions, and ethnic groups within Vietnamese society.

When the 1945 August Revolution succeeded, the social structure of Vietnam comprised the main classes of peasants, landlords, bourgeoisie, workers, and several other strata. In addition to the primary forces of the revolution—namely, the working class, peasants, and some patriotic segments of the working population—the landlord class was divided into three segments: large landlords, medium landlords, and small landlords, with some landlords holding revolutionary sentiments. The bourgeoisie included both the national bourgeoisie and compradors.

In addition to the two major religions, Buddhism and Christianity, Vietnam also has local religions, such as Caodaism and the Hoa Hao Buddhist sect. The Caodaists and the Hoa Hao, along with the Binh Xuyen force [*Bộ đội Bình Xuyên*], had their own armed forces at that time and were divided into different factions.⁴ At various times, these forces held distinct political and revolutionary stances, sometimes aligning with the French, the Japanese, or the Viet Minh and at other times opposing them.

The diversity and complexity of ethnic groups, social classes, religions, beliefs, and political parties in Vietnam are factors that could weaken the collective strength of the people in the national liberation movement. However, most Vietnamese possess a deep love for their country, a strong will for independence, and a profound sense of national pride—qualities that have crystallized, developed, and endured for thousands of years. As Present Ho Chi Minh once said, "Our people have a passionate patriotism" [*Dân ta có một lòng nồng nàn yêu nước*] (Hồ, 2011a, p. 38). It can be said that this fervent patriotism, along with the consciousness of independence and national pride, is an invaluable tradition of the nation, and President Ho Chi Minh is the soul of the national unity.

The composition of the government (from the Provisional Government to the Resistance Coalition Government) reflects some characteristics of Vietnamese society, which consists of various strata, and at times even opposing factions, such as the Vietnamese Nationalist Party [*Việt Nam Quốc dân Đảng*] and the Vietnam Revolutionary League [*Việt Nam Cách mệnh Đồng minh Hội*]. However, as the organizer and the center of unity within the government, President Ho Chi Minh directed all members—including

⁴ For example, Caodaism alone has over 10 different branches.

those who did not share the same ideals—to work together for the common interests of the nation.

Under the close guidance of President Ho Chi Minh, the Party, the government, and local authorities set aside their differences and focused on commonalities to build a robust administrative system imbued with the spirit of solidarity and unity. This strong bloc of unity ultimately led the resistance against the French to its successful conclusion.

The government quickly issued decrees to seek talented individuals regardless of their background to build a strong government and establish a new regime. With his political vision, revolutionary spirit, and intellect, President Ho Chi Minh selected individuals of virtue and ability to participate in governance. After reorganizing the National Committee for Liberation [*Ủy ban Khởi nghĩa*] into the Provisional Government, he advocated for the inclusion of some members from other political parties, directly forming the Government Advisory Board [*Ban cố vấn chính phủ*] that invited certain officials from the old regime, including the 13th and final emperor of the Nguyen dynasty, Bao Dai (birth name is *Nguyễn Phúc Vĩnh Thụy*), as well as many intellectuals and non-communist members of the previous government to join the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.⁵ Some of these figures later resigned from their positions, further clarifying who truly had the nation's interests at heart, remaining steadfast in serving the people, all for the benefit of the nation, regardless of political affiliation or social class.

2.4. Building a transparent government

The total uprising to seize power in August 1945 succeeded, leading to the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This was a state of the people, by the people, and for the people. Most members of the government system, from the central to the local level, were pioneers in the national liberation movement and played key roles in the historic August Revolution in 1945.

The characteristics of this personnel, along with the nature of the revolutionary state, are objective factors that contribute to the integrity of the Vietnamese state apparatus at all levels. This transparent government structure has fostered the endogenous elements necessary for the success of both the resistance and state-building efforts.

Immediately after seizing power, President Ho Chi Minh, who also served as the prime minister, consistently emphasized that the essential virtues required of government officials are diligence, frugality, integrity, and altruism [*cần, kiệm, liêm, chính và chí công vô tư*]. The team of officials, as servants [*công bộc*] of the people, must lead by example in embodying these qualities. During the resistance against the French, the government

⁵ Typical examples include former officials of the Nguyen Dynasty and patriotic Confucian scholars: Bui Bang Doan, Nguyen Van To, Huynh Thuc Khang, Phan Ke Toai, and Vi Van Dinh, or young intellectuals from other parties such as Phan Anh, Vu Dinh Hoe, Nguyen Van Huyen, and Nguyen Xien.

of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam fully realized its role in organizing and managing society as a transparent government.

