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Review Article  
International Relations**INTERNAL INSTABILITY AS A SECURITY CHALLENGE  
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**Abstract**

National security is one of the most critical elements for Vietnam society, economy and political system, their stability, sustainability and prosperity. It is unconditionally the top priority for Vietnamese government, State, Communist Party and military forces. In the contemporary world with advanced technology and rapid globalization process taking place, beside many extant economic, social and political benefits there are many appearing challenges and threats that could endanger and destabilize the current socio-economic and political system of any country, including Vietnam. The security issues and concerns understood by those challenges and threats are posed for the international and national community, both from outside and from within. The national security issues and concerns should be constantly screened and updated as the world is evolving at unprecedented pace, with particular exposure to the rising, but not yet fully identified, unconventional challenges and threats that have never seen before. The article is using empirical analysis and case study as methodology for carrying out research, treating security and military science as interdisciplinary, but two of the branches of social science. The aim of this article is to focus on internal instability as challenging security issue that could pose a real threat and danger to the current socio-economic and political system and based on that to draw some implications and propose some viable solutions for the Vietnamese authority to guard the safety and security of the people, society and also its political existence.

**Keywords:** internal instability, threat, security challenge, security issues, Vietnam

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**摘要****关键词:**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

According to contemporary dictionaries, most often security is defined as a state of certainty of an individual, a group of individuals or a nation to counter a crisis situation. Security is freedom from or resilience against potential harm (or other unwanted change) from external forces. Beneficiaries of security may be persons and social groups, objects and institutions, ecosystems, and any other entity or phenomenon vulnerable to unwanted change by its environment. Security mostly refers to protection from hostile forces, but it has a wide range of other senses, for example, it could be understood as: the absence of harm; the presence of essential goods (energy security), the resilience against potential damage; the secrecy and privacy; and finally a state of mind (emotional security) [69]. The most general definition of security is provided by the Dictionary of Social Sciences issued by UNESCO in which according to Daniel Lerner, in the most literal sense, security is virtually identical with certainty (safety) and it means no physical threat (or danger) or full protection against it [14].

Often, in various studies in the field of social sciences, security is presented as the ability to survive, independence, identity or certainty of development. In security analyses, the occurrence of two negative phenomena that are challenge and threat is considered. Challenges are understood as the emergence of new situations in which there are urgent needs requiring the formulation of responses and taking appropriate measures to ensure a certain state of security. They can turn into threats, the real dangers to the security. Threats can be a reflection of the real state of affairs or exaggerated ideas. They may refer to the assessment of a state at a specific historical moment (current threat) or refer to an extrapolation of the anticipated developments and accompanying adverse, unwanted changes (potential threats) [43]. According to Swiss scholar Daniel Frei, the state of security only occurs when there is no real threat (objective factor) and no sense of threat (subjective factor) [19].

According to Morton Berkowitz, national security can be the most suitably defined as its ability to protect its internal values against external threats. Ensuring acceptable level of national security is one of the main functions of government and each country has its own national security (management) system and national security strategy [22, 28, 42, 15]. The proper functioning of national security system including law enforcement services, training and research institutes, rescues services responsible for security

and (local) government bodies involved in such activities, depends to a large extent on their interdependency and their proper exchange of information [34, 15]. National security remains closely related to international security, which can be considered both at the regional and global level. United Nations experts in the study on the concept of security have defined international security as a state in which nations believe that they are not threatened by military attack, pressure or economic compulsion (sanction), and are therefore capable of freedom of development and progress. They further argue that international security is the result and the sum of security of each and all countries, the members of the international community. Accordingly, international security cannot be provided without a full international cooperation between countries and involvement of international organizations and individual citizens [1].

In this study we use empirical analysis as *methodology* for carrying out research, treating security and military science as interdisciplinary, but two of the branches of social science. We proposed two different analytical frameworks for research on security issued of global powerhouses and of diminutive countries (Vietnam)

The *aim* of this article is to focus on internal instability as challenging security issue that could pose a real threat and danger to the Vietnam's current socio-economic development and political system and based on that to draw some implications and propose some viable solutions for the governmental authority to guard the safety and security of the people, society and also its political existence.

