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Vietnam's Role in Regional Peace and Mediation

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Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc taking part in the closing ceremony of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit being held online in Hanoi on November 15, 2020. Photo: Nhac Nguyen, AFP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Vietnam institutionalised in official documents a ‘reconciliation/mediation role’ for its diplomacy even before taking on the 2020 ASEAN chairmanship and the country’s non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.
- This new thrust demonstrates Vietnam’s growing confidence on the regional, if not international stage. Hanoi recognises that it is in its interest to contribute to international peace and security.
- However, Vietnam has to overcome significant challenges to play a role in reconciliation and mediation. As a newcomer to this field, Vietnam will need significant time and resources to build up its capacities and reputation.
- Undertaking a lower key mediation role that focuses on facilitating understanding and dialogue among disputing parties should be Vietnam’s current aim.
- For a start, the country could seek a mediating role in regional security issues and enhance its peacekeeping contribution to demonstrate its commitment and build up its reputation in the area.

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam's rapid economic development, political stability, and successful hosting of various high-profile international events have raised the country's regional and international profile. With this new spotlight, however, has come expectations from inside and outside of Vietnam for the country to contribute more to international peace and security.¹

Recent developments in Vietnam's foreign policy demonstrate the country's stronger commitment to peace and reconciliation:

- (i) The themes drawn up to guide its engagement in multilateral forums concentrate on peace and reconciliation – the expressed theme for Vietnam's non-permanent seat on the UNSC is “Partnership for Sustainable Peace”, focused on conflict prevention, peace building, post-conflict reconstruction, and on strengthening the role of multilateralism and multilateral institutions in peace and security.² A priority for its ASEAN chairmanship also emphasises a “cohesive ASEAN” gained through fostering solidarity and unity among its members.³
- (ii) Vietnam started its 2020-2021 UNSC term with two initiatives that exemplify the themes: One open session on UN Charter compliance, stressing the need to enhance dialogue, multilateralism, and peaceful tools provided by the UN for conflicts and disputes; and one meeting to ‘bridge’ the UN and ASEAN, aimed at increasing understanding between the two bodies and promoting ASEAN's contribution to UN initiatives, especially peacekeeping. For the first time, at the initiative of Vietnam, an information briefing on ASEAN took place at the UNSC.⁴
- (iii) Vietnam has rapidly increased its contribution to UN peacekeeping operations,⁵ and the recent passage of the National Assembly Resolution on Vietnam's participation in UN PKO in November 2020 has laid a legal foundation for its further contribution. Vietnam is also eager to upgrade its UN peacekeeping training centre into a regional facility for the Asia Pacific.⁶ The country has also been willing to share its experience in post-conflict reconstruction, national reconciliation, promoting integration, and sustainable development. For instance, Vietnam has actively shared its experience on tackling post-conflict issues at various multilateral forums, such as through its work with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), working on topics such as the handling of bombs, mines, and unexploded ordinances.⁷ It has also emphasised the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction, as a part of efforts to promote the UNSC Resolution 1889 (2009) on Women and Peace and Security.⁸ Bilaterally, it has shared lessons on reunification, national reconciliation, and reforms with both of its Korean partners.⁹

These diplomatic efforts, particularly Vietnam's hosting of the second Trump-Kim Summit in February 2019, have fuelled discussions among intellectuals and general public about a Vietnamese ‘reconciliation diplomacy’ or ‘mediation diplomacy’. These discussions mainly feature two key ideas: (i) Vietnam's repositioning as a middle power, and the need to build a ‘niche diplomacy’ to contribute more effectively in global affairs;¹⁰ and (ii) Vietnam possibly becoming ‘Asia's Helsinki’ or a ‘peace bridge’.¹¹ One former deputy foreign minister remarked: “Although it is still too early to talk about it, but a ‘reconciliation

diplomacy’ or ‘mediation diplomacy’ is not impossible for Vietnam if we take into account Vietnam’s history or its recent efforts and contributions to world peace. However, what we need is not just a slogan, but we have to initiate concrete actions to implement the objective”.¹²

This paper explores Vietnam’s possible role and options in the field of peace and conciliation. It argues that the time is ripe for Vietnam to play a limited mediation role in line with the country’s national interests. It concludes with some policy recommendations for Vietnam to play such a role.

