



## THE CURRENT SITUATION AND PROSPECTS OF CHINA-VIETNAM RELATIONS

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### Abstract

*China and Vietnam established diplomatic relations on January 18, 1950, based on the leadership of the two parties established by Chairman Mao Zedong and Chairman Ho Chi Minh and the friendly relationship cultivated by the two countries. On October 22, 2022, after the end of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong will visit China to show the Vietnamese Communist Party's support for the results of the Chinese Communist Party Congress. This is the most practical congratulatory gesture. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong is a prestigious leader not only to the Vietnamese people but also to other communist parties around the world; therefore, this visit is more popular with China and more valuable for promoting relations between the two parties and the two countries. In the new era, the meeting between Party General Secretary and President of China Xi Jinping and Party General Secretary of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong has important, friendly, friendship and substantial achievements for China-Vietnam relations and the socialist cause of the two countries. The friendship between the two peoples is the social basis and source of strength for the long-term, sustained and sound development of bilateral relations. 72 years of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and China, we can look back at the past, reflect on the lessons of history to look forward to the future.*

**[Key words]** China; Vietnam; relations; current situation; prospects

In the history of the struggle for national liberation and national independence, China and Vietnam also encountered many difficulties and in the process of finding the way to save the country, they both found a common path, an ideal. The common belief and aspiration is to become a socialist country led by the Communist Party. In the new era, the relationship between China and Vietnam is “important, friendly, friendship and substantial achievements” (Thu, H., 2022).



“Important” because this is a historic visit that will leave an important imprint on China-Vietnam relations, with far-reaching impact beyond the scope of bilateral relations between the two countries; it will attract the attention and attention of the people of the two countries and the international community. “Friendly” because this visit not only reflects the special relationship between the two countries, but also reflects the affection between the two general secretaries. The meeting between the two general secretaries of China and Vietnam is of great significance because they are two outstanding theorists, thinkers and most important national leaders. “Friendship” because it takes place in a friendly and sincere atmosphere before, during and after the visit. China is the ceremony to present the “Medal of Friendship” to General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong. The “substantial achievements” are clearly reflected in the joint statement and the 13 agreements signed by the two countries, reflecting the political consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries and further deepening the relationship between the two countries. The results of this visit not only have a profound impact on bilateral relations, but are also conducive to regional and world peace, stability and development.

### **I. China–Vietnam Relations, Great Importance is Attached to the Political Relationship**

The two nations is comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership “16 character policy” and “four good”

On the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Vietnam, China-Vietnam relations have had good times and turbulent periods, but overall, the mainstream is still friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. In the two wars against France and the United States, Vietnam received great and effective help from international friends, especially the Soviet Union and China. This is one of the factors that contributed to the glorious victory of the Vietnamese National Liberation Revolution. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) officially established diplomatic relations on January 18, 1950. China became the first country in the world to establish diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. But before that, the “friendship, solidarity and combat” between the two parties and peoples of the two countries had gone through long, difficult years in the process of national-democratic revolutionary struggle of each country. In that process, the revolutionary cause of the two countries, the destiny of the two peoples, and the historical mission of the two parties were closely linked. President Ho Chi Minh and many predecessors of Vietnam have been active in China for many years, participated in the revolution, and received the sincere help of the Chinese people. After the August Revolution of 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was born, our people and army also had activities to support the fight of the people and the Chinese liberation army on the Guangxi battlefield. Dien-Que border area, Thap-Dai-Van-Son battlefield...). The support of the Vietnamese revolution for the Chinese revolution at that time was small, but with great affection between the two peoples. During a meeting with members of the Chinese Military Advisory Group before leaving for Vietnam, on June 30, 1950 in Beijing, Chairman Mao Zedong said: “Ho Chi Minh and many Vietnamese friends have once participated in and aided China's revolutionary struggle, some even



shed blood and sacrificed themselves. Now it's absolutely a good thing for comrades to come to help their fight against the French” (Sa-luc, and Man-luc, 1992). Recalling the close feelings between the two Parties and peoples at that time so that we can understand why the diplomatic relations between Vietnam and China were established right after the People's Republic of China was born (October 1, 1949) and that relationship had very good years, like President Ho Chi Minh's verse: “both a comrade and a brother” (Nguyen H.Q., 2010). The faithful Vietnamese people will never forget the great and sincere help of the Communist Party, Government and people of China during the two resistance wars for national salvation and national construction.

That friendship, solidarity, fighting, cooperation and friendship not only made an important contribution to the revolutionary cause and national construction of the two peoples of China and Vietnam, but also contributed to the common cause of the peoples of countries in the region and around the world to strive for a common goal: peace, independence and social progress. Since 1991, when the world revolution was in decline due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, the normalization of relations between China and Vietnam was also a period for both countries to carry out this process. In the process of reform and opening up, the two sides have increased exchanges and learned from each other's experience. This is the most pragmatic cooperation that has no similar development model in the world at present. The economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has also continued to advance. Currently, Vietnam's trade cooperation with China is greater than any relationship between Vietnam and other countries.

