

**THE PEOPLE’S PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES THOROUGHLY
GRASP AND EXEMPLIFY HO CHI MINH’S IDEOLOGY OF
RELYING ON THE PEOPLE IN ENSURING SECURITY AND
ORDER**

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Abstract:

This article analyzes Ho Chi Minh’s ideology on the role of the people in ensuring public security and order. It emphasizes that the People's Public Security Forces must rely on the people, stay close to them, and serve them wholeheartedly. Ho Chi Minh believed that the people are an invincible source of strength, a "heavenly net and earthly mesh" (thiên la địa võng) that enables the police to detect and counter all acts of sabotage. Beyond professional expertise, public security officers must possess revolutionary ethics, excel in mass mobilization, and avoid bureaucracy and authoritarianism. Ho Chi Minh stressed that the success of the police depends on being trusted, loved, and supported by the people. The article also warns against signs of alienation from the people, which contradict Ho Chi Minh’s teachings and erode public trust. Building a modern, progressive, and people-oriented public security force is a crucial factor in maintaining national security and promoting the country’s development.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, People's Public Security Forces, Revolutionary ethics, Public security and order.

In August 1945, with the victory of the general uprising, the revolutionary government was established throughout the country. The People's Public Security Forces were born amidst that fervent revolutionary atmosphere and immediately undertook the mission of safeguarding the

newly-won revolutionary achievements. In his capacity as President of the State and Chairman of the Party, Ho Chi Minh had a profound awareness of the fierce nature of the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, recognizing that the protection of national independence was intrinsically linked to the chosen revolutionary path and goals—a struggle that was long-term, arduous, and complex. He emphasized that, in order to protect the revolutionary forces and achievements, the People's Public Security Forces played a particularly important role. He set forth numerous guiding principles and consistently paid close attention to building the People's Public Security Forces as the core force in safeguarding national security, protecting the Party, defending the revolutionary government, and maintaining social order and safety. Among Ho Chi Minh's viewpoints on this matter, the principle of relying on the people to protect public security and order stands as the most fundamental and essential, and it must be thoroughly understood, internalized, and exemplified by every officer, soldier, agency, and unit within the sector.

1. Ho Chi Minh's ideology is fundamentally rooted in patriotism, compassion for the people, and boundless humanism. Making a revolution, in Ho Chi Minh's view, is to liberate the people, to bring them a prosperous, free, and happy life, and it must be based on the strength of great national unity. In a speech to the second class of political research students at the University of the Vietnamese People (December 1956), Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “Among all things under the sky, nothing is more precious than the people. In the world, nothing is more powerful than the strength of the people's unity”¹.

The discussion of Ho Chi Minh's thought on the struggle to safeguard public security and order begins from this very starting point.

¹ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 10 (Hanoi: National Political Publishing House, 2000), p. 453.

The issue of security and order is not only the responsibility of the State—that is self-evident—but must first and foremost be regarded as a fundamental need and right of the people. According to Ho Chi Minh, as the true masters of society and the State, the people must be organized into a force to protect their own prosperous and happy lives. The question is how to ensure that every citizen, from the elderly to the young, becomes an active and effective assistant of the authorities, rather than remaining indifferent as was common under former regimes with regard to matters of public security and order. This is the secret to success in safeguarding security and order according to Ho Chi Minh’s ideology: “The fervent patriotism and vigilance of the people, combined with the efforts of the army and the police, form a net—a ‘heavenly net and earthly mesh’ (*thiên la địa võng*)—through which no saboteur or spy can escape”².

The origin of this immense and invincible strength lies in the people, but to make it a reality requires education and organization. Therefore, public security forces must not only be professionally competent but, as Ho Chi Minh demanded, must also excel in organizing and carrying out mass mobilization work. They must understand the lives of the people, stay close to them, and mobilize them to participate in safeguarding security and order. If “they are estranged from the people, then no matter how talented they are, they can achieve nothing”; but “if they firmly rely on the people, then no enemy can destroy them”. This principle was thoroughly grasped and directed for implementation by Ho Chi Minh in the public security sector from a very early stage.

According to Ho Chi Minh’s thought, the struggle to safeguard national security and public order is a continuous and long-term struggle. At the 10th National Public Security Conference (January 1956), he stated: “Our people have two forces. One is the army, to fight foreign invaders, to

² Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 246–247

protect the Fatherland, and maintain peace. The other is the police, to fight domestic enemies and sabotage elements. There are times of war and times of peace. In times of war, the army fights; in peacetime, they train. But the police must always fight the enemy—during war, there is work; during peace, there is even more work. As long as imperialism and exploiting classes exist, sabotage will persist. They aim to destroy socialist countries... The task of the police is to stop the hands of the saboteurs... The enemy is not so clever; they succeed in sabotage because we are careless and subjective. If our police know how to safeguard and rely on the people, and if we teach the people how to safeguard and avoid negligence, then the enemy can do nothing”³.