WHY SHOULD VIETNAM CONSIDER A MEDIATION ROLE?

(i) A new thrust in foreign policy

Vietnam has long declared a foreign policy goal of “willing to become a friend and reliable partner of all countries in the world community, striving for peace, independence and development”.¹³ However, it was only recently that Vietnam placed greater emphasis on the goal of proactive contribution to international peace and security. Directive No. 25 CT/TW of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee (issued on 8 August 2018) on enhancing the role of multilateral diplomacy stated that the country would need to shift from merely “attending” to “actively participating” and “actively contributing” to multilateral institutions, accelerating efforts to play a “leading or mediatory role in multilateral organizations and forums having strategic importance to the country”¹⁴ in accordance with the specific capabilities and conditions of the country.¹⁵ Vietnamese leaders have repeatedly used the phrase “hoa giai” (translated as either reconciliation or mediation in English) in their public speeches,¹⁶ and stated that Vietnam should gradually promote the role of mediation in regional and global issues.¹⁷

“Hoa giai” in the Vietnamese language implies the involvement of a third party. According to the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Vietnam, “*Reconciliation/Mediation means peacefully solving disputes by arrangements and negotiation with the assistance of a third party*”.¹⁸ “Hoa giai” is a common practice in Vietnamese culture, where bringing disputes to legal authorities is not a preferred option. Officially, Vietnam uses the word “hoa giai” to indicate that the country is willing to take on the role of a third party, such as in mediating international disputes and conflicts, though preferably under a multilateral framework.

Directive 25-CT/TW was issued in preparation for Vietnam’s 2020 ASEAN chairmanship and its non-permanent seat on the UNSC. This directive, however, has long-lasting and significant implications for Vietnam’s foreign policy. It signals, as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh puts it, “an important milestone in foreign policy thinking”.¹⁹ It is remarkable that, for the first time, mediation diplomacy has been institutionalised. While this highlights a sense of responsibility and desire to contribute to international peace and security, it also demonstrates Vietnam’s growing confidence on the regional, if not international stage. Vietnam draws this growing confidence from what it perceives as an increased degree of trust and encouragement from the international community. Directive 25-CT/TW, thus, can be seen as an institutionalisation of Vietnam’s newfound confidence and willingness to take on a bigger role in international affairs.

(ii) Vietnam's capabilities and advantages

Mediation resonates with Vietnamese cultural and historical traditions: It could be argued that reconciliation diplomacy is not simply a new direction but harks back to Vietnam's history of reconciling with former enemies after conflicts. A master strategist in the 15th century, Nguyen Trai, declared after a military victory that the country would facilitate the return of prisoners of war (Chinese troops) to "repair the bilateral friendship [and] end war forever".²⁰ King Tran Nhan Tong (1258-1308) has also been seen as a symbol of Vietnam's reconciliatory spirit.²¹ According to *The Complete Annals of Đại Việt*, King Tran Nhan Tong stripped the reward of a prince who continued to hunt for Yuan troops after the king had ordered a ceasefire. To alleviate his mandarins' fear of any post-war political retribution, the king also had any supposed proof of treason burnt.²²

In the contemporary period, Vietnam has established high-level partnership frameworks with all its former foes – France, the United States, and China. Vietnam has also made significant efforts and achievements in national reconciliation, particularly with new political and legal frameworks that facilitate the return and participation of overseas Vietnamese in Vietnam's political, economic, and social life. Notably, four out of the 15 members of the current prime minister's Economic Advisory Group are overseas Vietnamese intellectuals.²³ The government has also actively promoted outreach efforts targeted at overseas Vietnamese communities in the United States. The return of Mr Nguyen Cao Ky, former prime minister of the South Vietnamese administration that fought against the Vietnam Communist Party in the North, in 2004, during which he expressed support for national conciliation, was a symbolic success in the process.²⁴

