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BUILDING AND OPERATING THE TECTONIC GOVERNMENT OF INTEGRITY AND ACTION TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM IN THE NEW SITUATION

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Abstract. Building a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people has been a matter of much discussion by politicians and scientists in recent years. The model of tectonic State/Government has been applied in many countries around the world, including Vietnam. In the current period of accelerated industrialization, modernization and deeper international integration in Vietnam, especially when a thorough solution has not been found to put the Covid-19 epidemic under control, the issue of building a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people needs more research and attention. The paper draws the attention to the perception and practice, then proposes some solutions to continue building and operating the tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the new situation.

Keywords: Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; The tectonic state; the tectonic government of integrity and serving the people.

1. Perception of the tectonic government of integrity and serving the people in Vietnam

Most political, administrative and social science researchers in Vietnam believe that the term "Developmental/Tectonic State" was first proposed by Chalmers Johnson in 1982 [2] to describe the characteristics of Japan's economic growth model after World War II. During that time, the Japanese state was using various intervention methods to overcome the failures of the market and create a framework, orientation and promote development, thereby stimulating and ensuring a very high growth rate. After 1950, this term was conceptualized by many researchers around the world, typically Amsden (1989) [1], Wade (1990) [2] and Evans (1995) [7] who further developed the concept of "developmental state" and applied to the analysis of Taiwan and Korea cases. With reasonable economic development policies, these countries emerged as enormous economies with "miracle" development in Asia in the twentieth century. The term "tectonic developmental government" is also widely used in many reports of international organizations [20]. In general, all views emphasize that the tectonic developmental government is the state that puts the top priority on economic development and focuses on the organization and operation of the state to create the environment, legal framework and policies for businesses and people as well as to create favorable development conditions.

In Vietnam, academically, the concept of "tectonic state" is broader than "tectonic government" because the Government is only a component of the State apparatus. But in practice, the Government always holds the central position in the State's activities because the Government exercises executive power, and "executive power is the center of state power: the executive power is both input and output for legislative and judicial power" [19, p. 309]. Therefore, when referring to the activities of the State, people often focus on the activities of the Government as Government activities. This is evident in multi-

party states, in which, the political party that comes to power will form the Government of that party and that government will manage and implement the socio-economic development policies set out by the political party during its term. The tectonic developmental government is the sharpest expression of a tectonic developmental State. These two terms are often used identically.

The concept of "tectonic government" is not entirely new and is considered as a way describe new context in Vietnam, inheriting from Ho Chi Minh's thought. In 1946, the first National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam elected the Government led by Ho Chi Minh as President, which is the Government of "resistance and national construction". President Ho Chi Minh repeatedly mentioned "construction" or "national construction": "We want peace for our national re-construction" [12, p. 100], "Even if we have to sacrifice blood to build a completely independent and happy country, we will be ready without hesitation" [11, p. 56], "We are united to build our country" [11, p. 164], "If our nation has joined forces with one heart and closely united, the resistance war is bound to win, and nation building is bound to succeed" [11, p. 218], ... According to Ho Chi Minh's thought, "construction", "national construction" is for the purpose and desire to build a "decent, bigger, more beautiful" Vietnam, to become "shoulder to shoulder with the great powers of the five continents". This is also expressed in the Platform and guidelines of the Party and the State's Constitution over the periods with different degrees corresponding to the context and tasks of each historical period [22]. Thus, the phrase "tectonic developmental government" mentioned today also carries the meaning of "national construction". The tectonic developmental government built and operated in Vietnam today is based on a new public management model in order to meet the trend of state governance in the contemporary world.

