

Political Review: Vietnam in 2017

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Presentation to Vietnam Update 2017

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Outline

1. Vietnam Communist Party Central Committee plenums
2. Prime Minister and Cabinet
3. National Assembly
4. Anti-Corruption Campaign
5. Crackdown on bloggers, human rights/pro-democracy activists
6. Politics of Life: Vietnam's One-Party State

1. Outcome of the Central Committee Plenums 2017



5th Plenum (May 5-10, 2017)

- Approved three resolutions:
 - Completing the socialist-oriented market economy institutions
 - Continuing to re-organize and improve the efficiency of state-owned enterprises
 - Developing the private economy into an important driving force of the socialist-orientated market economy
- Đinh La Thăng issued official warning and dismissed



Đinh La Thăng replaced by Nguyễn Thiện Nhân on May 7, 2017 as Secretary of the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee

6th Plenum (October 4-10, 2017)

- Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc: Report on the Socio-Economic Situation and State Budget in 2017 and Tasks for 2018
- Deputy Prime Minister Trương Hòa Bình : Report on the Plan on Enhancing Protection, Care for and Improvement of Public Health
- Phạm Bình Minh: Report on Population Work
- Deputy Prime Minister Vương Đình Huệ: Report on Project to Reform Management and Financial Mechanisms and Reorganize Public Administrative Units

6th Plenum (October 4-10, 2017)

- Nguyễn Xuân An dismissed as Đà Nẵng City party secretary
- Secretariat enlarged by appointment of two new members:
 - Phan Đình Trạc, Central Commission for Internal Affairs, vice chairman of Central Steering Committee for Anti-Corruption
 - Nguyễn Xuân Thắng, Director of Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, vice chairman of Central Theoretical Council
- Regulation on Personnel Rotation (98-QĐ/TW)
 - Personnel strategy and rotation of leading and managerial personnel
- Steering Committees for Northwest, Southwest and Central Highlands regions to be dissolved

Health Issues and Personnel Appointments



Đinh Thế Huynh, head of Secretariat, reported seriously ill



Trần Quốc Vượng
Thường trực Ban Bí thư
August 1, 2017

Health Issues and Personnel Appointments



President Trần Đại Quang appears in public on August 25 for the first time since 25 July when he met the secretary of Russia's security council, Nikolai Patrushev.

President Tran Dai Quang and his wife Nguyen Thi Hien
walk down the stairs at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi,
March 1, 2017. REUTERS/Hoang Dinh Nam/Pool Reuters

2. Prime Minister and Cabinet



Environmental Pollution April-May 2016 Continues to Cast Shadow in 2017



Formosa Plastics chemical spill,
April 2016
Public protests
Slow government response
Compensation an issue

Prime Minister's Economic Reform Agenda

- Socialist market economy
- Proactively pursue global integration with aim to become middle income country by 2020
- Reform of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)
- Reform banking sector reduce public debt
- Anti-corruption/vested interests (extra-legal)
 - PM Nguyễn Tấn Dũng's cronies, bankers, real estate salesmen

3. National Assembly 14th Legislature



National Assembly

3rd Session, May 22-June 21, 2017

- Passed twelve laws, six bills and twelve resolutions
- perfected the institutions of the socialist-oriented market economy mechanism
 - Law on Management and Use of State Assets (amended)
 - Criminal Code
 - Law on State Compensation Liability
 - Law on Legal Aid,
 - Planning Law postponed due to contentious content
 - Three days allocated to question and answer sessions out of one month

National Assembly

4th Session, 23 October-24 November

- Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2018
- Approved budget allocation for 2018
- Passed amendments and supplements to articles of the Law on Physical Training and Sports, the Law on Credit Institutions, and Law on Overseas Representative Missions of The Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- Submitted drafts on Law on Forest Protection and Development, Law on Planning, Law on Protection of Government Secrets and Law on Network Security

National Assembly 4th Session, 23 October-24 November



Approved new Minister of Transport, Nguyễn Văn Thể (L) and new Government Inspector General, Lê Minh Khái. Former transport minister, Trương Quang Nghĩa, was appointed to serve as the Party Secretary of Đà Nẵng City, while former Government Inspector General, Phan Văn Sáu, was appointed party secretary of Sóc Trăng province.