Vietnam's improved international prestige: Vietnam has been pursuing a proactive foreign policy through its expanding diplomatic network, which is currently ranked 38th in the world and 10th in Asia.²⁵ It has established 189 diplomatic relations, among which are three comprehensive strategic partnerships, 14 strategic partnerships, and 13 comprehensive partnerships. One notable feature of Vietnam's foreign policy is the emphasis on ties with "traditional friends",²⁶ many of which are currently involved in disputes and conflicts that might require international support to promote reconciliation efforts. Vietnam's economic development model as well as its experience with reform and 'opening-up' could be a source of inspiration for others.²⁷

Organisational capability and confidence in its diplomacy: The experience gained from its roles at important multilateral institutions and from hosting big international events has boosted Vietnam's confidence in its diplomacy. The second Trump-Kim Summit held in February 2019 was a political and logistical success, praised by both Trump himself and DPRK officials.²⁸ Vietnam's efforts in facilitating a safe long journey by train for Kim also demonstrates Vietnam's commitment, diligence, and ability to deliver a key event at very short notice.²⁹

Strong domestic support: Among the Vietnamese people, there is a strong sense of gratitude and desire to contribute to international peace, in acknowledgement of the international community's support for Vietnam during its wars, post-war reconstruction, and modern development.³⁰ As stated in a news briefing, the second US-DPRK Summit held in Vietnam is particularly meaningful as Vietnam, during its past wars, had counted on the support of international third-party mediators in the Geneva and Paris negotiations in 1954 and 1973

respectively.³¹ Today, Vietnam is thus willing to mediate peace between the United States and DPRK, for the region and the world.³² Despite the significant amount of financial and human resources spent on the event, as well as the inconvenience and disruption it brought to daily life, the Vietnamese people are supportive and proud to have played such a role in the US-DPRK negotiations.

(iii) It serves Vietnam's interests

Vietnam's national interests has three broad dimensions: security, economic development, and prestige. A mediation role supports Vietnam's national interests in all three dimensions. In terms of security, maintaining a peaceful and stable external environment is one of the most important goals of Vietnam's foreign policy.³³ Contributing to efforts to manage disputes in the region directly complements this goal. More importantly, upholding a rules-based international order is of great importance given Vietnam's two main security challenges – territorial disputes in the South China Sea and water management issues in the Mekong. By playing a mediating role, Vietnam reinforces and promotes the norms of peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, while signalling its rejection of unilateral and violent acts which contravene international law. Such a role would also help Vietnam enhance its own conflict management and resolution capacities.

Playing an active role in managing international disputes also serves Vietnam's economic interests. According to a Moody report, if tensions on the Korean Peninsula continue to escalate and lead to conflict, other than the parties directly involved (North Korea, South Korea, and the United States), Vietnam and Japan would be the most badly hit. This is because approximately 20 per cent of Vietnam's intermediate goods are imported from South Korea, while its exports to South Korea account for more than 5 per cent of its GDP.³⁴

Last but not least, a mediating role will improve Vietnam's image and reputation, which in turn, will translate into many concrete benefits. Vietnam would for instance become increasingly attractive as a tourist destination and business environment. Its national products would become more desirable, and the country could even experience an increase in its soft power.

EXPLORING A MEDIATION ROLE FOR VIETNAM

The current challenge for Vietnam is to translate a very general official guideline into practical policies which address geopolitical realities, while being in step with the country's comfort level, capacities, and resources. A 'third-party' reconciliatory role could potentially involve anything from providing good offices to taking on mediation, inquiry, conciliation, and arbitration responsibilities³⁵ before, during, and after a conflict. Many of these responsibilities, such as conciliation and arbitration, require a significant level of engagement and demand more political and financial costs and greater capabilities and experience.