The first person to put the concept of "tectonic government" into a state document

was Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung when defining the key tasks of the 13th Government, term 2011-2016. This concept was then continuously studied and discussed by managers, academia, enterprises and people, especially during the term of the next Prime Minister. In 2016, after being re-elected for the 14th government term, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc made a speech and emphasized on the "efforts to build a tectonic government of integrity and drastic action to serve the people" [17]. This is immediately reflected in the Government's Action Program for the 2016-2021 term [9]. Consequently, the tectonic government is not only used to refer to a management model but also to indicate the Government's goals and determination to act against the requirement of accelerated industrialization, modernization and comprehensive international integration in Vietnam today. On the basis of an overview of the work of researchers and leaders in Vietnam over the past time, the term "tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people" includes the following basic contents:

In terms of viewpoint, the tectonic government of integrity and serving the People is the Government that organizes and operates towards the goal of "rich people, strong country, democracy, justice and civilization". It fully demonstrates national governance responsibilities; takes the rule of law as the foundation; culture and ethics of public service as a measure; satisfaction of enterprises, people and above all, the sustainable development of the country as the evaluation criteperformance results. rion for Government should always be flexible, responsive, constantly renovate, create development and actively share such development.

In terms of nature, the tectonic Government of integrity and action to serve the People is the model and goal in the organization and operation of the Government, in which the Government must act towards the satisfaction of enterprises and people; contribute to building a clean and strong socialist rule of law state of Vietnam, and become a truly so-

cialist democratic state of the people, by the people, for the people.

In terms of characteristics, the tectonic Government of integrity and action to serve the People is a Government with a consistent and transparent vision; creating favorable mechanisms, policies and environment for enterprises and people to freely develop within the framework of the law. This Government must have an effective, neutral, transparent administrative apparatus, free from corruption, wastefulness, self-interest, group interests, it must put the interests of the nation and the people first and foremost and have a harmonious public-private relationship; effective and fair governance.

In terms of functions, the tectonic Government of integrity and action to serve the People is the Government that actively coordinates and connects investment plans; has a national development vision; proactively builds institutions to promote growth and development; plays a key role in harmoniously resolving conflicts of interest arising in the development process [23].

In terms of content, the tectonic Government of integrity and action to serve the people focuses on the following main tasks: Firstly, changing the assumption of the administration and management mode of the Government, moving from "Law-governed Government" to "Serving Government". Secondly, taking national interests as the guideline of action, serving the People as the priority goal, practical results as a measure of public service performance. Thirdly, renovating the Government's organization towards streamlining the efficiency and effectiveness. Fourthly, improving the quality of the contingent of cadres, civil servants and public employees to have both moralities and tal-"praticing industry, thrift, honesty, righteousness", "being public-spirited and selfless", meeting the requirements of building a tectonic government in the context of globalization and international integration. Fifthly, proactively designing a good institutional system and creating a favorable and

fair business environment, forecasting and preventing market risks to nurture the economy to develop in a sustainable way, promoting private economic development. *Sixthly*, promoting democracy, mobilizing the reasonable participation of the people in the management activities of the Government and the State.

In terms of conditions, in order to successfully build and effectively operate a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the People, following prerequisites are required: Firstly, it is necessary to build a political and economic institution, culture, society, ... in the direction of being tectonic. Secondly, there should be a strong renewal of the Party's theoretical thinking. Thirdly, it is necessary to have an administrative apparatus and human resources that are truly tectonic, have integrity, and wholeheartedly serve the People. Fourthly, it is necessary to establish and master a good power control mechanism [24], improve accountability and effectiveness in the fight against corruption and wastefulness.

2. Practice of building and operating the tectonic Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam of integrity and action to serve the People

Building and operating the tectonic Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam of integrity and action to serve the People is an objective necessity, stemming from the internal organization and operation of the Government when facing the requirements of the process of accelerated industrialization, modernization and deeper international integration in Vietnam. The practice of building and operating a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the People in Vietnam in recent years has gained following achievements:

Firstly, the thought and leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam on economic management has been changed.

