

UTILIZING TALENTED PEOPLE IN NATIONAL GOVERNANCE: SOME THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES IN VIETNAM TODAY^(*)

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***Abstract:** To effectively govern national development, it is impossible not to utilize talented individuals. The Communist Party of Vietnam pays special attention to utilizing talented people in national governance. The success of the Vietnamese revolution and the country's development during 40 years of renovation have proven the importance of utilizing talented individuals in all areas of social life. Currently, in the new era, the issue of utilizing talented people, especially strategic-level cadres in national governance, has significant importance.*

***Keywords:** talented people, utilization of talented people, strategic-level cadres, national governance, democracy.*

1. Introduction

The achievements in the nation building, especially during nearly 40 years since the Renovation period (*Doi Moi*), have affirmed the leadership capacity of the Communist Party of Vietnam as well as the correctness of socialism and the path toward socialism. Building socialism is the cause of our entire Party and people, in which talented individuals in all areas of social life play an extremely important role. These are talented people in the fields of production and labor, commercial business, science

and technology, education and training, culture and arts, national defense and security, etc. Additionally, for leadership and direction within the political system, especially in state management/national governance, talented people in leadership and management roles play an even more important role than ever before. “The leadership capacity, fighting strength,

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and the integrity and stability of the Party are the decisive factors in the success of the renovation cause”¹.

The 13th National Congress Documents of the Communist Party of Vietnam first introduced the concept of national governance: “Renovating national governance towards modernity and effectiveness”² and stated the requirement to “Reform the system of recruitment, utilization, and promotion of talented people in state management, state governance, science, technology and innovation”³.

Generally, talented people are those who are excellent, knowledgeable, capable, and have rich experience in a particular field. They always make great contributions to the country and society, while also possessing good moral qualities - meaning they have both virtue and talent. However, evaluating and defining what constitutes a person of virtue and talent is not simple, because for talented individuals, assessing their moral qualities, knowledge, capabilities, and personal achievements requires criteria specific to each field. Some of these criteria are externally visible and can be directly evaluated, while others are internal, hidden within, and not easily discerned. This explains why until now we have been accustomed

to using qualifications, positions, and background to evaluate who is talented, because these criteria are relatively easy to grasp and assess. However, these criteria are relatively rigid and formal, not conducive to forming a truly talented team of officials, and particularly pose significant obstacles to cultivating and promoting creative abilities and the positive, proactive spirit of talented individuals.

It can be said that in our country, the mechanism for evaluating talent, the system of criteria, and methods for selecting criteria to evaluate talented people are still not truly clear and easily applicable. Looking broadly, there are two major unresolved difficulties, which is why the evaluation of talented people is still not truly objective and scientific: *First*, it is difficult to break down the criteria of having both virtue and talent into measurable and calculable secondary criteria such as moral qualities, knowledge, capabilities, personal achievements, etc. *Second*, the evaluation methods and mechanisms themselves still have several points needing improvement. Evaluating talented people in specific fields is already difficult; evaluating talented people in national governance is much more challenging. Whether resources

are reasonably and effectively exploited, whether business operations achieve high efficiency, whether people's lives and economic, political, and social conditions develop or not... all require managers with correct policies and wise leadership.

2. Debate on Which Mechanism to Select Talented People in National Governance: Democratic System or Meritocracy?

The debate about which mechanism best selects the most talented and suitable people to manage the country has occurred throughout the modern period in many countries worldwide, especially since the beginning of the Cold War until today. In the West, the trend of protecting and using democratic electoral mechanisms is the main trend, and many scholars supporting this trend consistently reject meritocracy, whether Western or Eastern.

