

The political system's organizational structure and staff reduction process in Vietnam at present

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Abstract

The political system of Vietnam follows the former Soviet style, which includes the following elements from central to local level: Party, State, Fatherland Front and mass organizations. This type of organizational structure has shown increasing limitations in the current context of an open economy and global integration. These need to be reformed and improved. While there are enormous challenges in this reform process, there are encouraging changes. Therefore, it is essential to renovate fundamental understanding on political system structure and induce the strong political will of the whole political system, particularly within the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Based on the theoretical model of political will developed by Post et al. (2010), this study aims to test the assumption that the political system organizational restructuring and staff reduction process will be successful with strong political will and public support. The findings show that the on-going political system organizational process and staff reduction in Vietnam seems to be in line with the assumption. There are impressive initial achievements. These include: (i) elimination of three steering committees, seven directorates etc.; around 200 bureaus, departments etc., and 65 provincial departments; (ii) reduction of 50 directorate-level leading positions, more than 300 bureau and department-level leading positions, about 200 provincial department-level leading positions and about 10,000 division/office-level managers. Challenges are inertia within the system, hesitation and conflicts of interest among decision makers. Therefore, strong political will from the top level, common understanding and effort from all Party members and support from people, as well as effective solutions in the coming years, are all required.

Keywords

political restructuring, staff reduction, Vietnam

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Overview

The political system's organizational structure in Vietnam follows the former Soviet style, which includes the following elements from central to local levels: Party, State, Fatherland Front and mass organizations. Many of these organizations were established and developed prior to the Communist Party of Vietnam's gaining the ruling power, after which they became members of the political system of Vietnam under the leadership of CPV, management of the state and ownership of the people. This political system has been functioning relatively well and making significant contributions to the country's achievements in wartime and to the socio-economic development process. However, it has shown critical limitations in the current context of an open economy and global integration. The Party has tried to reform before without success. The main reasons include lack of political will, limited understanding of the goals and conflicts of interest in the implementation process.

Over the last 30 years, CPV has issued many resolutions on organizational structuring and staff re-profiling of the political system. While there are significant improvements, the organizational structure of the political system remains husky (too big and heavy than necessary), with limited operational efficiency and effectiveness. Limitations include overlapped functions and tasks, low results of organizational restructuring and staff re-profiling processes to improve the quality of Party cadres and government officials, as well as an overstaffed and inefficient structure.

From the beginning of tenure XII (from January 2016 to June 2017) (Nguyen, 2019), the number of ministries and ministry-level agencies decreases compared to the previous tenure XI. However, there are still 30 ministries and ministry-level agencies, which include 18 ministries, four ministry-level agencies and eight government agencies. This is much more than other countries in the region and in the world. In the region, there are 11 ministries in Japan, 15 ministries in Singapore, 16 ministries in Laos and South Korea, 19 ministries in Thailand and 20 ministries in China, Malaysia and the Philippines. Other countries such as Spain (12 ministries), Belgium (13 ministries), Germany (14 ministries), the US (15 ministries), France (16 ministries), Portugal (17 ministries), the UK (17 ministries), Italy (18 ministries) and Russia (21 ministries) all have fewer ministries.

This heavy organizational structure with too many staff causes a great burden for the state budget, as well as hindering the political system's efficiency and effectiveness. The Party is well aware of this and has learnt valuable lessons from past failures. As a result, it has determined to tackle the problem by undertaking radical organizational restructuring and staff reduction. Clear roadmaps and timelines with specific targets for each ministry, sector and province have been set by the Politbureau, and the Party's Committees at all levels are held accountable for results delivery.

Theoretical framework

This study follows the model of political will that Lori Ann Post, Amber Raile and Eric Raile (2010) defined: "one that facilitates operationalization of the concept and that allows direct mapping to outcomes and the identification of specific shortcomings" (p. 659). The authors argued that:

political will has been an idea riddled with ambiguity and imprecision... Evidence of political will typically has been considered indirect and retrospective – with a failure to implement change

purportedly manifesting a lack of political will and successful implementation constituting proof of its existence. (Post et al., 2010; p. 670)

They break the concept down into four components: (i) a sufficient set of decision makers; (ii) a common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda; (iii) a commitment to support; (iv) a commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution.

Checking on these components will help test the assumption that the political system organization restructuring and staff reduction process in Vietnam will be successful with strong political will and public support.