In this article we strive to develop a *hypothesis* that to preserve the national security and stability, to retain sustainable socio-economic development, it is important for Vietnam as still diminutive player in international stage first to focus attention and efforts on dealing successfully with internal instability (to be strong from inside) before countering international security issues in the region and threats in the global environment.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The science of security is treated as much broader than military science as it includes also non-military issues of the international, regional, national security and individual safety. Security science is an independent and original research discipline striving to obtain a comprehensive and coherent panorama (multi-aspect, multi-dimensional, multi-perspective) of reality from the point of view of satisfying the individual and

collective need for security. The development of methodology for research in security sciences is just both separate and, as well, at the intersection of other well rounded sciences, such as political science, psychology or sociology. Security science in the classification of sciences is a scientific discipline belonging to the field of social sciences. Moreover, due to the objects, subjects and methods of research, and also the type of research statements (hypotheses) formulated and the practical directives, security science is considered as an interdisciplinary science. We are assuming a fairly obvious statement that scientific methods appropriate for security science are, among those very popular in the social sciences, methods of empirical research. This is the method of verification of research hypotheses or the method of searching for answers to the research questions formulated by scholars [30].

As a result, in this paper we are empirically investigating security issues and concerns, typical for economic and military powerhouses in the world, split into two groups: conventional and unconventional. In contemporary world, we are observing the rise in importance of unconventional security issues, their scope and range, which doesn't mean that the conventional security issues are decreasing in their importance and become less influential. For diminutive countries that are less influential and less open to the world, at least at the moment, such as Vietnam, the impact and the significance of unconventional security issues are less obvious and the division of security issues into such category might be unjustified. In case of those countries, the division of security issues into internal and external ones seems to be convincing and as such we are observing the rise in importance of internal security issues, their frequency and intensity rather than the external security issues originating from outside as a result of a political game of superpowers both in the region and in the world. Having that in mind, we relate to the Vietnam's unique socio-geopolitical context in order to draw comprehensive implications and propose some viable solutions for ensuring the internal security of people, business, society and current political system in Vietnam, a still small actor (player) but growing in importance, contributing to the global security and stability due to its strategic geopolitical position. We are carrying the studies based on the sound theoretical framework encompassing selected security issues and concerns, but with strong exposure to internal ones, of the following dimensions [53, 54, 62]: social, cultural (identity), economic, political, military, information and environmental. The internal

issues in such dimensions will certainly pose real challenges, and as a result, could block the whole process of ongoing transition, globalization and integration of Vietnam's economy and society.

### **III. GLOBALIZATION AND SECURITY ISSUES IN THE WORLD**

There is no doubt, therefore, that security is the supreme need of people and social groups and at the same time the most important goal [46]. It aims to satisfy the most important needs of survival, stability, sustainability and predictability of development, well-being and finally human happiness. Multan claims that security can be defined not only as a specific goal, but also as a succession. This means that we are not aware of what it is until we are threatened by its loss [27]. It is assumed that national security consists of relations and links between all of its constituent elements [27]. A common feature of most security definitions is to describe it as a process. Security is not a given state of affairs but a continuous social process in which operating entities try to improve the mechanisms that ensure their sense of security. All components of this process, more or less measurable, having the character of both dependent and independent variables, are subject to numerous changes conditioned by the internal situation of nation, its regional and international situation [21, 31].

