

Peace: A universal value of humanity and a fundamental value of socialism in Vietnam

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● **Abstract:** Peace is the sacred aspiration of humanity and the Vietnamese people. In the current global context, peace is not merely a common goal of humanity; it also represents a fundamental value shaped through the long course of human development. At the same time, peace carries distinct and context-specific meanings, closely intertwined with each nation's interests, identity, sovereignty, and security. This article analyzes the theoretical and practical basis of peace as a modern universal value; clarifies the dialectical relationship between the "human value" and the "national value" of peace; and explains Vietnam's creative application of peace protection in conjunction with its national defense, security, and foreign policy strategy, aiming for sustainable development.

● **Keywords:** peace; human values; national values.

1. Introduction

Throughout the course of human history, peace has consistently stood as a noble aspiration and a fundamental objective toward which all nations strive. Nevertheless, the pursuit and preservation of peace have never been simple or straightforward. After the two world wars, humanity built many peacekeeping mechanisms such as the United Nations, disarmament treaties, and regional cooperation mechanisms. But peace is still constantly threatened by strategic competition, local conflicts, extreme nationalism, power politics, terrorism, and new forms of warfare (cyber warfare, information warfare, space warfare). In the trend of globalization, peace has become a fundamental value for sustainable development, linked to democracy, justice, human rights, and cooperation. However, peace is also influenced by the national interests, geopolitics, and the strategies of major powers.

Vietnam, a nation that has endured thousands of years of foreign domination and war, understands the value of peace more profoundly than any other value: it is a condition for survival, a cultural aspiration, and a symbol of Vietnamese resilience and wisdom. In the era of renewal and deep international integration, recognizing and applying the value of peace has become an urgent theoretical and practical requirement to firmly protect the Fatherland early and from afar.

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical basis of peace and value of peace

Since ancient times, both Eastern and Western thinkers have regarded peace as an ideal of society. In the East, Confucius emphasized “harmony is precious” - taking harmony and benevolence as the foundation of morality. In the West, Aristotle viewed peace as a condition for people to “live well in a political community”. In modern times, I. Kant, in *Eternal Peace* (1795), put forward the famous idea: There is no path to peace, peace is the path, laying the foundation for modern peace theory.

The Marxist - Leninist perspective on peace

K.Marx and F.Engels considered peace in a dialectical relationship with war. War and peace are two opposing states but have a dialectical connection, reflecting contradictions in political and social life. War is not a natural phenomenon but a continuation of politics through violent means (i.e., “politics by force”). Therefore, when violence ends, politics continues to exist in another form - namely, peace. According to K. Marx, peace is only true when there is no longer class oppression.

V.I.Lenin inherited and developed the ideas of K.Marx and F.Engels, arguing that peace is also a continuation of politics, but through non-violent means. Thus, peace is not an absolute negation of war, but rather a stage in the process of political development where contradictions are resolved through peaceful means, such as negotiation, and diplomacy, rather than through force.

In the era of imperialism, V.I.Lenin emphasized that true peace can only be achieved on the basis of eliminating oppression, exploitation, and injustice, and cannot be a “false” peace based on the domination of great powers. V.I.Lenin asserted that there can be no lasting peace as long as imperialism exists. Through this, Marxism - Leninism defined the concepts of just and unjust peace.

Just peace: Peace that serves the interests of the working people, of oppressed nations, and strives for justice, independence, freedom, and development. It is peace established on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-determination of nations. Only peace linked to national liberation, democratic independence, and socialism is true and lasting peace. For example, the struggles for independence of the Vietnamese people, Cuba, and other colonial countries were just wars fought for genuine peace.

Unjust peace: This is peace established through submission, surrender, acceptance of injustice, loss of sovereignty, or a false peace that maintains an unequal order between nations. It is “peace imposed by the strong on the weak”, denying the right to self-determination and independence of nations.

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V.I. Lenin strongly criticized the “imperial peace” model, such as the Treaty of Versailles after World War I, which only served the interests of the victorious nations and sowed the seeds of new wars.

Peace is intrinsically linked to human nature. In essence, peace is not merely the absence of war, but also a condition for the comprehensive material and spiritual development of human beings. From the philosophical perspective of Marxist - Leninist, in its reality, human nature is the total of social relations; therefore, peace cannot be separated from the relationships between people, between nations, and between humanity and the natural world.

