

To identify and fight against wrong and hostile views on power control issue and corruption combat in our country today

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Abstract: *Recently, Vietnam has gained significant achievements in power control and corruption prevention and combat. However, this is also an issue usually targeted and distorted by hostile forces. The article focuses on identifying and fighting against some wrong and hostile views of hostile forces on this issue in the current period.*

Keywords: *identify, fight, wrong and hostile views, corruption prevention and combat*

In recent years, our Party and State have issued many policies and measures to control power and fight corruption. In fact, these measures have promoted effectiveness, gradually preventing and repelling the power abuse and corruption. Many corruption cases have been investigated and brought to trial strictly. This has been consented and supported by people from all walks of life. Despite the positive results we have achieved, hostile forces still find ways to deny and distort. Here are some of their distortions:

1. First argument: there is no democracy in the one-party-ruling system; it is impossible for people to control the power.

1.1. This is one of the old hostile forces' rhetorics when arguing our country's democracy: in a single-party ruling system, there is no democracy. Democracy only exists in societies where multi-parties compete with each other. They believe that the interests and concerns of people in society are diverse. Each political party will represent voter blocs with diverse interests. It is impossible for a single political party to represent and include all the diversified interests of the people in its political guidelines and platform. Furthermore, in certain periods of time, a country may have to face different problems, and each political party may come up with different plans and ways to solve these problems. This is the basis for people to choose to vote for parties in elections. A party that wins the majority of people's trust will become the ruling party. A party that no longer meets the people's expectations will be boycotted by the people and must leave their positions of power. People

will use their votes to control power and oversight the parties' actualization of their promises.

With such arguments, hostile forces believe that in Vietnam, given only one ruling Party – the Communist Party – the Party's decisions are the ultimate decisions. They believe that people do not have the right to choose other parties, even if they are not satisfied with the Party. They believe that elections to the National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels are just a formality, because those who are elected are all Party members and have been pre-selected by the Party. Therefore, in their view, it is impossible for people to exercise their democratic rights and control the party's power through the election process.

1.2. We must understand that the multi-party system of Western democracy is not necessarily an effective mechanism to exercise the people's democratic rights. In the multi-party system in Western countries, not every party can become the ruling party. Only large, influential parties, backed by interest groups and capitalists, have a chance to become the ruling party. These political parties do not necessarily represent the interests of working people but mainly represent the interests of the bourgeoisie and the rich owners in society.

In fact, in the multi-party system, political parties will not hesitate to claim that they represent the interests of the people, which can lead to populism in political life. As has been shown in many countries around the world recently, to win the votes, political parties do not hesitate to promise things that are unable to be fulfilled. They can ignore the country's fundamental and long-term interests, but focus on short-term, immediate issues, following the wishes of some certain public groups. Their aim is to win the votes of voters, then to gain power. It has become a common story in Western political life that an elected party breaks their promises.

Besides, many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America which apply multi-party democracy according to the Western model still cannot create development of the country, even the competition and fighting between political parties has brought the countries into chaos and poverty due to war and conflict. Therefore, a competitive multi-party system is not necessarily a condition for the development and prosperity of a country.

1.3. The Communist Party of Vietnam is the party that represents the interests of the workers, the working people and the entire nation. The Party has no other interests than the interests of the working people. With its organizations from the central to the grassroots, basically, the needs and aspirations of the people are integrated and reflected into the Party's policies and guidelines; then institutionalized into State policies and laws, led by the Party.

Besides, in elections for elected bodies in Vietnam (namely the National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels), there is always a proportion of candidates who are outside the Party. In order to facilitate people's choices, the electoral list always has overage to leave a certain room for competition. To have a chance of being elected, candidates must present an action plan to the voter conference. This is one of the bases for people to elect the candidate. In fact, the number of non-Party people in the National Assembly is gradually increasing, creating a more diverse National Assembly, reflecting the aspirations of different classes of people. This also ensures democracy through the approval of important decisions in the National Assembly. With such a mechanism of interest integration, it is surely that Vietnam does not necessarily need another political party besides the existing one, the Vietnam's Communist Party.

2. Second argument: the one- ruling party system in Viet Nam is the reason for corruption

2.1. Hostile forces argue that the multi-party system will help fight corruption the most effectively. Because when multiple parties compete, there will always be opposition parties that oversee all activities of the ruling party, pointing out shortcomings and loopholes in the policies set by the ruling party. That creates the checking mechanism: the ruling government is always put under control and thus, it must operate more responsibly, prevent abuse of power and corruption.

In Viet Nam there is only one ruling party. The Party rules the power from central to local levels. Hostile forces argue that a single ruling party without opposition parties will lead to authoritarianism and despotism. Furthermore, in a single-party system, the incentive to fight corruption is very weak. Because whether you oppose it or not, the party is still in power. Even if people lose confidence in it, they have no other party to choose. Meanwhile, in multi-party countries, opposition parties bring to light the ruling party's abuses of power and corruption, which can lead to the ruling party's failure in the election. If the opposition party receives enough trust from the people, they will become the ruling party. Therefore, in Vietnam, to control power and fight corruption, there must be a multi-party opposition.