In recent years, China-Vietnam relations have maintained a stable and positive momentum of development. The leaders of the two countries have reached many important consensuses, pushing bilateral relations to a new level. In the relationship between the two countries, friendly cooperation is still the mainstream. The friendship cultivated by generations of leaders of the two countries has become a precious common wealth of the two peoples, contributing to maintaining the stable development momentum of the traditional friendship between China and Vietnam, and bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples. Overall, China-Vietnam relations have maintained a stable and positive momentum; the leaders of the two countries have reached many important consensuses, pushing bilateral relations to a new level. Since the normalization of relations between Vietnam and China in 1991, the friendship and cooperation between the two countries in various fields have developed rapidly and extensively, bringing tangible benefits to both countries. So far, the two countries have signed a number of government-level agreements and various cooperation documents, laying a legal foundation for the long-term cooperative relationship between the two countries. In November 1991, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam Do Muoi and Chairman of the Council of Ministers Vo Van Kiet visited China, marking the official normalization and opening a new page in the history of Vietnam's political and economic relations between the two countries. Since then, the two countries' senior leaders have regularly made official visits and met on the sidelines of international conferences, through high-level meetings. The two sides always emphasized that the China-



Vietnam friendship is a valuable asset of the two Parties, States and peoples of the two countries, which should be carefully preserved and constantly cultivated; affirming that they will do their best to deepen that relationship, trust each other, and support each other in the cause of innovation, reform and opening up, and building socialism in each country, for the sake of peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region and the world.

In 1999, during the visit of General Secretary Le Kha Phieu and senior leaders of the two parties to China, China and Vietnam established the “16 character policy” to promote the relationship between the two countries in the 21st century, that is, “friendly neighborliness, comprehensive cooperation, long-term stability and future-oriented thinking” (Manh H., 2022). In December 2000, Chairman Tran Duc Luong visited China, and the two countries signed a joint statement on comprehensive cooperation in the new century. After that, the two sides agreed to make the two countries the spirit of “good neighbors, good friends, good comrades, good partners” (Manh H., 2022). In 2002, during an official visit to Vietnam and speaking to students of Vietnam National University, Hanoi, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, President of the People's Republic of China Jiang Zemin emphasized “The development of the Vietnam-China relationship must be based on mutual trust, long-term stability is the premise, good neighborliness is the guarantee, comprehensive cooperation is the key, for mutual development. Prosperity is the goal” (Tran T.Q., 2011). Especially during General Secretary Nong Duc Manh’s visit to China in May 2008, the two sides agreed to adopt the slogans of “16 character policy” and “four goods” to establish the China-Vietnam relationship framework as a “comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership” (Nguyen H.Q., 2010).

In 2008, the two sides agreed to establish a framework of comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership between China and Vietnam, the highest cooperation framework and the most profound connotation in Vietnam's relations with countries around the world. China is also the first country with Vietnam to build this cooperation framework. With the joint efforts of the two sides, the comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership between China and Vietnam in recent years has maintained a stable development momentum and achieved many new developments. Up to now, China and Vietnam have established nearly 60 exchange and cooperation mechanisms from the central to local levels, related to almost all fields, playing an important role in promoting the relationship between the two countries, friendly cooperation between ministries, branches and localities of the two countries. Cooperation between the two Parties has been promoted, making an important contribution to building trusting relations between the two countries. The two sides maintained the exchange of delegations and established a regular exchange and cooperation mechanism between the Party Committees, especially in the field of cadre training, Party building...; successfully organized a mechanism for high-level meetings between the two parties and a theoretical seminar to exchange experiences in Party building, state management, renovation, reform and opening-up and international integration; signed and effectively implemented the Cooperation Plan between the two Parties, the Agreement on cooperation in training senior cadres between the two Parties. Exchanges and cooperation between the National People's Congress of



China and the National Assembly of Vietnam, between the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the Vietnam Fatherland Front, and between ministries and branches such as diplomacy, defense, and public security have been continuously enhanced. Up to now, the two sides have successfully coordinated to organize 11 sessions of the Steering Committee for bilateral cooperation as well as well implemented activities of China-Vietnam border defense friendship exchanges, strategic security dialogues, and dialogues, defense strategy; maintaining sending naval ships to visit each other, conducting joint patrols on land and the Gulf of Tonkin, inspecting the joint fisheries between the Chinese Fisheries General Team and the Vietnam Coast Guard, exchanging young officers...

In January 2017, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong paid an official visit to China. This visit will help to enhance mutual trust, further consolidate the traditional friendship between China and Vietnam, deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, and make positive contributions to promoting regional and world peace, stability, cooperation and development. During the official visit of General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong to China from October 30 to November 1, 2022, the visit aroused regional and world interest. This is the first visit to China by a foreign leader since the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and it is also the first domestic and foreign diplomatic activity on the mainland since the establishment of the new leadership of the Communist Party of China. On November 2, 2022, the two countries issued a joint statement confirming that the two sides will strengthen and deepen the “comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership” relationship between the two countries in the new era. The two countries agreed to strengthen strategic communication, enhance political mutual trust, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, continue traditional friendship, properly handle differences on the basis of mutual benefit, mutual understanding and respect, and maintain common development of bilateral relations, as well as peace and stability in the region. China and Vietnam are also committed to strengthening coordination in international affairs, jointly addressing regional and global challenges, contributing to maintaining regional and world peace, and promoting economic and overall development. The two Parties, the two countries and the two peoples have stood shoulder to shoulder, giving each other great and valuable support and assistance, contributing to the success of the revolutionary cause of national liberation and socialist construction in each country.

#### 1. The Vietnam-China Fellowship Association is friendly exchanges bind the two nations

In September 1945, after the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Vietnam-China Friendship Association was established. As one of the first foreign friendship organizations in Vietnam and the forerunner of the Vietnam-China Friendship Association. On February 11, 1950, the Vietnam-China Friendship Association was established at the Viet Bac revolutionary base, marking an important milestone in the friendly ties between the two countries. The Vietnam-China Friendship Association is a socio-political organization operating within the framework of the law of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and its charter. In terms of organizational structure, the Vietnam-China Friendship Association is organized at the central, provincial (or equivalent) and





branch levels. The highest governing body of the Association is the National Congress, which is held every five years. The Congress elected the Central Executive Committee of the Association for a term of 5 years. The Central Executive Committee elects a Standing Committee consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen, General Secretary and a number of members. The Association Secretariat is appointed by the Standing Committee, responsible for handling the daily affairs of the Association. In addition to the Secretariat, a number of other specialized committees assist the Standing Committee. The main task of the Vietnam-China Friendship Association is to provide the Vietnamese people with information about the history, culture, life and achievements of the Chinese people in the process of renovation and opening up; and at the same time introduce to Chinese people about history, culture, life and achievements in the renovation cause of the Vietnamese people.

