

## US rejoins UNESCO, reversing Trump withdrawal



AFP

The United States rejoined UNESCO on Friday, reversing its withdrawal during the Trump administration, the UN's cultural agency said.

Donald Trump announced in 2017 that he was pulling the United States out of UNESCO, alongside Israel, accusing the body of bias against the Jewish state, a decision that took effect in 2018.

An extraordinary session of the UN body's General Assembly voted overwhelmingly for the return of the United States, an AFP reporter present at the vote said, with around 132 members voting in favour, 10 against and 15 abstentions. Dissenting voices included Iran, Syria, China, North Korea and Russia, whose delegates appeared to seek to delay the vote through several statements on procedure and suggested amendments. The United States, a founding member of UNESCO, was a major contributor to its budget until 2011, when the body admitted Palestine as a member state.

That triggered an end to the contributions under US law, leading up to the formal withdrawal announcement six years later. Audrey Azoulay, a former French culture minister who has headed UNESCO since 2017, made it a priority of her term to bring the US back.

Until the suspension of its contributions in 2011 – decided during the Obama administration – the US paid about 22 percent of UNESCO's budget, or \$75 million.

But the US Congress, then fully controlled by the Democratic Party of current President Joe Biden, in December paved the way for the United States to restore funding, setting aside \$150m in the budget. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in March that the US absence from UNESCO was letting China write rules on artificial intelligence. The US had already withdrawn from UNESCO in 1984 – under the Reagan presidency – and rejoined the Organisation after an almost 20-year absence in October 2003. "The United States has already withdrawn twice. We're not sure how many more times we're expected to welcome them back," a North Korean diplomat told AFP, asking not to be identified by name.

## Hundreds arrested in third night of France riots

He said he wants social media such as Snapchat and TikTok to remove sensitive content and that violence is being organised online.

Rioters put up barricades in Nanterre, the working-class town outside Paris where Nahel was shot dead on Tuesday. Their advance towards police lines under a hail of fireworks was stopped as police fired round after round of tear gas. In their anger, rioters set fire to cars and large swathes of fencing.

Police seen making their push into Nanterre ran past graffiti left by the rioters: saying "Nahel, we love you" – and below that, obscenities leveled at the authorities. Police say the teenager fled a traffic check, in an incident caught on smartphone camera and shared on social media.

The officer who fired the fatal shot at close range is being investigated for voluntary homicide, and remains detained.

The teenager's death has fed complaints of systemic racism and police violence, which the force denies.

Forty thousand officers were said to have deployed across France on Thursday, nearly four times the number the day before.

But there are few signs that government appeals to de-escalate the violence – including from French leader Emmanuel Macron – would quell the widespread anger.

The UK on Friday updated its official travel advice to warn citizens planning to visit France about unrest sparked by a police officer's killing of the teenager, AFP reported.



People look at a building of the Tessi group, burnt during night clashes between protesters and police, following the death of Nahel, a 17-year-old teenager killed by a French police officer in Nanterre during a traffic stop, at the Alma district in Roubaix, France, June 30, 2023.

PASCAL ROSSIGNOL/REUTERS

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Aid restrictions in Myanmar may be war crimes: UN

REUTERS – The Myanmar military rulers' restrictions on life-saving aid are growing and may amount to war crimes such as degrading treatment, starvation, and collective punishment, a UN human rights report said. The report by the UN rights chief says the military has established an "all-encompassing system of control" since a Feb. 2021 coup and said urgent steps are needed to meet people's fundamental needs and rights.

#### Finnish minister resigns

REUTERS – Finland's economy minister Vilhelm Junnila resigned on Friday just 10 days into his term in office, the nationalist Finns Party said, after being accused of making repeated Nazi references.

"For the continuation of the government and the reputation of Finland, I see that it is impossible for me to continue as a minister in a satisfactory way," Junnila said in a statement.



By **Abed Akbari**  
CEO of Abarar Moaser Research Institute

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Studying the speech of General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong at the National Foreign Relations Conference to observe and concretize the foreign policy of the 13th National Party Congress on December 14, 2023 on the topic of creating and developing Vietnam's modern foreign relations is full of scientific and practical tips and directions for foreign policy. According to us academicians, this lecture was a comprehensive class for familiarizing the students of international relations studies with the requirements of designing and formulating ideas and strategies for foreign policy. But if I want to summarize this whole speech in one sentence, I have to say:

Vietnam wants everything together by proposing the idea of Vietnamese bamboo diplomacy as a metaphor of resistance while flexibility and adaptability in foreign policy. By everything I mean: national and international honor and respect, using national identity to promote global status, progress and sustainable development, influencing regional situations and becoming more internationally integrated in the field of global relations.

In this idea-oriented speech it is mentioned that in addition to the function of preventing war or ending it, diplomacy must always serve in domestic policies, nation building, and national development. A proposition which its existence and deep belief in it is considered as an intellectual tradition and identity in Vietnam. On

the other hand, it has been rightly pointed out that foreign relations today are not just a continuation of domestic policies, but are a strong stimuli for the growth of states and nations in line with their rights.