National governance was a novel and particularly challenging task for the patriotic leaders who had the revolutionary spirit to overthrow colonial feudalism but lacked practical knowledge for comprehensive nation development after seizing power. Meanwhile, the resistance against French colonialism continued to be fierce. The battlefield was fragmented and divided, making it difficult for the administrative machinery of the country to manage governance effectively, especially in organizing the resistance and establishing authority in areas of intense conflict and enemy control.

Faced with these challenges, some individuals within the public administration experienced moral decline and became *quan cách mạng*.⁶ They no longer embodied the mission of being the public servants of the people, as President Ho Chi Minh once stated. Therefore, comprehensively reforming the entire administrative system from the central government to the grassroots level became a key focus of the government during the years of resistance against French colonialism. To strengthen and adjust the government apparatus, the constant requirement to uphold and build an incorruptible government became a central daily task. Only a government with integrity can sustain the trust of the people, which was the key factor in the success of the resistance against French colonialism.

To ensure a government of integrity, it is necessary to monitor the activities of all members at all levels within the public administration. More than two months after independence, the president of the government (President Ho Chi Minh) signed Decree 64-SL on November 14, 1945, establishing the Special Inspection Committee [*Ban thanh tra đặc biệt*] directly under the government. This committee was granted full authority to investigate and review necessary evidence for supervisory tasks and to suspend or arrest any member of the government or local authorities who committed offenses, as described in the official gazette:

The decree stipulated that the special inspection committee had full authority to receive complaints from the people, investigate, examine, and review documents from local people's committees or government agencies necessary for supervisory tasks, and suspend or arrest any officials within local committees or the government who committed offenses. The special inspection committee consisted of individuals with the capability and integrity to assist the government in building a cadre of officials characterized by the virtues of diligence, frugality, integrity, and altruism. The special inspection committee was responsible for reviewing and reporting to the government on cases of legal violations, such as corruption and oppression of the people. (Lê et al., 2006, p. 71)

⁶ *Quan cách mạng*: Individuals in positions of authority, regardless of their rank, who interact with the public—such as feudal officials—and often exhibit behaviors of embezzlement, squandering, and abuse of power.

Immediately after establishing the government, President Ho Chi Minh reminded state officials:

The government, from the central to local levels, serves the people and shares common responsibilities with them, unlike the oppressive colonial and feudal authorities. We must do everything possible to benefit the people and avoid any actions that could harm them at all costs. (Hò, 1945, p. 1)

He also criticized certain corrupt practices and shortcomings among some government officials, such as abuse of power, conceit, negligence, and corruption, which had led to public grievances and eroded trust in the government. He emphasized the importance of the people's strength and the relationship between government officials and the populace: "We have successfully established the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. However, if the nation is independent yet the people lack happiness and freedom, then that independence holds no value" (Hò, 1945, p. 1).

He advised: "We are not afraid of making mistakes, but once we identify one, we must work diligently to fix it" (Hò, 1945, p. 1). President Ho Chi Minh reported to the national assembly that while the government had tried to maintain integrity, the personnel in the administration from the central to the local levels were numerous. Therefore, the government must lead by example; when setting an example, it must be strict in criticizing and using the law to punish those who are corrupt and degenerate. This activity must be carried out continuously, as he stated: "We have done, are doing, and will continue to do so until the matter is completely resolved" (Văn phòng Quốc hội, 1994, p. 98).

The special inspection committee plays a particularly important role in assisting the Council of Government in enforcing strict discipline and adherence to the law. The council of government places great emphasis on the inspection and supervision of the work of local government committees and other governmental agencies. Given that the government is still young and the legal system is in the process of being developed and lacks coherence, many officials within the government are often uncertain in their understanding of state management and social governance. In some cases, individuals have abused their positions to coerce the public, engage in embezzlement, and waste resources. The government is resolutely committed to harshly punishing—up to and including the death penalty—any member who commits serious violations.