Mediation itself also has a wide range of approaches, from the lowest level of good offices to actively inducing a certain solution to disputes. As outlined by Touval and Zartman (1985), there are three general approaches: *information strategies*, *formulation strategies*, and *manipulation strategies*, depending on the level of involvement of the mediator.³⁶

If Vietnam is to take on such a ‘reconciliatory role’, it will need to develop a clear conceptualisation and a feasible operational strategy. *Firstly*, it should start with a narrower focus – a modest mediation role or the first and second approaches listed above. There are three main reasons for this: (i) Despite having a long tradition of peace diplomacy, Vietnam is still a ‘newly reborn kid on the block’ in a professional field that requires specialised expertise, experience, practical guidance, as well as considerable political, financial, and administrative support. The challenge is greater when it has to operate in an increasingly competitive environment, where the number of third-party facilitators and mediators (at local, national, regional, and international levels) has significantly increased in the last decade;³⁷ (ii) The fundamental principles of Vietnamese foreign policy, including a respect for sovereignty, self-determination, and non-interference, will limit the extent of its engagement. Vietnam’s own experience with mediation also discourages the country from a manipulative approach – during the Geneva Conference negotiations, its own interests were negatively affected by the calculations of bigger powers;³⁸ (iii) While Vietnam’s close relationships with all parties, particularly the disputing parties, is an advantage; this also requires the country to firmly uphold its neutrality.

With a moderate mediation role, Vietnam can consider several options such as good offices, shuttle diplomacy, facilitating negotiations, capacity building, and experience sharing with relevant parties. Directive 25 advocates a mediatory role in a multilateral setting; however, as mediation is often a very long process and Vietnam will not always be able to hold high-profile posts at multilateral forums, it will have to explore both multilateral and bilateral approaches.

Secondly, Vietnam will have to overcome several significant challenges. An operational masterplan needs to be designed to build domestic consensus and political will, lay the institutional foundations, mobilise financial and human resources, and build the necessary capacities: (i) Peace making and mediation in particular require the right set of competencies – both at the level of individuals and institutions. While pooling a few eminent individual peace-makers is important, it is more vital to build institutional capacity and an organizational culture that enables a well-coordinated engagement and allows sustainability given the rotational nature of the country’s diplomatic system. (ii) Managing relationships with other actors including civil society, the academia, and foreign actors is also a challenge. (iii) Economic resources provide important leverage to peace-making when the mediator might have to fund confidence-building activities, shuttle diplomacy, or back the implementation of peace agreements. This could be a big challenge given Vietnam’s plan to streamline and downsize its public spending.³⁹ To overcome the above challenges, Vietnam will need to reach out to relevant partners and experienced mediators for assistance and build cooperative partnerships.

Thirdly, Vietnam should aim to boost its peace reputation and offer to undertake an appropriate role in regional issues. The second Trump-Kim Summit in Hanoi demonstrated Vietnam’s capability in hosting high-profile events. Both the parties were also pleased with Vietnam’s efforts. There have already been many players involved in mediating efforts on the Korean issue. Trump and Kim also have their own direct channels. However, Vietnam is uniquely placed to be an effective facilitator for conversation. Vietnam has a non-hostile and neutral profile, with no geopolitical motives. The DPRK is very sensitive to any perceived influence from a third party – North Korea’s chief negotiator Kim Myong Gil, for instance, once criticised Sweden for acting like a “backseat driver” when mediating nuclear

negotiations.⁴⁰ Moreover, as the DPRK has a relatively high level of trust in Vietnam, its leadership is comfortable learning from Vietnam's experience in economic development and reform, as well as Hanoi's ability to maintain good relationships with both the United States and China.⁴¹ In fact, Kim's 2019 visit to Vietnam was designated as an "official friendship visit", a term that connotes an even higher status than Kim's previous visits to China.⁴² While the Trump-Kim meeting was underway in Hanoi, a separate DPRK delegation made field trips to Vietnam's industrial parks and factories.⁴³