The Vietnam-China Friendship Association plays the role of a “bridge” for economic, scientific and technical cooperation as well as cultural exchange between the two peoples. The association also encourages and helps the two countries' cultural, scientific, sports and cultural agencies and organizations and businesses to establish friendly and cooperative relations with each other. The association also regularly organizes many people-to-people exchanges, meetings, film screenings, concerts, and art performances to promote the image of China and celebrate the great holidays of the Chinese people. In order to introduce and widely propagate to the peoples of the two countries about the traditional historical friendship, the beauty and development of each nation in the renovation period, the Vietnam-China Friendship Association organized the exhibition, photo exhibition, as showing President Ho Chi Minh's interest in Vietnam-China relations; Vietnam's achievements during the renewal and international integration and China's reform and opening-up. In order to share experiences and learn from each other, conferences and seminars have been organized to discuss issues related to promoting friendly cooperation and people-to-people exchanges between provinces and cities of the two countries. People-to-people exchanges, especially between the young generations of the two countries, are increasingly practical, contributing to enhancing mutual understanding and promoting the friendship between the two parties, the two countries and the two peoples. Up to now, the two sides have organized three Vietnam-China Youth Festivals. In 2010 and 2013, the Chinese side invited 3,000 young Vietnamese to China. In 2016, Vietnam invited 1,000 young Chinese. In 2019, the two countries have organized 19th Vietnam-China Youth Friendship Meetings (with a size of 100 people each) in the face-to-face format. In 2021 and 2022, the two sides have organized online exchange activities, friendship meetings with the youth of the two countries as well as many youth exchange and cooperation activities between localities of the two countries, especially in the fields of youth development (Chu H.T., and Pham T.S, 2022).

The Vietnam-China Friendship Association have a close relationship with the China-Vietnam Friendship Association of the Chinese side. Over the past years, the two sides have coordinated many exchange activities with the aim of enhancing mutual understanding between the two peoples, thereby enhancing mutual friendship. Two countries have organized many delegations to



visit each other, organize “red tours”, find places to keep memories of mutual cooperation during the revolutionary period of each country. Vietnam welcome delegations of Chinese veterans who helped Vietnam in the wars against France and the US... It is noteworthy that the two sides have established a rather special and very effective exchange mechanism, which is the “Vietnam-China People's Forum”, in which a number of Vietnamese dignitaries are considered to have deep understanding of China and a number of Chinese dignitaries with deep understanding of Vietnam meet annually to discuss issues of concern to the people of the two countries, contributing to helping the Party and Government of each side make the right decisions in the field of economic development. strengthen and develop relations between the two countries. In recent years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face communication has not been possible, but we also have online exchanges with the Chinese Association or through the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam.

## **II. China–Vietnam Relations, Both Sides Attach Special Importance To Each Other's Position**

China and Vietnam agreed that the world situation is undergoing historic and profound changes, which are unpredictable and entering a new period of turmoil. The two parties and the two countries should make unremitting efforts to realize the goals, ideals and missions of people's happiness and human progress; insist on understanding and developing bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective. The motto and the spirit of “good neighbors, good friends, good comrades, and good partners” will promote the continuous development of China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in a long-term, healthy and stable development in the new era.

First, maintaining relationships in a changing world.

Recently, complex changes have taken place in the world environment, the “big power competition” is still fierce, the Covid-19 epidemic, and military conflicts between Russia and Ukraine have caused earth-shaking changes in the entire global security environment. Competition for power among the superpowers has exacerbated instability in Southeast Asia. With the Covid-19 pandemic, global supply chains have been repeatedly broken, and the world economy has mostly been hurt. In this context, the continued regular meetings and high-level exchanges between China and Vietnam are milestones in the bilateral relations between the two countries. Since the beginning of 2020, the general secretaries of the two countries have made 4 phone calls and exchanged letters and telegrams on major political events between the two sides. The epidemic continues and the recovery of the global economy is slow. The two countries need to jointly maintain the regional industrial and supply chains. In this context, the relationship between the two parties and the two countries plays a very important role. In 2022, cooperation in epidemic prevention between the two countries will be the highlight. China has provided Vietnam with a variety of vaccines through aid and commercial orders; the border provinces of the two countries also support and cooperate with each other. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong emphasized:



“The changes in the world are very complicated, and our two countries are at an important stage. Therefore, it is not only a historical responsibility but also an objective requirement to continuously consolidate and develop the good-neighborly and friendly relations and comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries, and it is in line with the wishes and interests of the two peoples” (Hoang, V., 2022).

Second, promote substantive cooperation.

In the past 3 years, the General Secretary of the two parties has had 4 phone calls (January 2020, September 2020, February 2021 and September 2021). Every year, the two General Secretaries send gifts and congratulatory messages on the occasion of the two countries' traditional New Year, each other's birthdays and major holidays of the two countries. President Nguyen Xuan Phuc talked by phone with Chinese President Xi Jinping in May 2021, and the two Prime Ministers spoke by phone three times in June 2021, January 1, 2022 and September 2022 held talks with the Chairman of the National People's Congress of China in June 2021. These activities have contributed to strategic orientation, motivation and political guarantee for the healthy and stable development of the two countries' relations.

