

**1988****Trần Văn, ‘A Number of Renovations in the Work of Handling Immigration and the Handling of Foreigners’ [Excerpts]****Citation:**

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**Summary:**

This article, published in a classified Vietnamese Ministry of Interior publication, asserted that Vietnam’s economy required international cooperation and support, saying “no country can close its doors and still expect to be able to develop and make progress.” The article also states that the Ministry was now gradually allowing identified “spies” to enter Vietnam so that their activities could be covertly surveilled by the Ministry’s counter-espionage officers

**Original Language:**

Vietnamese

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Translation - English

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### **“A Number of Renovations in the Work of Handling Immigration and the Handling of Foreigners”**

By Trần Văn

The work of handling immigration and the handling of foreigners is one of the methods our government uses to help protect national security and law and order in our society. It is a form of public struggle that involves the implementation of our laws while at the same time it is part of our development of rules and regulations for use the areas of Public Security's governmental functions.

During the war of liberation, we scored a number of successes our work of handling immigration and the handling of foreigners. After South Vietnam was totally liberated and the Fatherland was unified, we should have immediately changed our administrative rules and regulations to adapt them to our central mission of building and defending the Fatherland. Instead, however, we continued to use wartime laws and regulations in peacetime, which created many problems, obstacles, and contradictions [conflicts] between our internal policies and our external policies.

...Our Party's 6th National Party Congress laid out a new direction for our Party, calling on us to renovate our thinking, our organizations, and our attitudes, and it presented four major lessons learned from experience.

Our agency responsible for immigration and the handling of foreigners strictly implemented the 6th Party Congress's resolution, first of all by renovating our legal thinking and making the people the foundation of our efforts, by operating in accordance with the law, and by combining the strength of our nation with the strength of the international community. ...

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[After describing the implementation of several new regulations allowing overseas Vietnamese to return to visit Vietnam to visit family and for “tourism”]

...Although these actions have made our work harder, we in Public Security have matured in our understanding, our attitudes, and our working procedures. In terms of our understanding, we now clearly see that we need to strictly and seriously support our Party's “open door” policy. We know that when our door is open, flies and mosquitoes will get into our home, but sunlight and fresh air will also enable us to buy wire screens and insecticide to kill the flies and mosquitoes. The struggle between the concept of keeping our doors tightly closed to prevent spies from getting into our house and the concept of opening our doors in order to be able to build our nation in accordance with the objective realities of the world today is a rather complicated struggle. The concept of keeping the door closed in order to protect our home is rather heavily engrained in our thinking, and it can be seen in the utilization of wartime administrative and legal procedures to block overseas Vietnamese and foreigners from entering our country, from traveling around the country, from working and doing business, and from making contacts with our people, rather than using secret professional methods [covert surveillance].

We also have differing assessments of overseas Vietnamese and foreigners. Our Party's position is that the vast bulk of our overseas Vietnamese compatriots and of foreigners are good people and that there are very few spies and reactionaries. However, there are still some comrades who do not agree with that assessment and who still view overseas Vietnamese and foreigners in general as being difficult, bad elements, and who even believe that the majority of them are spies or reactionaries.

We have also made renovations in how we handle spies. We no longer totally ban spies from entering our country. In fact, we are slowly allowing them to enter our country so that we can expand our secret struggle front, give our reconnaissance [surveillance, intelligence-gathering] forces opportunities to hone their skills, and fight the enemy by luring the enemy into our country in order to fight him (at a time when we are not yet strong enough to attack the enemy in his own lair).

With regard to foreigners, we are now proposing new regulations that are adapted to our “open door” policy. The world economy today is an economy in which nations depend on one another - no country can close its doors and still expect to be able to develop and make progress. ....

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...Our nation's economy still faces many problems and the lives of our people have not yet been stabilized. If our people feel that they are being oppressed the people's suffering will be greatly increased and their faith in us will decrease. Freedom and democracy are happinesses that are now within our grasp. They will bind the masses to us even more tightly. The five Hanoi tour groups that visited the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, and Czechoslovakia this year were organized very quickly and the tourists and the Tourism Association are very enthusiastic about the results. A number of professors in Ho Chi Minh City have proclaimed that our policy of allowing Vietnamese citizens to travel abroad for some length of time to handle personal matters is a very good thing. They said that it proves that our regime trusts its people and they said that this will create opportunities for our talented students to be able to travel abroad to study and then to come back home to build and develop our nation. Naturally alongside these positive benefits we will not be able to seal off all the holes. However, we have weighed the benefits versus the risks and have concluded that the benefits outweigh the risks. We have chosen the best option, but we are under no illusions that this is the perfect solution.

Our Party's General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh had given us the following definition: "Renovation is a creative solution for both the law and the revolution."

We have now begun to implement our Party General Secretary's words.

By T. V.