The year 1986 marked a great change in the thinking on economic management of the Communist Party of Vietnam. At that time, the Party determined: "The guiding conception of the economic plans and policies is to liberate all existing production capacity, exploit all potentials of the country and effectively use international assistance to vigorously develop productive forces along with building and consolidating socialist relations of production" [5, p. 353]. The Platform for National Construction in the transitional period towards socialism (1991) also defined "to thoroughly abolish the centralized management mechanism of bureaucracy and subsidies, moving to a market mechanism with the state management by laws, plans, policies, and other tools... To renovate and improve the effectiveness of the State's guidance, control and regulation" [4, p. 12-13]. These views and orientations continue to be inherited, supplemented and developed in accordance with domestic and international contexts. The achievements after more than 30 years of renovation of Vietnam have proved the correct line of the Communist Party of Vietnam, whose premise is to change the thinking about economic management in response to new requirements.

Recently, the 13th National Party Congress confirmed the necessity "to synchronously improve all the institutions for development, with priority given to those for socialist-oriented market economy. necessary to renovate national governance towards modernity and effective competition..., to create a favorable, healthy and fair investment and business environment for all economic sectors, to promote renovation; to mobilize, manage and effectively use all resources for development..., and at the same time strengthening the inspection, supervision and control of power by the legal system" [6, p. 337-338]. All those are considered the strategic breakthroughs of the term.

Such views and lines of the Party are the basis for realizing the State's and the Government's institutions, creating tools for social management and administration.

Secondly, the new ways of thinking have been performed by actions in the direction,

management and administration of the Government.

On the basis of the Party's line and viewpoint on economic management, a legal framework for a multi-sector economy has been established. The government gradually changes from "rowing the boat" to "driving the boat" of managing the economy in particular and managing the society in general. The renewal of thinking in the Government's leadership and administration is clearly shown through the messages of the Prime Ministers, most notably the recent statements of Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc: "The government promotes the transfer of management method from administrative command into serving and tectonic government; the government must not become a burden on people and enterprises. At the same time, it is necessary to clearly define the state management functions and the market functions, limit and gradually abolish the "request – approval" mechanism, let the market regulates, the Government focuses on the work of building institutions and policies, creating an environment for investment and business development" are really big changes in thinking about the direction, management and administration of the Government.

The Government continuously acts, creates and shares the development. In the last term, the Prime Minister focused on directing all levels and sectors to proactively renovate, strongly reform and take drastic action. In the spirit of attaching closely to reality, in the 2016–2020 period, Government leaders have made 570 business trips "up to the forest, down to the sea" to work with localities, agencies, and grassroots units in order to give specific and timely instructions, solve many important and urgent issues [16].

Thirdly, the Government's organization has been renovated towards streamlining, compactness, effective and efficient operation.

Organizational reform of the Government is always a matter of concern. The Government's implementation of organizational renewal is based on the provisions of the Constitutions. Comparing the 2013 Constitution

with the previous ones, it can be seen that the regulations on the Government has become more specific and clearer. The Law on Government Organization in 2015 is promulgated to replace the Law on Government Organization in 2001 which demonstrated the renovative requirements in organization and operation, in the performance of functions, tasks and powers of the Government and Prime Minister.

All levels and sectors have made efforts to take drastic action to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of law enforcement with many creative and flexible forms, speeding up administrative procedure reform, building an e-Government,... which have achieved many remarkable results. Until now, it has reduced and simplified more than 1,000 administrative procedures, 3,893 out of 6,191 business conditions, 6,776 out of 9,926 goods subject to specialized inspection, 30 out of 120 administrative procedures related to specialized inspection. Total social costs saved are about more than 18 million mandays/year, equivalent to more than 6,300 billion VND/year [13].

One of the highlights showing the Government's spirit of action is the establishment of a Working Group by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc to monitor, urge and inspect the implementation of tasks, conclusions and directions that the Government and the Prime Minister have assigned to ministries, agencies and localities. The working group has worked fiercely, not afraid to collide and has brought out positive and strong spillover effects on strengthening administrative discipline, creating the movement of the entire state administrative system. The number of overdue tasks has decreased by 22.63 % compared to before the Working Group was established [13].