4. Anti-Corruption Campaign



Nguyen Phu
Trong



Nguyen Tan Dung

Party Secretary General –v– Dung’s Cronies and Patronage Networks

Petro Viet Nam, Sacombank, Ocean Bank and Vietnam Construction Bank



Mass trial of 51 company and bank officials

Hà Văn Thắm (OceanBank)



Former Chairman
of the Board of
Directors of the
Ocean
Commercial Joint
Stock Bank loss
of \$94 million

Nguyễn Xuân Sơn sentenced to death



Former
Chairman of
the Board
Petro Vietnam
Loss of \$69
million

Trịnh Xuân Thanh kidnapped in Germany



5. Arrest and Trials of Bloggers and Human Rights/pro-Democracy Activists

- Over 21 pro-democracy activists and bloggers arrested in 2016; at least 17 arrested in 2017
- Over 110 prisoners of conscience 2017 (HRW)
- 36 cases where activists were beaten by government associated thugs (Jan 2015-Apr 2017)

Mẹ Năm on trial January 2017



Convicted in July and sentenced to 10 years in prison for “conducting propaganda against the state”

Brotherhood for Democracy



Nhà đấu
tranh Trần Anh
Kim và đồng sự
Lê Thanh Tùng
- Hội Anh Em
Dân chủ
Sentenced
December 2016
upheld May 2017

Tran Anh Kim and Le Thanh Tung

Trần Thị Nga (Thúy Nga)



Anti-China activist, on East Sea, land
and labour rights, Formosa toxic spill

Brotherhood for Democracy

Nguyễn Văn Túc,
arrested 2008,
released 2012, re-
arrested in 2017 7th
member of
Brotherhood



