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**ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE
CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE NEW CONTEXT**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale and urgency of the topic

The Central Highlands constitutes a distinctive geo-political space, often described as the “roof of Indochina,” and occupies a critical strategic position in Viet Nam’s national defense, security, and external affairs. The Central Highlands formerly comprised five provinces—Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Đắk Lắk, Đắk Nông, and Lâm Đông—and borders Attapeu and Sekong provinces of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Throughout the revolutionary process and national construction, this region has consistently been identified as the “western rampart of the Fatherland,” playing a pivotal role in safeguarding territorial sovereignty, controlling border security space, maintaining socio-political stability, and ensuring national security.

In the context of implementing the policy on rearranging administrative units for the 2025–2030 period, after 1 July 2025, although there have been adjustments to administrative boundaries and organizational apparatus at each level, this does not alter the essential nature of the Central Highlands as a unified strategic area for defense, security, and political security. Located at the center of the strategic intersection among the three Indochinese countries, any fluctuations in political security in the Central Highlands may directly affect the national security environment and the country’s socio-political stability rather than remain localized. Therefore, ensuring political security in the Central Highlands is an objective, regular, and long-term requirement and a prerequisite for maintaining political stability and firmly protecting national security.

In practice, the Central Highlands remains an area with numerous latent complexities regarding political security. After national reunification, hostile and reactionary forces have continuously exploited constraints in socio-economic development and political-legal awareness among segments of ethnic minority communities, together with intertwined ethnic and religious features, to incite, lure, and cause disturbances to security and order. The political riots in 2001 and 2004 are typical evidence, demonstrating the direct threat to political security when social contradictions are not adequately recognized and are not handled promptly and appropriately. In recent years, subversive activities have become more sophisticated, combining secessionist and autonomist agitation with the exploitation of ethnic, religious, democracy, human rights issues, and cyberspace. The serious incident in Đắk Lắk province on 11 June 2023 clearly illustrates the risk of transformation from public order and safety issues into political security “hotspots” if not tightly controlled from the grassroots level.

Empirical data reflect a protracted and complex public security situation in the Central Highlands, with persistent risks affecting political security. From 2011 to the present, the region recorded 35,943 cases of violations against social order and safety, including 2,661 cases directly related to rural security [66, p. 1]. These figures indicate the systemic and prolonged nature of public security challenges associated with land disputes, spontaneous migration, livelihoods of ethnic minorities, and the effectiveness of grassroots political systems, thereby posing direct risks to political security. In addition, the Central Highlands has a diverse and interwoven ethnic–religious structure; religion exerts a profound influence on the spiritual life of segments of ethnic minority communities. Exploiting this, reactionary organizations and subjects linked to FULRO regard religious manipulation as a principal and recurring method to gather forces and conduct subversive activities. Under the guise of extremist religious organizations such as “De Ga Protestantism,” “Protestantism of Christ,” and certain heterodox cults such as “Hà Mòn,” these actors disseminate secessionist ideas, incite contradictions, generate belief-based conflicts within communities, and directly affect political security stability in the region. Although local authorities and functional forces have implemented multiple preventive and combat measures, political security assurance still reveals certain limitations, particularly in early and remote situation grasping and in fully dismantling reactionary organizational structures.

Recognizing the strategic position, role, and distinctive characteristics of the Central Highlands, in recent years the Party and the State have promulgated important guidelines and policies to develop the region in conjunction with strengthening defense and security and ensuring political security. Notably, Politburo Resolution No. 23-NQ/TW dated 6 October 2022 identifies the

maintenance of socio-political stability and the assurance of political security as prerequisites for the sustainable development of the Central Highlands. Subsequently, documents such as Resolution No. 152/NQ-CP dated 15 November 2022, Decree No. 178/2024/NĐ-CP dated 2 November 2024, and Decisions No. 758/QĐ-TTg and No. 759/QĐ-TTg dated 15 November 2025 have established a coherent legal basis for renewing state governance, while setting increasingly high requirements for political security assurance under adjustments in governance space in the Central Highlands. In particular, the document of the 14th National Party Congress emphasizes the requirement to “firmly maintain political security, social order and safety; maintain and consolidate a peaceful and stable environment to build and develop the country” [47, p. 8]. This serves as a direct political-theoretical basis orienting political security assurance in the Central Highlands in the new context, where traditional and non-traditional security factors continue to intersect and exert increasingly complex impacts on socio-political stability in this strategic region.

In the new context, from a political security perspective, rapid developments in the global and regional environment, together with the rearrangement of administrative units and restructuring of political-system apparatuses at all levels, are creating new and higher demands for political security assurance in the Central Highlands. If boundary adjustments and organizational restructuring are not closely linked to situation monitoring, forecasting, and governance of emerging social issues, “governance gaps” at the grassroots level may easily arise, enabling hostile forces to exploit, incite, and destabilize. Meanwhile, non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, forest resource depletion, spontaneous migration, high-tech crime, and harmful information in cyberspace are increasing and interacting in complex ways with traditional security issues, making the political security environment in the Central Highlands more difficult to forecast.

For these reasons, the research topic “Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands in the New Context” is highly necessary. It meets urgent practical requirements for protecting national security and contributes to supplementing and refining political science theory on political security assurance in strategic areas, directly serving leadership, governance, and policy formulation in the coming period.

2. Research objectives and tasks

2.1. Research objectives

- Overall objective: To clarify the theoretical and practical bases, assess the current situation of political security assurance in the Central Highlands, and on that basis propose key solutions for ensuring political security in the new context..

- Specific objectives: *First*, to systematize and clarify the theoretical foundations of political security and political security assurance; *Second*, to analyze the specific characteristics of the Central Highlands and the major challenges to political security in the region; *Third*, to assess the current state of political security assurance, identifying its limitations and emerging challenges; *Fourth*, to propose orientations and practical solutions for strengthening political security assurance in the coming period.

2.2. Research tasks

First, Review domestic and international studies relevant to the topic; identify research gaps and key issues to be clarified; *Second*, Develop the theoretical and practical framework for political security assurance in the Central Highlands; *Third*, Survey, collect, process data, and assess practice for the period 2011–7/2025; *Fourth*, Forecast trends and propose viewpoints and solutions for political security assurance in the new context..

3. Object and scope of research

3.1 Research object: Political security assurance activities in the Central Highlands in the new context from the perspective of political science; clarifying actors, contents, mechanisms, and modalities of political security assurance, and the roles of actors within the political system, armed forces, and the People.

3.2. Phạm vi nghiên cứu

- Substantive scope: The dissertation focuses on theory and practice of political security assurance under globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, socio-economic transformation, ethnic–religious characteristics, administrative-unit rearrangement, non-traditional security

challenges, and subversive activities of hostile forces domestically and internationally. On that basis, the dissertation clarifies the contents, mechanisms, modalities, and determinants shaping political security assurance in the new conditions.

- Spatial scope: The five Central Highlands provinces Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Đắk Lắk, Đắk Nông, and Lâm Đồng—prior to July 2025.

- Temporal scope: The dissertation surveys, analyzes, and evaluates practice of political security assurance in the Central Highlands from 2011 to prior to July 2025.

4. Theoretical foundations and research methods

4.1 Theoretical and methodological foundations: The dissertation is grounded in Marxism–Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the Party’s viewpoints on protecting national security and maintaining political security in association with sustainable development and consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture,” especially in the strategic Central Highlands. It also applies theories of non-traditional security, security governance, political systems, and conflict management to analyze coordination mechanisms among actors and the control of complex political security issues.