Peace reflects the aspiration for harmonious existence, coexistence, and development - a fundamental and universal need of humanity. Humans, as social beings - possessing reason and consciousness - always strive to maintain stable conditions for creativity, labour, and the reproduction of life. Therefore, peace is an essential need, a human value intrinsic to human nature.

In the humanitarian spirit of K.Marx, the ultimate goal of all social processes is to liberate humanity from all forms of alienation, oppression, and violence, that is, to establish a social order based on freedom, equality, and human dignity - which is also the foundation of true peace.

From an anthropological perspective, peace is linked to morality, compassion, and the capacity for self-awareness that constitute the humane social essence of humankind. Peace cannot be sustained solely by the absence of conflict, but must be built upon trust, fairness, and mutual respect.

In today's era, as humanity faces non-traditional threats such as terrorism, climate change, resource competition, and global inequality, protecting peace means protecting humanity, the right to life, and the right to development. Thus, peace is the highest form of humanity, the most vivid reflection of human nature - a nature that strives for freedom, justice, and happiness.

The essence of socialism with the value of peace.

Socialism, according to the views of K.Marx, F.Engels, and V.I.Lenin, is a new socio-economic system in which creative human labour becomes the decisive factor for development, and all social values are built on the foundation of justice, cooperation, and humanity. In socialism, labour is no longer forced but a free, creative activity serving the common good of society. Therefore, peace becomes an essential condition for the formation, existence, and development of socialism. Without peace, human creativity and productive capacity cannot be unleashed; class contradictions, war, and conflict will hinder all social progress.

K.Marx affirmed that: “The free development of each person is the condition for the free development of all people”⁽¹⁾, an idea that profoundly reflects the peaceful nature of society, where cooperation replaces antagonism, human solidarity replaces violence, and social justice replaces the injustice of private ownership.

F.Engels also pointed out that war is a product of class-based and exploitative societies,

while in a future communist society, where people are equal and there are no more antagonistic contradictions, “war will lose its basis for existence”.

Continuing this idea, V.I. Lenin affirmed that socialism is the cause of peace, but it is a just peace, established on the basis of abolishing national oppression and exploitation and guaranteeing the right to self-determination of nations. V.I. Lenin wrote: “We fight for peace, but not the kind of peace that sustains oppression, but peace based on social justice”.

From a philosophical perspective, socialism and peace have a dialectical relationship: Peace is a condition for the existence of socialism, because only in a stable, non-violent environment can people develop their creative abilities and build a rich material and spiritual life. Socialism guarantees lasting peace because it eliminates the root causes of war - private ownership and class oppression - while establishing equal cooperative relations between nations. Therefore, the essence of socialism is linked to the value of peace, not passive peace, but active peace, protected by justice, maintained by development, and nurtured by human creativity. Peace in socialism is the highest expression of humanity and social progress, the goal and also the result of a revolutionary process for humanity, by humanity, and for the free and comprehensive development of humankind.

2.2. The nature and content of peace

Peace is comprehensive in nature and considered from multiple perspectives: political: the absence of war and armed conflict; socio-economic: development, fairness, welfare, and cooperation; humanistic: respect for human rights, dignity, beliefs, and aspirations.

Thus, peace is both a condition, a method, and a goal of human development. Peace, therefore, is not a static state but the result of a process of struggle, development, and social progress. The concept of peace in a positive sense means not only “the absence of war” but also “a state of fairness, cooperation, and sustainable development”.

Peace is a state of stability, security, fairness, and cooperation in relations between individuals, communities, and nations; it is a universal human value and a strategic goal of all peoples, ensuring the existence, sustainable development, and happiness of humankind. Peace is linked to universal values: human rights, equality, respect for differences, and cooperation for mutual development.

The human and national value of peace

The human value of peace. In the UNESCO Declaration on the Culture of Peace of 1999, it is stated: Peace is not only the absence of war but also the presence of justice, development, and respect for human rights⁽²⁾. International organizations today consider peace to be linked with sustainable development, human security and gender equality - new values of the 21st century. Peace therefore becomes a measure of civilization and a reflection of humanity’s intellectual and moral development.