Presently, the United States and North Korea do not wish to appear weak and lose their bargaining power in their ongoing tug-of-war. In this regard, they can consider the alternative of approaching a credible third country to explore ways to move forward without being seen as ceding ground unnecessarily. Given its comparative advantage, Vietnam could facilitate an agreement that meets both parties' near-term objectives (i.e. reducing tensions and diffusing crises) that can lay the basis for a longer-term solution. Vietnam should also further promote humanitarian assistance to mitigate food shortages and natural disasters,⁴⁴ and encourage the exchange of students, academics, and officials, especially on issues related to economic planning and transition.

Within the region, Vietnam should support ASEAN, the UN and relevant parties in promoting dialogue towards long-term solutions to conflicts and facilitating the safe and dignified repatriation of refugees in Myanmar's Rakhine state.⁴⁵ More specifically, Vietnam could continue to strengthen the ASEAN consensus on a regional approach and the association's crucial role in helping Myanmar reach a solution; facilitate dialogue between relevant parties on technical issues such as illegal migration, human trafficking, refugee repatriation; and share its experience in working with relevant partners on refugee repatriation,⁴⁶ rehabilitation, and reconciliation.

Last but not least, Vietnam should further enhance its PKO participation in both quantity and quality, particularly expanding its PKO functions to include policing and enhancing women's representation. These measures will promote effective community outreach and confidence-building, leading to lasting and positive impact on the ground. In fact, Vietnam has performed pretty well in promoting the role of women.⁴⁷ Beyond their assigned duties, they actively take on other roles such as teaching children, sharing farming experience with the local people, and encouraging the participation of women and girls in political processes.⁴⁸ Vietnam should also share its own successful experiences on national reconciliation and sustainable post-conflict reconstruction, and possibly explore a mediation role involving its PKO missions at a proper time.