6. Politics of Life: Vietnam's One-Party State

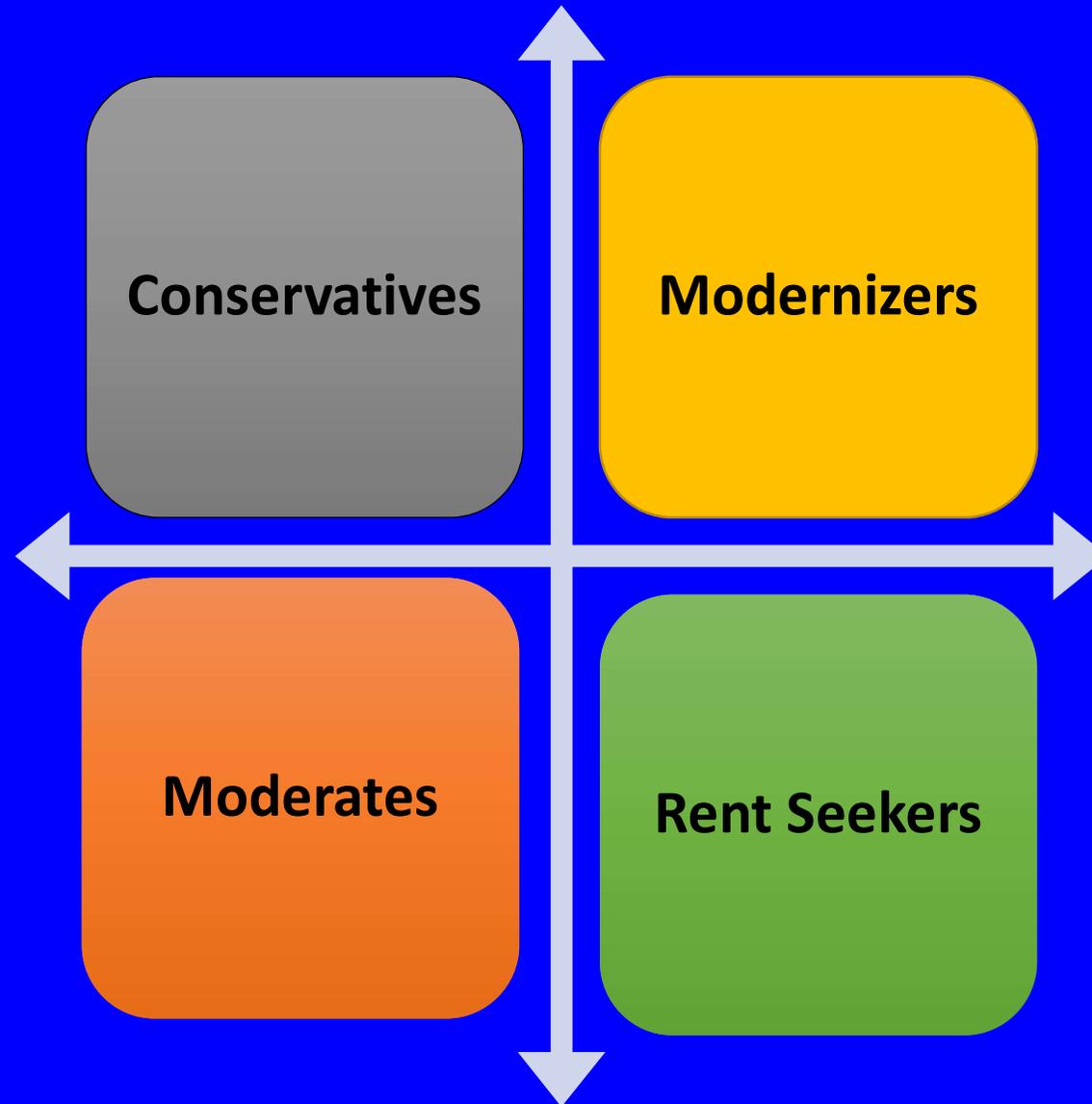
Explaining Vietnamese Politics

- Elite Power Struggle
- Contending Policy Currents (four headed)
- Weak State, Strong Society
 - Political Authority
 - Sustainable Governance Indicators
- Sectoral representation

Elite Power Struggle – Zachary Abuza

- Secretary General Nguyễn Phú Trọng
- elected for third term at 12th VCP Congress in January 2016
- Expected to step down at mid-term party conference
- Two contenders to replace him
 - Đinh Thế Huynh
 - Trần Đại Quang

Contending Policy Currents – Alex Vuving



Sectoral Re[representation on the Central Committee

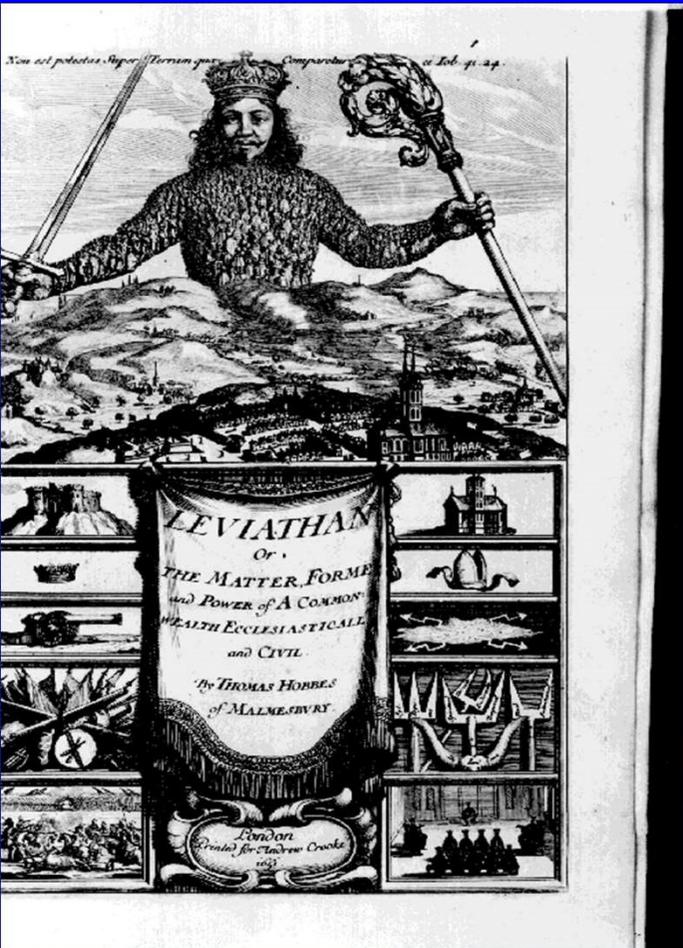
Sector	11 th Congress	12 th Congress
Politburo	9%	10.5%
Central Party-State	38%	35.5%
Secondary/Local	42%	42%
Military	11%	12%

