

Tạp chí Lý Luận Chính Trị Và Truyền Thông

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Misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field is the information that does not reflect the true nature of its ideological and theoretical content. It is a fabrication, a swap between right and wrong, true and untrue social issues. In fact, false and misleading information is frequently either made up, or just a garbled part of the truth. At other times it inadequately cites ideological views, theories, or events taking place in the socio-political life of Vietnam. Such information is often accompanied by one-sided and subjective evaluation and analysis. More seriously, when such false and distorted information is used by hostile forces for political purposes, it has a damaging impact on public ideology and social opinions. It causes negative opinions, suspicion, and can spread anxiety. As a result, some cadres lose faith in the Party, the State, and the socialist regime. This brings the risks for national disorder in the economic, political, security and defense fields.

So where do misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field come from? What are their sources? What is the hidden target? And how can such erroneous information be properly uncovered and handled? This article will attempt to contribute one more voice on how to identify and handle false and distorted information in order to protect the ideological foundation, guidelines, and policies of the Party and the country.

1. Subjects of misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field

In order to understand the intentions and nature of misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field, it is necessary to identify the purveyors of such information. It is possible to classify the subjects of the current modes of false and

distorted information in the ideological and theoretical field according to the following groups.

First, there is the ideological opposition group. The ideology of the Party and the revolution of our country is the domain of the proletariat. Those who follow the bourgeois ideology, or even the remnants of feudalism, still fiercely oppose Vietnam in order to protect their interests. The struggle against the ideological opposition group has been uncompromising and has taken place continuously since the birth of Marxism-Leninism in the 19th century.

Second, there are politically hostile forces attempting to fight against socialism. With a conspiracy to change our country's socialist course and change the political regime in Vietnam, they want to become "leading figures" in opposition political organizations even though they are selective in their criticism of ideology to suit their political goals and motives. And so, they have been diligently researching and systematically creating opposing arguments. They will always find ways to distort, smear, or fabricate stories from whole cloth in order to protest or negate Vietnam's ideological foundation, which is Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh thought.

Third, political opportunists, who are masked as politically dissatisfied cadres and Party members or refuse to study and cultivate moral revolutionary ideas, avoid Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought, diluting the Party's ideals, undergoing 'selftransformation' and 'selfevolution' as pointed out by our Party.

Fourth are researchers who do not thoroughly understand theoretical or practical issues while self-appointing themselves as the true experts of the problems. They are even influenced by disinformation from the previous three groups of opportunistic and hostile forces and have been known to cite and spread the distorted thoughts and theories they have acquired. These people can be called vain followers.

Objectively, the source of false and misleading information can be individuals or organizations, either living in the Vietnam or abroad. Some openly and directly oppose the revolution while others are anonymous. There are also those who use a pseudonym, hiding behind an alias. As individuals, these are usually people who are

dissatisfied with the Government. They can be seen as political opportunists, who are both lazy and easily manipulated by other hostile groups. This type of person is easily bribed. Sometimes they are people from old regimes having prejudices against the revolution. They might also be anti-communist extremists. They span all segments of society from those who are unemployed to those who are equipped with qualifications and academic titles. As organizations, they are groups of people with reactionary ideas, opposing the cause of building and defending the socialist Vietnam. A good example would be the Viet Tan Party, Group 8406. The Viet Tan Party as well as all of the people and organizations mentioned above receive material and intellectual support and assistance from outside sources hostile to Vietnam.

2. The objective purposes of misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field

In recent times, misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field has focused on distributing false information with the purpose of destabilizing security and social order. The goal is to cause disunity and division between the Party, the State, the armed forces, and ultimately the people. These groups also hope to generate confusion and distrust in theory and ideology, causing cadres and Party members to question their ideal, lose vigilance, become confused, and ultimately to doubt the ideology, resolutions, guidelines, and leadership of the Communist Party. The most negative result is that this stance leads to 'self-evolution' and 'self-transformation' of individuals giving a foothold to gradually introduce the bourgeois ideology and to abolish the socialist ideology and socialism in Vietnam.

3. The contents of misinformation and disinformation in Vietnam today

Misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field are now very diverse and focus on the following basic contents: distorting, negating Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and the ideological foundation of the Party and Vietnam's revolution; negating the goal, ideal, and the path to socialism; smearing and slandering the leaders of the Party and State, defying the leadership role of the Communist Party; distorting and slandering the history, guidelines, and policies of the Party and State.