- ¹ Editorial Department (2020), “The gioi dat ky vong vao Viet Nam,” *Nhan Dan Online*, at <https://nhandan.com.vn/tin%2Dtuc%2Dthe%2Dgioi/the%2Dgioi%2Ddat%2Dky%2Dvong%2Dva%2Dviet%2Dnam%2D446302/>
- ² Deputy PM, FM Pham Binh Minh’s article on occasion of VN's assumption of UNSC Presidency (2020) VGP News, at <http://news.chinhphu.vn/Utilities/PrintView.aspx?ID%3D38471>
- ³ VNA (2020), “ASEAN Chairmanship: For a cohesive and responsive ASEAN,” *Nhan Dan Online*, at <https://en.nhandan.com.vn/highlights/item/8318102%2Dasean%2Dchairmanship%2Dfor%2Da%2Dcohesive%2Dand%2Dresponsive%2Dasean.html>
- ⁴ VNS (2020), “Viet Nam successfully fulfils role as President of UNSC in January,” *Viet Nam News*, at <https://vietnamnews.vn/politics%2Dlaws/591739/viet%2Dnam%2Dsuccessfully%2Dfulfils%2Drole%2Das%2Dpresident%2Dof%2Dunsc%2Din%2Djanuary.html>
- ⁵ Although Vietnam is relatively new to peacekeeping and has only started its deployment since 2014, it has significantly stepped up its efforts. Up to January 2020, it had sent 43 officers and 126 military doctors and medical personnel to South Sudan. Since 2018, Vietnam has sent whole PKO unit forces with two Level-2 field hospitals to South Sudan, and is ready to deploy the third one by the end of 2020. It is also currently ready to dispatch 295 military engineers and is training police force for PKO in South Sudan.
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- ⁶ Hoang Thuy (2020), Vietnam eyes UN peacekeeping center for Asia-Pacific, *VNExpress*, at <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam%2Deyes%2Dun%2Dpeacekeeping%2Dcenter%2Dfor%2Dasia%2Dpacific%2D4128709.html>
- ⁷ Vietnam shares experience in tackling post-war bombs, mines and UXOs (2017). *Voice of Vietnam*, 7 September, at <https://vovworld.vn/en%2DUS/news/vietnam%2Dshares%2Dexperience%2Din%2Dtackling%2Dpostwar%2Dbombs%2Dmines%2Dand%2Duxos%2D574174.vov>
- ⁸ *Cross-Cutting Report No. 2: Women, Peace and Security. Security Council Report*, at <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/research%2Dreports/lookup%2Dc%2Dgkwlentisg%2Db%2D6239031.php>
- ⁹ Vietnam shares experience in national reunification (2015). *Nhan Dan*, 23 May, at <https://en.nhandan.com.vn/politics/external%2Drelations/item/3366602%2Dbir%2Dseba%2Dproject%2DE2%80%93%2Da%2D>
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- ¹⁰ Vu Le Thai Hoang (ed.) (2020), *Ngoai giao chuyen biet: Huong di, uu tien moi cua ngoai giao Viet Nam den 2030* [Niche Diplomacy: New Orientation and Priority of Vietnam Diplomacy toward 2030], Hanoi: Su That Publishing House.
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- ¹² Pham Hang (2019), “Nguyen Thu truong Ngoai giao Nguyen Phu Binh noi ve vai tro trung gian cua ngoai giao Viet Nam,” *The World and Vietnam Report*, at <https://baoquocte.vn/nguyen%2Dthu%2Dtruong%2Dngoai%2Dgiao%2Dnguyen%2Dphu%2Dbinh%2Dnoi%2Dve%2Dvai%2Dtro%2Dtrung%2Dgian%2Dcua%2Dngoai%2Dgiao%2Dviet%2Dnam%2D88380.html>
- ¹³ Editorial Department (2006), “Vietnam's present Foreign Policy,” *Socialist Republic of Vietnam Government Portal*, at <http://chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/strategies/strategiesdetails?categoryId%3D30&articleId%3D3036>
- ¹⁴ UNSC seat enables Vietnam to contribute more to global peace (2019), *Nhan Dan*, <https://en.nhandan.org.vn/politics/external%2Drelations/item/7559702%2Dunsc%2Dseat%2Denables%2Dvietnam%2Dto%2Dcontribute%2Dmore%2Dto%2Dglobal%2Dpeace.html>
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²⁴ “Former Saigon PM talks about homeland” (2010) *Viet Nam News*, 4 November, at [/https://vietnamnews.vn/politics%2Dlaws/205369/former%2Dsaigon%2Dpm%2Dtalks%2Dabout%2Dhomeland.html](https://vietnamnews.vn/politics%2Dlaws/205369/former%2Dsaigon%2Dpm%2Dtalks%2Dabout%2Dhomeland.html)

²⁵ *Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index 2019*, at https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/country_rank.html#

²⁶ Pham Binh Minh (2015) Ngoại giao góp phần xứng đáng xây dựng và bảo vệ Tổ quốc, *Vietnam Government Portal News*, 15 August, at <http://baochinhhphu.vn/70%2Dmua%2Dthu%2DCach%2Dmang/Ngoai%2Dgiao%2Dgop%2Dphan%2Dxung%2Ddang%2Dxay%2Ddung%2Dva%2Dbao%2Dve%2DTo%2Dquoc/234114.vgp>

“Vietnam respected in international arena: Ambassador,” *Vietnam News Agency*, 28 August 2020, at <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/vietnam%2Drespected%2Din%2Dinternational%2Darena%2Dambassador/182029.vnp>

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²⁹ Vietnam only had a two-week preparation period, much shorter than the two-month advance notice given for the leaders’ meeting in Singapore in June 2018.