However, the democratic electoral system has been facing many irresolvable internal contradictions for a long time, typically: *First*, while political slogans promote equality, in reality, there is no equality. In capitalist society, fundamentally, democracy is merely a form of democratic expression within the ruling class, with power distribution methods remaining in the hands of

capitalists. *Second*, the democratic electoral mechanism of one person, one vote only achieves superficial equality, leading to low voter turnout due to distrust in the elected political system. The U.S. presidential election turnout in the past half-century has mostly been just over fifty percent. Additionally, after voting, citizens have very little influence on state policies. *Third*, the democratic electoral mechanism is dominated by money. From another perspective, by controlling money, the bourgeoisie can use it to control public opinion or create public opinion, and then use public opinion to control so-called "democracy". *Fourth*, political parties have relatively weak control over the government. Because governments usually comprise several political parties representing different interests, no political party can fully implement its will in government operations. Government policies are often the result of compromise and harmonization between parties. This makes national governance display two characteristics: on one side, alongside the advantage that policies reflect the comprehensiveness of various opinions and can represent more people's wishes, but on the other side, no policy can be decided by a single party, but must be negotiated by

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all ruling parties, therefore, decision-making time is relatively long and efficiency is relatively low.

In the work “The Future of Capitalism: Facing the New Anxieties”, Paul Collier writes: “Anxiety, anger and despair have eroded people’s political loyalty, their trust in government, even their trust in each other”⁴. He argues that with its ruthless focus on profit and increasingly unequal distribution of income and opportunities, Anglo-American capitalism has lost much of its economic, political, and moral legitimacy. With the increasingly deadlocked problems that Western society faces, French President Emmanuel Macron himself had to exclaim that capitalism “can no longer work”⁵. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Macron elaborated on how capitalism has led to severe inequality and called on companies to play an active role in fighting social inequality and take responsibility for minimizing the impacts of climate change. Commentators noted that this statement was even more significant as it was spoken from within the belly of the beast, where the world’s political, business, and financial elite gather. This inevitably raises the question within capitalist society: has capitalism

become obsolete?⁶ It’s worth noting that Emmanuel Macron is typically considered a pro-business liberal abroad, yet here he took a left-wing stance in criticizing capitalism and market economies of recent decades. Emmanuel Macron himself identified four phenomena in capitalist society: social inequality, irrationality between value creation and profit, unsustainable social networks, and climate change. These four phenomena have triggered crises in social inequality, democracy, institutional sustainability, and climate. The modern capitalist model associated with an open market economy can no longer function in this environment⁷. Daniel Bell highlighted four flaws in Western democracy: *First*, the tyranny of the majority, when it exploits democracy to oppress minorities and implement poor policies; *Second*, the tyranny of the minority, when interest groups use economic power to intervene in politics for the benefit of their small group; *Third*, the tyranny of the voting community, when current voters decide the future of others; *Fourth*, the tyranny of competitive individualists, as elections sometimes exacerbate conflicts and hinder the resolution of social contradictions through neutral measures⁸.

Western electoral systems remain imperfect, often favoring presentation over capability, where victory is achieved but competence can only be evaluated after the term; Western political parties' interests sometimes supersede national interests, and the "democracy trap" hinders national governance, leading to imposed public opinion, inadequate social welfare, and ineffective social management. Western democracy (also called "one person, one vote" electoral democracy) is facing serious problems: persistent inequality, political corruption, collapse of social bonds, lack of trust in government and elite institutions, and incompetent government. In short, liberalism has not delivered democratic results⁹. This is not just an isolated phenomenon, but - as some scholars voiced several years ago - a global decline of Western-style democracy¹⁰. And this decline, ironically, has had some influential voices in the United States implicitly pointing fingers at America itself¹¹. How do we select outstanding leaders? This has been a topic of debate across civilizations for thousands of years. Plato presented an argument based on universal experience that is difficult to refute: if we want to make shoes, we must choose a skilled shoemaker; if we need medical treatment, we must consult

a qualified doctor; so why do we select national leaders based on who gets the most votes rather than choosing those with the highest moral character and wisdom?¹².

Electoral democracy cannot substitute for democracy itself. Democracy can be narrowly understood as a political system where governments are selected through universal suffrage elections. However, democracy has a broader meaning; it is not just a model but also a driving force, and furthermore, a value. John Dewey argued that democracy is not just a political system for elections and government regulation; it is a moral and social ideal. Democracy represents a complete and perfect community. Dewey believed that the root of democracy is morality, as it aligns with individual human dignity¹³.