In particular, hostile forces prepare and coordinate their plan carefully from theory to practice, and from events to persons. They also target specific objects to distort and deny the basic theoretical principles of Marxism-Leninism, and to oppose the reality of Vietnam's revolution with socialism. By promoting this distortion, they completely reject Vietnam's ideological thinking about socialism and the path to socialism and the achievements of Doi Moi. By fabricating documents and judgments which are difficult to verify historically, the hostile and reactionary forces sow doubts about our decision to follow the path of proletarian revolution, national independence and socialism. Their goal is to confuse novice readers, make the younger generation skeptical, and people's trust wavering.

A lot of false information is intended to offend the respect of our Party, State and people toward President Ho Chi Minh and to distort Ho Chi Minh's thought. The distortion extends across all lines to the great efforts of our Party, State, and people to curb negative behaviors and corruptions in society, aiming at building a democratic, equitable and civilized society. One specific example would be their focus on distorting the spirit and contents of the Resolutions of the 4th Plenums of the Party Central Committee, 11th and 12th Tenures, to undermine confidence in their successful implementation. The implementation of these Resolutions was attacked openly, directly and heavily with their arguments that this work was hopeless in gaining the confidence of the people, cadres and Party members. The perpetrators denied Vietnam's political system and demanded a new constitution for a pluralist political system with multiple opposing parties. They used the reasoning that within the Communist Party there are factions and wings. They distorted the views and principles of democratic centralism in the Party, believing that concentration of power always leads to the destruction of democracy. They also demanded the abolition of Article 4 as it is written in the Constitution on the role of leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Hostile forces also spread disinformation regarding land disputes with the goal of inciting opposition among farmers to demand the constitutionalizing of private land ownership. Another tactic is to propagate and incite division, opposition, and subversion in the disguise that this is a democratic and patriotic struggle. They distort

and dispute theoretical and practical issues found in leaders' speeches. Fabricated diaries have been published as memoirs of the leaders. Sensational stories have been invented regarding the activities of the leadership. Information is also spread that equates the merits of individuals and families who have fought and sacrificed for national independence and socialism with those who once obeyed the foreign invaders to fight against the struggle for independence and unification.

One more time, their goal is to create contradictions and arouse suspicion and division among the people. This corrupt goal also targets the correct guidelines of the Party and State. At the same time, Vietnam's opponents try to make up figures with imaginary merits to the country and the people. At times and in many places, opponents incite some of the people and indifferent cadres to follow the so-called path of true freedom and democracy. There are also efforts to take advantage of freedom of religion for wrongful and illegal purposes. This negatively affects security and order, and ultimately politics, the economy and society at large. These are some of the issues of great concern in the current context and need to be fully and properly addressed. This is why appropriate and effective measures for handling these people and organizations should be taken.

4. Current forms and methods of spreading misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field

Although the use of disinformation and disinformation has not subjectively changed, the conventional and unconventional forms and methods of transmitting such information are now very sophisticated and cunning. With traditional methods, the focus on propagating untruthful, dishonest, and deceptive ideas was repeated over and over. This is a technique which is expressed in the aphorism, "small rain lays great dust" Although it is not new, it is dangerously effective, especially for those who are gullible, low-educated, and lack self-resistance capacity.

In addition, these forces seek to collude with Western scholars and degenerate and corrupt cadres and Party members who show signs of 'selfevolution' and 'selftransformation.' The focus becomes one of pushing propaganda in the direction of mixing what is true and false. This is done by giving negative information, opinion,

and fake news from press, conferences, and seminars. These sources are used to make such information appear objective but subjective comments, exaggeration, distortions, and outright lies are often inserted to sow doubts about the Party's statements and guidelines. In particular, hostile forces fully exploit sensitive political and economic moments, important cultural or social occasions, or major national holidays and diplomatic events to propagandize and distort the Party's programs, resolutions, and guidelines. The result is a distortion of history, the creation of distractions, the sowing of confusion and distrust. This incites more individuals to participate in 'selfevolution' and 'selftransformation.' Again, this in turn results in directing people in a negative direction. It causes instability and disorder in the social order and then transforms problems of social order into problems on the magnitude of national security.

In addition, taking advantages brought by the Industrial Revolution 4.0, they disseminate hostile and wrong information via the internet and social networks. At the moment, this is their favorite method. Messages are sent as a way to spread rumors, and fake accounts are created to infiltrate community groups on social networks to upload inaccurate information and respond to comments. Through social networks, more and more methods of sending information are used in an organized and methodical way. This misinformation creates specific scenarios in extremely sophisticated and cunning ways. The origins of such information are difficult to trace. Information is often cherry-picked from many different sources, from unrelated individuals and organizations, both at home and abroad. These sources are news, articles, and especially photos, whose content is then structured to practice psychological deception. Accordingly, the information appears partly true and familiar, but in reality, it is completely untrue. In some cases, the information is mostly correct with only a small part being wrong. But indepth comments become the real distraction to public opinion, causing confusion and loss of trust among the people.