Globalization shapes processes that take place in all spheres of human activity, including economy and security. Economy and security are areas of basic importance for human functioning in the contemporary world, mutually penetrating and dependent on each other. Security and the idea of partnership for peace are one of many aspects and it is treated as a guarantor of sustainable competitiveness of enterprises and sustainable development of economies [31, 29, 13]. Globalization is not a new phenomenon, but it has gained significance only thanks to the development of technology, which enabled the exchange of information in real time and the movement of people and goods globally in a short time. It means an extensive network of economic and informational connections connecting different parts of the world [8]. Globalization is inextricably linked to the development of humanity. In pursuit of development, faster communication, better technologies, man has managed to minimize the differences between societies of different countries, at the same time created common ground for mutual cultural exchange. The globalization process cannot be reversed, we are surrounded by it and we live with it. Although the globalization process has been

going on for several centuries, it has been particularly intense in recent years. Governmental institutions that are responsible for ensuring security should be able to limit the negative effects of globalization on social and economic spheres. It is necessary to take action to ensure social and economic security not only at the national level, but also at the international and supranational level. Governments conclude agreements on economic cooperation, join military and economic alliances. It is in these agreements and alliances that clauses on mutual cooperation in the field of security are included. Because globalization is a transnational phenomenon, security activities also need to have transnational features. Globalization means a process of growing interconnectedness between societies leading to events in one part of the world increasingly affecting people and societies in remote locations [2]. Globalization is multidimensional and asymmetrical. Multidimensionality consists in including various spheres of human activity in these processes: political, economic, social, technological, cultural, ecology and security issues which are closely related to each other and affect each other [16]. Asymmetry depends on a different rate of change in individual fields and on the emergence of opposite benefits and phenomena, e.g. qualified immigrants accelerate the development of the host country, at the same time weaken the development of the country of origin, environmentally burdensome production releases the country of origin from it, but accelerates the degradation of the country to which it has been moved; taxes of transnational enterprises are paid in the home country [53].

The most important economic benefits for many countries resulting from globalization include the inflow of foreign capital, access to information, modern technologies, expanding the market offer of products, increasing the pressure for modernization and increasing the efficiency of economic activity, return on investment, creating new jobs, boosting exports, participation in the international division of labor, economic growth, raising the standard of living, civilization advancement. Globalization forces many companies to become more competitive and can be a way to develop poorly developed countries as it can fuel social, political and economic changes [33, 61, 64]. In the socio-cultural sphere, the main benefits of globalization processes are: increasing access to diversified cultural offer, growing intercultural exchange, openness to cultural diversity, awareness of its sensitivity, blurring the boundaries between what is national and what is foreign, creating similar cultural products in different societies, strengthening its both

orientation towards standardization and orientation towards customization [12]. At the same time, these processes have a positive effect on intercultural communication, the opportunity to get to know each other better and understand different customs. Positive consequences of globalization for the political sphere are: dissemination of democratic institutions and procedures, gradual universalization of human rights, unification of international collaboration, cooperation and peaceful settlement of disputes, growing formalization and institutionalization of international relations, striving for regional and international integration, strengthening and empowering communities, greater access to various sources of information, greater opportunities to publicize their own problems and interests, bigger influence on power, self-organization thanks to modern means of communication and the dispersal of power [24].

As stated above, ensuring security is one of main functions of government and in that area one has to deal with a wide range of threats and challenges constituting real concerns for the whole society, especially for social groups and individuals [22, 44]. Security issues researched in literature and practices are presented as multidimensional problems of multiple levels [48, 33]. Security issues should not be confined to economic, social and environmental aspects and their interaction [32]. Additionally, security research is generally presented as a problem of two levels. First level is focused on individuals and social groups while the second level deals with the security issues in a national level. Research on both levels, however, is very often concentrated on the life or health threat in direct connection with conventional war conflicts, terrorism, organized crime, political or social persecution and natural disasters. Nevertheless, such understanding security does not comply with the present reality. There exists a wide range of scientific studies proving that the present understanding of security consists of several dimensions which might not be directly linked to actual traditional war activities. The human security in a broad sense could be jeopardized also by unfair economic and social practices or abuse of political power by governmental bodies, corruption in national economies, and discrimination of minorities, drugs and black markets [23]. In last few decades, the understanding of security has been changing. New areas emerged which may influence security facets, which were not urgent earlier. Now those facets can endanger individuals or even nations. Breaches of cyber security, separatist attacks or

intense cyber wars are becoming more usual than conventional wars in physical space. Violations of cyber security may cause great damage, ruin businesses or even temporarily paralyze full-fledged functioning of individual countries or regions [49]. Table 1 presents the most important issues of security at international level that impact all of us, enterprises and organizations, government and society, groups and individual citizens, regardless of nationality. The presented security issues well researched in the literature of military science divided clearly into two main categories (unconventional and conventional) will be discussed further in order to adopt some of them to be regrouped and presented, in a nutshell at the regional level for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and, in detail, with division into external one and internal ones, at the national level for Vietnam's economy and society.