The West has some concepts relatively close to the utilizing talented people, such as "Meritocracy", first used in the satirical work of renowned sociologist Michael Young: "The Rise of the Meritocracy"¹⁴, first published in 1958 with the concept that power and wealth are distributed according to merit rather than origin; or the concept of "Elitism", etc. However, according to some scholars, both meritocracy and elitism are not truly about utilizing

talent in the proper sense, and they even go against democracy¹⁵. Therefore, one should not set meritocracy and democracy in opposition to each other; these two do not exclude each other. The system of utilizing talent is primarily about education, which aligns with democracy's meaning of education and public knowledge. Similarly, the Western notion that *capitalism makes people competitive, and socialism makes people lazy* is inaccurate, at least in the case of socialism in Vietnam, especially since the Renovation period (*Doi moi*). Among the five basic virtues of a communist person that Ho Chi Minh outlined, "industriousness" (being hardworking, and diligent) is the first virtue. Being diligent not only creates wealth and makes the country stronger, but from a philosophical perspective, labor itself creates human beings.

Philosophy and mathematics Professor Laurent Ross observed the unity between Marxism and meritocracy. He wrote: "Marxists have no problems with a meritocracy. Marxists want the best people doing the toughest jobs. Marxists want an efficient economy where people get paid what they are worth. Marxists want to give people an incentive to work harder. We want all these things regardless of the type of

economic system we are living under—be it slavery, feudalism, capitalism, or socialism. In fact, I would argue that the point of Marxism is to have people paid what they are worth. The aim of the socialist revolution is to end the exploitation of humans by other humans so that everyone is paid what they are worth"¹⁶. National leadership and governance require a holistic perspective and strategic vision, and should not be limited by "term-based thinking". Moreover, a meritocratic system itself will help limit pure "populist appeal" and prevent populism.

3. The Communist Party of Vietnam and the Utilization of Talented People in National Governance

The classical theorists always emphasized the importance of utilizing talented people. F. Engels affirmed that "to manage the administrative apparatus and the entire social production system, empty words are not needed, but rather solid knowledge is required"¹⁷. V.I. Lenin highly valued the role of talented people in science and technology, considering this as key to advancing toward socialism: "Without the guidance of experts who are well-versed in the fields of science, technology, and have experience, it is impossible to transition to socialism"¹⁸.

In Vietnam, from very early in history, our ancestors clearly recognized the importance and necessity of having talented people, people with the ability to govern the country and care for the people. Nothing describes the perilous situation of the country more accurately than the image of talent being as scarce as autumn leaves, and outstanding individuals as rare as morning stars (“人才秋葉，俊傑晨星” Nhân tài thu diệp, Tuấn kiệt thần tinh)¹⁹.

When discussing talent in the monarchical period, they used the term “hiền tài” (“hiền” referring to capable and virtuous people, “tài” referring to talented people), and one cannot fail to mention Than Nhan Trung (1419 - 1499). He had a famous saying, which serves as a declaration about the law of a nation’s rise and fall, about the principle of governing a country: “Talented and virtuous people are the vital force of a nation”, but few people mention the even more important second part, where the first part seems to be the premise for the second. Than Nhan Trung wrote: *Talented and virtuous people are the vital force of a nation; when this vital force prospers, the nation grows strong and rises high; when this vital force declines, the nation becomes weak and falls low. Therefore, all sage emperors and enlightened kings invariably took the*

*nurturing of talent, selection of scholars, and cultivation of vital force as their primary task*²⁰. Whether a country has talented people or not fundamentally depends on its leaders, as Than Nhan Trung once said: The prosperity of talent relates to the changes of heaven and earth, but its roots lie in the education provided by sages²¹. Talent is important, but more important is whether national leaders care about, nurture, and cultivate talent - this is the primary mission of national leaders.