Current status, challenges and the Party's direction

Current status of the political system's organizational structure

Organizational structure. There are currently 42 ministerial directorates/general departments, which is double that of 2011. At the lower level, there are 826 bureaus and departments and 7280 divisions/offices under directorates/general departments, which is an increase of 4.7% compared to 2011. In addition, there are 750 ministerial bureaus and departments and 3970 divisions, which is an increase of 13.6% and 13% compared to 2011 respectively. This does not include the armed forces or the police. The central advising and supporting agencies have 23 departments (21.9%) and 40 divisions (37.4%) more. Provincial/city agencies have 162 divisions (9.32%) and 1265 staff positions (12.12%) more compared to 2011.

There are also a number of issues in relations with local governments. The number of provinces, districts and communes increased from 44 to 63, from 535 to 713 and from 10,026 to 11,162 from 1986 to the present respectively. This means that after 30 years, the number of provinces, districts and communes has increased by 19, 178 and 1136, equivalent to 43.18%, 33.27% and 11.33% respectively. Over the past 10 years, the number of provinces has decreased by just one, while the number of districts and communes has increased by 165 and 194 respectively.

It is noteworthy that many districts and communes do not meet the standards of the regulations. About 9% of districts (49) and 37% of communes (3363) do not meet the standards on either land area or population set by the National Assembly Standing Committee's No. 1211/2016/UBTVQH13 of 25 May 2016, of which 724 communes meet fewer than 50% of these standards. Many communes have less than 1 km² of land area and some urban wards have about 0.15 km² of land area. The large number of communes, which are currently 11,162 communes/wards/towns, have huge impacts on the country's salary and number of permanent staff.

At present, the organizational structure of the Fatherland Front and mass organizations is additional to and in parallel with the state system from the central to the commune level, with heavy bureaucracy, huge budget burdens and low efficiency. In these organizations, there are currently 86,395 permanent staff, accounting for 14.14% of the country's total cadres, officials and professional staff. Many of these staff are not capable and not committed to the activities at ground level. There are five permanent positions in each commune in these organizations. These include Chair of the Fatherland Front, Secretary of the Youth Union, Chair of the Women's Association, Chair of the Farmers' Union and Chair of the Veterans' Association. Consequently there are 55,810 cadres in these mass organizations, accounting for 23.7% and 23.7% of the total number of commune-level staff and total commune-level staff in the country's mass organizations' staff. These exclude the large number of village-level staff that have subsidies/allowances from the state budget.

In addition to the above-mentioned mass organizations, there are also 63,345 associations that are under the management of the Ministry of Home Affairs and 31 associations established by the Prime Minister's decisions. The operating costs of these associations are mainly borne by the state budget.

Furthermore, there are about 58,000 public institutions that could be socialized, e.g. self-financed. There are more than 2.2 million staff in these public institutions, whose salaries are currently paid by the state budget. This accounts for 57.9% of the total number of Party cadres, government officials and professional staff in the political system.

Staff size. As of 1 March 2017 (Central Steering Committee, 2017), there are 3,958,760 staff working in the Party and state agencies, including permanent staff who get a monthly salary and contracted staff who get allowances paid by the state budget. These include 437,067 Party cadres and government officials, and 2,294,251 staff of public institutions (not including 150,246 people in the public institutions that are already self-financed). There are also 1,227,442 staff at the commune, village and resident quarter level, which account for 31.01% of the total state salary and allowance budget and 15.9% of local regular expenditures.

Currently there are 279,143 Party cadres, government officials and professional staff at the central level, 2,080,280 at the province and district levels and 235,627 at the commune level. In addition, there are 131,867 contracted staff in accordance with Decree 68, 239,342 other types of contracted staff, 991,815 part-time staff at the commune level and 686 people in special associations (excluding the armed forces and police).

The results of the implementation of staff reduction in accordance with the Politbureau's Resolution 39-NQ/TW of 17 April 2015 remain limited. The total number of staff whose salary and allowances are paid by the state budget actually increased to 96,141 people, equivalent to 2.49%, from 2015 to 2017.

Budget implications. In terms of the proportion of public officials and people paid by the state budget, Vietnam ranks 43th in the region. This excludes the armed forces and police. The Philippines, India, Indonesia, East Timor, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, China and Thailand rank 13th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 25th, 26th, 35th, 48th and 51st respectively (World Bank, 2015).

