

Improving the effectiveness of official communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation, refuting wrongful and hostile views in Viet Nam today

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Abstract: *The platform for national construction during the transition period to socialism (1991) affirms: "The Party takes Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts as the ideological foundation and guideline for every action"⁽¹⁾. This is a red thread throughout the process of Vietnam's revolutionary development and has become the Party's action motto. However, recently, hostile forces have used the media and social networks to conduct sabotage in an attempt to cause psychological confusion, cognitive chaos, and ideological ambiguity among cadres, Party members, and the general public - especially young people. Therefore, our Party has paid great attention to communication work to protect the Party's ideological foundation to raise awareness, responsibility, and vigilance for Viet Nam's people against dangerous rhetoric by hostile forces.*

Keywords: *official communication, protect Party's ideological foundation; fight against wrongful and hostile views.*

1. New context and requirements for communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views

In recent years, the international and domestic context has changed rapidly; directly and multi-dimensionally affecting communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation, subsequently leading to conflict with dangerous and hostile rhetoric.

Internationally, the world "is going through huge changes, rapid, complicated and unpredictable developments. Globalization and international integration continue to progress but are being challenged by the competition for influence among major countries and the rise of extreme nationalism"⁽²⁾. Armed conflicts have occurred in some places, notably between Russia and Ukraine, which has had a direct impact on the world's peace and stability.

Competition for influence among superpowers tend to become increasingly fierce and drastic. Opposition and hostile forces have taken advantage of this situation to attack, criticize, and condemn the socialist model, encouraging pro-Western political trends, separatist demands and praising Western democracy as a superior model for the world.

Nonetheless, the fourth industrial revolution is developing strongly, creating both opportunities and challenges for all countries and peoples. This revolution is associated with the development of cyberspace, combined with physical, digital, and biological technology, between virtual and real systems. This has fundamentally changed the way people produce, thereby creating a “revolution” in the production - value chains that has opened up new prospects and motivated countries to strongly participate in the process of integration and development. However, the process itself is also creating modern means and platforms for hostile forces to take advantage of, to sabotage the Party’s ideological foundation.

Domestically, Vietnam is in the process of comprehensive and synchronous innovation. Great and historically significant achievements after more than 35 years of innovation have helped “our country to gain such ever fortune, potentials, position and international reputation”. In recent times, besides positive changes in the Party building work, there have been “manifestations of deterioration in political ideology, ethics, and lifestyle, “self-evolution” and “self-transformation” internally and the situation of corruption, waste and negativity is still complicated. More seriously, “a part of cadres and party members are not politically persistent, degraded political ideology, and are still skeptical and vague about the Party’s goals, ideals, and the path to socialism” in our country; a few are confused, wavering, and distrustful; particularly, some deny Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thoughts and the Party’s innovation policy”⁽³⁾.

Meanwhile, “the sabotage of hostile forces and reactionary organizations is becoming more and more sophisticated”⁽⁴⁾. Besides sabotaging the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts, hostile forces also attempt to spread bourgeois political ideology, culture, morality, and lifestyle into Viet Nam’s society, and particularly target the younger generation. Recently, hostile forces have thoroughly taken advantage of “hot issues” in all fields to distort Viet Nam’s development situation, direct wrong and opposing thoughts and actions, disobedience, violence, and riots. Thereby, attracting and gathering dissatisfied individuals, political

opportunities inside and outside the country, international organizations and governments to interfere in Vietnam's internal affairs. This increasingly sophisticated and drastic sabotage has significantly affected the awareness, psychology, and attitude of a proportion of people, cadres, and party members. It requires a need to promote and improve the effectiveness of official communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views in Vietnam in the contemporary world.

2. The recent situation of official communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views in Vietnam

To cope with increasingly sophisticated and fierce sabotage by hostile forces, the Politburo of the 12th tenure promptly issued a Resolution on strengthening the protection of the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views in the new situation. The Steering Committee 35 was established from the Central to district levels and in ministries, departments and branches with the role of directly managing and implementing protection of the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views. In particular, official communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation is carried out in a systematic manner, on a regular basis, and in many various forms. Many grassroots Party committees and cells have organized thematic meetings on protecting the Party's ideological foundation, thereby disseminating, and spreading the fundamental contents of the Resolution to a large number of cadres and party members.