2.2. In fact, anti-corruption achievements are not entirely related to the opposition multi-party regime, or a single ruling party. In the world, there are many countries with opposition multi-party systems but corruption is still quite serious. According to Transparency International (TI) ranking the most corrupt countries in the world in 2022, there are many countries with multi-party regimes⁽¹⁾. These also often include countries with political instability

and economic difficulties. In developed countries, corruption has not been eliminated. Thus, it can be affirmed that the one-party ruling system is not necessarily the cause of corruption. There are many other causes of corruption.

2.3. In Vietnam, our Party soon realized the seriousness of corruption when it identified corruption as a “national catastrophe” that could affect the survival of the regime. Therefore, anti-corruption work has received special attention from the Party with the motto “no prohibited areas, no exceptions”. Recently, our Party and State have issued a series of guidelines and policies to fight corruption drastically. Anti-corruption measures not only rely on calling for the self-awareness of party members, through criticism and self-criticism, through propaganda and advocacy measures, but also include appropriate steps in building mechanisms to control power and prevent and fight corruption. This is clearly demonstrated in the Party and State’s regulations on controlling power, especially the leader, in the adjustments of the legal system on power control and anti-corruption.

Documents of the 13th Party Congress have set out the main tasks and solutions in the work of preventing and fighting corruption in the upcoming time: Synchronously and effectively implement legal regulations on preventing and combating corruption. Improve the efficiency of recovering corrupt assets, in accordance with the law. Strictly implement legal regulations on practicing thrift and preventing wastefulness. Continue to strictly and effectively implement the declaration of assets and income of officials, civil servants, and public employees, especially leaders at all levels. Enhance the role and promote the positivity, creativeness and coordination of the Fatherland Front, socio-political organizations, people, businesses and the press in detecting and fighting against corruption. Practice thrift and prevent wastefulness. Enhance the effectiveness of monitoring, oversight, inspection, support and facilitation⁽²⁾.

With great efforts, in recent times, the fight against corruption in our country has achieved positive results, contributing to maintaining political stability and socio-economic development. Many large-scale, serious and complicated corruption cases of great public attention have been handled strictly that help warn, deter and repel corruption, and affirm the determination of the Party and State in fighting against corruption⁽³⁾. Many high-ranking officials, including Politburo members, were brought to trial before the law⁽⁴⁾. This confirms that in a one-party ruling system like in Vietnam, if the Party is constantly strict with itself and resolutely fights corruption, the situation will gradually improve. With such effort, we strongly believe that our corruption fight will turn to a new page.

3. Third argument: There is no separation of power in Viet Nam, thus it is impossible to check and balance the power, causing corruption.

3.1. Hostile forces argue that in Vietnam, separation of powers is not applied in the organization of the state apparatus, so power cannot be controlled. They believe that human nature is selfish and self-centered. Therefore, when given power, the risk of abusing power is huge. It is obvious that: “Power always tends to corrupt. Absolute power will lead to absolute corruption.” Therefore, the theory of separation of powers was introduced by Montesquieu to control the greed and risk of abuse of power by those in power. Most developed countries in the world today apply the principle of separation of powers in the organization of state power, although the method of application differs to some extents.

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, the state apparatus is organized according to the principle that state power is unified, with no mutual checking between branches of power. The widespread corruption in Vietnam recently proved the inability of the system to fight corruption. The solutions proposed are situational and responsive and cannot solve the root causes. Therefore, hostile forces conclude, handling corruption cases is only handling the tip of the iceberg and cannot solve the problem in a fundamental, long-term way.

3.2. According to the theory of decentralization of powers, State power will be divided into three parts: legislative, executive and judicial with different functions. These three branches will be assigned to three different agencies, creating mutual checking between agencies. This will ensure that all state powers are checked, thus preventing the risk of power abuse. The theory of decentralization is applied in the organization of the state apparatus in many countries around the world, especially in Western countries, with three main versions including: flexible decentralization model (representative model), hard decentralization model (presidential model), and mixed model (also known as semi-presidential model). However, some countries “import” those models without considering their specific cultural, historical situations, thus, causing failure and ineffectiveness.

Besides, it should be noted that the application of the theory of decentralization in the organization of the State apparatus to create a mechanism to check and balance power between agencies can also lead to the mal-operation of the apparatus, a stagnant State where power branches fail to compromise with each other. It is a situation of “coexistence” between the president and the prime minister when these two power positions belong to two different parties in a mixed system (as actually happened in

France), a situation of mutual veto between the two houses of Congress (the Senate vetoes bills passed by the House of Representatives and vice versa), or between the President and Congress in a Presidential system (as happened in the US).

