

# Vietnam: Economic Reforms and Leadership Changes

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The proposed paper attempts to look at the inter-relationship between economic reforms and leadership changes in Vietnam, starting with the official launching of *doi moi* (renovation) by the Sixth National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) in the context of the death of the CPV's General Secretary Le Duan, his replacement by Truong Chinh, followed by the selection of Nguyen Van Linh to lead the party in 1986. The decision to continue with economic reform while maintaining political stability in the face of the radical transformation of communist regimes in East Europe and the Soviet Union, and the Tiananmen Square incident in China led to another major change of leadership at the Seventh Party Congress. For a while, a delicate balance was maintained between the party, the state, and the military as well as between the north, the center, and the south at the top level of leadership. By the ninth and tenth party congress, economic growth, the need to attract foreign investment, further integration into the global economy, and a new policy of multilateralization and diversification of foreign relations decreased the need for such institutional and regional balances, and brought into power a new generation of leaders who tended to be more pragmatic than ideological. With economic reforms, political power in Vietnam since 1986 seems to be transferred from revolutionary leaders to renovation leaders then to integration leaders.