4.2. Research methods

The dissertation employs an interdisciplinary approach in political science and combines methods to ensure scientific rigor, systematic structure, and practical relevance, including: practical review; analysis–synthesis; historical–logical method; descriptive and comparative statistics; sociological survey (500 questionnaires in 5 provinces; 486 valid responses; processed using SPSS); and expert consultation. Methods are applied flexibly, complementing each other and directly aligned with the content and structure of each chapter.

5. Novel contributions of the dissertation

First, the dissertation develops an integrated theoretical framework for political security assurance in the new context from a political science perspective, viewing political security assurance as a comprehensive activity of the entire political system and the People, linked to sustainable development of the Central Highlands.

Second, it provides empirical evidence from a 500-questionnaire survey (486 valid responses) across five Central Highlands provinces, clarifying the current situation, newly emerging issues, and the impacts of administrative-unit rearrangement, social change, and non-traditional security challenges.

Third, it identifies determinants shaping political security under the new conditions, clarifies the mechanism through which “governance gaps” emerge, and proposes a comprehensive and feasible solution package to firmly ensure political security in conjunction with sustainable development in the Central Highlands..

6. Significance of the dissertation topic

- *Theoretical significance:* ⁽¹⁾ Contributes to systematizing and developing theoretical foundations of national security and political security; ⁽²⁾ Clarifies the role of political security in the Central Highlands for socio-political stability and sustainable development; ⁽³⁾ Enhances understanding of the relationship between political security assurance and regional development in the new context.

- *Practical significance:* Provides empirical data for policy formulation; serves as reference material for teaching and research; and suggests feasible solutions for the political system and functional forces in governance and political security assurance in the Central Highlands.

7. Structure of the dissertation

In addition to the introduction, conclusion, list of scientific works, references, and appendices, the dissertation is structured into 4 chapters and 10 sections.

1.1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH WORKS

1.1.1. Studies on theoretical foundations and approaches to political security assurance

Representative works (Habermas, Buzan, Romm, Katzenstein, Freedman, Brzezinski, etc.) converge on the view that political security is a dynamic process dependent on social consensus, governance effectiveness, and adaptive capacity, and is strongly shaped by geo-political context and power competition. Domestic studies (Nguyễn Văn Hưởng, Phan Duy Quang, Mai Thị Hồng Liên, Tô Lâm, etc.) expand the content of national security/political security toward a comprehensive approach linking stability to development, the “people’s heart-and-mind posture,” ideological security, and cyberspace, while emphasizing the core role of the People’s Public Security forces and the participation of the entire political system.

1.1.2. Studies on the current situation of political security assurance in the Central Highlands

This body of work highlights the area’s specific characteristics; the complex ethnic–religious interplay; impacts of land, livelihoods, migration, and social welfare; FULRO-related activities and hostile forces’ exploitation of religion. Representative authors include Gerald C. Hickey, Nông Văn Lưu, Trần Xuân Dung, Nguyễn Văn Thuận, Hoàng Kông Tư, Nguyễn Văn Minh, Mai Thị Hồng Liên, Triệu Văn Bình, Nguyễn Khắc Khánh, and Thái Đại Ngọc. Research on grassroots political systems, mass mobilization, conflict management, and social welfare affirms that political security stability in the Central Highlands is determined primarily at the grassroots level; weak governance can transform contradictions into “hotspots.”

1.1.3. Studies on viewpoints, solutions, and models for political security assurance in the strategic Central Highlands

Works on security governance, the “people’s security posture,” internal political protection, inter-force coordination mechanisms, and risk prevention underscore the need for a comprehensive approach, mobilizing the strength of the entire people, with the Public Security/armed forces as the core, linking political security assurance to socio-economic development and consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.” Representative authors include Đặng Văn Hiếu, Bùi Quảng Bạ, Phí Đức Tuấn, Bùi Trung Thành, Mai Quang Hiện, Tô Lâm, Ksor H’Bơ Khấp, Nguyễn Sĩ Hòa, Hoàng Kông Tư, and Bùi Trung Hiếu. These studies also highlight new demands for strategic prevention under digital transformation and non-traditional security challenges.

1.2. VALUE OF THE REVIEWED STUDIES AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1.2.1. Value of reviewed studies

Existing research: (1) provides a theoretical foundation expanding political security content toward a comprehensive, multidimensional approach; (2) clarifies the impact of the international environment and power competition on national political security; (3) develops an approach suitable for Viet Nam, emphasizing the linkage of stability to sustainable development and the “people’s heart-and-mind posture”; (4) provides rich empirical material on the Central Highlands’ specificities and risk-generation mechanisms; (5) shapes a solution framework regarding the people’s security posture, internal protection, and inter-force coordination. However, most studies remain fragmented and lack an integrated approach situating the Central Highlands in the new context.

1.2.2. Research gaps addressed by the dissertation

First, a shortage of an integrated analytical framework fully reflecting the dynamics of political security in the Central Highlands as a complex whole. Second, a lack of comprehensive research on the roles and coordination mechanisms of the entire political system, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, village elders/prestigious persons, legitimate religious dignitaries, and the People alongside the armed forces/public security.

Third, limited application of modern theories (non-traditional security, risk governance, etc.); solutions tend to be incident-driven rather than strategically preventive.

Fourth, insufficient linkage from theory to practice and a solution system for a sufficiently long period, especially 2011–2025. Fifth, limited in-depth research on political security in cyberspace associated with the Central Highlands’ specificities and local-level information risk governance capacity.

Chapter 1 Summary

Chapter 1 systematically reviews domestic and international research on political security and political security assurance, indicating a shift from traditional security approaches to comprehensive ones linking political stability with social consensus, governance effectiveness, and sustainable development. Studies also confirm the growing impacts of the international context, digital transformation, and non-traditional challenges on political security. For the Central Highlands, many works clarify ethnic–religious specificities, risks of transforming development shortcomings into socio-political hotspots, and the decisive role of grassroots political systems and the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.” However, most remain fragmented and lack an integrated analytical framework in the new context. Accordingly, the dissertation adopts a comprehensive approach and develops a unified theoretical framework to be elaborated in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES OF ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS TODAY

2.1. CONCEPTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POLITICAL SECURITY ASSURANCE IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

2.1.1. Concepts of security, national security, political security, and political security in the Central Highlands

2.1.1.1. *Security and national security*

- *Security*: Security is approached as both a state of stability and safety and a proactive process of prevention, detection, and handling of risks threatening the existence and development of individuals, communities, and states. Security differs from order and safety in that it is tied to intentional threats directed at socio-political foundations and the legitimacy of power. In this dissertation, security is defined as a state of stability and safety of individuals, organizations, nations, and peoples—more broadly, humanity—within an environment in which threats are absent or effectively controlled.

- *National security*: A specific form of security within the framework of the nation-state, tied to the survival of a sovereign political community; it protects sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the political regime, while encompassing stability and sustainable development against traditional and non-traditional threats.

The *Vietnam People’s Public Security Encyclopedia (2005)* defines national security as “the stability and sustainable development of the social regime, independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and other important interests of a nation” [18, p. 24]. Legally, Article 3 of the 2004 Law on National Security stipulates that national security is “the stability and sustainable development of the socialist regime and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; the inviolability of independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the Fatherland” [92, p. 8].