However, to achieve that, according to Ho Chi Minh, the People’s Public Security Forces must be under the direct and absolute leadership of the Party: “The People’s Armed Public Security Forces, like the army, must submit to the leadership of the Party from top to bottom. It must be that way”⁴. This viewpoint was reaffirmed in his speech at the 14th National Public Security Conference: “Public security work must be closely tied to the political line of the Party. If it deviates from the Party’s political line, then no matter how skillful it may be, it will achieve no results”⁵.

Ho Chi Minh's ideological views on public security also clearly reflect the principle of national unity, emphasizing reliance on the strength of the masses to safeguard the revolutionary achievements. In numerous writings and speeches, this idea was repeatedly emphasized by him, demonstrating a consistent and profound perspective. At the second political re-training course (May 16, 1959) organized by the Ministry of Public Security, he pointed out: “To be a police officer, one must gain the people’s trust, affection, and support. Only by relying on the people can the

³ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 258–259

⁴ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 153–154

⁵ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 140

police fulfill their duties well. The people have millions of eyes and ears, making it difficult for the enemy to hide. If, in your work, you receive the people's support, gain their trust, their admiration, and their love, then you are sure to succeed"⁶.

However, in order to be trusted, loved, and supported by the people, Ho Chi Minh required each officer and soldier in the public security forces to “cultivate revolutionary ethics and fight against individualism,” to uphold a strong sense of responsibility—only then would they “be worthy of being cadres trusted by the Party and the people”. On March 11, 1948, in a letter to the Director of the Public Security Department of Zone XII, Ho Chi Minh clearly outlined the moral qualities and revolutionary virtues required of a public security officer, as follows:

Towards oneself: be diligent, thrifty, honest, and upright.

Towards colleagues: be kind and helpful.

Towards the government: be absolutely loyal.

Towards the people: be respectful and courteous.

Towards work: be devoted.

Towards the enemy: be resolute and clever.

The six teachings of Ho Chi Minh for revolutionary public security officers are principles of morality, guidelines for behavior, and standards of character that every officer and soldier, regardless of their position or working environment, must constantly practice, strive toward, and exemplify.

2. The achievements in maintaining public security and order by the People's Public Security Forces have been closely linked to the extent to which Ho Chi Minh's ideology of relying on the people has been thoroughly understood and creatively applied. However, along with the growing strength of the government and the increasing power of the State,

⁶ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 12, p. 223

as well as the accumulation of achievements, there have emerged—and continue to exist—manifestations of neglect and deviations from his teachings.

The tendencies of bureaucratization, authoritarian behavior, bullying the people, and treating them as subjects to be ruled still exist among certain individuals and organizations within the public security sector. In reality, if the People's Public Security Forces are not “trusted, loved, and supported by the people,” but instead are “feared and hated,” then that relationship is no different from what existed under the old regimes. The essence of a hostile regime lies in its opposition to the people; no matter how much they improve their operations or draw lessons, they can never win the people's hearts. That is the fundamental difference between us and the enemy. Therefore, if we lose the people's trust and affection, leaving only a contest of force and professional skills between the two sides, then it will be difficult to secure victory. During his lifetime, Ho Chi Minh often reminded us: “What we should fear most is the people's unrest”. We recall that Nguyễn Trãi once wrote in the *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo*: “The righteous cause lies in pacifying the people”. When the people's hearts are at peace, the government is stable.

Whether or not the people are at ease depends on many factors—political, economic, social, and cultural—and each social class is affected differently by those factors, resulting in highly complex psychological expressions. Naturally, to ensure the people's peace of mind requires the effective implementation of the Party's line, the State's policies and laws, and the mobilization of social organizations—not merely the efforts of the public security forces. However, given their role as a sharp instrument of the State, tasked with defending the people's democracy and maintaining

dictatorship over hostile forces, the police exert significant influence over public sentiment through their various activities.

The material conditions, spiritual life, and emotional and psychological states of the people are extremely complex. There remain consequences from a backward and impoverished economy, and emotional and psychological wounds caused by imperialist wars of aggression that have not fully healed even after fifty years. Nearly forty years of the country's renovation process have yielded many encouraging achievements, but have yet to overcome the social evils that continue to trouble the people. The market economy and the open-door policy have created conditions for growth, but at the same time have introduced numerous challenges and complexities to public security and order. Within each family, each neighborhood, each residential group, and each locality, there are ongoing elements contributing to public unease.

