

## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Vietnam

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>-7</td> <td>-7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td colspan="3">56</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td colspan="3">No</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	-7	-7	0	<b>Democ:</b>	0	0	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	7	7	0	<b>Durable:</b>	56			<b>Tentative:</b>	No			
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SCODE	VIE	CCODE	818	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	1	4	3	4	1																				
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
			2 July 1976 (Uni.)																						
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	1992																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong (CPV); selected by 11 <sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, 19 January 2011																								
<b>Legislature</b>	Unicameral: National Assembly (500 seats; selected by Communist Party of Vietnam; in the most recent elections, 22 May 2011, 43 seats were assigned to non-party candidates)																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Supreme People's Court																								

### Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Executive Recruitment: Designation (3)**

Executive recruitment remains a designative act within the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). While some political reforms have been made in Vietnam since the Sixth National Congress of the CPV in 1986, nevertheless, Vietnam remains for all practical purposes a one-party communist dictatorship. Despite serious struggles between hardline communist ideologues and reformist technocrats in the CPV, since the Asian economic crisis of 1997 the CPV has placed renewed emphasis on maintaining social and political control at the expense of economic reform. However, in April 2001 the CPV designated a “modernizer”, Nong Duc Manh, to the position of General Secretary. While Nong Duc Manh poses no threat to the hegemonic position of the CPV in Vietnam, his designation may signal a renewed emphasis on economic and social reform.

In June 2006 Vietnam’s National Assembly approved an important leadership change, overwhelmingly voting in favor of a new Prime Minister, Nguyen Tan Dung, and President, Nguyen Minh

<sup>1</sup> The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

Triet. The ascent to power by these two men was assured at the Communist Party Congress, held in April 2006, when they came third and fourth in elections to the ruling Politburo. They were beaten only by the country's most powerful men, the Secretary General of the Communist Party, Nong Duc Manh, and the government's Public Security Minister, Le Hong Anh. Both men are viewed as economic reformers, committed to deregulating the economy, ending corruption within the ruling party and increasing foreign investment into the country. During the 11<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, conservatives managed to have Nguyen Phu Trong was elevated to General Secretary on 19 January 2011; authorities have cracked down on dissidents since since Trong has taken over leadership of the CPV. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung was reelected for another five-year term in the Politburo; Troung Tan Sang replaced Nguyen Minh Triet as president.

**Executive Constraints: Slight to Moderate Limitations (3)**

The 1992 constitution decentralized political decision making, at least on paper. While reaffirming the guiding role of the CPV in the economic, political and social arenas, nevertheless, it asserted that the Party should operate within the framework of the constitution and granted the National Assembly increased powers and authority. However, even with these changes decision making remains highly centralized. Policy making largely remains the prerogative of the CPV's Politburo and its Standing Board. The President and Prime Minister follow the directives of the CPV. While the National Assembly has increasingly played an active role in revising legislation, its powers remain weak. The judiciary has no autonomy from the CPV.

**Political Participation: Repressed Competition (1)**

The CPV continues to maintain its hegemonic control over the political arena. No political parties are permitted to operate within Vietnam (although "independents" are permitted to participate in National Assembly elections after being vetted by the CPV). Freedom of press and assembly are highly circumscribed. While "moderate reformers" can be found within the CPV, nevertheless, as the economy has slowed down in the past few years "conservative hardliners" within the CPV have actively sought to purge these liberalizing voices from positions of power. The recent ascent (April 2001) of Nong Duc Manh to the post of General Secretary of the CPV, however, may signal the resurgence of reformist forces within the Party. In December 2001, the National Assembly passed 24 amendments to the 1992 constitution, the most important of which gave official recognition to the private sector of the economy. The amended Article 21 stated that "all economic sectors are important components of the socialist-oriented market economy" and went on to confirm the freedoms of traders and capitalist enterprises.

The Vietnamese government was accused by international human rights groups of repressing the Montagnard minority group inhabiting the central highlands since a series of demonstrations broke out there in February 2001 calling for land rights, religious freedom, and independence. Alleged repression continued throughout 2003 and 2004, with arrests and detentions of human rights activists and religious dissidents. The government announced on 20 March 2003 that it had detained prominent doctor and campaigner for human rights and democracy Nguyen Dan Que. Several Montagnard activists were tried on charges of "fomenting disorder" and "undermining the national unity policy" for taking part in public demonstrations.