³⁰ Security Council, “Security Council urges renewed measures to improve women’s participation in peace processes,” reaffirming the key role women can play in rebuilding war-torn societies, *United Nations* at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2009/sc9759.doc.htm>

³¹ These diplomatic processes are considered consequential in Vietnam’s struggle for its independence in view of the power imbalances between Vietnam and its much stronger adversaries. As a complete military victory was too costly, and even impossible, the then Vietnamese strategy was to combine “fighting and negotiation”. See Vo Van Sung (2012), “Suy ngẫm về bài học “vừa đánh vừa đàm” trong chiến tranh bảo vệ Tổ quốc,” *Nhan Dan*, 13 December, at <https://nhandan.com.vn/tin%2Dtuc%2Dsu%2Dkien/suy%2Dngam%2Dve%2Dbai%2Dhoc%2Dvu%2Ddanh%2Dvua%2Ddam%2Dtrong%2Dchien%2Dtranh%2Dbao%2Dve%2Dto%2Dquoc%2D582129>

³² Nguyen Hong Diep (2019), “Thuong dinh Hoa Ky – Trieu Tien: Kien tao hoa binh, nang tam vi the,” *Thong tin Doi Ngoai*, at <http://tapchithongtindoingoai.vn/su%2Dkien%2Dva%2Dbinh%2Dluan/thuong%2Ddinh%2Dhoa%2Dky%2Dtrieu%2Dtien%2Dkien%2Dtao%2Dhoa%2Dbinh%2Dnang%2Dtam%2Dvi%2Dthe%2D21338>

³³ Luu Ngoc Khai, and Dang Cong Thanh (2019), “Duong loi doi ngoai cua Dang theo tinh than Nghi quyet Dai hoi XII – Mot tam cao moi,” *Bao Dien tu Dang Cong san Viet Nam*, at <http://dangcongsan.vn/tu%2Dlieu%2Dtham%2Dkhao%2Dcuoc%2Dthi%2Dtrac%2Dnghiem%2Dtim%2Dhieuc%2D90%2Dnam%2Dlich%2Dsu%2Dve%2Dvang%2Dcua%2Ddang%2Dcong%2Dsan%2Dviet%2Dnam/tu%2Dlieu%2Dcuoc%2Dthi/duong%2Dloi%2Ddoi%2Dngoai%2Dcua%2Ddang%2Dtheo%2Dtinh%2Dthan%2Dnghie%2Dquyet%2Ddai%2Dhoi%2Dxii%2Dmot%2Dtam%2Dcao%2Dmoi%2D544967.html>

³⁴ Yuda Masayuki and Kikuchi Tomomi (2017), “Vietnam and Japan would be among hardest hit by a Korean conflict,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, 4 October, at <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/Vietnam%2Dand%2DJapan%2Dwould%2Dbe%2Damong%2Dhardest%2Dhit%2Dby%2Da%2DKorean%2Dconflict2>

³⁵ J. G. Merrills, *International Dispute Settlement*, Cambridge University Press (Fifth Edition 2011), p. 26.

³⁶ Information strategies: the mediator primarily serves as a facilitator of information, laying the groundwork for further substantive progress in the conflict resolution process. Formulation strategies are those where a mediator serves as a facilitator for actual negotiations by providing a meeting place, and moderating discussions. Manipulative strategies: a mediator actively engages the parties and shapes the negotiations. See William Zartman and Saadia Touval (1985), "International Mediation: Conflict Resolution and Power Politics," *Journal of Social Issues*, 41(2), 27–45.

Jacob Bercovitch (1997), "Mediation in International Conflict." In I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen, eds., *Peacemaking in International Conflict*. Washington, DC: United States Institution of Peace Press., pp. 137-138.