There have been many deputies appointed, with a total of 81,492 positions, ranging from division deputy head to deputy minister, accounting for 21.7% of the total cadres and officials from the central to the district level. On average, there is one deputy for every five staff members. There are some special cases where 44 out of 46 people in a provincial department or 100% of people in a ministry-level agency are leaders, without any expert or working-level staff.

The number of people appointed with "equivalent titles" is questionable. For instance, there are six director general equivalent titles and seven deputy director general equivalent titles in one ministry's department, and 19 deputy director general equivalent titles in another ministry's department. There are even division head or deputy head equivalent titles.

The structure arrangement of cadres and officials across various levels is irrelevant, with 23% at the central level, 38.4% at the province and district levels and 38.6% at the commune level. The survey results show that 53% of respondents see an increase in staffing but there is still a lack of capable people in the political system (Public Opinion Research Institute, 2017).

In particular, the number of staff in the administrative offices is huge. The administrative office staff accounts for 27.2% in Party central agencies, 29.85% in Fatherland Front and mass organizations and 29.87% in the National Assembly's Office.

Such a complicated staffing structure leads to increasing running costs, which account for a high proportion of the total regular state expenditure. The running costs accounted for about 65% of total state budget expenditures over 2011–2015, which was 2.2 times higher compared to the previous five-year period. The running costs in 2017 were about 64.9%, which was a 16.2% increase compared to 2015. In recent years, the total running costs have kept rising, from VND 704,400 billion in 2014, to VND 777,000 billion in 2015, VND 837,050 billion in 2016 and VND 902,880 billion in 2017, an increase of 10.3%, 7.7% and 7.78% respectively compared to the previous year. These running costs in 2017 increased 16.2% compared to 2015. The salary and allowances account for 52.8% and education and training costs account for 24% of these running costs.

Due to the increasing running costs, the investment for development expenditures reduced from 28% in 2007 to 19.7% in 2016. In particular, these were –8% and –4.7% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The public debts accounted for 63.7% of GDP in 2016 and 63% in 2017 excluding the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) debts. This might cause macroeconomic risks.

Challenges

General challenges in this organizational restructuring and staff reduction process include:

Aftermath of the central planning system with old-fashioned thinking and bureaucratic working style. The leaders and personnel affairs staff abuse the loose system of staff recruitment, appointment and promotion. They find loopholes in employment contracts and change employment statuses when possible. This leads to a significant increment in staff at all levels.

Massive split and creation of administrative units. The number of provinces, districts and communes increased from 44, 535 and 10,000 in 1986 to 63, 713 and 11,136 in 2016 respectively. Similarly, the number of ministries reduced by one while the number of directorates increased to 42 in 2018, doubling that in 2011. The number of departments increased to 750, by 13.6% compared to 2011. The number of divisions increased to 3970, by 13% compared to 2011. This excludes the armed forces and police (Thu, 2018). As a result, the number of staff increased rapidly. The bureaucracy and inefficiency worsened accordingly.

The efficiency of public expenditures remains low. The corruption index of Vietnam is 33/100, ranking 113 out of 176 countries. This is lower than China, which has a 40/100 index and ranks 79 out of 176 countries (Transparency International, 2016). The corruption related to staff recruitment, appointment, promotion and rotation is widespread and complex. People are normally recruited not based on qualification or capability but on personal relations and corruption. As such, quality and work effectiveness are low.

Disciplinary and enforcement mechanisms on state management and the quality of cadres and officials' public service delivery remain weak. A slow, incomprehensive and inadequate public administration reform process, and bureaucratic and complex administrative procedures, make people discontent and concerned about the inefficient and ineffective state organizational structure. The survey showed that 57% of respondents were concerned about this (Public Opinion Research Institute, 2017).

The Party's directions and actions

In order to shed light on the new stage of development, the Resolution of CPV Congress XII indicated that it would:

Continue to reform the Party's apparatus and the political system toward compact and higher quality with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of the leadership, stewardship and management. This exercise is attached with clarification of functions and tasks as well as enhanced quality of the cadres and officials . . . Consider piloting merging a number of Party organizations and State agencies that have similar functions and tasks . . . Simplify the organizational structure with focus on further clarification of functions, tasks and operational patterns of organizations; add extra responsibilities for some positions and reduce staff of the whole political system . . . Adjust the terms of reference of the people's councils and people's committees at various levels for better performance in the current context and new requirements. (Communist Party of Vietnam, Resolution of Congress XII, 2016)

The Congress XII also identified that the simplification of the political system and enhancing its operational efficiency and effectiveness is one of the six key tasks of the CPV Central Committee tenure XII agenda.