During the 14th Government term, under the drastic direction of the Government and Prime Minister, the GDP in 2020 increased by 2.91 % and Vietnam became the only country with positive growth among the 6 major economies in the South East Asia. The average growth in the period 2016–2019 reached 6.8 %; average of 2016–2020 reached 5.99 %, higher than 5.91 % in the period 2011–2015, among the highest growth countries in the region and the world. In 2020, Vietnam has risen to become the 4th largest economy in ASEAN and 37th in the world [13]. In particular, during the outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic since the end of 2019, Vietnam is a country that has successfully controlled the spread of the epidemic, emerging as a safe destination, attracting a lot of attention from foreign investors.

Fourthly, the quality of the contingent of cadres, civil servants and public employees has been improved to meet the new situation.

For the purpose of a tectonic government, the most important thing is cadre work. Being well aware of that, in its activities, the Government always constantly improves the quality of cadres, civil servants and public employees to meet the tasks of industrialization, modernization and international integration through training and education. The Government's tectonic goal is to build a team of cadres, civil servants and public employees with both moralities and talents, having a spirit of service to the people and enterprises, and skills in applying the advances of the industrial revolution 4.0 in public service activities and actively adapting to the changes of development.

Fifthly, the work of building and promulgating institutions has been put on as a top priority task.

With the determination to remove the overlapping, contradictory, unclear legal regulations that cause difficulties and impede production and business activities and to meet the requirements of integration, in recent years, the Government has focused on reviewing and identifying institutional "bottlenecks" in socio-economic fields in order to promptly amend, supplement and perfect. The Government has proposed the National Assembly to amend and supplement many laws, focusing on laws related to investment, business and construction activities.

In the period 2016–2021, each year the Government gives comments on from 17 to 24 draft bills and ordinances; issues nearly 700 decrees and more than 200 decisions and regulations of the Prime Minister. The quality of legal documents has been increasingly improved, really put into practice, contributing to solving difficulties for people and enterprises [13]. As of March 13, 2021, there are only 14 documents detailing the implementation of laws, ordinances and resolutions have not been issued (the lowest ever) [3].

Sixthly, the business environment is increasingly improved, in which business support for start-ups and innovation is of particular interest.

The Government has gradually shifted to operating the macro-economy, the goals and set targets of economic development in long term; economic growth has been more substantive. Multilateral and bilateral trade agreements have been signed continuously in recent times. Until now, Vietnam has joined 16 free trade agreements, of which 13 FTAs have taken effect, 03 FTAs are under negotiation. This is really a favorable condition for enterprises and people to do business and develop.

The Government increasingly focuses on the implementation of restructuring public investment, state-owned enterprises and credit institutions. State-owned corporations and enterprises have made positive changes in transparency, governance capacity, and operational efficiency. Enterprises and projects with huge and long-term losses have been promoted to restructure, in which many projects are back in operation, reducing losses, stabilizing and moving towards profit; there are three projects to be removed from the list of 12 weak projects need to be handled. The restructuring of state-owned enterprises has created opportunities for all economic sectors to participate, especially the private sector. In addition, there are currently about 14,000 cooperatives operating under the Law on Cooperatives and restructuring the operations in line with the market and efficiency [16].

Implementing Resolution No. 10-NQ/TW dated June 3, 2017 of the Central Govern-

ment on private economic development, the Government has encouraged entrepreneurship, renovation, development of small and medium-sized enterprises, forming and developing large-scale private economic groups that thrive in many fields [16]. These are demonstrated through the National Program to Support Innovative Startup Ecosystem, the Digital Vietnamese Knowledge System Project,... Many drastic actions to improve the business environment have been promoted, such as: enhancing direct dialogue, receiving recommendations and reflections from enterprises, ensuring publicity and transparency, reducing costs for the people and enterprises, protecting the legitimate rights and interests of enterprises and the people,...