Leadership Change: Central Committee 12th Party Congress, January 2016

- 180 (175) full voting members, 20 (25) alternate
- Retained full members 58%
- Full New/Alternate members 42%
- Continuity with the past rather than abrupt change
- General transition 40s, 50s and 60s
- Sectoral composition only minor changes

Paper Leviathan: Political Authority

Adam Fforde and Lada Homutova



- How is authority (*uy*) perceived by Vietnamese citizens?
- Relationship between authority and power
 - You can have power without authority but you cannot have authority without power
- State has authority but lacks elements of power

Weak State, Strong Society

Bertelsmann Foundation, Sustainable Governance Indicators

- Status Index:
 - Quality of Democracy
 - Policy Performance
- Management Index
 - Executive Capacity
 - Executive Accountability
- Six Step Process
 - Two subject matter experts provide scores on each variable. The scores range from 1 (low) to 10 (high). The scores are grouped into four bands: 1-2, 3-5, 6-7 and 9-10

Sustainable Governance Indicators Status Index

Quality of Democracy

- Electoral process
- Access to information
- Civil rights
- Rule of law

Policy Performance

- Economy and employment
- Social affairs
- Security
- Resources

Sustainable Governance Indicators Management Index

Executive Capacity

- **Steering capability** (strategic capacity, inter-ministerial coordination, evidence-based instruments, societal consultation and policy communication)
- **Effective Policy implementation**
- **Institutional learning** (adaptability and organizational reform capacity)

Executive Accountability

- **Citizens**
- **Legislature**
- **Intermediary organizations**

[Insufficient data]

Sustainable Governance Indicators

Aggregate Score of Two Indices

Country	Aggregate Score	Band	Classification
Singapore	7.3	2	Medium High
Indonesia	4.6	3	Medium Low
Malaysia	4.4	3	Medium Low
Vietnam	3.8	3	Medium Low

Carlyle A. Thayer, "Weak States and Strong Societies in Southeast Asia," in Amin Saikal, ed., *Weak States, Strong Societies* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2015). 149-172.

Weak but Developing State

Organisation	Survey	Ranking
World Economic Forum	Global Competitiveness Report 2017-18	55 out of 137
Heritage Foundation	Index of Economic Freedom 2017	63 out of 181
World Bank	Ease of Doing Business Report, 2017	82 out of 190
Transparency International	Corruption Perceptions Index 2017	113 out of 176
United Nations Development Programme	Human Development Index 2016	115 out of 188
Reporters Without Borders	Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2017	175 out of 180

Integration, Dynamic Reform and Comprehensive Development

- Vietnam's Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum) jumped 20 ranks over five years to 55th of 137 (2017-18)
- Vietnam's Doing Business Rank (World Bank) increased 14 ranks in one year (ASEAN 5 Group), 68th out of 190
- Global Innovation Index (World Property Organisation), jumped 12 ranks [time period not specified], 47th out of 127 (May 2017)
- Vietnam's middle class account for 10% to rise to 50% by 2035 (World Bank)
 - Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at Vietnam Business Summit (7 November 2017)

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