**Table 1.** Security issues and concerns for global economy and globalization process

<b>Conventional security issues</b>	<b>Unconventional security issues</b>
Asymmetry of interests (of developed and developing countries)	The rise of cryptocurrency
Illegal migration	Cyber-threats: -Information warfare
Global terrorism, extremism and Nationalism	Cyber-threats: -Cyber-terrorism
National defense spending	Cyber-threats: -Cyber-crime
Regional conflicts and territorial disputes	Cyber-threats: -Cyber-espionage
Trade and currency warfare (protectionism)	
Energy and environmental concerns	

(Source: Author's literature review)

#### *Asymmetry of interest*

Currently, the geopolitics presupposes that majority of novel technologies are devised and designed in developed countries with their subsequent transfer to developing countries for the benefit of developed countries first [16]. In other dimensions of asymmetry of interest, it depends on a different rate of change in individual fields and on the emergence of opposite benefits and

phenomena, e.g. qualified immigrants accelerate the development of the host country (case of USA) at the same time weaken the development of the country of origin; in international investment the environmentally burdensome production releases the country of origin from it, but accelerates the degradation of the country to which it has been moved; the phenomenon of price transferring due to the fact that the income taxes of transnational enterprises are paid in home country, not where business and production activities are taking place [53].

#### *Illegal migration*

Illegal migration towards developed countries in the world such as USA and Europe, regardless of the reason and purpose, is not a recent phenomenon [20]. It has been lasting, with diverse intensity, for centuries, even its main tracks and destinations remained almost the same. There are routes that are crowded with massive illegal migrants and due to border tightening of local authorities become empty a few months later. The adaptability of migratory routes, detecting, tracking and detailing them are a significant challenge and the analysis and appropriate use of information on migratory routes are essential for this purpose [6].

#### *Global terrorism, extremism and nationalism*

The connection between illegal migration and terrorism on a global scale is in the focal point of security dilemmas since the beginning of the flow of illegal migration and since the main terrorist attacks occurring across developed world in particular. The basic question is whether the terrorist organizations are able and will embed terrorists among illegal migrants [26]. The tendency of steady growth of relative number national crimes, crimes of terrorist nature and strengthening extremist orientation is constantly noted in all parts of the world [1, 25, 52, 35]. Terrorism is a multi-faceted and dynamic phenomenon as it is occurring in various forms. It poses a threat to individual and social development. It is an act of violence done in a fearful way to achieve extreme political, religious or ideological goals. It is changing under the influence of civilization development which makes it difficult to define it unequivocally. Increasing terrorist acts have mobilized democratic nations to counteract this phenomenon at many levels. Essential elements of cross-border cooperation should be anti-terrorist operations, crisis management and military cooperation [54]. The ground of terrorism embraces diverse factors that affect its development, such as: demography,

poverty, social stratification, political systems, historic perspective or religious situation [55, 45].

#### *National defense spending*

To stabilize national defense spending is one of the decisive prerequisites of a long-term maintenance and development of national defense capabilities and security [17]. Facing global and regional conflicts and tensions posing threats to national security, all countries in the world, especially the so far biggest spenders, are increasing military spending on arm procurements [4, 5]. That leads to the armament race and the war crater policy among traditional and newly emerged military powerhouses, endangering world peace and security.