Building on these perspectives and legal grounds, the dissertation consistently adopts the following definition: *national security is a state of stability and sustainable development in which the political regime, the State, independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and vital national interests are firmly protected against risks and challenges; this state is ensured under the Party’s leadership, the unified management of the State, and the participation of the entire political system and the People.*

2.1.1.2. *Political security and ensuring political security*

The *Vietnam People’s Public Security Encyclopedia (2005)* defines “*political security as “the stability and sustainable development of the political regime; a primary component of national security; including political stability, ideological foundations, political institutions, the Party’s leadership, internal security, and the ensured implementation of the Party’s guidelines and the*

State's laws and policies" [18, p. 20]. It also defines *protecting political security* as "activities to prevent, detect, combat, and foil all plots and actions infringing upon the stability and sustainable development of the political regime; a vital and regular task of the entire political system and society, in which the People's Public Security forces play the core role" [18, p. 20]. This approach distinguishes political security as the state to be achieved from ensuring political security as the political–social process of maintaining that state. [18, tr.20].

Accordingly, the dissertation defines: *political security* is the core component of national security, reflecting a state of stability and sustainable development of the political regime in which state power is organized and exercised effectively and efficiently; the ideological foundation, political institutions, socio-political order, and the People's trust in the Party and the State are safeguarded against all risks and challenges. *Ensuring political security* comprises the entire set of activities by the political system and the People to prevent, detect, deter, and address infringements, thereby maintaining and consolidating political security under specific historical–social conditions..

2.1.2. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands in the new context

Political security in the Central Highlands is understood as a firmly stable state of the political system in this strategic area, in which the Party's leadership, the State's governance effectiveness, and the great national unity among ethnic groups are ensured.

Political security assurance in the Central Highlands is a proactive, organized, legally empowered process aimed at preventing, combating, and deterring risks that infringe upon the political regime, independence, sovereignty, and social stability, based on mobilizing the roles of the entire political system, the armed forces, and the People.

Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands in the new context is a comprehensive, regular, and proactive process conducted by the entire political system, armed forces, and the People, under the Party's leadership, to prevent, detect, control, and promptly address risks threatening ideological foundations, political institutions, socio-political order, and inter-ethnic unity; thereby maintaining political stability, consolidating the "people's heart-and-mind posture," and creating a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the Central Highlands.

2.2. ACTORS, CONTENTS, MODALITIES, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

2.2.1. Actors and forces ensuring political security in the Central Highlands

Ensuring political security is the task of the entire political system and the People, in which:

- Party committees and authorities: direct leadership and governance actors; grassroots handling capacity determines stability.
- Armed forces (core: People's Public Security; coordinated with the Viet Nam People's Army, Border Guard, etc.): situation monitoring, forecasting, prevention, combat, incident handling; ensuring legality and effectiveness.
- Viet Nam Fatherland Front and mass organizations: mobilization, supervision, mediation; building social consensus.
- Village elders/prestigious persons and legitimate religious dignitaries: community "bridges," guiding public opinion, mediating, preventing incitement.
- The People: central actor; the "people's heart-and-mind posture" is the sustainable foundation of political security..

2.2.2. Core contents of political security assurance in the Central Highlands

Five main groups:

- Institutional security: uphold Party leadership and governance effectiveness; build a clean political system; power control; prevent degradation and "self-evolution," "self-transformation."
- Ideological–cultural security: protect ideological foundation; strengthen trust and consensus; proactive positive communication and refutation suitable to local conditions.
- Grassroots socio-political stability: integrate political security assurance with socio-economic development, poverty reduction, public services; dialogue and timely resolution of legitimate grievances.
- Governance of ethnic–religious–livelihood–welfare issues: respect freedom of belief; resolutely handle exploitation; consolidate great unity.

- Prevention of traditional and non-traditional security risks, especially in cyberspace: protect information infrastructure and data; address disinformation/harmful content; enhance digital skills for officials and citizens..

2.2.3. Modalities of political security assurance in the Central Highlands

- Implement a comprehensive approach: “building” is fundamental, “combating” is timely; focus on early, grassroots prevention.

- Party leadership and direction: concretize resolutions; inspection/supervision; link political security to development.

- State management: institutionalization, administration, inspection; governance of sensitive sectors (land, migration, religion, welfare, etc.).

- Professional operations of the armed forces: situation grasping, forecasting, handling “hotspots,” ensuring legality.

- Mass mobilization and consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture”: mobilization, mediation; leverage Front/organizations and prestigious persons.

- Communication and digital transformation: monitoring–analysis, targeted countering, official information provision, inter-sectoral coordination.

2.2.4. Criteria for evaluating political security assurance in the Central Highlands

2.2.4.1. Criteria by actor groups

- Cấp ủy/chính quyền: năng lực lãnh đạo–điều hành; cụ thể hóa chủ trương; kiểm tra–giám sát; phối hợp; xử lý kịp thời vấn đề nhạy cảm.

- Party committees/authorities: leadership–administration capacity; policy concretization; inspection; coordination; timely handling of sensitive issues.

- Armed forces (core: Public Security): situation grasping/forecasting; prevention–combat effectiveness; coordination; integration of operations with mass mobilization.

- Fatherland Front/mass organizations: mobilization/mediation effectiveness; supervision and social critique; social dialogue channels.

- People/community: self-governance participation; trust and cooperation; resilience against disinformation and incitement..

2.2.4.2. Criteria by content areas

- Institutions: smooth operation; discipline; governance effectiveness; inter-sectoral coordination.

- Ideology: communication/guidance effectiveness; information resilience; effectiveness in countering hostile viewpoints.

- Socio-economy linked to political security: mainstreaming political security into development; reducing grievances; livelihoods, jobs, welfare.

- Ethnic–religious: community cohesion; capacity to handle sensitive points; leveraging prestigious persons and legitimate dignitaries.

- Cyberspace: information governance capacity; handling disinformation/harmful content; improving digital skills.

2.2.4.3. Criteria for identifying limitations and classifying causes

Three groups: subjective (actor capacity, coordination), objective (area characteristics, social change), structural–institutional (policy shortcomings, decentralization, resources, coordination mechanisms).

2.2.4.5. Criteria for identifying emerging issues in the new context

Based on: (i) novelty and complexity of risks; (ii) spread speed and unpredictability, especially online; (iii) requirement to renew governance toward strategic prevention, inter-sectoral approaches, “hard–soft” combination, consolidating consensus and the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.”

2.3. FACTORS AFFECTING THE ENSURANCE OF POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

2.3.1. Area-Specific and Social Characteristics

2.3.1.1. Strategic Position and Requirements for Ensuring Political Security

The Central Highlands covers an area of approximately 54,474 km² (over 16% of the national territory), occupying the central position of the Southern Trường Sơn range and serving as

the “western rampart” of the country, with nearly 580 km of border adjoining Laos and Cambodia. Any security fluctuations in this region have the potential to spread to the South Central Coast, the Southeast region, and nationwide. The region possesses over 2 million hectares of basalt soil (approximately 66% of the national total), with bauxite reserves estimated at around 5.0 billion tons, accounting for nearly 50% of national reserves [12, p.2].

However, the vast and fragmented terrain, together with shortcomings in land, resource, and livelihood management, increases the risk of complaints, disputes, and conflicts of interest.

The administrative reorganization effective from 01 July 2025 (reducing the region to 3 provinces; Kon Tum merged into Quảng Ngãi) alters the governance space [11], thereby requiring that political security assurance be closely aligned with organizational restructuring, transparent resource allocation, and harmonization of community interests.

The region’s strategic position necessitates that political security assurance in the Central Highlands be considered within the overall framework of national defense, border security, and sustainable development..

2.3.1.2. Diverse Ethnic–Religious Characteristics

The Central Highlands has a population of approximately 5.9 million people, comprising 54 ethnic groups; ethnic minorities account for nearly 38%. The region has approximately 2.3 million religious followers (38.6% of the population), of whom ethnic minorities constitute about 89.5% of Protestants; Catholic adherents number over 1.15 million, with ethnic minorities accounting for 44.1% [M1, Appendix 5].