The national value of peace. For every nation, peace is a prerequisite for ensuring independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and sustainable development. For large countries, peace is linked to international stability, maintaining influence, and soft power. For small countries like Vietnam, peace is closely tied to national independence, self-reliance,

and development. Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom”. For Vietnam, peace must be peace “in independence”, “in freedom”, and “in socialist justice”.

The dialectical relationship between human values and national values

This is a relationship of unity in goals and difference in interests. Human peace aims at eliminating war, but the peace of each nation is linked to specific interests. Human values and national values are not opposed but complement and harmonize. Protecting peace for the nation contributes to world peace; conversely, world peace is a condition for national development. Vietnam considers peace a means to development, but at the same time a strategic goal of national defense.

2.3. Peace in Ho Chi Minh's thought and the guideline of the Communist Party of Vietnam

Firstly, Ho Chi Minh's thought on peace

Peace is the sacred aspiration of the nation and of humanity. Ho Chi Minh always considered peace as the noble goal of the Vietnamese revolution and of all progressive humanity. He affirmed: “Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom”. Here, independence - freedom - peace is a whole; national independence is a prerequisite for genuine peace; and peace only has meaning when it is linked with freedom and social justice. He emphasized: “the peace movement must be linked with the national independence movement”⁽³⁾.

Peace must be linked with justice, independence, and the right to self-determination of nations.

According to Ho Chi Minh, peace cannot be the tranquility of slavery but must be a just social state where nations have the right to freely choose their own path of development. He emphasized: “We love peace, but it must be genuine peace in independence and freedom”⁽⁴⁾.

According to Ho Chi Minh, peace can only be sustainable if it is based on mutual respect, equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. He affirmed: “We want to have friendly relations with all countries, these countries all have different political systems, they also know that our system is different from theirs, but the leaders have shown great friendliness, and the people are very enthusiastic”⁽⁵⁾.

Peace is a human value intrinsically linked to the spirit of humanism, tolerance, and love for humanity.

Ho Chi Minh's ideology on peace is not only political but also contains profound humanistic depth. He always emphasized friendship, tolerance, and solidarity among nations, considering them the foundation of lasting peace. He said: “I have only one desire, a supreme desire, which is to make our country completely independent, our people completely free, and for all our

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compatriots to have enough food, clothes, and access to education⁽⁶⁾. This is the most vivid expression of peace in Ho Chi Minh's thought - peace for humanity, for the right to live and develop comprehensively.

Peace must be defended by justice and the strength of the people.

Ho Chi Minh never passively absolutized peace. For him, to have peace, one must resolutely fight against all invading and oppressive forces. He affirmed: "Our compatriots fought for independence, freedom, and justice, upholding the spirit of our nation as a heroic nation, determined not to be enslaved"⁽⁷⁾. Therefore, peace according to Ho Chi Minh's thought is just peace, built on the strength of national and international solidarity, not a false peace based on subjugation.

Today, his thought retains its guiding value: Peace must be based on justice and development; it must be built on dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect; and it must be oriented towards humanity - for happiness, progress, and humanism. These ideas are intertwined with the spirit of proletarian internationalism, profoundly reflecting the relationship between human values and national values, between the ideal of peace and the socialist goals that he strived for throughout his life.

Secondly, the Vietnamese Communist Party's perspective on peace

Peace is the aspiration of the Vietnamese people and the overarching goal of the Vietnamese revolution.

From its very inception, the Communist Party of Vietnam clearly defined: the struggle for national independence and national reunification is to bring peace, freedom, and happiness to the people. In its first Political Platform (1930), the Party clearly stated its goal: "The people are free to organize. Men and women have equal rights... To make Vietnam completely independent. To establish a government of workers, peasants, and soldiers"⁽⁸⁾. This shows that peace is linked to national independence and the happiness of the people, not temporary, dependent peace.

Peace must be just peace, linked to national independence, justice, and social progress.

During the revolutionary process, the Party affirmed: "The cause of fighting to maintain peace and achieve national unity is not only in line with the vital interests of our people and nation, but also in line with the common interests of the world's peace and democracy movement"⁽⁹⁾. After the reunification of the country, in the 1991 Platform, the Party continued to affirm: "Vietnam wants to be friends with all countries in the world community, striving for peace, independence and development"⁽¹⁰⁾. Since then, the viewpoint of "peace - cooperation - development" has always been the ideological foundation of Vietnam's foreign policy in the period of renewal and international integration.