China and Vietnam are two socialist neighbors who are trying to deepen reform (renovation), reform and opening up. Both countries are facing new opportunities and challenges in the process of construction, development and innovation. Under the current situation, further consolidating and strengthening the China-Vietnam comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership is in line with the fundamental and long-term interests of both sides, and is conducive to maintaining peace, stability and promoting regional and world cooperation. During General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's official visit to China, various ministries, central and local governments of the two countries signed 13 documents. The signing of these 13 signed cooperation documents also clearly shows the content of in-depth exchanges between the two sides, that is, the two sides agree to strengthen cooperation in substantive fields, especially to improve the effectiveness of cooperation. Cooperation in the field of economics, trade and investment has laid a solid foundation for the development of bilateral relations; emphasizing that China and Vietnam are very important and potential trading partners. These cooperation documents cover a variety of fields, including cooperation documents between the party and government and localities. The highlight of the cooperation documents between the two parties is that the two sides attach great importance to substantive relations. Among them, the Ministry of Commerce of China and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam signed a memorandum of understanding and other practical activities. Regarding strengthening cooperation to ensure the supply chain between Vietnam and China, the General Administration of Customs of China and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam about Memorandum of Understanding on Food Safety in Bilateral Trade, Ministry of Industry and Trade The People's Government of Yunnan Province (China) and the President of Vietnam reached a consensus on strengthening cooperation in the economic and trade field. These documents play an important role in exporting Vietnamese goods to China and vice versa.





Vietnamese enterprises and people also need to understand and meet the growing requirements and standards of the Chinese market in order to be able to stably export Vietnamese agricultural, forestry and fishery products to the world's most populous market in the near future.

Cooperation between the two parties has been promoted, making an important contribution to building trust between the two countries. The two sides also maintained high-level contacts and established cooperation and exchange mechanisms between Party committees at the Central Committee. The complicated developments of the COVID-19 epidemic made travel conditions limited, but the two sides still maintained regular contact in a flexible and effective manner.

Third, strengthen political mutual trust.

Cooperation between the two parties has been promoted. The two sides maintained the exchange of delegations and established cooperation and exchange mechanisms between Party Committees; organized 10 theoretical seminars between the two parties. The two sides established a mechanism of the Bilateral Cooperation Steering Committee (2006) to coordinate all aspects of cooperation in the bilateral relationship. Relations between important branches such as diplomacy, security and defense were promoted, the two sides continued to effectively implement cooperation agreements between the two ministries of foreign affairs (2002), the two ministries of public security (2003), two Defense Ministries (2003)... (Chu H.T., and Pham T.S., 2022).

Cooperation between Chinese provinces and Vietnamese localities and cities, especially Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guangdong... has been active and has achieved many practical results. Up to now, nearly 50 provinces/cities of Vietnam have established friendly cooperative relations with Chinese provinces/cities/autonomous regions. The relationship between localities has been strengthened in many forms with mechanisms such as: Joint Working Committee between 04 provinces of Cao Bang, Lang Son, Quang Ninh, Ha Giang (Vietnam) and Guangxi (China); Joint working group between 04 provinces of Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Lao Cai, Ha Giang (Vietnam) and Yunnan province (China); Conference to review the cooperation situation between Vietnamese ministries/sectors and localities and Guangdong province (China); Conference on economic corridor cooperation in 5 provinces, Lao Cai - Hanoi - Hai Phong - Quang Ninh (Vietnam) and Kunming (China). Economic Corridor Cooperation between Lao Cai, Hanoi, Hai Phong, Quang Ninh provinces/cities with Yunnan province, China. Through the sessions, the two sides discussed in-depth measures to enhance mutual understanding and trust, promote substantive cooperation in all fields, and resolve difficulties and obstacles in the process. Cooperate and jointly build a border of peace, stability and friendship, contributing to the stable and healthy development of the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between China and Vietnam. Exchanges and exchanges between mass organizations are increasingly expanding, contributing to enhancing trust, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation, and creating a solid foundation for the two countries' relations. The two sides have coordinated to organize various activities such as People's Forum, People's Friendship Festival, Border People's Festival, Youth Friendship Meeting, Youth Festival...



Vietnam is willing to support and promote the development of China-ASEAN relations. Vietnam highly appreciates China, especially Vietnam's cooperation and active support during its tenure as the rotating chair of ASEAN in 2020. With the joint efforts of all parties, China-ASEAN relations continue to develop comprehensively, extensively and vigorously in various fields. China and Vietnam have also closely coordinated and cooperated in multilateral mechanisms and forums such as the United Nations (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the Mekong-Lancang River. Vietnam also highly appreciates China's active support and cooperation during Vietnam's tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2020-2021. At present, both China and Vietnam are members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP). This visit by Nguyen Phu Trong will also be an opportunity to enhance the cohesion and influence of RCEP. China and Vietnam regularly coordinate to organise theoretical workshops between the two Parties, to exchange experiences on Party building and national management. China and Vietnam overcame difficulties caused by the pandemic to successfully organise the recent two meetings in-person form, in Hanoi in September 2021 and Nanning in July 2022. Cooperation at multilateral forums continues to be strengthened. China thanks and appreciates Vietnam's support for China at the United Nations, hoping that Vietnam will further strengthen cooperation within the framework of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation.

Fourth, highlights of economic, trade and investment cooperation.