#### *Regional conflict and territorial disputes*

The intensification of conflicts and territorial disputes, the rising importance of regional powers is interesting for diverse scientists, including political and military analysts, due to the changing national values in a global world and due to the power separation between key players in the international stage and international system of security [10]. Regional military powerhouses become more assertive nations to claim disputed territories, both in land, sea water and airspace [39]. To solve regional territorial disputes and conflicts soft security instruments such as multilateral bodies and institutions or international practices are needed which rely mainly on sharing, congruence and development of values and competences of initiators and participants of security governance [47]. A combination of soft security instruments with normative hard means (economic sanctions) is seen as a possibility to gradually reduce regional tension and lead to sustainable security and development [11].

#### *Trade and currency warfare*

In globalizing and integrating economically world, free trade and exchange of goods and services are the most important values for international business community. To ensure the global sustainable development and economic growth, all countries should put an end to protectionism. However, in contemporary world, protectionism is increasingly a rising trend towards putting national economic interests first and above the global interests, leading to dangerous trade war and currency manipulation, laying ground for conflicts of interest between global economic powers, between them and the smaller countries [59].

#### *Energy and environmental issues*

Energy shortage and environmental issues are the most concerns of enterprises operating in global business environment as they impact the living and business condition of current generation and cause great consequence for future generation of mankind [65]. Due to the shortage and depletion

of conventional sources of energy such as coal, oil and gas, to guarantee long-term energy and environmental security the world tends towards sustainable source of energy such as electricity generated by ocean tides, solar and wind power to protect the environment and planet [56, 57, 58].

#### *Crypto-currency*

The rise of technology based crypto-currencies is envisaged as the substitute of the U.S. dollar which has been the world most dominating currency for the last several decades [16]. The risks of crypto-currencies functioning are related with their extreme volatility, fragility, still low level of acceptability and their legal background. Despite the improved efficiency of usage these risks are the reasons to put them far from mainstream use in international transactions as secured and trustworthy instruments of payment.

#### *Information warfare, cyber-terrorism, cyber-crime, cyber-espionage*

With changing global security situation shifting towards Internet cyberspace, the increase in external threats and the emergence of new ones such as: cyber-attacks, non-conventional warfare models, etc., countries in the world must feel concerned regarding consolidation of their own security [40]. Breaches of cyber security, separatist attacks or intense cyber wars are becoming more usual than conventional wars taking place physically. Violations of cyber security may cause greater damage, ruin businesses or even temporarily paralyze full-fledged functioning of individual countries or regions [50]. Given the global nature of cyber threats, assurance of a cyber-security policy is very important not only at the local and organization level, but also at national and international level. Currently, international cyber security as such is not legally regulated in a suitable way. Therefore, the role of national cyber security system and strategy has become particularly significant [49, 50]. Cyber-threats follows primarily the global links in a cyberspace in terms of critical infrastructure of the state and intergovernmental objects in the fast evolving international security environment and the fact that instruments used by aggressors in cyberspace are becoming increasingly accessible and affordable as their operational skills are progressively advanced [47, 7].

## **IV. VIETNAM SPECIFIC SECURITY ISSUES**

### A. ASEAN related context of Vietnam's national security

ASEAN is facing now numerous critical risks and uncertainties to its future. Current developments show that USA can no longer be the sole player to provide security solutions for the region. Other rising powers in the region have not stood on the height of the task and displayed the willingness and capacity to shoulder this burden. ASEAN members have not been able to agree on a comprehensive measure that effectively addresses the aforementioned world traditional and non-traditional security threats. These threats are global and transnational in both nature and impact and therefore, they cannot be dealt with alone by single country or by the ASEAN bloc itself. To prevent potential dispute and conflict, due to the strategic geopolitical position, ASEAN members need to create hand in hand a principled order that can facilitate and boost more substantive international cooperation on the security issues that are increasingly intertwined and multidimensional [60].