Dealing with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has issued timely policies to support enterprises and people. The State Bank of Vietnam has adopted a policy of giving exemption from or reduction of loan interests and charges according to the internal regulations of credit institutions in order to support customers affected by the Covid-19 epidemic [18]. The Government has introduced a policy for enterprises to borrow money to pay wages for the suspended employees [10], the General Department of Taxation has also introduced a policy on deferring tax payment and exemption of late payment interest due to impact of the Covid-19 epidemic [8], ... These are considered the clearest and most concrete examples of a tectonic government - an action government that always ready to serve enterprises and people.

Seventhly, the issue of power control, accountability, the prevention and fight against corruption and wastefulness is increasingly being paid attention to.

Government accountability is gradually being raised. The issue of power control is of great interest to social commentary. In the past years, especially in the last term, the Government has taken actions in controlling power and in preventing and combating corruption and wastefulness, gradually regaining the trust and expectations of the people in the

government apparatus from central to local. Many high-ranking officials in the State and in the Government have been prosecuted and put on trial for corrupt acts. These actions show the determination and desire for a truly honest and transparent Government and State, saying no to corruption and wastefulness, towards the goal of a powerful Vietnam in the middle of the 21st century.

Eighthly, the Government gets closer to the people through promoting democracy in society.

The principles of openness, transparency and people participation are enshrined in many important laws. In the Government's documents, promoting the participation and listening to the people's opinions, thoughts and aspirations is considered the task and solution of all levels, branches and agencies in order to build the tectonic Government of integrity and wholeheartedly serving the people. The Government has initially responded to the people's aspirations through contact and dialogue to come up with solutions to handle hotspots, for example, overcoming the pollution problem of the central sea; solving the situation of food safety and hygiene in localities, typically Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi; ... The Prime Minister issued Directive No. 26/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2016 on Strengthening discipline and regulations in State administrative agencies at all levels. This is the basis for good implementation and promotion of democracy in society.

Besides the above achievements, there are some **limitations** as follows:

Firstly, the State administrative apparatus is not really streamlined and effective. The arrangement and merger of ministries into a multi-sectoral management ministry has not really been associated with the deep adjustment of functions, reduction and integration of tasks, leading to the workload and scope of management fields of the ministry become complicated. The merger is not accompanied by restructuring the internal structure of the ministries, making the organization of the

apparatus inside the ministries and ministerial-level agencies remain bulky with many intermediate agencies and increasing number of focal points of administrative units. The problem of organization and operation of local governments at all levels still has not been found an optimal solution. The power decentralization to the locality is not really true to the nature.

Secondly, the renovation of working methods, strengthening of discipline, the quality of cadres, civil servants and public employees is not really uniform, there is still a situation of blame avoidance. The settlement of complaints and denunciations in a number of ministries, branches and localities has not been paid due attention, not associated with contact and dialogue with citizens [16]. Some cadres and civil servants also show signs of bureaucracy, bossiness, and abuse of power when performing official duties. The situation of "petty corruption" still occurs.

Thirdly, the work of building and promulgating institutions although has achieved certain results, but is still lacking and incomplete. The legal system is not synchronized, there are still contradictions and overlaps, lack of uniformity and is difficult to apply. Status of application for adjustment of the law/ordinance formulation program supplement, delay and withdraw the bill has not been completely resolved. The quality of some project documents and draft legal documents is not satisfactory. Law enforcement is still slow in some places. Some problems have not been timely supplemented or corrected [16] ...

Fourthly, the transfer of some tasks to the society and the business community is still slowly implemented. Some publicprivate partnerships have not really been effective due to barriers on policy and legal as well as resources, mainly financial resources.