The CPV's Central Committee has acted strongly on this issue with two important resolutions to restructure the political system organization towards a compact, quality and effective structure and an efficient operation. These are: (i) Resolution 18-NQ/TW of 25 October 2017 set a target to reduce permanent staff by a minimum of 10% compared to 2015, and from 2021 to 2030 to complete the restructuring process; (ii) Resolution 19-NQ/TW of 25 October 2017 focused on the self-financing and staff reduction of the public institutions, with a target to reduce public institutions and permanent staff by 10% each by 2025 compared to 2015, and then by 2030 to reduce public institutions by a further 10% compared to 2025 (Tan, 2018).

In line with Resolution 18-NQ/TW, the Party committees at various levels are focusing on the further clarification of functions and tasks of each agency, considering the merger of a number of agencies and organizations that have similar functions and tasks, as well as adding extra responsibilities to a number of positions and reducing the permanent staff of the political system.

Underlying causes, solutions and initial achievements

Underlying causes

A number of underlying causes can be identified as follows. First, the overall structure of the political system is inefficient, with too many agencies and organizations (Party, State, Fatherland Front and mass organizations) paid from the state budget. In addition, there are about 63,345 associations (including 31 special associations at the central level and 8764 at the local level), for which offices and running costs are mainly covered by the state budget.¹

Second, the political system's organizational restructuring and staff reduction process is challenging since it affects the personal interests of many people, including leaders. There is not sufficient enforcement to hold the heads of agencies accountable for personnel decisions. Conflicts of interest related to the confidence vote also have negative impacts on this process.

Third, overlapping functions across personnel and organizational affairs advisory agencies (CPV's Central Commission on Organization and Personnel, the National Assembly's Deputies Affairs Committee, the Ministry of Home Affairs and State President's Office). Each of these

agencies advise on staffing decisions within their own jurisdictions without overall control. As a result, the total number of permanent staff increases with nobody held accountable.

Fourth, there is inadequate review and research on organizational and personnel affairs. The functions and tasks of each agency/organization in the political system are not yet clearly defined. There is a lack of personnel and organizational affairs professionals. The monitoring, checking and inspection process is not conducted regularly. The inertia of the system, as well as redundancy, are challenging.

Solutions

The CPV has acted strongly in an orchestrated manner on this issue. The Resolution of the CPV Party Congress XII clearly pointed out that it would: “Continue to restructure the Party and political system organization towards simplified structure, efficient and effective leadership and management. Organizational restructuring should attach the clearly defined functions and tasks as well as enhancement of public servants’ quality” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2016). It stressed the need to “Pilot merging a number of Party and State agencies that have similar functions and tasks” and “Structure reprofiling, combining a number of positions and staff reduction throughout the political system”, as well as the “Adjustment of functions and tasks of the People’s Councils, People’s Committees at all levels to be relevant with current context”.

The XII CPV Congress’s resolution further stated that the political system restructuring towards compact, efficient and effective operation is one of the six key strategic tasks of the Central Committee tenure XII.

In line with this, the Central Committee 6th Plenum, tenure XII has issued Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW of 25 October 2017 on the “Continuation of political system restructuring towards compact, efficient and effective operation”. The Party’s committees at all levels have been focusing on the clarification of the functions and tasks of each agency and organization, piloting merging of offices that have similar functions and tasks and combining positions and reducing staff numbers in the political system.

Initial results of the political system’s organizational restructuring exercise

For the first time ever after 20 years of implementation of the cadre strategy, there are revolutionary changes in the organizational structure. Initial results after more than a year of Resolution 18-NQ/TW implementation include: (i) the elimination of three steering committees, seven directorates, about 200 bureaus/departments and 65 provincial departments; (ii) the reduction of 50 directorate-level leading positions, more than 300 bureau and department-level leading positions, about 200 provincial department-level leading positions and about 10,000 division/office-level managers.