Peace is the environment and condition for national development, but it must be protected by the strength of the entire nation.

The Party has always emphasized that peace is not the result of unprincipled concessions, but the fruit of tenacious and just struggle. This viewpoint shows that the Party considers peace a condition for development but not separate from the task of defending the socialist

Fatherland. Peace is guaranteed by the people's support, the strength of national defense, and the overall strength of the nation.

Peace is linked to justice, cooperation, and development in the age of globalization.

In the Document of the 13th National Congress (2021), the Party clearly stated a new vision of peace in the context of a world full of changes: "Persistently and firmly adhere to the independent, self-reliant, multilateral, and diversified relationship policy; enhance the ability to adapt dynamically and flexibly handle national interests harmoniously with common concerns, depending on the subject, issue, time, in accordance with international law and the principles of conduct in the region, in the spirit that national interests are paramount"⁽¹¹⁾. It can be seen that peace in the current context is always associated with independence and self-reliance - core principles in the Party's viewpoint.

At the same time, the Party clearly affirms: "resolutely and persistently protect the independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, sea, islands, and airspace; maintain a peaceful and stable environment for national development"⁽¹²⁾. This shows the dialectical thinking between peace and national defense - not separated, but supporting each other: only with peace can development be achieved, and only with the strength to develop can peace be maintained.

The Vietnamese Communist Party's perspective on peace has three layers of meaning: Humanistic: For the sake of humanity, for a prosperous, free, and happy life. Political: Closely linked to independence, sovereignty, and international justice. Development: A prerequisite for building socialism and sustainable international integration. It is a creative inheritance of Ho Chi Minh's thought on just peace, while also reflecting the Party's strategic vision in the era of globalization, aiming to achieve the goal of: "prosperous people, a strong nation, and democratic, equitable, and civilized society".

2.4. Peace - a value of socialism in Vietnam today

Peace - the humanistic foundation of the socialist path in Vietnam

Peace is the age-old aspiration of the Vietnamese people and a universal human value. Throughout thousands of years of nation-building and national defense, the Vietnamese people have always had to struggle to achieve and maintain peace. Therefore, in Ho Chi Minh's thought and the policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam, peace is not only a goal but also a core value of the socialist system.

The socialism that Vietnam is building is a society of "a prosperous people, a strong nation, democracy, fairness, and civilization" - a society for the people, by the people, and for the comprehensive development of the people. For human beings to develop freely and creatively, peace is an indispensable condition.

Peace - a prerequisite for the cause of national construction and development

For Vietnam, peace is not only a political state but also a fundamental condition for economic, cultural, and social development and for improving the people's lives.

During the period of renewal, our Party affirmed: "firmly protect the Fatherland, maintaining a peaceful and stable environment for national development"⁽¹³⁾. Peace helps Vietnam concentrate resources for development, transition from a planned economy to

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a socialist-oriented market economy, promote industrialization, modernization, and deep integration into the region and the world. The achievements after nearly 40 years of renewal - an average GDP growth rate of 6.37%/year⁽¹⁴⁾, millions of people escaping poverty, and the Human Development Index (HDI) continuously increasing - are vivid evidence of the practical value of peace.

Peace - an expression of the human nature and social justice of socialist society.

Socialism in Vietnam places the people at the center of development, considering the independence, freedom, and happiness of the people as the ultimate goal. Therefore, peace is not only an external condition, but also a moral and humanistic value in social life.

In a socialist society, peace is expressed through: Solidarity, compassion, and respect between people; Equal cooperation mechanisms between nations and countries; Peaceful, friendly, and cooperative foreign policy for mutual development. Vietnam advocates “being a friend, a reliable partner, and an active and responsible member of the international community”⁽¹⁵⁾, clearly demonstrating the peaceful, cooperative, and humanitarian nature of the Vietnamese socialist regime.

Peace - both the goal and the strength that protects the socialist Fatherland.