Globalization has essentially made collective security an essential element of national security and vice versa. Relevant stakeholders, both in and out of ASEAN region, should be able to realize this truth and collaborate with each other to build a more sustainable and predictable future of their own. As a member of ASEAN bloc Vietnam is guaranteed a higher level of security than standing alone within the framework of ASEAN's diverse mechanisms and policy of cooperation and exchange, ASEAN's partnership with other nations of bloc in the sphere of security issues. Global security issues concerning Vietnam are better soluble at the ASEAN level than at the national level. In partnership and alliance with other countries and with other ASEAN members in particular Vietnam could contribute proactively and responsively to cope with external threats and solve its own, regional and global security issues in a diplomatic and peaceful manner. For internal security issues and threats, Vietnam should have to take own means and measures to solve them in own ways and no foreign country or external force can help by involving in the internal affairs of Vietnam as an independent and sovereign nation [63].

### B. Vietnam specific context of national security

Vietnam specific context of national security, on one hand, is derived from international and regional context of security. Together with new developments in the world scene of security, some security issues remains timeless, some security issues still keep up with

the times, while some other security issues could lose their importance and relevance. In terms of national security of Vietnam, especially the internal security issues, nothing has been change since a long time. Those issues are timeless and constant, regardless of the history, present or the future of national socio-development. Of course, sometimes some of those internal security issues are gaining momentum and increasingly intensifying, another time they are less intense. Table 2 presents the most important and updated security issues, both external and internal, that are relevant for Vietnam in XXI century's history of development. Those security issues are discussed separately. The external security issues are first and preliminarily analyzed, while the internal security issues are to be taken into in-depth consideration as they are important for keeping the internal stability and no external force or country can involve in, except the Vietnamese government and authority and Vietnamese people themselves.

**Table 2.** Security issues and concerns for Vietnam national security

External security issues	Internal security issues
Climate change and natural disaster	Internal asymmetry of social interests
Water resources disputes	Political instability
Territorial disputes	Corruption scandals
Sustainable economic growth and global trade warfare consequences (protectionism)	

(Source: [18, 38, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 67, 70])

As pointed and suggested by the title of this article, in this section we are focusing our attention on the mentioned in the Table 2 internal security issues that could hinder and strongly destabilize the national development of Vietnam in terms of the whole process of ongoing transition, globalization and integration of the economy and society.

*Internal security issue – asymmetry of social interests*

The internal asymmetry of interest means that despite the strong economic growth being currently at the predicted pace of around 6.7% GDP in 2018 [67], one of the highest rate in the world, overtaking probably China and India, but if it is even to take place relentlessly and unceasingly, the social and environmental sustainable development are not automatically guaranteed as those categories of concept are totally different,

irrelevant, even conflictual to each other and of course, one cannot be directly implied from other. Rising attention is paid to the wealth gap between different individuals and different groups in the society and unfair distribution of public, common goods and services among them, such as the personal safety, education, social security and healthcare. The asymmetry of interest is also visible in the highly favorable business conditions in terms of the full access to business opportunities, national resources, privileges and preferential treatments dedicated to the public sector of state owned enterprises (SOEs) instead to the private firms and the FDI sector, the main growth drivers in the economy. This peculiar phenomenon contributes to the reduction in effectiveness of the whole SOEs sector and hinders the competitiveness of national economy.

#### *Internal security issues – political instability*

For the political regime's security, there are both internal and external threats and challenges. The external security issues are already concisely aforementioned. They are obvious and frequently mentioned in the discussion table to find adequate common solutions. On the contrary, the internal security issues are more serious and not very much discussed within the circle of Vietnamese top political elite due to the sensitive nature. Those security issues embracing the degradation in political ideology, thought, morality and lifestyle of a number of cadres and Party members who are involved in bureaucracy, corruption scandals and waste of public resource (discussed later) will still be a serious matter, lowering the people's confidence in the Party and State's credibility and reputation. Overseas and at home, hostile forces will continually implement peaceful evolution schemes, causing disturbances and using the so-called democracy and human rights in order to induce a power change to the current political system in Vietnam.