Good examples include: (i) the Ministry of Public Security’s restructuring exercise, which led to the elimination of eight directorates, 55 bureaus/departments, 20 provincial firefighting departments, 819 divisions/offices and about 1000 units; (ii) the Ministry of Defence privatization of 88 state-owned enterprises, which reduced the number of 100% SOEs to 17; (iii) the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics’ merging of three bureaus and reduction of six bureau subordinate units and more than 100 divisions/offices in its headquarters; (iv) the Ministry of Finance’s closure of 43 State Treasury transaction offices, 18 tax offices and 110 tax collection points, and reduction of 239 custom office teams/units; (v) the Long An province’s reduction of 95 offices, 84 leader/

manager positions (49 heads of offices and 35 deputies), 192 public institutions and 175 leader and manager positions in these institutions (128 heads and 47 deputies); (vi) the Kien Giang province's reduction of 19 technical offices under eight departments and 48 public institutions and closure of 24 district offices; (vii) the Bac Ninh province's reduction of 29 provincial offices, 38 leader positions and 197 permanent staff (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2019).

Results of staff reduction process

This has been a long and repeated process without any success. The first Resolution 13-NQ/TW on "A number of political system's organizational structure, salary and social allowances under the state budget", issued by the Central Committee's 7th Plenum, tenure VIII of 16 August 1999, stated the target in staff reduction: "to actively steward the staff reduction in administrative offices of the Party and state agencies and mass organisations, public institutions and state-owned enterprises by 15%" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 1999). After 10 years, this target was not achieved and the number of permanent staff increased to 1,976,976 in 2007, which was about 1.5 times higher than 1997. In 2017, the number of permanent staff continues to rise to 2,956,669, excluding the armed forces and police, which is twice of 1997, compared to the population growth of 20%.

Lessons learnt from the past exercises include: (i) not strong enough political will; (ii) ineffective implementation process without effective monitoring and enforcement measures; (iii) complex and problematic employment recruitment, appointment, performance appraisal and termination process; and (iv) corruption and abuse of power.

Over the past three years, the number of staff reduced is 132,000 people, which is 3.54%. These include 81,000 cadres, officials and staff at the central and local levels (3.3% reduction), and 51,000 commune-level staff and workers (4.02%).²

This reflects challenges as well as encouraging achievements in this difficult exercise. A specific result was achieved, with a 3.54% staff reduction for the first time ever over the last 20 years. It is therefore expected that by 2021 the target of a minimum 10% staff reduction set by the Politbureau's Resolution 39-NQ/TW will be achieved.

This also shows strong political will and creative implementation measures by the authorized Party's committees at various levels. These include merging of agencies/offices that have overlapped or similar functions and tasks, a job description review, an organizational restructuring process, a support policy by local budget to early retirement and/or job change, increasing allowances for those who carry additional responsibilities and combining the Party and government positions at the same level whenever possible.

The job descriptions with qualification requirements are developed prior to the recruitment, staff restructure or job interview process. Over the last three years, about 99 delegations with a total of 2000 rounds of district-level leaders and higher attended training, study tours and research abroad. Training courses are conducted for secretaries, heads of agencies and personnel staff at both the central and local levels before large-scale implementation. As a result, errors have been mitigated in organizational restructuring and the human resources arrangement process.

The principle that the Party takes absolute, direct and comprehensive leadership on personnel affairs and cadre management has been further clarified and detailed. The Central Committee indicated that the Party's Committees are the main responsible entity for personnel and organizational affairs, namely the Politbureau and the Party's Standing Committees at various levels. Along this line, the Politbureau issued Conclusion 17-KL/TW of 11 September 2017 on the "status of implementation of permanent staff reduction by the organizations in the political system in the

period 2015–2016 and targets, tasks and solutions for period 2018–2021” to make the heads of agencies/offices accountable for this process.

There has been an enforcement mechanism for the heads of agencies/offices: “No promotion or appointment of those heads of agencies/offices or his/her deputy in charge of personnel and organizational affairs that fail to seriously and effectively carry out the Resolution 39 in his/her responsible agency/office/locality”, specifically the staff reduction targets. Therefore, the Party organizations, particularly the authorized Party’s Committees across various levels, have actively led and developed plans and roadmaps in the implementation process.