The Central Steering Board 35 required its units to diversify communication activities on the basis of promoting mass media strength, combining traditional media and modern mass media, mainstream media and unofficial media. Communication activities in books, newspapers and magazines continue to be promoted. Many scientific magazines have appropriate, in-depth columns to publish articles on protecting the Party's ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile viewpoints, namely: Communist Magazine, Political Theory Magazine, Education and Communication Magazine, Political Theory and Communication Magazine, People's Daily, People's Army Newspaper. Some publishers such as National Political Publishing House, Political Theory Publishing House, People's Army Publishing House also promote the publication and release of publications protecting the Party's ideological foundation.

In the period 2019-2021, the whole country had more than 200 reference books and monographs with content related to Resolution 35-NQ/TW, including many books with the content directly fighting wrongful and hostile viewpoints⁽⁵⁾: “The press and publishers have greatly contributed to promoting their role as the Party and State’s sharp weapon in the communication, advocacy, and education of the entire Party, the entire people and the entire army to unite and consent to overcome difficulties and challenges to successfully carry out political tasks in 2022”⁽⁶⁾.

National and local television stations have developed political programs related to protecting the Party’s ideological foundation such as: Vietnam Television (VTV) with the program “Face off”, Voice of Vietnam (VOV) with the program “Look straight, tell the truth”, etc. In addition, Steering Committee 35 at all levels also promotes communication activities on the Internet and social networks. Since 2019, many localities, ministries and branches have used new communication channels with many diverse forms such as: websites, fanpages, Facebook, YouTube, Zalo... to post positive information and fight bad and malicious information, promptly orienting the ideology of cadres, party members and the people. Many media channels, such as Huong Sen Viet, Vietnam Prosperity have many followers and interactions and play an active role in communicating and protecting the Party’s ideological foundation.

Official communication activities in protecting the Party’s ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views are not only conducted in breadth but also in depth through many creative and practical ways. Typically, a number of local Steering Committees 35 have organized scientific conferences, published and distributed handbooks on skills and professions on protecting the Party’s ideological foundation. For example, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics released “Workbook for protecting the Party’s ideological foundation, fighting against wrongful and hostile views in the new situation”; The Academy of Journalism and Communication released the book “Student Q&A Handbook on the task of protecting the Party’s ideological foundation, fighting against wrongful and hostile views”. These documents have become practical handbooks for cadres and party’s members and people to improve awareness, skills, and methodology in implementing Resolution No. 35.

Notably, following up the success of the 2021 contest “Scientific essay writing on protecting the Party’s ideological foundation and fighting against

wrongful and hostile views in the new situation” (organized by the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics in 2021) the Central Steering Committee 35 assigned the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics to preside and coordinate with the Central Communication Department, Central Theoretical Council, and Communist Magazine, People’s Daily and Vietnam Journalists Association to organize the writing contest for the following year. This contest attracted many cadres, party members, people and a number of foreign scholars and politicians to join, creating widespread influence. The contest is a creative, practical, and effective form of communication to protect the Party’s ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views in our country during the current period.

However, besides positive achievements, the official communication to protect the Party’s ideological foundation has revealed some limitations and inadequacies. For example, poor content of communication and orientation, especially on the Internet and social networks; lack of depth and insights, inappropriate, formalistic, ineffective forms and method, etc. As the 13th Party Congress commented: “The work of fighting against and preventing false information, wrongful and hostile views is sometimes and, in some places, still passive, lacking sharpness and fighting spirit”⁽⁷⁾. On the other hand, the State’s management of communication activities in the press and other media is sometimes loose and lacks control. Some newspapers and media networks do not adhere closely to the Party and the State’s principles and objectives. A large number of communication cadres, due to limited awareness and capacity or in pursue of profits and material benefits, only focus on posting sensational information to “earn more likes and views”, following the crowd’s psychology, and ignoring state agencies’ regulations. Those limitations have significantly affected the effectiveness of official communication on protecting the ideological foundation of the Party, fighting against wrongful and hostile views recently.

3. Some solutions to improve the effectiveness of official communication to protect the Party’s ideological foundation, fight against wrongful and hostile views

Firstly, continue to strengthen the leadership and direction of Party Committees and Steering Board 35 at all levels on the role and significance of communication work to protect the Party’s ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views. Most importantly, raising awareness, promoting responsibility, and directing decisively and creatively play a

prerequisite role in the quality and effectiveness of official communication that ensures work to be carried out regularly and continuously, with appropriate content and form in the context of increasingly demanding task of protecting the Party's ideological foundation, fighting against wrongful and hostile views in the new situation.