Over the past 20 years since the normalization of China-Vietnam relations, Vietnam-China economic and trade relations have achieved leapfrog development, with bilateral trade volume rising from \$32 million in 1992 to \$30 billion in 2010. Since 2004, China has been one of Vietnam's largest trading partners. At the end of October 2011, the bilateral trade volume reached US\$28.14 billion, an increase of 31.5%, of which Vietnam's exports to China reached US\$8.56 billion, an increase of 57.5%, and Vietnam's imports from China reached US\$19.58 billion, an increase of 23.6% (Chu H.T., and Pham T.S., 2022) . In recent years, especially since the beginning of 2022, the senior leaders of the two parties and the two countries have maintained and communicated frequently; this exchange has determined the role and direction of the common development of the two countries. In other areas, the two countries have strengthened cooperation to jointly overcome the difficulties of the epidemic and maintain customs clearance of goods and trade exchanges. Both countries have achieved very encouraging results. According to Chinese customs statistics, the bilateral trade volume will reach 230 billion US dollars in 2021. In 2022, this figure will continue to be maintained. According to statistics, in the first nine months of this year, the bilateral trade volume reached 170 billion US dollars. Talking about the results of economic and trade cooperation, the direct investment of Chinese enterprises in Vietnam has maintained a growth trend for many years. Vietnam has continuously become China's largest trading partner in ASEAN. Vietnam-China trade volume accounts for a quarter of the total trade volume between China and ASEAN, and it is China's sixth largest trading partner in the world. In fact, from 2013 to now, China's direct investment in Vietnam has continued to grow, and has even



increased significantly in recent years. China has risen from the top 15 to the top 10 countries investing in Vietnam the most. According to statistics from the Ministry of Planning and Investment, in the first 10 months of 2022, China's direct investment in Vietnam reached US\$1.7 billion, ranking fourth among 103 countries and Vietnam's investment regions after Singapore, Japan and South Korea (Phuong N., 2022).

Vietnam and China showed a determination to balance trade. They pledged to create favorable conditions for their businesses to increase cooperation in investment, economics, trade, and air, road, and rail transport. Economist Professor Liu Rui of the Beijing People's University said: "Vietnam is now the highest potential market in Southeast Asia and has a rapidly growing economy. This gives the two countries multiple opportunities to increase economic cooperation". Vietnam has been continuously the largest trading partner in ASEAN since 2016 and China's sixth largest trading partner in the world since 2020. The two countries' senior leaders reached a common understanding on strengthening coordination and jointly promoting cooperation in the fields of economics, trade, production capacity and investment, infrastructure, and finance. The two sides have established and signed many mechanisms, such as: a Working Group on Cooperation on Infrastructure and a Working Group on Monetary Cooperation; an Agreement on extending and supplementing the 5-year development plan for economic and trade cooperation between Vietnam and China for the 2017-2021 period; Amended Border Trade Agreement (2016); and many cooperation Memorandums of Understanding on jointly developing infrastructure cooperation plans and cooperation in production capacity, thereby continuing to create a framework to strengthen and promote bilateral economic-trade cooperation. Regarding trade, in the context of the epidemic negatively affecting the trade of most countries around the world, the two-way trade between Vietnam and China maintained an impressive growth momentum. From 32 million USD in 1991, bilateral trade turnover has grown strongly and rapidly to 165.9 billion USD in 2021. In 2021, the total trade between Vietnam and China reached 165.9 billion USD, an increase of 24.6% compared to 2020 (according to Chinese data, it was 230.2 billion USD, up 19.7% and accounting for one-third of the total trade turnover between China and ASEAN). In the first eight months of 2022, bilateral import and export turnover reached 117.4 billion USD, up 10.8% over the same period in 2021 (Manh H., 2022). Vietnam's fruit exports to China have made remarkable progress, in which Vietnam's passion fruit has been piloted for official export to China since July 2022 and fresh durian exported from Vietnam has also been officially approved in September 2022. China has become an important leading market for Vietnam's agriculture, forestry and fishery products, with the value of two-way trade between Vietnam and China in the agricultural sector increasing rapidly and continuously over the years. It is expected to continue to grow strongly in the near future. Regarding investment, accumulated to August 2022, China ranked 6th out of 139 countries and territories investing FDI in Vietnam with 3,453 valid projects, and total registered capital reaching 22.42 billion USD. Particularly in the first 8 months of 2022, China ranked 4th out of 94 countries and territories investing in Vietnam with 143 projects, with total capital reaching 1.4 billion USD ( Chu H.T., and Pham T.S., 2022).



Fifth, peace and stability in the East China Sea and strengthening territorial and border cooperation.

After the normalization of China-Vietnam relations, in 1993 the two sides signed an agreement on basic principles for resolving border and territorial issues. The two sides are also negotiating on three issues including the land boundary, the demarcation of the Beibu Gulf and the issue of the East China Sea. So far, implementing the agreements and common perceptions of the two countries' senior leaders, the existing problems in the relations between the two countries have been gradually resolved. The two countries signed the Land Boundary Treaty (1999), the Agreement on Delimitation and the Agreement on Fisheries Cooperation in the Gulf of Tonkin (2000), completed all the demarcation and marker planting (in 2008) and signed the Agreement on Fisheries Cooperation, concluding three documents on land border management (2009). These are important events of historical significance, creating the premise for building the Vietnam-China border into a border of peace, stability and development, contributing to strengthening the friendship and cooperation between the two countries. Implementing the agreements and common perceptions of the two countries' senior leaders, the existing problems in the relations between the two countries have been gradually resolved. The two countries signed the Land Border Treaty in 1999 and the Agreement on the Delimitation of the Tonkin Gulf and the Vietnam-China Fisheries Cooperation Agreement in 2000, while completing all land border demarcation and marker planting in 2008 and signed three documents on land border management in 2009. These are important events of historical significance, creating the premise to build the Vietnam-China border into a border of peace, stability and development, contributing to strengthening the friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