#### *Internal security issues – corruption scandals*

Corruption in Vietnam is the most serious problem in the society. By definition, corruption or embezzlement is an act of abuse of title, authority, or willful violation of the law for the benefit of the individual [70]. Corruption in Vietnam has caused damage to government budgets estimated at 30% of so far national investment in infrastructure [66]. Table 1 presents the values of Vietnam Corruption Index and country's international ranking over the period of 2001-2017.

**Table 3.** Vietnam Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

Year	Indicator	Ranking
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2001	2.6	75/91
2002	2.4	85/102
2003	2.4	100/133
2004	2.6	102/145
2005	2.6	107/158
2006	2.6	111/163
2007	2.6	123/179
2008	2.7	121/180
2009	2.7	120/180
2010	2.7	116/178
2011	2.9	112/182
2012	31	123/176
2013	31	116/176
2014	31	119/175
2015	31	112/168
2016	33	113/176
2017	35	107/180

(Source: [70])

According to the Transparency International ranking, in 2010 Vietnam CPI was 2.7 out of 10 (countries with under 5 are considered to be in high corruption status). In 2011, scores and rankings of Vietnam show that corruption remains a major concern for the country. Comparing the two years 2010-2011, no significant change has been made in the government's fight against corruption. The CPI index after 2011 used scales from 0 to 100 points. Low scores are more corrupt, high scores are transparent. According to the 2012 survey, Vietnam's scores rose slightly from 2.9 to 31, but were still down 11 points, compared not only with advanced countries but also with neighboring countries in the region. Also according to Transparency International survey of 95 countries in 30 recent years, 30% of Vietnamese people have bribed public servants, 55% of respondents said that corruption increased and 38% believe that the Government of Vietnam's efforts to fight corruption are ineffective. According to the Trace International, in a survey of 197 countries in the world, Vietnam is ranked 188th with 82/100 points, ranking among the top most corrupted 10 countries in the world. Breaking down the criteria one by one, Vietnam has the disadvantages of overlapping between state agencies and businesses, leading to redundancy and bureaucracy in management. Vietnam's poor performance in corruption fighting is due to the lack of supervision by civic organizations and transparency in administration [3].

## V. CONCLUSION

Global impacts and challenges are diverse, ambiguous and multidimensional. In order to deal with specific changeable security issues and challenges of both unconventional and conventional nature, coordinated defense strategies at different levels (international, regional and national) should be in place, sound restructuring of national defense capacity and effective investment in defense sector are required. Each nation should strike a good balance between security needs and development objectives within its annual government expenditure depending on real growth in GDP as national economic conditions will most often determine the state budget for defense sector and its structure. Hence, the economic development is a top priority for enhancing national defense capacity, national defense strategy, cooperation and coordination at the aforementioned levels.

For Vietnam which is not a key player in the world security arena, it is more suitable to see its security issues not in prism of conventional and unconventional threats but in the optic of external risk factors and internal challenging instability. In terms external risks, Vietnam is one of the countries in the region most affected by natural disasters and climate change. As discussed above, Vietnam is already experiencing and is expected to suffer greatly under the double impacts of both upstream dam development in the Mekong River and global climate change. This development requires shifting the national defense strategy to pay more attention and distribute adequate resources to prevent and mitigate the natural disaster and climate change consequences. The complex nature of security challenges and threats is demanding Vietnam to expand defense diplomacy efforts and actively participate in defense and security cooperation with the regional and international community. Bilaterally, Vietnam always wishes to widen its defense relations with all countries, and the range of prioritized activities includes mutual exchange of military delegations, accessing to information and sharing diverse experience, cooperation in multiple training and education, solving environmental concerns and humanitarian issues. Vietnam also attaches great importance to the multilateral cooperation in national defense and security issues through international and regional organizations and forums such as the UN Security Council, ASEAN, and APEC to jointly tackle international security challenges and threats. Understanding the dangers of escalating territorial conflicts in the Northern border and maritime disputes in South China Sea's Spratly and Paracels archipelago with neighboring

military powerhouse China, and their potential impacts on the regional security and development, conjointly with other ASEAN nations, Vietnam repeatedly called for peaceful resolutions of disputes in accordance with international law and respect for freedom of navigation based on the to-be-elaborated multilaterally accepted common Code of Conduct (COC), instead of current Documents of Conducts (DOC). This appeal has well resonated with the interests of other countries in the region directly engaged in the disputes, such as Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. These issues have been addressed at various forums and meetings which eventually lead to unanimity on the urgent need to protect maritime security, to preserve peace and stability in the ASEAN and in the Asia-Pacific region.