3. Some solutions to continue building and operating the tectonic Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam of integ-

rity and action to serve the People in the new situation

Since the end of 2019, the world economy is facing numerous difficulties due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Vietnam has effective methods to control the pandemic and stabilize the economy, it cannot be subjective when the world has not found a thorough solution to control the epidemic. Faced with that situation, along with the trend of rapid globalization and deeper international integration in the 21st century, in order to contribute to realizing the goal of becoming a "a developing country with a modern industry, surpassing the lowermiddle income level" by 2025, towards becoming a "developing, upper-middle-income country with modern industry" by 2030 and officially becoming a "high-income developed country" by 2045 [6, p. 337-338], Vietnam needs to step up the construction and operation of a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people to create development. In the future, it is necessary to implementing the following focus on solutions:

Firstly, actively renovating the organization and operation of the Government in the direction of streamlining, effectiveness, efficiency, publicity and transparency. In order to create a compact government apparatus, there should be only about 18 ministries and ministerial-level agencies. The United States has 325 million people but only 1 Prime Minister, 1 Deputy Prime Minister, 15 Ministers and 14 Deputy Ministers. Japan has 127 million people and has only one Prime Minister, no Deputy Prime Minister, 16 Ministers and 16 Deputy Ministers. Meanwhile, Vietnam's population is 93 million people, but there are up to 5 Deputy Prime Ministers, 22 Ministers and 130 Deputy Ministers. In its activities, the Government needs to find all ways to create development, focusing on improving the national competitiveness, creating a favorable environment for businesses and people to develop, and overcoming difficulties and hardship caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is necessary to professionalize

and technicalize the activities of administrative agencies from central to local levels.

Secondly, the Government needs to decentralize powers to ministries, branches and localities more according to the criteria of "real strength". This is a must-do trend for the Government apparatus to focus on institutional building and macro management. Government has to do the necessary at the national level, not on specific cases. At the same time, it is necessary to surmount the situation of avoidance of local authorities, the main bottleneck is due to the inactivity of the locality [15, p. 206].

Thirdly, continuing to promote the construction and reform of institutions, creating an open business environment, attracting the increasingly large and effective participation of people and businesses in the economic development of the country to meet the development requirements. Improving the quality of public policies, quickly perfecting the legal system in a socialist-oriented market economy to create a basis for people, businesses and society to develop in the right direction.

Fourthly, improving the public service integrity regime in association with administrative reform and modernization and building a contingent of cadres, civil servants and public employees at all levels who are truly servants of the People. It is necessary to change the philosophy of training and fostering cadres from focusing on knowledge to comprehensive capacity development so as to meet the requirements of the Government. It is necessary to renew the selection of talented people into state agencies through serious and objective recruitment examinations. Cadres, civil servants and public employees need to say no to corruption and wastefulness, being honest, not being bossy, authoritarian, causing difficulties for people and enterprises.

Fifthly, improving the efficiency of the Government's inspection, supervision and control on the state administrative system to ensure the tectonic Government and the whole tectonic state administration. It is nec-

essary to strengthen the publicity, transparency and accountability of state administrative agencies, especially ministries, branches, local governments at all levels [25] and the leadership and management levels. Measures should be taken to promptly handle acts and manifestations of degradation of public service ethics.

Sixthly, actively mobilizing all classes to participate in proposing solutions and initiatives to build, develop, and spread the values of the tectonic Government of integrity and serving to the people. In order to do that, it is necessary to raise awareness of the necessity to build and operate a tectonic government through mass media such as books, newspapers and television.

Seventhly, continuing to implement research in a scientific and methodical way, clarify theoretical and practical issues, experience in order to issue guidelines and solutions to build and operate an effective tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be affirmed that the tectonic developmental State/Government model shows its preeminent advantages such as promoting economic development and ensuring social security, enhancing publicity, transparency, and accountability of state agencies and promoting the people's right to mastery. Practices over the past time have proven that building and operating the Government in the direction of being tectonic, improving the quality of service for businesses and people is both a requirement and a solution to contribute to successfully implementing the goal of "rich people, strong country, democracy, justice and civilization" in Vietnam. In the coming time, the Government needs to implement synchronous solutions to continue to successfully build and effectively operate the model of a tectonic government of integrity and action to serve the people.

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