During the intense wartime and the difficult early stages of revolutionary state-building, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, under President Ho Chi Minh's leadership, genuinely exemplified integrity and altruism. This was a fundamental reason that contributed to the success of the Vietnamese people's resistance against colonialism and state-building efforts, culminating in victory in 1954. The author argues that establishing a government of integrity was a significant achievement in the effort to build and protect the revolutionary government of Vietnam. The strength of the regime lies with the people; a transparent government can foster trust among the populace. Building a system of public governance with integrity and maintaining strict adherence to the law are crucial prerequisites for establishing a strong nation.

2.5. Building state institutions, promoting the role of organizations, and concentrating power on the head of state

The political system of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam after seizing power consisted of the Communist Party as the ruling party, the national assembly as the highest authority, the government as the highest administrative body, and the Viet Minh Front [*Mặt trận Việt Minh*], which later became the Lien Viet Front [*Mặt trận Liên Việt*]. It was established in 1951 by merging two organizations: the League for Independence of Vietnam (abbreviated as Viet Minh) and the Vietnam National Union (abbreviated as Lien Viet), along with various mass organizations. The close integration and full promotion of the roles of these organizations in the political system were crucial for harnessing the strength of the nation and the regime, thereby creating a unified power to effectively carry out all tasks related to resistance and state-building. The 1946 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam clearly states:

The highest administrative body of the entire country is the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which includes a president representing the nation, a vice president, and a cabinet. The president directly chairs the council of government. The powers and duties of the president and the government are outlined in the constitution, reflecting a unified concentration of authority, particularly the highest concentration in the president.⁷ (Quốc hội, 1946, Article 49)

President Ho Chi Minh was entrusted by the national assembly with the responsibility of being the head of state and directly managing the government. All regulations regarding the role, duties, and powers were concentrated in the president; at the same time, President Ho Chi Minh also directly led the operations of the government. This is a characteristic feature of the rule-of-law state, implemented from the moment the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was established. Practical experience shows that this institutional framework ensures the leadership of the Party: (1) On one hand, it enables the concentration and unity of state power; (2) On the other hand, it enhances the authority of the government in organizing the swift and effective implementation of tasks related to resistance and state-building.

Hundreds of decrees concerning various fields, such as politics, economics, and society, were signed by the president of the government during the early period of gaining power. These decrees facilitated the establishment of a unified and comprehensive nation and enabled a prompt and effective response to the aggression and warfare initiated by the French colonizers and reactionary forces.

The successful symbol of the Vietnamese revolution in establishing an insightful mechanism between the Communist Party (the highest leadership body), the national assembly (the highest authority), and the government (the highest administrative body of the nation) is embodied in the role of President Ho Chi Minh. He was the founder and

⁷ According to Article 49 of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, adopted by the National Assembly on November 9, 1946, the president holds ten key powers in governing the country.

nurturer of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the creator of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the direct head of the government. This distinction highlights the importance of defining the roles and powers of political organizations within the political system of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

3. CONCLUSION

Building a strong government and fully promoting the role of the government was a key factor in the success of the resistance against French colonialism in protecting the independence of the Vietnamese nation. Established in extremely challenging circumstances, when it seemed as if the nation was “hanging by a thread” [*ngàn cân treo sợi tóc*], the young government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, successfully guided the people through difficulties to fulfill the historical mission entrusted by the nation.

Successfully safeguarding the achievements of the 1945 August Revolution was the effort of the Party, the people, and the military as a whole—among which the role of the government was significant. In the challenging conditions of the war of resistance, with the battlefields divided, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was entrusted by the Party and the national assembly with the monumental task of successfully organizing and directing the resistance and state-building efforts.

The principles for constructing and functioning the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, as mentioned earlier, are firmly grounded in the ideas of President Ho Chi Minh that national independence is paramount. To maintain national independence, the people must be the foundation and officials are the servants of the people. A government that works for the people can mobilize the strength of the entire population in an effort to build and protect the nation. With these principles for organizing a people’s democratic state, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, successfully fulfilled its noble mission: leading the war of resistance against colonialism to victory and advancing the state-building efforts.

In summary, the resistance and state-building efforts served as an important school for training and developing the organization and governance of the country, managing society, and fulfilling the functions and duties of the highest administrative body of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The practical successes of the resistance and state-building movements affirmed the valuable principles and experiences in establishing a rule-of-law state advocated by President Ho Chi Minh. These values are continually embraced and advanced by the Party and the state in the ongoing process of renewal, state-building, and defense.

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