

Overcoming ideological barriers to propel the nation into the era of ascent

Dr. Ngoc Vinh LUONG

Abstract: *Ideology, as a constituent element of social consciousness, exhibits dual features: it can lead social existence, yet also lag behind it. Therefore, during major revolutionary social movements, hesitation, pessimism, and resistance often arise, forming barriers that obstruct development. Today, as Vietnam approaches a new era - an era of national ascent - every organization and individual must quickly recognize and overcome ideological barriers in order to contribute to a powerful collective momentum, advancing national prosperity and ensuring a life of well-being and happiness for the people.*

Keywords: *ideological barriers; era of national ascent.*

Recently, General Secretary To Lam, as the leader of the Party, has repeatedly affirmed that the 14th National Party Congress will mark the beginning of a new era - the era of national ascent. According to him, this is an era of development and national strength under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, aiming to successfully build a prosperous, democratic, just, and civilized socialist Vietnam that stands shoulder to shoulder with the world's powers. The immediate goal of this new era is to achieve the strategic objectives by 2030: to become a developing country with modern industry and upper-middle income; and by 2045, to become a developed socialist nation with high income. This is a grand aspiration - one that demands revolutionary tasks, bold breakthroughs, and a complete shift in thinking and action.

Ideology is a system of viewpoints, ideas, beliefs, and values adopted by individuals or social groups in life, work, or social issues. It can be shaped by personal experience, education, cultural background, history, or scientific inquiry. Ideology reflects how people perceive, interpret, and relate to the world. In many cases, ideology has a profound impact on decisions, behaviors, and social interactions. When ideology is progressive, it paves the way for revolutionary change; when it is conservative or regressive, it can stifle innovation, suppress new ideas, and hinder development.

As the nation stands at a historical threshold—preparing to enter a new, transformative era—we face numerous large-scale, novel, and revolutionary

challenges. Inevitably, this context gives rise to ideological barriers that organizations and individuals must swiftly recognize and decisively overcome.

1. Identifying Ideological Barriers as the Nation Enters the Era of Ascent

The process of undertaking revolutionary tasks inevitably encounters ideological resistance - manifesting as entrenched viewpoints and traditional mindsets that hinder reform and innovation. Several typical forms of ideological barriers in this new phase include:

Conservative thinking: Some individuals tend to cling to traditional values and are reluctant to accept change. They may fear the loss of cultural identity or ideological foundations and worry that bold reforms could introduce risks that threaten stability - or even the Party and the regime. At a less severe level, some individuals or institutions may adopt a rigid, inflexible stance, focusing only on potential risks and difficulties while opposing or passively resisting new policies and initiatives.

Monopolistic and subsidized thinking: Some believe there is only one “correct” way to solve problems or develop the country. They place blind faith in past resolutions and directives, relying heavily on historical experience. This mindset breeds insularity and rejects alternative strategies or perspectives. In practice, this stifles innovation - especially at the grassroots level - and can lead to information monopolies and a culture that discourages open discussion and debate, ultimately impeding reform.

In contrast, the “subsidized mindset” manifests in passivity. These individuals do not oppose innovation, but they wait for directives from above instead of acting proactively. This delays implementation, causes missed opportunities, and undermines creativity and local initiative.

Resistance from vested interest groups: These groups have benefited from the current system and fear that reform may undermine their privileges or influence. They may leverage their power to uphold outdated policies and ideas. In essence, this reflects individualism and a lack of willingness to sacrifice for the greater good of the Party, the nation, and the people. In an era where institutional streamlining is a revolutionary mission, this mindset poses a serious obstacle to national development.

Generational gap: Older generations may hold different values and perspectives than younger ones, making it difficult to communicate new ideas or foster consensus across age groups. This barrier often manifests in excessive emphasis on experience and a lack of trust in the youth, leading to reluctance

in delegating authority or supporting bold, creative proposals from younger leaders.

Pessimism, anxiety, and skepticism: Some people believe that the nation's strategic visions are too vague, inconsistent, or ineffective. They doubt the feasibility of revolutionary solutions and therefore engage in reform efforts half-heartedly or merely performatively.

These ideological barriers have emerged in part due to the real limitations, shortcomings, and missteps during the reform process. While some concerns may be understandable, the demands of reality require a new mindset, open thinking, and a readiness to accept challenges - especially among cadres and Party members. The path forward must encourage creativity and reform.