Spontaneous migration has altered demographic balances; during the period 2005–2017, there were 59,228 households/218,632 persons migrating outside planned arrangements; by the end of 2018, over 22,000 households had not yet been permanently resettled. From 2011 to June 2022, 574 cases of illegal border crossing involving more than 4,300 ethnic minority individuals were recorded [66]. Certain reactionary organizations have exploited ethnic–religious issues to incite separatism (incidents in 2001, 2004, 2008, 2023, etc.) [139], [140], [142].

The interwoven ethnic–religious structure constitutes both a foundation of great national unity and a latent risk of “politicization” if governance is weak..

2.3.2. Socio-Economic Factors with Direct Impact

The Politburo has affirmed that socio-economic development (KT–XH) constitutes the foundation for maintaining political stability (Resolution 10-NQ/TW; Conclusion 12-KL/TW; Resolution 23-NQ/TW). The region’s GRDP increased from VND 20.3 trillion (2002) to VND 287 trillion (2020), and is estimated at over VND 415 trillion (2024), with an average annual growth rate of 7.5–8%. However, its GDP contribution remains only about 3.5% of the national total; per capita GDP reaches approximately 58% of the national average..

2.3.2.1. Development Disparities

The poverty rate stands at 11.19%, of which ethnic minorities account for 27.98%; indigenous ethnic minorities account for 32.81% [141, pp.10–11]. In Đắk Lắk (2019), ethnic minority households represented 63.88% of the total poor households [139, pp.2–3]. Prolonged inequality easily generates comparative grievances and perceptions of relative deprivation, which can be exploited for incitement and directly affect political security.

2.3.2.2. Migration and Demographic Transformation

During 2011–June 2022, 523 households/2,783 Hmong individuals migrated to the Central Highlands; 309 households/1,370 persons returned or crossed the border illegally [121, pp.18–19]. Spontaneous migration in certain localities has exceeded management capacity; it has generated crime, land disputes, and difficulties in accessing public services, thereby creating “governance gaps.” If not managed coherently, migration increases political security risks from the grassroots level.

2.3.2.3. Limitations in Land and Resource Governance

Across the region, 180 agro-forestry companies manage 2,655,063 hectares of land (48.59% of total natural area). Approximately 52,940 households lack production land, including 32,006 ethnic minority households. During 2001–2018, 396 complex land disputes were recorded; land-

related complaints accounted for approximately 67.7% of total complaint and denunciation cases [16, pp.80–81].

Natural forest area currently stands at approximately 2,246,068 hectares; during 2016–2020, 312,416 hectares were lost, with timber reserves decreasing by more than 25.5 million m³ [50].

Land is intrinsically linked to livelihoods and community identity; non-transparent governance can transform economic conflicts into political security issues..

2.3.3. The Quality of Party Committee Leadership, the Effectiveness of State Governance, and Inter-Force Coordination as Decisive Factors in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

Practice demonstrates that where Party committees maintain close engagement with the people, local authorities exercise transparent governance, and coordination among the armed forces is tight and effective, socio-political stability is preserved. Conversely, weak governance leads to the accumulation of grievances, which hostile forces can exploit and “politicize.” Coordination mechanisms under Decree No. 03/2019/NĐ-CP, together with the effective promotion of the roles of village elders, reputable persons, and legitimate religious dignitaries, constitute essential conditions for consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.” Leadership capacity, governance effectiveness, and inter-force coordination ultimately determine the ability to absorb, manage, and resolve political security risks.

2.3.4. Subversive Activities of Hostile Forces, Combined with the Increasing Impact of Cyberspace, Intensify Complexity and Unpredictability, Posing New Challenges to Political Security Assurance

Cyberspace has transformed the methods of subversion: rapid dissemination, multi-platform dispersion, and heightened difficulty of control. The proportion of households with Internet access in the Central Highlands is approximately 63–65% (lower than the national level of over 75%); among ethnic minority households, Internet access stands at approximately 46%, while computer ownership is below 6%. During the period 2020–2023, more than 3,200 accounts and online groups disseminating distorted propaganda were detected and handled; over 60% were linked to overseas reactionary organizations.

The Cù Kuin incident (11 June 2023) revealed a subversive model combining “external – internal – cyberspace” elements, resulting in casualties and the prosecution of multiple subjects on terrorism charges. Contemporary political security risks exhibit non-linear characteristics, accumulating from information-related risks and the erosion of social trust..

2.3.5. Complex Developments in the Global and Regional Context, Together with the Escalation of Non-Traditional Security Challenges, Exert Indirect and Multi-Dimensional Impacts on Political Security Assurance in the Central Highlands

Fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices, intensifying strategic competition, and supply chain disruptions directly affect regional livelihoods. Forest degradation, climate change, drought, and transnational crime increase disputes and social risks; from 2011 to the present, 574 cases of illegal border crossing involving more than 4,300 ethnic minority individuals have occurred [66]. Exogenous factors only become serious challenges when internal governance capacity is insufficiently robust.

Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands is influenced by a composite of factors: strategic position, ethnic–religious structure, development disparities, migration, land governance, subversive activities, and non-traditional security challenges. However, the degree of risk ultimately depends decisively on the quality of leadership, the effectiveness of state governance, and the capacity for coordinated action in consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture” from the grassroots level.

Chapter 2 Summary

Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical foundation for studying political security assurance in the Central Highlands. It clarifies core concepts and approaches as a dynamic political–social process closely linked to the capacity of the State and the political system to prevent, control, and resolve risks threatening political stability. Political security assurance is defined as a

comprehensive and long-term undertaking conducted under the leadership of the Party, the management of the State, and the participation of the entire political system together with the People.

On this basis, the dissertation specifies the substantive content of within the distinctive context of the Central Highlands, where geo-strategic, ethnic, religious, ecological, and socio-economic development factors are closely intertwined. An analytical framework is developed encompassing the following domains: institutional security; ideological–cultural security; socio-economic stability associated with political security; ethnic and religious security; and political security in cyberspace, thereby highlighting the central role of the People and the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.”

From a practical perspective, the chapter analyzes the principal factors affecting political security in the Central Highlands, including its strategic position, ethnic–religious structure, development disparities, migration, land and resource governance, subversive activities, and the impact of cyberspace. It further elucidates the mechanism through which socio-economic and governance-related issues may transform into political security challenges when leadership and managerial capacity fail to meet emerging demands. This analysis provides the groundwork for assessing the current situation in the subsequent chapter..

CHAPTER 3

THE SITUATION OF ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN RECENT YEARS

3.1. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

3.1.1. Achievements in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

3.1.1.1. The Role of Key Actors in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

- The Leadership Role of Party Committees and Authorities at All Levels in Ensuring Political Security

Practical experience demonstrates that the leadership of Party committees and the effectiveness of state governance constitute decisive factors in ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. Major policy documents, including Resolution No. 44-NQ/TW, Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW (2018), Resolution No. 23-NQ/TW (2022), and Government Resolution No. 152/NQ-CP (2022), have created a unified framework integrating socio-economic development with national defense and national security. Provincial authorities have concretized these directives through mass mobilization programs, dialogue mechanisms, grievance settlement, human resource development, and sustainable poverty reduction initiatives.