The high-ranking leaders of the two Parties and countries have reached many important the maintenance of peace and stability in the East Sea. The two sides signed an agreement on the basic principles guiding the settlement of sea-related issues in 2011; have established and regularly maintained the Government-level negotiation mechanism on border and territory issues, the meetings between the two countries' deputy foreign ministers and three negotiation mechanisms, namely the working group on the waters beyond the mouth of the Gulf of Tonkin, the working group on cooperation in less sensitive maritime issues, and the working group on maritime cooperation for common development. Valuable lessons during the negotiations on the settlement of land border issues and delimitation in the Gulf of Tonkin along with the agreement on the basic principles guiding the settlement of sea-related issues and the common perceptions reached between the two countries' high-ranking leaders lay the groundwork and build trust for the two sides to continue negotiating and seek measures to gradually address the East Sea issue peacefully on the basis of the friendly relationship between the two countries, the respect for the legitimate rights and interests of each other, in accordance with international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC) signed between ASEAN and China. In addition, the two sides can cooperate in other fields such as scientific research, protection of the marine environment, search



and rescue, and meteorology and hydrology. Since the complete settlement of the land border issue in 2009, the two sides have agreed to focus on maritime issues. During General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's official visit to China in October 2011, the two sides signed an agreement on basic principles guiding the resolution of maritime issues, laying the foundation for the resolution of maritime issues. In 2022, China and Vietnam agreed to continue to abide by the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties and the two countries and the "Agreement on Basic Principles Guiding the Resolution of China-Vietnam Maritime Issues" (Pham B.M., 2020). The border negotiation mechanism at the government level of China and Vietnam insists on actively discussing measures to solve the problem through friendly consultations and negotiations. Temporary ones that do not affect the positions and commitments of all parties; seek basic long-term solutions that are acceptable to both parties. At the same time, the two sides agreed to manage and control maritime differences on the basis of consultation and consensus, refrain from taking actions that complicate the situation and expand disputes, maintain peace and stability in the East China Sea, and promote maritime cooperation.

Sixth, promote tourism and epidemic prevention cooperation and education and training.

For many years, China has been the country with the largest number of tourists in Vietnam (about 5.2 million, accounting for one-third). If land-based cross-border tourists are included, the number of people crossing the border between the two places reaches 12 million each year. The two countries also agreed to promote the early launch of the Ban Gioc Waterfall (Vietnam)-Detian (China) Scenic Area Tourism Cooperation Pilot. The cooperative relations between the two parties of Vietnam and China are developing day by day.

Since the end of 2007, China has resumed providing assistance for the training of Vietnamese middle and senior cadres. In 2008, the Central Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the International Liaison Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China signed an agreement on the exchange and cooperation mechanism. Over the past 20 years, the two countries' cooperation in education and training has developed very strongly. The two countries have signed many important agreements on training cooperation. The number of Chinese students, especially those from Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guangdong regions, studying in Vietnam is also increasing. More than 80 Vietnamese universities have had regular and effective relations with Chinese universities. During General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's visit to China from October 11 to 15, 2011, the two parties have signed the 2011-2015 cooperation plan between the two parties. In the joint statement and joint communique, China and Vietnam have always attached great importance to and emphasized the strengthening of exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, education, and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries. Leaders of Party committees at the central level have also maintained regular exchanges and contacts in various flexible forms. The two sides have effectively implemented the two-Party cooperation plan in the 2016-2020 period, the





personnel training cooperation plan between the two Parties in the 2016-2020 period, and the cooperation agreement on training senior officials between the two Parties in the 2017-2020 period. In April 2022, the two sides signed a cooperation plan between two Parties for the 2021-2025 period and a plan for personal training between the two Parties for the 2021-2025 period. The Chinese government provides scholarships for education at all levels of university and above to Vietnamese citizens every year. In 2021, the Chinese government will provide Vietnamese citizens with 44 fully-funded scholarships to study in China for doctoral, master's and universities. Currently, there are about 11,000 Vietnamese students studying in Chinese universities, and about 2,000 Chinese students studying in Vietnam (Phuong N., 2022).

Cooperation in tourism, since the “Vietnam-China Tourism Cooperation Agreement” was signed in 1994, tourism cooperation between the two countries has become stronger and stronger. If in 1993, there were only 17,000 Chinese tourists coming to Vietnam for tourism (equal to 20% of the number of international visitors to Vietnam). Up to now, for Vietnam, China is the largest international tourism market, both in terms of inbound and outbound. In 2019, Vietnam welcomed 5.8 million Chinese tourists (accounting for nearly one-third of international visitors to Vietnam) and the number of Vietnamese people traveling to China (about 4.5 million arrivals) also ranked top of the list of outbound visitors of Vietnam. China is also Vietnam's largest tourism market.

Medical cooperation, especially in the prevention and control of the COVID-19 epidemic, is also a bright spot in the relationship between the two countries. China is one of the countries that provide the most and fastest COVID-19 vaccine to Vietnam. By the end of 2021, China has donated 7.3 million doses of vaccine to Vietnam and commercially supplied about 45 million doses of vaccine. At the 14th meeting of the Steering Committee for Bilateral Cooperation in July 2022, China announced that it would give Vietnam an additional 10 million doses of vaccine. Chinese localities (Yunnan, Guangxi, Guangdong) also donated a large number of medical supplies to Vietnamese localities. Through the Party channel, China has given Vietnam a batch of medical supplies worth 1.5 million CNY (Chu H.T., and Pham T.S., 2022).