In fact, in Western countries, applying the theory of decentralization in the organization of the State apparatus still cannot help control power between branches effectively. In the organization of the State apparatus, this theory will become formal if there is no separation in the purposes of using power, if all three branches of power are aimed at protecting group interests in society. In essence, all three branches of state power represent different interest groups of the bourgeoisie, are the division of power within the bourgeoisie and protect the bourgeoisie interests. On the other hand, in principle, in a person there always exist two extremes: selfishness (for oneself) and altruism (for others, for society). Human behavior is not only governed by selfishness, but also influenced by cultural values, noble ideals and beliefs. The behavior of rulers is not only constrained by the institutional system of external control, but is also influenced by individual self-control. The level of self-control of everyone depends on the moral and cultural foundation that each individual has. Therefore, besides completing the mechanism of power control, the propaganda and education of good faith, ideology, responsibility for the contingent of cadres working in the apparatus of the political system is very important. This also helps check the power.

3.3. In Vietnam, State power is unified, not divided into branches of power to restrain and control each other like the Western model. That unity is not only reflected in the origin of state power, but also in the power's purpose of serving the people. In fact, the three legislative, executive and judicial branches all receive direct or indirect authorization from the people. In essence, the power of the people is indivisible.

According to the 2013 Constitution, control of power is considered a constitutional principle. Accordingly, "State power is unified, with assignment, coordination, and control of power among state agencies in the exercise of legislative, executive, and judicial powers." This can be seen as an important step in improving the state power control mechanism. After the 2013 Constitution was promulgated, many policies and solutions to control power have been concretized and implemented. This is expressed through the legal system on the organization of the State apparatus, on inspection and oversight of power, and the creation of a mutual control mechanism between agencies in the State apparatus.

With these regulations, although Vietnam does not organize power according to the principle of separation of powers, there is still division of duties, coordination and mutual control among State agencies.

Along with the power control mechanism in the State apparatus, the power control mechanisms in the Party are also paid attention to completion. In the process of leading the organization to control power and prevent corruption, the Party has also identified important areas that need to control power in order to contribute to proactively preventing corruption, the bribery for job title and power, the deterioration of political ideology, ethics, lifestyle, “self-evolution” and “self-transformation” among cadres and Party members. Most recently, the Party issued Regulation No. 114-QD/TW dated July 11, 2023 of the Politburo on controlling power and preventing and combating corruption and negativity in personnel work.

In addition, the participation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (through the social monitoring and criticism mechanism) and socio-political organizations and the people also makes an important contribution to the process of power control. The above analysis also shows that the issue of power control and anti-corruption in Vietnam has recently made important progress, showing the effectiveness of the applied measures. This proves that the issue of power control in Vietnam is going in a positive direction.

In conclusion, it can be said that the work of controlling power and preventing negativity, corruption in Vietnam in recent times has made undeniable important progress. This confirms that the efforts and steps we are taking are correct. Although hostile forces have attempted to sabotage and distort our work, the results we have achieved are the real answer and the most convincing rebuttal to their hostile arguments./.

(1) According to World Transparency Organization, Vietnam's 2022 corruption awareness index is 42 points (ranked 77/180 countries), increasing 10 places compared to 2021 (in 2021 Vietnam reached 39 points, ranked 87/180 countries); China and Cuba reached 45 points (both ranked 65/1800). Ranked below Vietnam are mostly multi-party countries such as: India (ranked 85/180), Colombia (ranked 91/180, Argentina (ranked 94/180), Morocco (ranked 94/180), Philippines (ranked 116/180), Egypt (ranked 130/180), Sudan (ranked 162/180).

(Source: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>).

(2) Communist Party of Vietnam (2021), *Documents of the 13th National Congress*, Publishing House of National Politics and Truth, Hanoi, Vol. 2, pages 145-146.

(3) Over the past 10 years (2012-2022), anti-corruption work has made strong progress, achieving many important results. Prosecution agencies across the country have investigated 19,546 cases/33,868 defendants, prosecuted 16,699 cases/33,037 defendants, and conducted first instance trials of 15,857 cases/30,355 defendants for corruption crimes. From the beginning of the 13th Party Congress term to December 2022, over 4,200 cases have been prosecuted and investigated, with more than 7,500 defendants accused of corruption crimes. Notably, 25 officials belonging to the Politburo and the Secretariat have been criminally prosecuted. In 2022 respectively, investigation agencies in the People's Public Security have handled the investigation of 687 cases, 1,439 defendants accused of corruption crimes, of which: New prosecutions of 436 cases and 929 defendants (an increase of 105 cases, 177 accused compared to the previous year's reporting period) (Source: Government (2022): Report No. 410/BC-CP, dated October 12, 2022 on Anti-corruption work in 2022, p.13).

(4) For example, such cases as Duong Chi Dung, Vu Quoc Hao, Pham Cong Danh, Ha Van Tham, Giang Kim Dat, Dinh La Thang, Trinh Xuan Thanh, Phan Van Anh Vu (Vu aluminum), Dinh Ngoc He (Bald Ut), Nguyen Van Vinh (high-tech gambling), Nguyen Bac Son and Truong Minh Tuan (AVG case), rescue flight case at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, test kit case related to the Minister of Health and former Minister of Science and Technology, and so on.