2. Overcoming Ideological Barriers to Enter the New Era, the Era of National Ascent

2.1. Leading the country into a new era is an objective necessity and a bold, determined step to realize the aspiration of building a prosperous and flourishing nation

An era is a historical period marked by important characteristics or events that significantly impact the development of a nation, the world, or a particular field. An era is often used to divide historical time according to major events or fundamental changes in political life, science, technology, or the environment. In the history of human development, there have been the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Industrial Era, the Information Age, and so on. It is important to distinguish era from epoch; according to Marxism–Leninism, an epoch is a phase with universal characteristics on a global scale, whereas an era may be applied globally, or within each country or field.

The term era has also been widely used in Vietnam. For example, the August Revolution of 1945 opened a new era - an era of independence and freedom, where working people became masters of the country. The great victory of Spring 1975 brought the country into a new era - an era of peace, independence, reunification, and advancement toward socialism. Similarly, the 6th National Party Congress in 1986 may also be considered a major milestone that ushered the country into the renovation era (*Đổi mới*).

The question arises: Is the use of the term new era to describe the upcoming phase of national development - aiming for the nation to rise up, achieve great milestones, and make remarkable breakthroughs - merely subjective will, illusion, or just a propagandistic slogan? First of all, it must be affirmed that a new era is something that has yet to exist - it is a phase that will be

created in the future, not something already existing, as some may doubt or question.

It must be emphasized that the use of the term “new era, the era of national ascent” in association with the 14th National Party Congress is a harmonious combination of both subjective and objective elements. Subjectively, this is first and foremost the wish of General Secretary To Lam, in his role as the head of the Party, setting forth objectives and requirements for the entire Party - particularly for the highest leading body of the Party in the new period. Naming the coming phase as “the era of national ascent” reflects the General Secretary’s personal initiative to set goals and expectations for the next Congress: that it must be a “renovation of renovation” Congress - demonstrating intellectual leadership, presenting bold, revolutionary, and breakthrough decisions capable of turning the tide, unlocking bottlenecks, and overcoming limitations and shortcomings that have been identified across many tenures but have yet to be resolved. The goal of the new era is not unfamiliar; it is, in fact, the realization of aspirations raised in previous Party Congresses - but now pursued with greater urgency and resolve, since the centennial anniversaries of the founding of the Party and the Nation are fast approaching. The era of national ascent is both an aspiration and a pressure for the next Congress tenure - it is a command of life itself: “develop or perish”. If this is not achieved, the Party will lose credibility, the trust of the people, and thereby the very basis for its existence.

However, the “era of national ascent” is not merely a subjective invention - it is grounded in objective and scientific foundations, calculated with caution and thorough deliberation.

First, the tremendous achievements over the past 40 years of Đổi mới (Renovation) have accumulated sufficient momentum and capacity for a breakthrough phase of development. Vietnam is now among the 40 largest economies in the world and ranks among the top 20 in trade and foreign investment attraction. As the late General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong affirmed, “Never before has our country had such a position, potential, and international prestige as it does today.”

Second, the world is undergoing changes of epochal significance. Although these come with many challenges, they also bring new opportunities and favorable conditions. The Fourth Industrial Revolution - especially artificial intelligence and digital technologies - offers opportunities for developing and underdeveloped nations to leapfrog and make remarkable progress if they know how to grasp and take the lead.

Third, the history of Vietnam's revolutionary struggle shows that whenever the Party succeeds in arousing patriotism, great unity, self-reliance, national pride, and mobilizes the collective strength of the people in combination with the power of the times, the Vietnamese revolution has achieved extraordinary victories.

From the above foundations, it can be affirmed that the upcoming 14th National Party Congress is the moment of convergence and synthesis of advantages and strengths to lead the country into a new era - the era of national ascent - following the era of independence and freedom, the era of building socialism, and the era of renovation.

2.2. The political determination of the Party will surely be realized thanks to the potential strength of the nation

History and national tradition are profound sources of motivation, contributing to the formation of Vietnam's identity and exceptional strength. These values are not only precious lessons from the past but also solid foundations for national construction and development in the future. The Vietnamese people have gone through thousands of years of history full of ups and downs and challenges, but it is in those hardships that the spirit of resilience, unity, and the aspiration for independence and freedom has always been the great driving force propelling the country forward.

The resilient and indomitable spirit in the history of nation-building and defense:

The history of the Vietnamese people is a series of arduous but heroic struggles to safeguard national independence and sovereignty. From the resistance against northern invasions to the wars against French colonialism, American imperialism, and border defense battles, the Vietnamese people have continuously risen and overcome countless difficulties and challenges. Glorious victories such as Bach Đằng, Đống Đa, or the triumphs in the wars against the French and the Americans have proven the strength of national unity and resilience.