During his time, President Ho Chi Minh always prioritized attracting, utilizing, and promoting people with both virtue and talent. In May 1958, in his “Speech at the Second Vietnam Student Congress”, President Ho Chi Minh reminded: “Today’s youth are a glorious generation, therefore they must be self-aware and voluntarily transform their thinking to be worthy of their duties. This means that young people must have both virtue and talent. Having talent without virtue is like a financial expert who embezzles funds - not only does this not benefit society but actually harms it. Having virtue without talent is like a Buddha - causing no harm but bringing no benefit to mankind”²². After gaining power, Ho Chi Minh realized that after achieving independence, one of the urgent tasks was to improve people’s

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knowledge. He emphasized: “The country needs to be built. Construction requires talented people”²³. Therefore, in his *Testament*, President Ho Chi Minh reminded cadres and Party members that they must strive to be worthy of being both leaders and servants of the people. Officials must be loyal, dedicated, thrifty, honest, impartial, putting public interest before personal interest, and taking responsibility before seeking pleasure... As a leader, one must possess superior wisdom, be astute, clear-sighted, far-seeing, approachable, and value talented and virtuous people. Thus, those who represent the people must be both “virtuous” (“hiên” - having talent and moral character) and “enlightened” (“minh” - being clear-sighted and justice), meaning they must have both virtue and talent.

The Communist Party of Vietnam has always emphasized improving the quality of cadres, promoting both moral qualities and capabilities of revolutionary officials. Resolution No. 03-NQ/HNTW dated June 18, 1997, of the Third Conference of the 8th Party Central Committee emphasized: “Expanding the scope of training and development for cadres in the political system and social organizations across all economic sectors. Particularly focusing

on identifying, training, and nurturing talented individuals, creating a pool of leadership and management cadres at all levels from central to local; leading scientific personnel; and business managers for large enterprises”²⁴. The political report of the 8th Party Central Committee at the 9th National Party Congress stated: “Building a clean and capable contingent of cadres and civil servants” and “Building a contingent of cadres, especially leadership and management cadres at all levels who are politically steadfast, exemplary in morality, clean in lifestyle, possessing intelligence, knowledge and practical operational capabilities, and connected with the people. Establishing mechanisms and policies to identify, select, train, and develop cadres; utilizing people with both virtue and talent”. The 10th Congress Documents prioritized talent in leadership and management fields, affirming: “Developing and implementing policies to develop and utilize talent, attracting talented individuals to important fields, regardless of Party membership or non-membership. Strengthening state and societal investment in identifying, training, developing, and utilizing talent, primarily in three areas: leadership-management, production-

business, and science-technology”²⁵. Continuing to affirm this direction, the 11th Congress Documents clearly stated the requirement to “have special policies for the country’s talented individuals”²⁶.

Over the past decade, the Communist Party of Vietnam has placed great emphasis on building a strategic-level cadre force. Resolution No. 12-NQ/TW, dated January 16, 2012, of the 4th Central Conference, XI tenure, identified limitations and weaknesses that have persisted through multiple terms, which if not corrected would challenge the Party’s leadership role and the regime’s survival, including: “The cadre force at central and strategic levels is very important, but has not been built in a fundamental way. Cadre planning has mainly focused on implementation at local levels, not yet at the central level, leading to gaps, patchwork solutions, lack of synchronization and proactiveness in cadre arrangement and assignment”²⁷. This requirement began to be implemented during the XI Congress term, and particularly by the XII Congress, Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW, dated May 19, 2018, of the 7th Central Conference, XII tenure, outlined strategic directing viewpoints, including: “Cadres are the decisive factor in the success or failure of the

revolution; cadre work is the ‘key link’ in Party building and political system construction. Building the cadre force, especially strategic-level cadres, is the top priority task, a crucial work of the Party, which must be carried out regularly, cautiously, scientifically, rigorously, and effectively”²⁸. In 2020, the Politburo issued Regulation No. 214-QD/TW, dated January 2, 2020, on the framework of position standards and evaluation criteria for cadres under the management of the Central Committee, Politburo, and Secretariat, with 5 general standards and specific standards for each position. This regulation further emphasized measuring cadre evaluation based on work quality and effectiveness.

To meet new requirements with the aspiration for national development, the XIII Congress Documents continue to emphasize and demand higher standards for strategic-level cadres. Strategic-level cadres are the core of the political system, the decisive key factor for success, possessing the ability to concentrate, comprehend, direct, and lead the nation in the right direction toward victory. The strategic-level cadre force must be talented individuals, must be the elite of the nation; in other words, the most talented people in society must be brought into the strategic-level cadre force - only

then can the aspiration for national development become a reality sooner. In preparation for the XIV Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the late General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong emphasized the importance and clearly defined the content of strategic-level cadres: “Strategic-level cadres must have political fortitude, steadfast adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought, unwavering commitment to the goals and ideals of national independence and socialism, possess innovative thinking, and have the ability to formulate policies and guidelines and lead and direct their implementation”²⁹.