Survey data indicate that 89.2 percent of officials rated leadership performance in ensuring political security as “fairly good” or “very good,” including 30.8 percent rating it “very good” [A1.1, Appendix 3]. Additionally, 88.0 percent evaluated the dissemination and implementation of Party resolutions as effective [A1.2, Appendix 3]; 84.1 percent assessed inter-sectoral coordination positively [A1.4, Appendix 3]; and 78.8 percent rated inspection and supervisory activities as effective [A1.3, Appendix 3]. From the public perspective, 46.0 percent expressed positive evaluations of local leadership in ensuring political security [A1.1, Appendix 4], while 69.2 percent reported regularly accessing information related to political security policies [A2.3, Appendix 4]. These findings confirm that unified Party leadership and effective state administration have played a central role in maintaining political stability in the region..

- The Role of the Armed Forces in Ensuring Political Security and Social Order and Safety

The armed forces serve as the core force in safeguarding political security and maintaining social order and safety in the Central Highlands. Their responsibilities include situation monitoring, prevention of emerging hotspots, crisis management, and strengthening the “people’s heart-and-mind posture.” Survey results show that 93.5 percent of officials affirmed that the armed forces maintain close relations with the population and provide effective support [B1.1, Appendix 3].

Moreover, 89.0 percent positively evaluated forecasting capacity [B1.2, Appendix 3], and 95.6 percent confirmed effective coordination among the People’s Public Security forces, the People’s Army of Viet Nam, and the militia and self-defense forces [B1.4, Appendix 3]. From the citizens’ perspective, 68.8 percent identified the armed forces as the principal force protecting political security [B1.10, Appendix 4], and 78.5 percent recognized effective inter-force coordination [B1.4, Appendix 4]. The armed forces therefore perform a dual function: safeguarding national security while consolidating social stability at the grassroots level..

- The Role of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and Socio-Political Organizations

The Viet Nam Fatherland Front functions as a central mechanism for mass mobilization, social supervision, and grassroots mediation. During the period 2019–2023, tens of thousands of “Great Solidarity Houses” were supported across the region. In Đắk Lắk Province alone, nearly 393.8 billion Vietnamese đồng were mobilized, and more than 454,000 square meters of land were voluntarily contributed. Survey findings indicate that 68.0 percent of citizens rated the role of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front as “good” or “very good” [C1.1, Appendix 4]. Additionally, 45.6 percent expressed “very high trust” in village elders and reputable persons [C1.9, Appendix 4]. Political security assurance in the Central Highlands has therefore been implemented through a community-based approach grounded in social participation...

- The Role of the People in Ensuring Political Security

The People increasingly participate proactively in ensuring political security. Survey results show that 69.2 percent regularly follow political security-related policies [A2.3, Appendix 4]; 62.8 percent evaluate community self-governance models as effective [A1.10, Appendix 4]; and 60.4 percent confirm the effectiveness of grassroots mediation mechanisms [D1.6, Appendix 4]. In cyberspace, 40.8 percent reported exposure to false information within the past twelve months; 37.2 percent reported such information to local officials; and 13.6 percent admitted sharing false information [D1.2, Appendix 4]. These findings indicate that the People constitute the central pillar of the all-people national security posture, although limitations in digital literacy remain evident.

3.1.1.2. The Current Situation of the Content and Modalities of Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

- Ensuring Institutional Security in the Central Highlands

In recent years, alongside socio-economic development, the political system in the Central Highlands has been progressively consolidated and has operated in a stable manner, thereby creating an important foundation for maintaining political security. This practice is consistent with the spirit of Resolution No. 23-NQ/TW (06 October 2022) of the Politburo, which emphasizes the requirement to maintain socio-political stability and to build a strong political system from the grassroots level. On this basis, provinces in the region have issued numerous programs and plans to consolidate organizational structures and enhance leadership and executive capacity, particularly at the grassroots level. Survey results indicate that 89.2 percent of officials assessed leadership and direction in ensuring political security as “fairly good” and “very good,” including 30.8 percent rating it “very good,” while the proportions rated “average” and “weak” were only 8.7 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively [A1.1, Appendix 3]. At the same time, 88.0 percent evaluated the dissemination and implementation of resolutions as having been conducted seriously and effectively [A1.2, Appendix 3]. These results reflect that institutional security stability is manifested not only in organizational form but also in the practical operation of the political system, consistent with the requirements set forth in Directive No. 23-CT/TW (2018) and Conclusion No. 21-KL/TW (2021).

Inspection, supervision, and inter-sectoral coordination have continued to be strengthened. Specifically, 78.8 percent of officials assessed inspection and supervision activities positively [A1.3, Appendix 3]; 84.1 percent evaluated inter-sectoral coordination as effective [A1.4, Appendix 3]. Regarding coordination mechanisms, 90.4 percent assessed the implementation of coordination regulations as good, including 35.9 percent rating it “very good” [A1.5, Appendix 3]; 94.8 percent positively evaluated the capacity to handle complex situations [A1.6, Appendix 3]; and 93.7 percent confirmed effective coordination among the People’s Public Security forces, the People’s Army of Viet Nam, and the militia and self-defense forces [A1.7, Appendix 3]. Expert assessments also indicate that strengthened information exchange, operational coordination, and scenario-based

exercises have enhanced the capacity to control political security risks in the region [M1.4, Appendix 5].

Institutional security in the Central Highlands has therefore been reinforced through unified Party leadership, effective state governance, and coordinated mechanisms among actors within the political system, contributing to improved prevention, early detection, and timely handling of risks, and limiting the emergence of political security “hotspots” in the area..

- *Ensuring Ideological Security in the Central Highlands*

Cultural and ideological security continues to be identified as a critical front in ensuring political security in the Central Highlands, consistent with the spirit of the Thirteenth National Party Congress and Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW (2018) on protecting the ideological foundation of the Party. Party committees and authorities at all levels in the region have synchronously implemented propaganda and political-ideological education activities, linked with ethnic policy, religious policy, and socio-economic development, with the aim of consolidating public trust and preventing complex risks to political security.

Survey results show that 90.9 percent of officials assessed propaganda activities as “fairly good” and “very good” (57.2 percent “fairly good,” 33.7 percent “very good”) [E1.1, Appendix 3]. At the same time, 86.9 percent positively evaluated activities aimed at combating and refuting erroneous and hostile viewpoints [E1.2, Appendix 3]. This indicates that ideological security is not limited to rebuttal activities, but also involves improving the quality of policy communication and strengthening political awareness among officials, Party members, and communities [M3.4, Appendix 7]. From the societal perspective, 46.0 percent of citizens rated the level of attention paid by authorities to political security as “good” and “very good,” while 32.4 percent rated it “average” [B1.3, Appendix 4]. Citizens primarily access information through official channels and community institutions such as the press, village meetings, hamlet meetings, and community activities [B2.1, Appendix 4]. However, the level of reception of rebuttal information on social media remains limited [A2.3; A2.4, Appendix 4], indicating the need to further innovate the content and methods of communication in order to enhance persuasiveness and social consensus.

Ensuring ideological security in the Central Highlands must therefore be closely linked with building the “people’s heart-and-mind posture,” combining “construction” and “struggle,” and promoting the role of village elders, reputable persons, religious dignitaries, and core grassroots forces, thereby creating a sustainable social foundation for political stability in the region [M3.4, Appendix 7].

- *Ensuring Socio-Economic Stability Associated with Political Security*

Socio-economic stability constitutes a foundational pillar of political security, particularly in a strategic area such as the Central Highlands. The viewpoint of closely integrating socio-economic development with strengthening national defense and national security is affirmed in Resolution No. 28-NQ/TW (2013), Resolution No. 23-NQ/TW (2022), and concretized through Resolution No. 152/NQ-CP (2022). Accordingly, development is not only an economic objective but also a solution for preventing risks of political instability from within.