That indomitable spirit has been forged over thousands of years - from the era of the Hùng Kings to national heroes such as Trung Trac, Trung Nhi, Le Loi, Nguyen Hue, Ho Chi Minh, and many other generations of heroes. The sacrifices, courage, and unwavering determination of those who came before not only helped the nation maintain its independence but also serve as enduring lessons in the power of unity and patriotism. These values continue to inspire younger generations, urging them to make unceasing efforts and contributions to the country.

The tradition of unity and consensus in all circumstances:

One of the profound traits of the Vietnamese nation is the tradition of unity and solidarity in overcoming challenges. Throughout history, from national defense wars to nation-building endeavors, unity has always been seen as a decisive factor leading to success. Uprisings and national liberation wars have demonstrated that when the people are united - when each individual and collective place the common interest above all - nothing is insurmountable.

The tradition of “sharing weal and woe” among the Vietnamese people, especially during the years of war, has played an especially vital role in promoting national development. This spirit of solidarity continues to be strongly expressed in the era of renovation and international integration. Unity in thought, action, and common goals will be a powerful driving force for overcoming difficulties and challenges in the current process of national development.

The aspiration for freedom, independence, and development:

One of the greatest driving forces derived from history and national tradition is the aspiration for freedom, independence, and prosperous development. From the early days of nation-building, our forefathers always strived to establish a self-reliant country, free from foreign domination and oppression. That desire for independence and freedom was not only manifested in wars of liberation but also in efforts to preserve and promote cultural values and national identity.

After national reunification, that aspiration was carried forward in the process of building a peaceful, strong, and prosperous country. From the difficulties following the war, we have risen strongly thanks to the determination, creativity, and patriotism of the people. The tireless aspiration for development of the Vietnamese people is the driving force that pushes us not only to build a strong economy but also a democratic, just, and civilized society.

Cultural values and patriotism

The history and traditions of the Vietnamese people also constitute a rich cultural heritage, encompassing values related to family, community, respect for ancestors, and admirable virtues such as honesty, a love of learning, perseverance, and diligence. These values not only contribute to building a strong society but also form the foundation for shaping individuals with ethical virtues and a sense of responsibility toward the community and the nation.

Patriotism and national pride are expressed through concrete actions in everyday life. Every Vietnamese citizen, from national leaders to ordinary people, bears responsibility for contributing to the country's overall development. This is a powerful motivation that enables our nation to maintain sustainable development and overcome all difficulties and challenges.

The driving force derived from national history and tradition is the latent strength that empowers Vietnam to rise in this new era. From the glorious victories of the past to the enduring cultural values, the spirit of unity and aspiration for development has always served as a solid foundation for national advancement. In today's turbulent world, these values will continue to be a guiding torch, providing the momentum for the country to move toward a bright and prosperous future.

2.3. Implementing the strategic orientations to lead the country into the era of national ascent is a revolution that requires intense determination and a spirit of sacrifice for the common good

In a world undergoing rapid development, each of us faces both challenges and opportunities to make change. The country now needs individuals who are courageous enough to innovate, be creative, and willing to sacrifice for the common interest. Innovation is not only about absorbing new things but also about the ability to critically examine the old, to improve and break free from familiar limitations.

Creativity is an inexhaustible resource that helps us overcome difficulties and find breakthrough solutions to improve quality of life and affirm the nation's position on the international stage. However, the path of reform and creativity is never smooth. It demands courage, a fearless spirit in the face of failure, and, above all, personal sacrifice in service of the community.

In his closing speech at the plenum of the 13th Party Central Committee on November 25, 2024, General Secretary To Lam emphasized: "The task of streamlining and restructuring the organizational apparatus is a very difficult, sensitive, and complex undertaking that directly affects each individual in every organization. Therefore, it demands unity, high determination, courage, and even the sacrifice of personal interests for the common good"⁽¹⁾. Let us look to historical examples: scientists, entrepreneurs, and ordinary citizens who never hesitated to sacrifice their time, effort, and even their lives to bring great value to society. That spirit needs to be strongly promoted through each person's actions. Anticipating the difficulties and losses that will arise in the revolution of streamlining the political system, the Resolution has specified:

“Enact regulations on procedures and policies to ensure the rights, benefits, and interests of cadres, civil servants, public employees, and workers when restructuring and streamlining the organizational apparatus”.

Our country will only grow strong if there are people who dare to think big, act boldly, and put the common good above all else. Let us begin with the smallest tasks - but do them with all our passion and sense of responsibility. That is how we can contribute to Vietnam’s sustainable and bright future.