All of these factors impose a demand on every public security officer to understand the people's state of mind, to cultivate and reinforce public trust, and to alleviate their doubts and frustrations through their conduct and attitude. Victory must be achieved and reinforced in every individual, every household, and every collective unit, as these are the fortresses that uphold the frontlines of public security, preventing all acts of sabotage by hostile forces. Doing the opposite—losing the people's support—will create millions of gaps through which enemies may infiltrate and conduct sabotage in uncontrollable ways.

Saying this does not mean we are lacking in vigilance toward the enemy's schemes; rather, it underscores the need to clearly distinguish between whom to apply democracy and whom to apply dictatorship. Toward enemies, we must be resolute and clever; toward the people, we must sincerely serve and protect them; and toward those who have strayed,

we must strive to educate and persuade them. Ho Chi Minh's ideology teaches us that "we must nurture the good within each person like spring flowers blooming, while letting the bad gradually fade away"⁷.

To win the hearts of the people, much more needs to be done, in which the public security forces must actively contribute—for instance, by assisting in job creation, promoting poverty reduction, building new cultural families, and organizing healthy recreational activities for children and adolescents. The image of the People's Public Security officers, even at the grassroots level, must become familiar, approachable, and deeply understanding of the people's lives. Therefore, strategically, attention must be paid to developing a network of skilled officers closely connected to the people at the grassroots level, forming a "heavenly net and earthly mesh" (*thiên la địa võng*) as Ho Chi Minh clearly instructed, alongside a professionally capable apparatus. "If we care about the people's lives, the people will follow us. If we gain the people's trust, we fear nothing. Without the people's support, we cannot perform our duties effectively"⁸.

The ultimate determining factor for success in safeguarding public security and order lies in building a reliable human force and organizational apparatus. The first standard is a firm grasp of and loyalty to the Party's political line, a wholehearted commitment to serving the people, and reliance on the people. In addition, if the police fail to keep up with and effectively respond to the demands of the renewal process, they will undoubtedly hinder the country's development. Common issues such as bureaucratic paperwork, abuse of power, and the emergence of corruption in dealings with the people—if not promptly addressed and eradicated—will tarnish the image and fine tradition of the People's Public Security Forces. This is not merely a matter of wages or institutional mechanisms,

⁷ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 672.

⁸ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 142.

but more profoundly a matter of ideology, revolutionary ethics, and the mass-oriented perspective among officers and soldiers in the public security sector. Especially in this field, where professional methods are closely tied to human dignity, fate, and even life itself, the utmost caution must be exercised to avoid mistakes. Ho Chi Minh reminded the police to investigate and study thoroughly, to act carefully, and to abolish the use of torture: “Using torture is barbaric. Only imperialists and feudalists resort to it”⁹.

Along with the advancement of science and technology, the global policing sector has reached a high level of modernization. We must take faster steps in equipment, training, and professional capacity enhancement in order to keep pace with and effectively counter the enemy’s tactics. Ho Chi Minh instructed the police: “You must study and be creative. Study and creativity go hand in hand”¹⁰. We must learn from the rich experiences of our own country and from other nations, but apply them creatively and appropriately to Vietnam’s current social context. Arrogance, conservatism, blind admiration of foreign models, dogmatism, and mechanical thinking are all enemies of study and creativity. From the intelligence of the Vietnamese people, updated with the essence of global knowledge, we must understand the Vietnamese person, Vietnamese society, and the Vietnamese nation in order to build a public security force that is progressive, national, and modern.

At the core of Ho Chi Minh’s ideology is the liberation of the human being, from which stems a correct perspective on human beings, on the people, and on the invincible strength of the people—once it is rightly organized and led—to achieve self-liberation. The object of activity for the public security sector is the human being; therefore, to stray from Ho Chi

⁹ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 10, p. 209.

¹⁰ Ho Chi Minh. *Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 139.

Minh's ideology is to risk becoming a purely technical apparatus prone to bureaucratization and moral decay, when viewed through the lens of serving the people./.

Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's ideology of relying on the people in ensuring public security and order is not only a fundamental principle but also a guiding compass for the operations of the People's Public Security Forces throughout every stage of the revolutionary cause. Through each historical period, the thorough and creative application of this ideology has contributed significantly to major achievements in safeguarding national security, maintaining public order, and protecting the Party, the State, and the people. In the current context, in order to fulfill its role as the trusted armed force of the Party and the people, the People's Public Security Forces must continue to uphold revolutionary ethics, practice effective mass mobilization, constantly renew organizational structure, enhance professional competence, stay closely connected with the people, and serve the people wholeheartedly. Only when trusted, supported, and protected by the people can the People's Public Security Forces truly be strong, modern, and worthy of being the "precious sword" defending the socialist regime chosen by the Party, President Ho Chi Minh, and the Vietnamese people.

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