Practical experience demonstrates that integrating the task of ensuring political security into development programs has yielded clear results. The regional economy has continued to grow, with a positive structural transformation driven by high-technology agriculture, hydropower, mining, and agricultural product processing. At the same time, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social welfare have been improved. Under Program 135 alone, 3,835 billion Vietnamese đồng were allocated; housing support was provided to 56,268 households; residential land was allocated to 17,907 households (713.38 hectares); production land was allocated to 72,695 households (35,447.53 hectares); 1,729 clean water facilities were constructed; and vocational conversion support was provided to 6,575 households. These outcomes have contributed to reducing underlying causes of social conflict and strengthening grassroots stability.

Survey results indicate that 88.4 percent of officials assessed socio-economic development as having a positive impact on socio-political stability [D1.1, Appendix 3], while 91.2 percent of citizens shared this assessment [B1.4, Appendix 4]. This demonstrates that socio-economic development has become an integral component of political security rather than a separate domain.

An important factor is the building of the “people’s heart-and-mind posture” during the development process. Specifically, 97.2 percent of citizens positively evaluated the role of village elders and reputable persons (56.4 percent “very good”) [B2.2, Appendix 4], and 98.4 percent of officials affirmed that this group plays an important role in mobilization and grassroots mediation [A3.1, Appendix 3]. In the religious sphere, 95.6 percent of officials and 73.2 percent of citizens positively evaluated the role of religious dignitaries in maintaining stability [E2.2, Appendix 3; B3.1, Appendix 4]. Training of ethnic minority cadres has also been strengthened: 12,024 individuals received upper secondary education training; 6,239 completed intermediate-level political theory training; 10,870 received professional training; 5,744 received management training; 18,779 village and hamlet cadres were provided with training in knowledge of security and public order; and 5,712 commune-level police officers were trained. Furthermore, 89.6 percent of officials assessed the participation of ethnic minority cadres as “good” and “very good” [A4.1, Appendix 3]. This has contributed to enhancing the capacity of the grassroots political system in preventing political security risks.

- Ensuring Ethnic Security and Religious Security

Ensuring ethnic security and religious security constitutes a foundation for socio-political stability and for maintaining political security in the Central Highlands, consistent with Resolution No. 23-NQ/TW (06 October 2022) on strengthening unity and consolidating the “people’s heart-and-mind posture” from the grassroots level. In practice, functional forces have proactively struggled against and neutralized activities exploiting ethnic and religious issues for subversive purposes, dismantling illegal organizational structures and unlawful religious groups. Since 2001, authorities have detected and dismantled 300 organizational frameworks and 439 “Tin Lành Đêga” groups in Gia Lai and Đắk Lắk Provinces; the “Hà Môn” case has been largely resolved [143, p.14]; 28 FULRO organizational frameworks have been eliminated; and 572 individuals have been persuaded to renounce “Tin Lành Đêga.” This reflects a shift toward a proactive approach combining professional security measures with mass mobilization.

Ethnic policies and development programs for ethnic minority areas have been implemented relatively synchronously, linked with cultural preservation efforts (UNESCO-recognized gong culture; restoration of traditional communal houses; preservation of epics; revival of scripts; and multilingual communication). Survey results show that socio-economic development is perceived as a “pillar” of stability: 86 percent of officials assessed its impact positively [D1.7, Appendix 3], while 59.2 percent of citizens shared this view [D1.7, Appendix 4]. Therefore, ethnic security should be approached as a form of social governance based on consensus and coordinated action within the system [M2.3, Appendix 6].

The roles of village elders, hamlet heads, and reputable persons continue to be prominent in mobilization, mediation, early handling of emerging issues, and the development of self-governance models. Specifically, 88.5 percent of officials evaluated their role as “fairly good” and “very good” [E1.4, Appendix 3]; 53 percent of citizens expressed “good” and “very good” levels of trust [E1.4, Appendix 4]; and 45.6 percent expressed “very high trust” in the role of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, mass organizations, village elders, reputable persons, and religious dignitaries in maintaining community stability [C1.9, Appendix 4].

Religious life is generally stable; recognized religious organizations operate within the framework of the law. Survey results indicate that 81.7 percent of officials positively evaluated the role of religious dignitaries in guiding followers to comply with Party guidelines and state laws [C1.4, Appendix 3]. Citizens also provided positive assessments: 66.8 percent regarding their contribution to solidarity [C1.5, Appendix 4] and 72.8 percent regarding their encouragement of the principle of “living a good secular life and practicing religion well” [C1.4, Appendix 4]. Overall, this demonstrates the effectiveness of an approach combining governance by law with the mobilization of community and mainstream religious resources.

- Ensuring Political Security in Cyberspace

Cyberspace directly affects public perception and socio-political stability. The Law on Cybersecurity (2018) provides the legal foundation for implementing proactive management, guidance, and prevention measures. Survey results among officials indicate that governance capacity

in cyberspace has been formed: 75.7 percent positively evaluated the effectiveness of ensuring cybersecurity [D1.9, Appendix 3], and 72.8 percent positively assessed efforts to prevent and combat fake news and harmful information [D1.10, Appendix 3]. From the citizens' perspective, 53.2 percent positively evaluated the level of information safety on social media [D1.9, Appendix 4]. Within the past twelve months, 40.8 percent reported encountering false information; 37.2 percent reported it to village or commune officials; and 13.6 percent admitted having shared false information [D1.2, Appendix 4]. This indicates that risks remain present, although social responses have become more cautious.

Digital capacity among grassroots officials has been significantly strengthened: 96.8 percent positively evaluated training in digital technology application skills; and 95.2 percent positively evaluated skills in identifying and handling fake news [F6.2, Appendix 3]. Accordingly, sustainable effectiveness depends on coordination among the legal framework, the capacity of the political system, and the participation of citizens [M1.2, Appendix 5; M2.3, Appendix 6], in which habits of verification and timely reporting play a decisive role [M3.4, Appendix 7].

3.1.1.3. Causes of the Achievements in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, the comprehensive and direct leadership of Party committees, together with the effectiveness and efficiency of state administration by authorities at all levels in the Central Highlands, constitutes the decisive factor in ensuring political security in the region. Unified leadership, consistent direction, and disciplined implementation have created coherence in policy execution and organizational coordination, thereby maintaining political stability.

Second, socio-economic development has become a solid foundation for ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. Sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and improvements in social welfare have reduced structural sources of instability and strengthened the material basis for long-term political stability.

Third, the consolidation and enhancement of the operational effectiveness of the grassroots political system have made an important contribution to ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. Strengthening organizational structures, improving the quality of cadres, and enhancing governance capacity at the grassroots level have increased the system's ability to detect, prevent, and resolve emerging risks at an early stage.

Fourth, the core role of the armed forces constitutes a direct factor in ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. Through proactive situation monitoring, prevention of emerging hotspots, maintenance of social order and safety, and close coordination with local authorities and communities, the armed forces have served as the backbone in safeguarding national security and maintaining political stability.

Fifth, promoting the "people's heart-and-mind posture" and enhancing the role of reputable persons within communities have created a strong social foundation for ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. The active participation of village elders, religious dignitaries, mass organizations, and trusted community figures has strengthened social consensus, enhanced public trust, and reinforced the social legitimacy of governance efforts.

Sixth, well-coordinated inter-sectoral mechanisms have enabled flexible and effective responses in ensuring political security in the Central Highlands. Close coordination among actors within the political system, particularly in handling complex and sensitive issues, has improved responsiveness, minimized institutional fragmentation, and enhanced the overall effectiveness of political security governance in the region..