It can be seen that the hostile forces have been thorough in their use of media with vehicles such as video and audio clips, which are posted to social networking sites such as Facebook, Zalo, and Instagram, as well as personal blogs, partisan websites, or any digital pages, which accept their deception. And so the spread of

disinformation is complete in the following forms: Adding, cutting or removing contents of the information; comments, analysis, and evaluation of the matter in a subjective, impulsive, pseudo-scientific manner; normal articles disguised with sensational headlines and titles associated with topical and sensitive current political and social events; forgery of internal documents and seals of functional agencies in the political system and local governments, then they are published in the form of criticism or direct opinions which are distributed to arouse curiosity, entice people, and deceive public opinion.

5. Current handling of misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field

The reasons for the speedy spread of misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field are diverse and complex. All citizens can become victims of such information. To preventing and minimize its effects on society, it is important to have the solutions not only by functional authorities, but also with the participation of all genuine Vietnamese citizens.

First of all, it is necessary for each citizen, upon receiving information, to mentally filter and check its accuracy. The most basic thing about information checking is to determine its origin and compare its content with official sources. Each individual needs to be vigilant in receiving information, always comparing and contrasting with official information published and broadcast in online newspapers and websites that have been approved by the authorities. Such websites currently have legal operation licenses, in accordance with the law on press and intellectual property. They are a good source to check the reliability of the information.

For individuals and agencies that have the responsibility to handle false, distorted, and reactionary information, they need to be constantly aware of disinformation. They need to detect it quickly and form a quick plan to combat and expose its unscientific and reactionary nature, to prevent and overcome its bad influences on cadres, Party members, and people. It is essential for them to expose the nature of such information and point out its fallacious demagoguery. In handling misinformation and disinformation, it is necessary to distinguish misled, distorted information from hostile

information. Hostile views are accompanied with political motives and oppositional ideas. However, if not promptly detected, prevented, and combated, disinformation will gradually turn into hostile information, especially when it is used to incite a hidden agenda used by reactionary forces.

This differentiation is made to identify the forms and methods of the opponents who work to advance their incorrect viewpoint, to classify and isolate these enemies, and to prevent them from taking advantage of and drawing in people who are temporarily confused between right and wrong views and mistakenly join the opposition. First and foremost, it is important to verify by tracing the source of information, the person and organization that disseminates it. This means to research and completely understand the perpetrator from their personal history to their reasons and arguments to understand the nature and intents behind their actions. In addition, it is necessary to learn more about the manipulation to grasp the theory behind its importance as well as to know the guidelines and policies of the Party and State related to that issue.

When providing defensive arguments, it is required to be resolute, prompt, wise, and cautious, but not imposing or mechanical. The reasoning must be rigorous, logical, and sharp while the language should be selective and appropriate. Lengthy expressions and inconsistency must be avoided so the message stays on point. In essence, the use of scientific reasoning is necessary to remain rational. However, it is not easy to expose the nature of misinformation and disinformation because scientifically false or politically reactionary information is the result of a sophisticated and cunning indoctrination process. This process today is amplified by modern media and has deceived some people.

Therefore, not everyone is able to participate in effectively handling and refuting misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field. This also means that the contingent of people dealing with it must meet a list of professional criteria. They need to be trained and updated regularly to the constantly changing challenges of the modern world. They must have a strong political mettle, bravery, and a fighting spirit. Good internet skills are mandatory to understand the Party ideology. Theoretical cognitive ability needs to be quantified with a high level of education. This is especially true for acquiring competence to understand the nature and content of

the principles of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought, and the many guidelines and policies of the Party and State. At stake is the economic, political, cultural, and social health of the entire country. It gives Vietnam an extremely sensitive instrument designed to detect misinformation and disinformation and to distinguish the nature of theoretical ideas, and international political trends. At the same time, they are required to know how to regularly collect, update, classify, store and process as a database the raging river of information. This job is assigned to them to supplement current modes of gaining insight and to improve their capacity to participate in the fight against false and hostile views and information in an effective way.

Dealing with misinformation and disinformation in the ideological and theoretical field today is an extremely complex battle of wits, struggle, and evolving tactics. It is a necessary battle to protect Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's thought and the leadership of the Party, as well as to strengthen Party unity and people's consensus to raise the fighting spirit against 'peaceful evolution' plot by hostile forces, as well as the manifestations of 'selfevolution' and 'selftransformation', and to uphold the socialist ideological course. It is imperative to protect and creatively develop Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought while maintaining the leadership of the Party. It is an immediate, urgent, and long-term task for the entire Party, armed forces, and people of Vietnam.

Tài liệu tham khảo

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