4. Some Raised Issues

The first question raised is whether talented people in management positions might abuse their power? Beyond identifying and selecting people with both virtue and talent, there’s also the question of power control. No one can guarantee that people with virtue and talent, when given positions, especially higher positions with greater power, won’t become corrupted, or in familiar terms, won’t undergo “self-evolution” or “self-transformation”. In feudal times, weren’t many treacherous officials once meritorious officials?³⁰ Throughout the Revolutionary period until today, from Tran Du Chau onwards, our Party has

had to deal with many degraded and corrupt officials, many of whom were capable and truly talented individuals. Therefore, to protect national interests, the regime, and the talented individuals themselves, a power control mechanism is essential. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong emphasized the requirements, importance, strategic direction, and basic content of power control: “Transparency, openness, and accountability are the first conditions for power control. The better the transparency, openness, and accountability, the better conditions are created for monitoring subjects to effectively prevent and combat corruption and negativity, leaving no dark zones, blank zones, or forbidden zones in preventing and combating corruption and negativity. Strengthen supervision and control over the use of power, monitor the self-cultivation, training of morality, lifestyle, and example-setting of cadres and party members, especially leaders at all levels. Promote transparency in the legal process of using power for people’s supervision, ensuring the proper use of power”³¹. It must be reaffirmed that power control is also an aspect of democracy; democracy and mechanisms for utilizing talented people are not opposed to each other but

are closely related.

An issue raised is whether there is a conflict between the mechanism of utilizing talented people, promoting proactiveness, and fostering creative spirit³² of talented individuals versus the mandatory compliance within the administrative system. To ensure scientific and effective synchronization between the apparatus, institutions, and cadres (including capable officials and talented individuals), the Communist Party of Vietnam has issued many directives to address this relationship. A notable example is Conclusion No. 14-KL/TW dated September 22, 2021, of the Politburo, which states the requirement to “pay special attention to building a contingent of leadership and management cadres with sufficient qualities, capabilities, and prestige, with political fortitude, intelligence, exemplary behavior, determination to innovate and create, who dare to think, dare to act, dare to break through, are ready to face difficulties and challenges, and always strive to act for the common good”³³. Before Conclusion No. 14, the XIII Party Congress Documents also emphasized the necessity to “have mechanisms to encourage and protect cadres and party members who dare to think, dare to speak, dare to act,

dare to take responsibility, dare to face difficulties and challenges, and are decisive in action for the common good”³⁴. The Law on Cadres and Civil Servants 2008 No. 22/2008/QH12, in Article 6, stipulates that “The State has policies to discover, attract, nurture, utilize and properly treat talented individuals”. Law No. 52/2019/QH14 of the National Assembly: Law amending and supplementing several articles of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and the Law on Public Employees has added to this content, stipulating that “The Government regulates the framework of policies for utilizing and treating talented individuals in public service activities” (Clause 2, Article 6).

To select talented individuals for all management levels, cadre planning is implemented according to the principles of “democratic centralism, fairness, impartiality, objectivity, openness, and transparency”³⁵ with 4 comprehensive and essential criteria³⁶ to select those with both virtue and talent. The question arises as to how to utilize talented individuals outside of the planned leadership and management levels. To ensure that current planning does not affect the accuracy and effectiveness of future cadre utilization, we have implemented a “dynamic” and “open”

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planning approach, emphasizing quality and interconnection between different aspects of cadre work.