3.1.2. Limitations and Their Causes in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

3.1.2.1. Major Limitations in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, the quality and consistency of the grassroots political system remain limited

The grassroots political system is the frontline for disseminating policy guidelines, monitoring the situation, and addressing emerging issues in the Central Highlands. Although survey results show a relatively high level of positive assessments (86.4% "fairly good/very good" regarding leadership and direction; 84.7% regarding the dissemination and implementation of

resolutions) [A1.1, Appendix 3], a prominent “bottleneck” is that the capacity of grassroots officials remains uneven. Specifically, 86.8% of officials agree that the capacity of a segment of officials is still limited [E2.1, Appendix 3], of which 58.9% consider the limitations to be “significant/very significant” [F1.1, Appendix 3].

This limitation is clearly reflected in socio-cultural adaptability: 46.8% of officials face difficulties due to insufficient understanding of the customs of ethnic minority groups [F5.4, Appendix 3]; 96.8% affirm the need to strengthen training in customary knowledge, languages, and multicultural working skills [F6.4, Appendix 3]. Citizens report similar concerns: 88.8% agree that seconded or reinforced officials do not understand local customs and languages [E3.4, Appendix 4]; the proportion assessing the understanding of customs as “good/very good” is only 33.6% [F1.2, Appendix 4]. Experts warn that insufficient knowledge of the locality can create “misalignment” when handling sensitive issues (ethnicity, religion, land, migration), thereby undermining trust [M1.2, Appendix 5; M2.3, Appendix 6; M3.4, Appendix 7]. The grassroots political system has improved, yet its quality remains uneven; disparities in capacity and the degree of “accurate and appropriate” engagement with communities reduce the effectiveness of prevention and early-stage resolution.

Second, shortcomings persist in social governance of sensitive fields such as land, ethnicity, religion, and spontaneous migration.

Sensitive fields are directly tied to people’s interests and are intertwined with historical, ethnic, and religious factors, thus easily affecting political security. Land remains a latent hotspot: land-related complaints account for a very large share; during 2001–2018, the region recorded nearly 400 complex cases, mainly related to production land for ethnic minority groups. In the survey of officials, 83.3% agree that land/ethnicity/religion governance remains inadequate [E2.2, Appendix 3]. Citizens rate land transparency as “good/very good” at only 47.6%; 31.6% rate it “average/weak”; 21.6% indicate “do not know/unclear” [A1.7, Appendix 4]—reflecting limitations in information disclosure and consensus-building.

Regarding religion: there remained unrecognized worship places (concentrated in Kon Tum and Đắk Lắk) prior to July 2025; 16.2% of officials assess the implementation of ethnicity–religion policy as only “average” [D1.4, Appendix 3]. Among citizens, 64.8% rate positively the facilitation of lawful religious practice, but 25.6% rate it “average” and 14.0% rate it “weak” [A1.8, Appendix 4]. Religious activities involving foreign or non-governmental elements and certain religious orders impose higher governance demands; handling arising issues in some places remains hesitant or unskilled [M1.2, Appendix 5; M3.4, Appendix 7].

Regarding spontaneous migration: it puts pressure on land, social welfare, and population administration; by 2018, more than 22,000 spontaneously migrating households had been resettled but risks persisted. Among officials, 57.7% agree and 18.6% completely agree that spontaneous migration and illegal border crossing remain complex [E2.5, Appendix 3]; among citizens, 41.2% agree and 21.2% completely agree [E3.5, Appendix 4]. These interlinked shortcomings create “sensitive points” in social governance; while largely localized, they may accumulate into risks if inter-sectoral coordination and grassroots capacity are not strengthened.

Third, limitations in the qualifications and capacities of officials—especially officials from ethnic minority groups—affect the task of ensuring political security in the Central Highlands.

Grassroots officials determine the effectiveness of situation monitoring and handling complex issues, yet 91.8% of officials acknowledge that the capacity of a segment of officials remains limited [E2.1, Appendix 3]. Regarding digital transformation: only 14.0% “master and have implemented”; 42.0% “have basic knowledge”; 8.0% “have not grasped” [A3.4, Appendix 3]. Regarding procedures for handling hotspots: 33.2% only “have basic knowledge” and 3.0% “have not grasped” [B3.1, Appendix 3].

Citizens assess the capacity of officials from ethnic minority groups as differentiated: 43.2% rate participation in management at the “average” level; only 16.0% rate it “very good” [C1.6, Appendix 4]. Regarding handling sensitive situations, 21.2% still rate it “weak/average” [C1.7, Appendix 4]. In addition, reinforced officials show “cultural–linguistic mismatch”: 46.0% of citizens agree and 4.0% completely agree [E3.4, Appendix 4]. Experts argue that training and

capacity-building have not kept pace with new requirements, especially in the face of non-traditional security risks and the exploitation of cyberspace [M1.3, Appendix 5; M2.3, Appendix 6; M3.4, Appendix 7]. The limitations are structural: professional competence, situation-handling skills, digital capacity, and “locality competence” remain uneven.

Fourth, ensuring political security in the Central Highlands is affected by the plots, tactics, and activities of hostile forces and various forms of crime.

The Central Highlands is a key area that has long been exploited; after FULRO, remnants and exile networks continue to be leveraged. Incidents in 2001, 2004, and 2008 demonstrate the risk of converting socio-economic grievances into political instability. Currently, 86.0% of officials assess that activities exploiting ethnicity/religion/democracy/human rights have a “significant/very significant” impact [D1.1, Appendix 3]. A prominent tactic is cyberspace: 62.9% of officials identify the exploitation of social media; 21.8% consider it combined with online operations and direct networking [E2.2, Appendix 3]. Among citizens, 40.8% have encountered distorted information in the past 12 months; 11% assess the handling of disinformation as “weak” [D1.10, Appendix 4].

Drug-related crime, smuggling, illegal exploitation, prolonged land disputes, and other problems create an environment susceptible to manipulation. The attack on 11/6/2023 in Cư Kuin (Đắk Lắk) shows the risk of extremist violence and the conversion of social contradictions into political violence. Experts emphasize a long-term strategy of subversion, exploiting “gaps” in grassroots governance [M1.2, Appendix 5; M2.3, Appendix 6; M3.4, Appendix 7]. The risks are multidimensional, tactics are flexible, and the interaction among crime, social discontent, and online propaganda increases the sensitivity of political security.

Fifth, limitations persist in ensuring political security in cyberspace and in digital communications.

Cyberspace creates a new “security space”: it both disseminates official information and is exploited for distortion and incitement. Officials’ assessments are relatively positive but uneven: 24.3% rate the effectiveness of ensuring cybersecurity as “average” [D1.9, Appendix 3]; 25.9% rate efforts to prevent and counter disinformation/harmful content as “average” [D1.10, Appendix 3]. Citizens are more cautious: only 53.2% rate information safety on social media as “fairly good/very good”; 39.6% rate it “average”; 7.2% rate it “not good” [D1.9, Appendix 4]; 38.4% are “very worried” about disinformation [D1.10, Appendix 4].

The capacity to identify information remains limited: 40.8% have encountered misinformation in the past 12 months; 13.6% admit having shared disinformation [D1.1; D1.2, Appendix 4]. Regarding officials: only 26.9% “master and implement” cybersecurity protection plans; 27.3% “have basic knowledge”; 3.3% “have not grasped” [B3.2, Appendix 3]. Regular training and handling remain insufficient: 47.1% of units have not conducted training on disinformation handling and media crisis management; 33.7% have not implemented the handling of harmful content in the past year [D3.3; D3.7, Appendix 3]. Moreover, 79.1% of officials agree/completely agree that disinformation handling is not effective [E2.3, Appendix 3]. These limitations lie in implementation capacity, proactive early-warning mechanisms, community digital literacy, and the gap between the speed of information diffusion and the speed of institutional response..