Peace in Vietnamese socialism is not passive peace. Our Party always emphasizes: “awakening the aspiration for a prosperous and happy country, promoting the will and strength of national unity combined with the strength of the times; comprehensively and synchronously promoting the causes of renewal, industrialization and modernization; building and firmly protecting the Fatherland, maintaining a peaceful and stable environment”⁽¹⁶⁾. This shows that peace and protecting the Fatherland are two unified aspects: only with peace can development be achieved, and only with development can peace be maintained. Vietnam’s current strength in protecting peace comes from the people’s support, the national defense, people’s security, and a peaceful, independent, and flexible foreign policy.

Peace - a humanistic, political, and developmental value of Vietnamese socialism.

In the context of today’s volatile world, marked by conflict and strategic competition, Vietnam’s unwavering pursuit of independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation, and development clearly affirms that peace is both a core value and a long-term goal of the socialist path in Vietnam. It is peace for humanity, for justice, and for the progress of humankind - a value that defines the identity of the Vietnamese socialist regime in the new era.

2.5. Directions for applying and developing the value of peace in Vietnam in the current context

Firstly, we must steadfastly pursue an independent, self-reliant, peaceful, cooperative, and developmental foreign policy.

Vietnam has determined that peace is guaranteed first and foremost by a peaceful foreign policy, resolutely protecting independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, while promoting cooperation for mutual development. This is a concrete realization of Ho Chi Minh's thought: "Our compatriots and soldiers, etc., resolutely fight for the independence, freedom and unity of our Fatherland, while actively contributing to the cause of national independence and protecting world peace"⁽¹⁷⁾.

Secondly, there must be close integration of building strong national defense and security capabilities and maintaining a peaceful environment

Genuine peace must be protected by the comprehensive strength of the nation, not by unprincipled concessions. Developing science and technology, economy, society, and culture must be linked to strengthening national defense and security, building a solid defense zone; ensuring "peace in strength" and "development in stability". This is the method of realizing the "value of peace" on the foundation of the combined strength of the nation and the times.

Thirdly, develop a culture of peace in society

In the new era, the Vietnamese value system needs to include "peace, compassion, cooperation, and tolerance" as central qualities. Education on the value of peace should be implemented in schools, promoting the value of peace, and organizing community activities to spread the positive values of independence; to promote a humanist spirit and oppose violence and extremism. The value of "peace" should be incorporated as a criterion for sustainable development in Vietnamese culture, people, and society.

Fourthly, promote the role of the people in peacebuilding

The people are the primary creative force and the fundamental source of peace. Implementing grassroots democracy effectively, building a strong "people's support base", and strengthening national unity are the foundations for national peace. We must fight against all schemes to divide, destabilize, and undermine peace; and consolidate social trust and people's consensus in the Party's leadership.

Fifthly, actively and proactively participate in activities for international peace

Implementing a multilateral and diversified foreign policy in international engagement; participating extensively in United Nations peacekeeping mechanisms, international agreements on arms control, and regional security... Contributing to building a fair, equitable, and sustainable international order that reflects the legitimate interests of developing countries. Promoting people-to-people diplomacy, humanistic diplomacy, dialogue, cooperation, and sharing the values of peace and friendship among nations.

Sixthly, sustainable economic development is linked to peace

An independent and self-reliant economy is the material foundation of sustainable peace. Innovating the growth model towards green, inclusive, and socially equitable growth; ensuring social security, narrowing the gap between rich and poor, thereby eliminating the root causes of social conflict.

Seventhly, combine the value of peace with social progress and humanism

Peace is not just the absence of war, but also harmonious, equitable, humane, and happy

development for all people. All development policies must be people-oriented, ensuring human rights, civil rights, and the realization of social justice and welfare.

3. Conclusion

Peace is a universal value of humanity, and also a sacred national value, but it only becomes a reality when each nation knows how to transform it into its national character. The unity between these two dimensions reflects the level of human civilization and the character of the nation.

The value of peace in Vietnamese society today is the culmination of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the theory of Vietnam's renewal path, and the peace-loving identity of Vietnamese culture. It is also a vital condition for building socialism and achieving solid international integration. Developing the value of peace today contributes to building lasting peace for the future of the nation and humanity. Vietnam has proven that peace is not a concession, but the strength of intellect, morality, and humanistic spirit. In the new era, building and protecting peace is the responsibility of the entire Party, the entire people, and the entire army, based on the combined strength of national defense, security, foreign relations, culture, and the Vietnamese people ■

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