In recent years, the cooperative relationship between China and Vietnam in the fields of politics, economy, education, culture, sports and tourism has been developing day by day. Through exchanges of visits by delegations at all levels, signing of multiple cooperation documents, joint seminars and exhibitions and other practical activities, the cooperative relations between localities of the two countries have also been deepened day by day. In particular, leaders of Yunnan, Guangxi, Guangdong, Tianjin, Hainan, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Shanghai and other Chinese places have visited Vietnam. Vietnamese central and local leaders have also visited China many times.

### **III. China-Vietnam Relations, Promote The Continuous Development Of The Comprehensive Cooperative Relationship Between The Two Countries**



## 1. China-Vietnam relations, looking back on history

Looking back at the relationship between Vietnam and China over the past 72 years, one can reflect on the lessons of history:

First, China-Vietnam relations have a particularly important role for the interests of the two countries and the destiny of the two peoples. Due to the historical and geographical context, the two countries of China and Vietnam are, as many people say, “mountainous land, mutual culture, similar ideals, interrelated destiny” (Nguyen H.Q., 2010). In the past, fighting together in the national-democratic revolution made an important contribution to the victory of the two peoples, but today, friendly cooperation also makes an important contribution to the development of the two countries. The Vietnamese people are well aware of that importance, deeply feel the love and support of the Chinese people, and are also deeply aware of their responsibility to support the Chinese people. Right from the Chinese resistance war against the Japanese fascists, Comrade Nguyen Ai Quoc (President Ho Chi Minh) mentioned the proverb circulating in Vietnam at that time: “Saving China is saving yourself” (Nguyen H.Q., 2010). During the resistance war against the US to save the country of the Vietnamese people, Chairman Mao Zedong also called on the Chinese people to support Vietnam. Today, in the new historical context, the “comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership” between China and Vietnam plays an increasingly important role in the peace, stability and development of each country, making an important contribution to the peace, stability and development of each country. emphasis on East Asian cooperation, and international movements aimed at the goals of peace, national independence and social progress.

Second, the China-Vietnam friendship relationship has a solid foundation, in line with the interests of the two countries, showing the affection of the two peoples, so it is able to overcome all difficulties and challenges to continue growing rapidly in all fields. That phenomenon can be likened to an ancient tree that has lived for thousands of years on the border of the two countries, just passed the cold winter with dead leaves and branches, but the warm sap from the ground still nourishes life, and when the spring comes again, it sprouts again. Today, China-Vietnam relations are also facing many challenges, but the opportunity to overcome is also great. With joint efforts, the two sides can completely overcome difficult challenges, take advantage of favorable opportunities, and bring China-Vietnam friendship relations to new heights and continue to develop well.

Third, in order to properly solve problems and obstacles in the China-Vietnam relationship, the two sides need to start from a strategic height, from the fundamental and long-term interests of the two peoples. Don't let short-term, local problems spoil fundamental long-term interests; do not allow external factors to negatively affect bilateral relations; do not allow the remnants of extreme nationalism to harm equality relations. Those are historical experiences that can be drawn from the reality of China-Vietnam relations over the past decades. Of course, to do so, it is important first of all to come from the goodwill, determination, patience and trust of each party.



## 2. China-Vietnam relations, toward the future

The trend of peace and development in the world, globalization and regional integration requires and creates favorable opportunities for the stable development of friendly cooperation between the two countries. Geographically, and also economically and culturally, Vietnam is a bridge between China and Southeast Asia. Politically, China and Vietnam have a closer relationship. The foreign policy of countries is based on national interests. National interests sometimes do not coincide with the similarity of political ideology. But in the case of current China-Vietnam relations, ideological similarities are in line with national interests. In terms of economy-trade, the current Vietnam-China relations as well as the relations between countries in the world, both in the presence of cooperation and also in the competition, arise problems that need to be overcome. It is possible through the cooperative efforts of the two sides to step by step settle on the principle of equality and mutual benefit. The current problem is that the two sides have well implemented the idea of “one belt, two corridors” cooperation between the two countries, integrated with the “one axis and two wings” cooperation between China and ASEAN countries.

More than 40 years ago was the period of China's development and rise. The outstanding feature of this period is to focus on the development of the domestic economy, implement the strategies of “bringing in” and “going out” simultaneously, expand the market, promote cooperation, and gradually expand its influence. Due to the above goals, China's external behavior tends to be moderate and persuasive, focusing on China's image of “peaceful rise”. Over the past century, China has made four major achievements: regaining independence from Western powers; building a strong economy based on the strength of the Communist Party; reform and opening up and modernizing the country; and building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The fourth most influential achievement of Xi Jinping in the past 10 years-the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is a grand gathering of global media attention; because China is becoming more and more important to global development. The congress summarized the 100-year journey since the birth and rule of the Communist Party in the world's most populous country, and opened up the grand goal of the next 100 years-a history of leadership and macro-management that seems unprecedented in the world. From an international perspective, the rise of China has brought growth momentum, unlimited business opportunities, and unlimited cooperation. China continues to expand in an all-round way and promote economic globalization in a more open direction, so the future is a good time for Vietnam.