2.4. Leading the country into the era of national ascent is the responsibility of every individual - respecting innovation and supporting new thinking and new approaches, while remaining cautious of recklessness and illusion

The country now stands at the threshold of both opportunities and challenges in the new era, where science, technology, and innovation have become the primary driving forces for development. To seize these opportunities, not only are national-level strategies needed, but also the active participation of every citizen.

On February 1, 2024, in his closing speech at the national conference on implementing and summarizing the realization of Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW of the 12th Party Central Committee; reporting on the socio-economic situation over the first eleven months of 2024; presenting solutions to accelerate socio-economic development in 2025 and resolve institutional bottlenecks, General Secretary To Lam issued a call: “Now more than ever, our cadre and Party member corps must uphold a strong sense of responsibility, set an example in carrying out duties, place the common good above all else, boldly innovate, be creative, make breakthroughs, and be courageous in sacrificing for the development of the country”⁽²⁾.

Each individual’s responsibility begins with clearly recognizing their role in national development. This may involve a spirit of continuous learning, diligent work, innovative thinking, and creative action. From the smallest actions, such as keeping the environment clean and saving resources, to major contributions such as scientific inventions or economic development—all efforts contribute to nation-building.

Moreover, the spirit of solidarity and social responsibility is a fundamental foundation. When everyone places the common good above personal interest and joins hands toward a larger goal, we can generate collective strength to help Vietnam rise and become a prosperous, developed nation in the new era.

Innovation is the core element to promote development and open new pathways for societal advancement. We must wholeheartedly support creative ideas and different approaches; because only when we dare to experiment and change can we escape the old ways and build a better future. However, in this journey, every individual and collective must remain vigilant, ensuring they do not fall into recklessness or illusions detached from reality.

New approaches must be assessed based on scientific grounds, feasibility, and long-term benefits for the community. Reckless thinking or ill-considered actions can lead to serious consequences, wasting resources and hindering collective development. Likewise, overly idealized notions about the potential or effectiveness of new solutions can make us lose our clarity and overlook essential practical factors.

Let us be open to new initiatives, but always place them within real-world contexts and examine them rigorously. Innovation must be harmoniously balanced with enthusiasm, creativity, and prudence. Only by striking this balance between innovation and reality can we move forward steadily, building a society that is not only developed but also sustainable and humane.

2.5. Combating wastefulness and practicing thrift to generate resources for Vietnam's rise in the era of national ascent

In a constantly changing world, our country must mobilize all available resources to grow stronger and assert its position in the new era. One of the key elements to achieve this is combating wastefulness and promoting a culture of thrift. Wastefulness not only depletes resources but also hinders development, causing us to miss important opportunities.

Practicing thrift does not mean living in deprivation; rather, it means using all resources efficiently—from time and money to natural resources. Small actions like turning off unused lights, reducing waste, or optimizing work processes all contribute to forming a substantial pool of resources that can be invested in education, healthcare, science, and technology.

Let us collectively build a habit of thrift and eliminate wastefulness in daily life. This is not only a responsibility to ourselves but also a duty to the nation. With the cooperation of everyone, we will establish a solid foundation to lead Vietnam into an era of sustainable and prosperous development.

Every action must be measured in terms of its effectiveness and compared with the time, effort, and money spent. Every agency and unit must reduce superficial tasks and the pursuit of empty achievements. Practicing thrift and combating wastefulness must become “self-aware”, “voluntary”, like “daily food, water, and clothing”.

More than ever, the current context demands that Vietnam seek new pathways to overcome these challenges and continue sustainable development. The new era is not only an opportunity for economic growth but also a chance to build a just, civilized, and integrated society. In a world that is changing day by day, seizing this opportunity can help Vietnam not only maintain stability but also make remarkable progress.

The new era is not merely a concept of change but also an opportunity for the Vietnamese nation to assert its position and strength on the global stage. To achieve this, the country must undergo a comprehensive transformation—from mindset to policy and concrete action—creating powerful drivers for economic growth, environmental protection, and improving the quality of life for every citizen. Entering the new era is the key for Vietnam to rise, realizing the aspiration for prosperity and sustainable development in this ever-changing world.

REFERENCES

- (1) <https://vtv.vn/chinh-tri/toan-van-phat-bieu-cua-tong-bi-thu-to-lam-tai-hoi-nghi-trung-uong-dang-khoa-xiii-20241125193124107.htm>.
- (2) <https://special.nhandan.vn/phat-bieu-cua-TBT-tai-hoi-nghi-trien-khai-Nghi-quyet-18/index.html>.