The mechanism for utilizing talented individuals is only truly effective when everyone has equal opportunities. Here, equal education for all is again mentioned as a key issue of democracy and talent utilization mechanisms, whether in Vietnam or worldwide. Currently, in the United States, higher education has become a tool for social stratification (“higher education is now a great stratifier”)³⁷, and education has deprived opportunities from the majority since childhood, as Michael Young - the author of the concept “Meritocracy” - eloquently wrote: Education has put its seal of approval on a minority, and its seal of disapproval on the many who have failed to shine from the time they were relegated to the bottom streams at the age of seven or before³⁸. Meritocracy has betrayed itself. Thus, it can be seen that the mechanism for utilizing talented individuals must ensure both aspects: committing to equality of opportunity while creating equality of conditions. In other words, the talent utilization mechanism needs to have equal opportunities and must contribute to promoting the resolution of inequality. From this perspective, the

talent utilization mechanism is not the ultimate goal but a means to achieve greater democracy, create conditions for better individual development, and make society function more effectively and better. And a good society is not one stratified by talent or class, but one that is good for all professions, all classes, all people, where everyone can become talented, or where society can appreciate the unique talents of everyone.

To discover and utilize talented individuals, there needs to be stronger and more thorough innovation in thinking. Simultaneously, the rapid creation of democratic mechanisms is extremely urgent. We often say that socialist democracy is both the goal and the driving force of cadre reform work. Only through democracy can we truly discover people with both virtue and talent, or in other words, only in a democratic, open, and transparent environment will people with virtue and talent dare and want to step forward. Over the years, the vast majority of cadres and civil servants have gone through training, testing, and striving in revolutionary practice, always maintaining steadfast political fortitude, firmly committed to the socialist revolutionary goals and path that our Party, Ho Chi Minh, and

our people have chosen; actively and creatively engaging with the people to implement the Party's guidelines, policies, and State laws. The moral qualities and professional competence levels of most leadership cadres have been increasingly improved.

However, alongside these strengths that need to be affirmed, within the leadership ranks there still exist many issues that must be seriously acknowledged and thoroughly improved. There are quite a few cadres who do not absolutely believe in the socialist path and communist ideals, and some even doubt and have diminishing faith in the Party and our people's renovation cause. Regarding moral qualities, the phenomena of degradation, corruption, and abuse of power have become increasingly concerning in society. The basic virtues of a revolutionary soldier, which are also the fundamental virtues of traditional Vietnamese values such as diligence, thrift, integrity, righteousness, impartiality, sacrifice for the country, service to the people, living transparently, simply, honestly, and healthily... are not as highly valued as before, and are even considered alien elements of an old moral system.

In the cycle of globalization and the strong push of the market economy,

fundamental moral norms such as good-evil, right-wrong, conscience, responsibility, trust... have become somewhat confused or blurred in their boundaries, while the issue of values and value systems is receiving more attention than ever. This truly has a negative impact, or in other words, is dangerous for the formation and development of political perspective and stance, and the establishment of basic personality traits of revolutionary cadres. If this foundation is not clear, distinct, and steadfast, then all efforts in other aspects will go in different directions, becoming ineffective or even counterproductive to the cause of building and contributing to the country, the nation, as well as the Party's sustainability. Ho Chi Minh himself repeatedly affirmed the decisive role of revolutionary morality. In his work "Revolutionary Path," he wrote: "Just as a river needs a source to have water, without a source the river runs dry. A tree must have roots, without roots the tree withers. A revolutionary must have morality, without morality, no matter how talented they are, they cannot lead the people. Because wanting to liberate the nation and humanity is a great task, and if one does not have morality, does not have a foundation, has already

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become corrupt and degraded, then what can they accomplish?"³⁹ A leader, especially a high-ranking leader, must possess leadership character and qualities, meaning they must first have a heart willing to sacrifice personally to serve the country, truly for the nation and the people. Will cannot replace talent, but without noble aspirations, there cannot be great talent.

One of the difficulties in identifying people with both virtue and talent for planning, training, nurturing, and appointment is the shortage of succession teams. In other words, if the succession force was always strong and robust, the discovery and utilization would not be difficult. From an educational perspective, the general level of talent and virtue of leadership cadres, especially high-ranking leadership cadres, relates to and can only originate from the general level of talented people nationwide. It is difficult to have outstanding or talented individuals in an environment of low knowledge and capability, and if under such conditions, there are outstanding or talented people, their existence in society would only be like small sparks.