First, in terms of cooperation opportunities, the most prominent aspect of China-Vietnam relations is political strength. Chinese General Secretary and President Xi Jinping affirmed that the Chinese Party, government and people attach great importance to relations with Vietnam. Xi Jinping expressed that he is willing to work together with the Vietnamese party, state and people to strengthen friendly cooperation and promote the continuous development of bilateral relations in a new stage. Efforts should be made to push the relationship between the two countries to a new



stage of political solidity, mutual trust, fruitful practical cooperation, solid foundation of friendship, and management of differences. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, people-centered, the political and social stability of the two countries has been maintained for a long time. China and Vietnam have set development goals for 10, 20 or even 30 years. The development of bilateral relations can provide a long-term vision based on these goals. The relationship between the two countries is stable and predictable as it develops. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is not only a major event in the political life of the Chinese party and the country, but also a major event that has attracted worldwide attention. Vietnam has always supported China's continuous development and growth, making increasingly important and positive contributions to peace, cooperation and development in the region and the world at large. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong is the first foreign leader to visit China at the invitation of General Secretary Xi Jinping after the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Five years ago, after the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, General Secretary and President Xi Jinping also chose Vietnam as the first country to visit. This shows that the Vietnamese party, state and people have always attached great importance to consolidating and developing relations with China, and regard it as a consistent priority of the overall foreign policy. Vietnam is deeply integrated into the international community. In order to implement this important orientation, the two sides should strengthen high-level exchanges and contacts, and effectively promote the construction of cooperation mechanisms between the two parties, all levels, various departments, and various mass organizations. Therefore, the most important achievement is that China and Vietnam have reached a common political understanding, and the two sides have affirmed and recognized each other's development achievements on the road to socialism. China highly appreciates Vietnam's achievements since the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and Vietnam also highly appreciates the success of China's 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and China's achievements in the past five and ten years; the two sides continue to support each other in taking the road of socialism and achieving long-term goals. The strategic leadership of the two top leaders of the two parties plays an important role in developing the traditional friendship between China and Vietnam in the new era.

Second, the important opportunities and advantages of China and Vietnam are in economic cooperation, trade and investment. When the two countries complement each other, China has advantages and products with advantages, and Vietnam also has demand. Vietnam and China have a close relationship in the supply chain and are two neighboring countries, so the two countries have good conditions to connect infrastructure and transportation. Promote economic, trade and investment cooperation to achieve stable, balanced and sustainable growth, expand other substantive cooperation areas that are in line with the interests of both parties, improve the level of cooperation, and effectively respond to energy security, food security, water security, and network security. Vietnam attaches great importance to the Chinese market and hopes to expand the export of Vietnam's superior products to China and open up the market for Vietnam's agricultural, forestry and aquatic products. At the same time, maintain a smooth cargo supply chain, facilitate customs clearance and formalities between the two countries, and increase restrictions



on Vietnamese goods transiting through China to third countries by rail; create favorable conditions for cooperation in air, road, and rail transportation. Vietnam also welcomes and is willing to create favorable conditions for large Chinese high-tech enterprises to expand investment in Vietnam. China is the world's second largest economy, contributes to world economic growth, and is a major trading partner of ASEAN countries. At the same time, Vietnam, as an important member of ASEAN, has been enhancing its role (in the organization), and its development is full of vigor and vitality.

Third, China and Vietnam are at similar stages of development and have more opportunities to develop each other. China is building a new stage of development and promoting high-quality development. China insists on focusing on the domestic market and strengthens the domestic and international dual cycle. It is confirmed that economic globalization has become an irreversible trend, China has been deeply integrated into the world economy and international system, and the industries of China and many countries are highly related and interdependent. Vietnam is accelerating the implementation of the goals set by the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, taking transformation and upgrading, increasing production capacity and industrialization as national strategic goals. From here, the two countries can strengthen cooperation and complement each other's strengths. At the same time, both countries agreed to actively discuss exchanges and cooperation in the fields of green development, addressing climate change, and digital economy, so as to create more growth points for China-Vietnam cooperation. In these areas, China has technological advantages, and Vietnam also has demand. This will be where the potential for near-term cooperative development lies.

Fourth, China and Vietnam strengthen production capacity cooperation and actively promote the docking of the “Two Corridors and One Belt” framework with the “Belt and Road” initiative. The basis of the “Belt and Road” that adapts to the needs, interests and sustainable development strategies of all parties; agrees to expand cooperation in agriculture, environment, science and technology, health and other fields. Or through activities such as the Youth Festival, the People’s Forum, and the Vietnam-China Border People’s Friendship Festival, the exchanges between the people and youth of the two countries have been strengthened. At the same time, China promises to provide Vietnam with no less than 1,000 government scholarships, train no less than 1,000 Chinese language teachers for Vietnam and help Vietnam cultivate high-quality talents; in addition, the Lao Cai – Hanoi – Haiphong standard gauge is about to be completed Evaluation of railway planning, etc.

In short, the epidemic continues and the recovery of the global economy is slow. China and Vietnam need to jointly maintain the regional industrial chain supply chain. In this context, the relations between the two parties and the two countries of China and Vietnam play a very important role. China and Vietnam are two close neighbors with a long tradition of friendship, and they are unswervingly moving towards socialism under the leadership of the Communist Party. Relying on the solid foundation of friendship cultivated by Chairman Mao Zedong, President Ho Chi Minh





and the older generation of leaders of the two countries, the promotion of substantive cooperation has achieved encouraging results. In the past, China and Vietnam believed and expected that with attention under the direct guidance of the leaders of the two parties and countries, China-Vietnam relations would continue to gain new impetus and develop to new heights. To develop, the two countries need a peaceful and stable international environment, an open economy and free trade. It will benefit the peoples of the two countries, and benefit the peace, cooperation and development of the world, the region and the entire region. In the context that both countries are in an important stage of development, both countries have the need to maintain a peaceful and stable regional environment to serve the cause of socialist construction and development with characteristics of the two countries. On that basis, both sides emphasized the persistence of the Communist Party's leadership in Vietnam's renovation cause and China's reform and opening-up; let's learn together and look for a resilient, sustainable, inclusive, green, digitalized development model suitable for each country.



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