In parallel with and in order to cope effectively with extant external threats and dangers mentioned above, Vietnam should be consolidated internally by itself, in terms of both the socio-economic development and socio-political stabilization. Vietnam should become resilient economically, sustainably developed socially, politically secure and stable, together with strongly preserved national identity and cultural proud. As suggested by literature review and analyzed thoroughly above, internal security issues embrace and focus around three most important topics: social asymmetry and gap (disparity); political instability; corruption scandals. Here are some suggestions proposed by the author to deal with them, solving their extant problems. The author reiteratively states in this article that solving internal security issues is a firm starting point and the only way that lays a solid foundation to deal with not less challenging external security issues.

In terms of asymmetry between groups in the society, the government and local authority should work together to reduce the following identified disparities: disparity between privileged state own enterprises and private, foreign enterprises in the economy; between disposable income, level of development and living standard of people in the biggest megacities and far-off areas (rural and highland areas), between the high ranked officials, public servants and ordinary people... Social tension and unrest are continually on the rise due to widening social gaps that exist in the society. Reforms are urgent and should be in place to contribute to higher level of basic income of the majority of ordinary working people. Especially the social insurance system is considered by many experts as outdated, unjust and not covering the whole social stratifications and needs far-reaching reforms. Otherwise the

hostile and opposing forces both within (domestic) and outside (international) country will take advantage of that opportunity to spread propaganda to induce citizens and social groups to demonstrate against government and political system, demanding power change, destabilizing the normal functioning of country in a current shape, destroying the achievements of State, Government and Party so far.

In terms of political instability, Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) as a single long lasting governing party in Vietnam naturally encounters many enemies within and outside its political structure, inside and outside Vietnam, especially in the time of economic downturns (crises) or natural disasters when many social groups are unsatisfied with their current economic condition and professional situation and are prone to extremist attitudes and behaviors. In a short run, in case of need, VCP representative should take necessary measures to calm the people down in order to avoid provocation and as a result, nationwide demonstrations on a mass scale. In a long run, long term sustainable economic development in parallel with enhancing social security system is a prerequisite, precondition and the only way to guarantee a welfare state for everyone, reducing social unrest and tensions, uniting people inside and outside Party.

In terms of fighting corruption scandals, all cases of identified or suspected corruption scandals and embezzlement practices should be revealed and seriously punished publicly, especially those related with the involvement of high rank state officials to prove that there are really no prohibited zone in fighting this deep rooted disease of the contemporary society and economy, taking China as a role model in fighting them. Many successes have been achieved so far in this front, but much more should be done because of the dynamism and constant evolving nature of this multifaceted and sensitive phenomenon. VCP has been all-out committed to fight against this type of dangerous pathology, characteristic for the market oriented and in-transition economy. Corruptions, in whatever forms, lead to reducing firms' and national competitiveness, less State and Government policy's transparency, credibility and trustworthy, and all of that could significantly release social tensions and instigate enemies provocation. Moreover, biggest revealed and yet to be revealed corruption cases could potentially endanger the existence of VCP in its current, quite fragile form. VCP and politburo members approach this issue in a very serious manner, treating corruptions as an omnipresent, potential danger, the biggest ever

enemy from within that is even more dangerous than any kind of so far external threats.

Vietnam as a developing country is facing too many internal issues. So that to preserve the national security and stability, to retain sustainable socio-economic development, it is important for Vietnam, as still diminutive player in international stage, to focus attention and efforts on dealing successfully with internal instability (to become strong and resilient from inside) before countering international security issues in the region and threats in the global environment.

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