The most thorough and fundamental measure to solve this issue must still originate from education. However, education here must be understood in

its broader sense, not just as a sector or ministry of the government. Only through radical educational reform, truly socializing education in the sense that the whole society participates in education, education for society, for the ideals of truth-goodness-beauty and social progress, can we continue to produce generations of young people with capability and knowledge, creating a healthy and truly intelligent intellectual foundation, truly a cradle for excellence.

Besides education as the most fundamental solution, attention needs to be paid to all three stages in the process of utilizing talented people in national governance: input, output, and utilization. *Input* refers to election and appointment, *output* refers to discipline and dismissal, and *utilization* includes discovery, attraction, proper employment, treatment, training, development, evaluation, planning, transfer, rotation, etc. The issue of personnel or human strategy, especially the strategic cadre force for national governance, cannot be achieved overnight. The future of the nation and the role of the Communist Party of Vietnam tomorrow will depend on the strategies, decisions, and thorough, serious, and profound preparations made today.

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- 29 Nguyen Phu Trong. 2024. “Some issues needing special attention in personnel preparation for the Party’s XIV Congress”, Communist Party of Vietnam Online Newspaper, link: <https://dangcongsan.vn/tieu-diem/mot-so-van-de-can-duoc-dac-biet-quan-tam-trong-cong-tac-chuan-bi-nhan-su-dai-hoi-xiv-cua-dang-661210.html>, accessed March 13, 2024.
- 30 From an ethical perspective, the mechanism of using talented people (universally, worldwide) can give rise to issues where leaders at all levels consider themselves deserving of their wealth and position, believing they achieved their positions purely through intelligence, talent, and contribution. Conversely, by this logic, disadvantaged people in society deserve nothing, as their fate is tied to their intelligence, talent, and contribution. In the West, many even believe that meritocracy is a myth created by the ruling class to convince workers they aren’t good enough to hold power and that they deserve to be poor. That’s why in his famous work “Tyranny of Merit: What’s Become of the Common Good?”, American philosopher Michael Sandel criticized the tyranny of so-called meritocracy as morally unreasonable.
- 31 Nguyen Phu Trong. 2023. Resolutely and persistently fighting against corruption and negativity, contributing to building an increasingly clean and strong Party and State. National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, pp.31-32.
- 32 Besides creativity, breakthrough thinking, and bringing about change, talented individuals also need “change management capability”. Reference: Doan Minh Huan (2018), “Building strategic-level cadres in our country today - Concepts, characteristics, and contradictions to be resolved”, No. 906, April, p.33.
- 33 Conclusion No. 14-KL/TW dated September 22, 2021, of the Politburo “on the policy of encouraging and protecting dynamic and creative cadres for the common good”, section 2.
- 34 Communist Party of Vietnam. 2021. Documents of the XIII National Congress, vol.II. National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, p.243.
- 35 Guidance 16-HD/BTCTW dated February 15, 2022, on “specific contents regarding cadre planning” issued by the Central Organization Commission

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- 36 Four criteria: First, “Political quality, morality, lifestyle, organizational awareness, discipline, and implementation of regulations on exemplary responsibilities of cadres and party members”; Second, “Work capability: Results and efficiency of work; level of fulfillment of assigned duties and responsibilities”; Third, “Prestige: Annual cadre evaluation results by competent authorities and confidence vote results as regulated (if any)”; Fourth, “Development direction and prospects: Ability to meet task requirements according to planned positions”. (Guidance No. 16)
- 37 The 2019 U.S. college admissions scandal somewhat revealed the urgent need to compete for spots in the eight Ivy League schools.
- 38 Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The myth of meritocracy: who really gets what they deserve?”, *The Guardian*, Oct 19, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/oct/19/the-myth-of-meritocracy-who-really-gets-what-they-deserve> . This article also makes a noteworthy argument that society needs to respect and utilize talented individuals, but cannot base human classification on talent, and Michael Young opposed the idea that “people could be put into rank order of worth”. This is because each of us has different abilities, is born in different circumstances, and chooses different paths and missions, and there is no reasonable way to compare the value of human lives.
- 39 Ho Chi Minh. 2011. *Complete Works*, vol.5. National Political Publishing House - Truth, Hanoi, pp.292-293.