Second, innovate and update communication content on protecting the Party's ideological foundation, fighting against wrongful and hostile views associated with rapid changes in reality. In the light of the complex, rapid, and unpredictable changes in reality, communication content besides the core issues of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thoughts needs to focus on fundamental and key issues in the Party's documents and resolutions; clearly and comprehensively identify opportunities, advantages as well as difficulties and challenges in the coming years. Focus on fighting against deviant, wrong, and hostile views while protecting specific viewpoints, guidelines, policies, events, and incidents and orienting public opinion in accordance with the motto "promote constructiveness", "use positivity to repel negativity". Innovating and updating communication content in this way allow the Party's guidelines and policies enter the people's lives, become the correct guiding motto, minimize mistakes and disorientation that hostile forces may make use of.

Third, diversify practical and effective forms of communication to protect the Party's ideological foundation and fight against wrongful and hostile views. Communication forms must be diversified and copious, linked to the characteristics of each segment of the people. Besides traditional communication ways, such as thoroughly understanding, studying resolutions, writing news articles in the press, it is necessary to promote communication on the Internet and social networks. Communication methods need flexible innovation linked to the needs, tastes and trends of society, focusing on "Innovating methods, improving the persuasiveness of communication and promotion work to make it diversified, vivid, concise, practical, close to life, easy to understand and remember, feasible and suitable for each audience"⁽⁸⁾. Additionally, it is necessary to launch proactive communication campaigns when the country has major political events or in difficult and challenging times to enable positive information flows to become mainstream, so that hostile forces fail to dominate the information battlefield to launch distorted arguments and distort the truth to mislead public opinion. The combativeness, persuasion, and effectiveness of communication work should be focused.

Fourth, improve the effectiveness of State's governance on communication activities to protect the Party's ideological foundation and refute wrongful and hostile views. Regarding the limitations and inadequacies in communication work on this issue in recent times, it is necessary to continue to improve the efficiency of State's governance, focusing on "strict handling according to the Party's regulations and State's laws" on press agencies reporters' publishing information that has not been verified, has no basis or evidence that causes negative impacts on public opinion"⁽⁹⁾. Therefore, state agencies need to strengthen discipline in managing the activities of press, publishing, and media agencies.

Fifth, promote the role and responsibility of the communication staff. The 13th Party Congress clearly stated: "Strengthen the management and direction of activities of press agencies; Focus on building a team of cadres in charge of press, reporters, editors, and rapporteurs with political courage, pure moral qualities, and professional expertise to improve the effectiveness of communication work"⁽¹⁰⁾. This helps communication staff properly convey the Party's guidelines and policies, and the spirit of the resolution. It addresses the situation that a part of cadres who, due to incompetence, lack of responsibility or for material interest, communicate incorrectly, stray from professional ethics, follow the psychology of the crowd and give up the political nature of communication activities. Such people are easily bribed and used by hostile forces to spread communication information that goes against the Party's guidelines and policies. At the same time, it is necessary to actively promote the emulation movement "Building a cultural environment in press agencies" through "promoting review and inspection of the implementation of political ideological orientation, objectives, occupational activities of press agencies in the spirit of facilitating the press to develop but resolutely handling violations"⁽¹¹⁾.

Sixth, continue to invest and improve physical facilities, technical infrastructure, technology; build, develop and strengthen coordination of forces in propagandizing to protect the Party's ideological foundation and refute wrongful and hostile views. In the context of modern media's development, to improve the effectiveness of communication work in protecting the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views, it is necessary to attach great importance on investment in digital technology application, promoting digital transformation to modernize agencies and media, creating widespread effects throughout the

society. Besides specialized communication staff at all levels, it is necessary to build and develop a contingent of experts and volunteer forces to expand the communication network. In addition, communication agencies need to have close coordination to connect and spread the content related to protecting the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views.

Improving the effectiveness of official communication on protecting the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against wrongful and hostile views will contribute to creating a clear change in awareness, unity of will, and action throughout the Party, as well as consensus among the people. It will encourage the entire Party, the people and the army to promote the spirit of patriotism, self-reliance, and the strength of great national unity to realize the aspiration of developing a prosperous and happy country./.

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