#### Thoughtful themes of the speech

In the following parts, I will describe and explain some of the most important points that came to my mind after reading the text of this speech.

#### Idealistic Realism

Rethinking in the field of foreign policy by relying on the combination of national components of power, including identity, politics, economy, in addition to entering a new form of official and unofficial nation-centered diplomacy to promote international cooperation shows an idealistic realism in the approach of foreign policy. This is not a contradiction, but the ability to combine the capabilities and potentials of a country and the ideals of that country with a respectable harmony. The general strategy proposed behind this idea is with the aim and ideal of nation-building and improving the defense power, and creating morale and determination and driving force for the entire political system.

#### Vietnamese community around the world

Another noteworthy point in the speech is the emphasis on using the capacity of the Vietnamese community outside of this country. The bond of friendship and cooperation between the people inside and outside Vietnam is considered a necessity for a stronger and more solid relationship with all the countries of the world. This issue is at the top of the priorities of the leading countries and we have always wit-

## A review of Vietnam's 'Bamboo Diplomacy'



nessed its positive and efficient reflection and signs in the areas of investment, improving credit and prestige, returning financial resources, facilitating communication and paving the path of sustainable development. The fact that the foreign residents of a country and the diaspora population are seen as having the capacity to influence and connect more culturally, economically and politically with the world is a sign of planning the inevitable conditions of linking the world more than before, as well as the foresight of the leaders of a country.

#### Flexible and peaceful approach as a new image

For many years in the international literature of foreign policy and international relations, the image of Vietnam was always tied to a long and strenuous war, but at the same time admirable resistance against superpowers. Apart from the internationality of this image and the main sign for the identity of Vietnam, in the heart

of Nguyen Phu Trong's speech, there is also the stubborn struggle to defend the land, independence and maintain sovereignty while keeping the spirit of heroism, philanthropy, friendship and tolerance, and considering truth, justice and correctness are mentioned. But the thing to ponder about is that in the last decade, this image has gradually been added with the image of a significant political and economic actor at the regional and international level.

#### Foundations of Vietnamese Bamboo Diplomacy

President Ho Chi Minh laid the foundation of Vietnam's bamboo diplomacy in 1945 and directly led and directed the development of Vietnam's revolutionary diplomatic service. The basic elements of Ho Chi Minh's diplomatic thoughts from the philosophy and tradition of diplomacy are seamlessly combined with the characteristics of patriotism and national culture. He believed

that national independence should be accompanied by socialism, self-reliance and self-independence with international solidarity and the development of national strengths with the strengths of the times. The president who tried to defend the role of international law, applied the values of traditional Vietnamese culture and diplomatic behavior along with global and progressive philosophies of humanity to raise the flag of philanthropy, benevolence, truth and legality in international relations. He considered it necessary to have a constructive and close interaction with every country, especially great powers, neighbors, traditional allies and progressive and peace-loving people of the world. A tradition that, as a realist researcher, has its result by looking at the

successful events in the history of foreign relations of this country, i.e. negotiating in defense of the fledgling Democratic Republic of Vietnam at the beginning of its work after the August revolution of 1945, negotiating and signing the Geneva Agreement in 1954, the resistance against the French colonialists, the negotiation and signing of the Paris Accord in 1973 as a prerequisite for the complete liberation of the South, the reunification of the nation and the country. This tradition is still visible in the context of all foreign policy actions of Vietnam for me as a researcher of international relations in Iran.

#### National and sovereign consensus on the direction of foreign policy

Today's policy of Vietnam represents a principle that has always been successful in the foreign policy, that is, national consensus on the chosen path. That the maximum social and governance consensus has been

formed in a thoughtful way on the principles and direction of Vietnam's foreign policy. The consensus axes of Vietnam's foreign policy includes independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation and development, and diversity and multilateralism in relations with international institutions and organizations that should be continuously promoted as an active and responsible member in formulating and designing foreign policy.

Based on the creative application of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, the continuation of the tradition and national characteristics of foreign relations, diplomacy and culture, and the conscious selection of the strengths of global culture and the progressive philosophies of the time, Vietnam has built an outstanding and unique school in foreign relations and diplomacy. A tradition with strong roots, strong trunk and flexible branches that can preserve the national, regional and international risks of this country in the turbulent era of traditional and give commendable credibility in the world arena to the patient, stubborn, diligent, creative nation of Vietnam.

In this short essay, I tried to describe and analyze some points of the speech of Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam. But most of it was not discussed. Undoubtedly, I will repeat more points from this lecture to my students in the next semester. I will say that without a doubt, by carefully studying the past, carefully observing Vietnam's present and reflecting on the country's prospects, they can clearly believe in this statement that the chosen path of Vietnam in the field of foreign and international relations is clear and respectable. A path that can be full of great lessons for other countries of the world.