The Party’s committees have paid adequate attention to lessons learnt for further upscaling. Since this is a learning by doing process for a ruling party, it is important to draw not only successful lessons but also the failed ones to clarify theoretical and practical pressing issues. The Party’s institutions and regulations set by itself need to be regularly updated for feasibility and relevance. It is necessary that the Party’s Committees follow closely on the ground, and address and mitigate challenges and obstacles emerging during the implementation process in a timely, active and flexible manner.

At present, CPV is looking at a number of pilot models. These include: (i) merging of a number of entities, namely the Party’s committees of the SOEs at the central level and the Party’s committees of the provincial SOEs, the Party’s Commission on Education and Communication with Commission on Personnel and Organization Affairs under the Party’s Committee of central agencies; (ii) establishment of the district-level Commission on Party Building Affairs, which includes former Party commissions such as the Commission on Personnel and Organization Affairs, Commission on Inspection and Commission on Mass Mobilization; (iii) combining the position of district-level Chair of Education and Communication with the district’s Director of Political Training Centre, Chair of Personnel and Organization Affairs and Director of Home Affairs Department, Chair of the Party’s Inspection Commission and the Chief Inspector, Chair of the Mass Mobilization Commission with Chair of the Fatherland Front; (iv) merging the offices of the People’s Council, People’s Committee and National Assembly Delegation into one office at the provincial level, the establishment of common offices for related organizations such as the Fatherland Front and mass organizations, the Party’s Committee and the Party’s Commissions.

Specific targets

Specific targets set by the Politbureau are as follows (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2017):

By 2021: (i) completion of institutionalization of the Party’s intent on renewing management, financial and restructuring mechanisms for the public institutions; (ii) reduction of minimum 10% of permanent staff compared to 2015, and termination of all work contracts that are not in line with the regulations in the public institutions; (iii) aiming for 10% public institutions that can be self-financed, which implies 10% of state budget support compared to 2011–2015; (iv) completion of privatization of public institutions and state-owned economic entities (except for hospitals and schools).

By 2025: (i) minimum reduction of 10% public institutions and 10% of permanent staff that are paid by state budget compared to 2021; (ii) aiming for minimum 20% of public institutions self-financed and 100% of state owned economic entities privatized (except those entities that are sufficiently self-financed); (iii) further reduction of 10% on average of direct state budget support to public institutions compared to 2016–2020.

By 2030: (i) further reduction of 10% of permanent staff in public institutions compared to 2025; (ii) reduction of 15% on average of state budget support compared to 2021–2025.

Analysis and conclusion

Assessing all components of the theoretical model that Post et al. (2010) developed, key findings can be summarized as follows:

- (i) *A sufficient set of decision makers.* The issue has involved all decision makers from the highest level of CPV, e.g. the CPV Congress, Central Committee and Politbureau, to the Party's committees at all levels (from ministries to provinces, districts and communes). They are responsible for planning, making decisions and overseeing implementation, and are accountable for the results specifically set for each level for each period of time.
- (ii) *Common understanding of a particular problem on the formal agenda.* This has been set as one of the six key priorities of the Central Committee tenure XII. All Party leaders and members understand and engage in this restructuring process. A successful pilot exercise in the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Finance and a number of provinces provided encouraging examples and experience for other agencies and organizations to take actions.
- (iii) *Commitment to support.* The exercise gains momentum and support from the top Party level and public consensus. Cutting the state budget burden and improving the political system's efficiency and effectiveness become inevitable.
- (iv) *A commonly perceived, potentially effective policy solution.* Specific targets set for each level, agency and locality. The heads of agencies/organizations are held accountable for this process. Monitoring, checking and enforcing mechanisms are in place to ensure deliverables.

In short, the political system's organizational restructuring and staff reduction process in Vietnam seems to be in line with the assumption that the political system organization restructuring and staff reduction process in Vietnam will be successful with strong political will and public support. Of course, it is challenging with existing inertia within system, hesitation and conflicts of interest among a number of the decision makers. Therefore, it requires strong political will from the top level, common understanding and efforts from all Party members and support from people, as well as effective solutions in the coming years.

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Notes

1. In accordance with the Prime Minister's Decision No. 68/2010/2010/QĐ-TTg of 1 November 2010.

2. Based on reports of the Party's committees at the central level (the police and armed forces are not included) (Central Commission on Organization and Personnel Affairs [Materials from the National Conference on Party's Building Affairs, 2019]).

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