³⁷ The European External Action Service (2016), *Global Challenges and Trends in International Peace: Mediation and Diplomacy: A Background Note*, p. 2, at http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/20160519%2Dglobal%2Dchallenges%2Dand%2Dtrends_final_en.pdf

³⁸ The Geneva Accords was a legal commitment from the great powers to respect the independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam (together with Cambodia and Laos). However, Vietnam could not utilise the military advantages it had gained on the ground to leverage a better settlement as China and the Soviet Union made concessions on the Vietnamese demarcation line for their own interests. See Vu Khoan (2014), "Hiep dinh Gio-ne-vo, 60 nam nhin lai", *Quan doi Nhan dan Online*, at

<https://www.qdnd.vn/thoi%2Dsu%2Dquoc%2Dte/binh%2Dluan/hiep%2Ddinh%2Dgio%2Dne%2Dvo%2D60%2Dnam%2Dnhin%2Dlai%2D447282>

Fredrik Logevall (2012). *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*. Random House, pp. 607-620.

³⁹ Vietnam needs to cut recurrent spending to ensure healthy budget (2018), *Nhan Dan*, at https://en.nhandan.com.vn/mobile_business/mobile_economy/item/6076102%2Dvietnam%2Dneeds%2Dto%2Dcut%2Drecurrent%2Dspending%2Dto%2Densure%2Dhealthy%2Dbudget.html.

⁴⁰ Oliver Hotham (2019), "Sweden no longer needed to mediate North Korea-U.S. talks: DPRK diplomat," *NKNews*, 19 November, at <https://www.nknews.org/2019/11/sweden%2Dno%2Dlonger%2Dneeded%2Dto%2Dmediate%2Dnorth%2Dkorea%2Du%2Ds%2Dtalks%2Ddprk%2Ddiplomat>

⁴¹ Le Dinh Tinh & Nguyen Duc Chinh (2019) "Why Vietnam Is More Than Just a Venue for the United States and DPRK Summit: A View From Hanoi," *Pacific Forum*, 1 March.

⁴² Lye Liang Fook and Ha Hoang Hop (2019), "Vietnam-North Korea Relations: Still a Special Relationship?," *ISEAS Perspective*, Issue: 2019, No.18, p. 3. https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_18.pdf

⁴³ Eric Talmadge (2019), "On summit sidelines, North Koreans study Vietnam's economy," *APNews*, at <https://apnews.com/eb50d09b6fa94e2e8166098be7dedc5c>

⁴⁴ Vietnam offered the DPRK 100 tonnes of rice aid in 1995 and another 13,000 tonnes in 1997. From 2000 to 2012, it supported the DPRK with 22,700 tonnes of rice, 5 tonnes of material rubber, and US\$50,000 in emergency aid. It offered US\$70,000 in flood relief to the North Asian nation in 2016. See "Official visit to set historic milestone in Vietnam-DPRK relations" (2019), *Viet Nam News Agency*, 28 February, at

<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/official%2Dvisit%2Dto%2Dset%2Dhistoric%2Dmilestone%2Din%2Dvietnamdprk%2Drelations/147476.vnp>

⁴⁵ Political Department (2018), "Vietnam, Myanmar issue joint statement," *Nhan dan Online*, at <https://en.nhandan.com.vn/politics/external%2Drelations/item/8237902%2Dvietnam%2Dmyanmar%2Dissue%2Djoint%2Dstatement.html>

⁴⁶ Jennifer Pagonis (2006), “Cambodia, Viet Nam and UNHCR agree on further Montagnard cooperation,” *UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency*, 22 August, at <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2006/8/44eb03442/cambodia%2Dviet%2Dnam%2Dunhcr%2Dagree%2Dfurther%2Dmontagnard%2Dcooperation.html>

⁴⁷ Up till Oct 2020, Vietnam has sent 23/166 female officers (13.8%) for UN PKO missions in South Sudan, which is higher than the UN average rate (4.8% of military contingents and 10.9% of formed police units). See more at: Women in Peacekeeping. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/women%2Dpeacekeeping#:~:text=%3DIn%202020%2C%20out%20of%20approximately,units%20in%20UN%20Peacekeeping%20missions.>

⁴⁸ Women’s participation key to effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding (2020), at <https://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/UNSCR1325.html>

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