3.1.2.2. Causes of the Limitations in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

Thứ nhất, nguyên nhân chủ quan

First, subjective causes.

Grassroots officials’ capacity remains insufficient, especially “locality competence” (91.8% of officials acknowledge limitations) [E2.1, Appendix 3]; 46.8% of officials face difficulties due to lack of knowledge of customs [D1.6, Appendix 3]; citizens also note that reinforced officials do not understand local culture and language [B1.4, Appendix 4].

Approaches tend to prioritize case-by-case handling and are deficient in forecasting and prevention: the proportion of units without training and without disinformation handling remains high [D3.3; D3.7, Appendix 3]; citizens still encounter/share disinformation [B2.1; B2.3, Appendix 4].

Inter-sectoral coordination remains unsynchronized: 77.6% of officials agree that coordination mechanisms are ineffective [E2.2, Appendix 3]; manifestations include lack of

information-sharing mechanisms, overlapping functions, and language barriers [E2.3, Appendix 3]; citizens rarely perceive clearly the effectiveness of coordination [B1.7, Appendix 4].

The governance capacity for cyberspace remains limited: only 26.9% of officials “master” cybersecurity plans [D2.5, Appendix 3]; citizens worry about disinformation [B2.5, Appendix 4].

Discipline and public-service accountability are not strict in some places, causing delays in handling sensitive issues, allowing small contradictions to accumulate [D1.8, Appendix 3].

Second, objective causes.

The region’s vast, fragmented terrain and dispersed population increase governance costs and response lags; 63.4% of officials consider this a significant obstacle [A1.1, Appendix 3].

A multi-ethnic, multi-religious structure and demographic fluctuations increase sensitivity; 76.5% of officials believe it is more complex than other areas [D1.1, Appendix 3].

Socio-economic development remains uneven and livelihoods are precarious, creating social pressure; officials assess a significant impact of socio-economic factors on political security [E2.2, Appendix 3].

Climate change, resource degradation, and spontaneous migration generate new contradictions and administrative pressure; both officials and citizens assess spontaneous migration as still complex [D1.1, Appendix 3; B1.4, Appendix 4].

The information environment and social media change rapidly, while community digital skills remain uneven: 40.8% of citizens have encountered misinformation [D1.1, Appendix 4].

Third, structural–institutional causes.

Land/ethnicity/religion policies are not sufficiently flexible for the specific conditions of the Central Highlands: 55.6% of officials assess the shortcomings as “significant” [E3.2, Appendix 3]; citizens rate land transparency as “good/very good” at only 47.6%, while “unclear” accounts for 21.6% [A1.7, Appendix 4].

Decentralization and multi-level coordination remain unclear and ineffective: 77.6% of officials agree that coordination mechanisms are not synchronized [E2.2, Appendix 3], reducing rapid response [M2.3, Appendix 6]. Implementation resources are limited: 62.8% of officials assess resource shortages as a significant difficulty [D1.1, Appendix 3]; cybersecurity capacity is difficult to improve without adequate conditions [D2.5, Appendix 3]. Governance models remain heavily administrative and reactive, and have not adapted to complex risks; 60.7% of officials believe disinformation handling is ineffective [E2.2, Appendix 3]. Public disclosure, transparency, and policy communication are not timely, reducing social consensus: 58.9% of officials agree/completely agree that grassroots information is not timely [E2.2, Appendix 3].

3.2. ISSUES RAISED FOR ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE COMING PERIOD

First, the requirement to firmly maintain political security in the context where ethnic and religious issues remain sensitive and susceptible to exploitation.

Second, the requirement to enhance the effectiveness of state governance and grassroots-level problem-solving capacity with respect to socio-economic issues, land management, and spontaneous migration

Third, the requirement to proactively prevent and defeat subversive activities in the context of deepening international integration and the increasingly pervasive impact of cyberspace.

Fourth, the requirement to innovate thinking and methods of political security governance under new conditions..

Chapter 3 Summary

On the basis of the established theoretical framework on political security, Chapter 3 has focused on analyzing the current situation of ensuring political security in the Central Highlands during the period 2011–2025, in a context characterized by intertwined fluctuations between traditional security and non-traditional security factors.

The analysis indicates that the guidelines and policies of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and the State concerning the protection of national security, the strengthening of national defense and national security, and the promotion of socio-economic development in the Central Highlands have been implemented in a relatively synchronized manner. Political security has been

fundamentally maintained; socio-political stability has been ensured; the great national unity bloc has continued to be consolidated; and numerous plots and subversive activities conducted by hostile forces have been promptly detected and prevented. The roles of the political system, the armed forces, and the People in ensuring political security have increasingly been promoted, particularly at the grassroots level.

However, practice also demonstrates that ensuring political security in the Central Highlands continues to face structural and long-term limitations. Several social contradictions related to land, forests, livelihoods, ethnicity, and religion have not yet been fundamentally resolved. The governance capacity of the grassroots political system remains uneven; coordination mechanisms are at times and in some places not sufficiently tight; and the work of situation monitoring, forecasting, and risk prevention has not kept pace with new requirements, especially in the face of the growing impact of non-traditional security challenges and cyberspace. These limitations contain latent risks that may erode the social foundations of political security if not timely recognized and effectively addressed.

From the analysis of both the achieved results and the existing limitations and their causes, Chapter 3 identifies the need for a new approach to ensuring political security in the Central Highlands—an approach oriented toward stability governance, with prevention as the primary focus, early intervention from the grassroots level, and close integration with sustainable socio-economic development. This constitutes the direct practical basis for Chapter 4 to propose orientations and a comprehensive system of solutions for ensuring political security in the Central Highlands in the new context..

Chapter 4

PERSPECTIVES AND SOLUTIONS FOR ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE NEW CONTEXT

4.1. FORECAST OF THE SITUATION AFFECTING THE ENSURING OF POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE NEW CONTEXT

4.1.1. Forecast of the International Situation and Trends Affecting the Ensuring of Political Security in the Central Highlands

In the coming period, the international environment will continue to be uncertain, with increasing strategic competition among major powers, the global economy containing numerous risks, and non-traditional security challenges evolving in complex ways. Cyberspace and transnational media will continue to develop strongly, increasing the risk of the dissemination of false and distorted information, thereby affecting public perception and social trust. International impacts on political security are indirect, cumulative, and long-term in nature, requiring enhanced forecasting capacity and risk governance.

4.1.2. Forecast of the Domestic Situation Affecting the Ensuring of Political Security in the Central Highlands

Domestically, the process of restructuring regional development, reforming the administrative apparatus, implementing digital transformation, and improving institutions will create both opportunities and challenges for political security in the Central Highlands. Economic fluctuations, disparities in interests, livelihood risks, limitations in grassroots governance, or policy delays may generate social grievances if not addressed in a timely manner. The quality of the grassroots cadre contingent and the capacity to manage the information environment play a decisive role in consolidating trust and preventing risks of instability.

4.1.3. Forecast of the Trend in Transforming the Methods of Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

The method of ensuring political security in the Central Highlands tends to shift from a model primarily focused on case-by-case handling toward risk governance and early, proactive prevention; from a single-sector administrative approach toward inter-sectoral and inter-regional coordination; and from management confined to physical territory toward governance that

encompasses both digital space and social perception. At the same time, the role of the People, reputable persons, and community institutions is increasingly promoted as an important component of the all-people national security posture and as a foundation for long-term stability.

4.2. PERSPECTIVES ON ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE NEW CONTEXT

4.2.1. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands must be placed under the absolute and direct leadership in all aspects of the Party committees and Party organizations, in close association with the unified and effective management and administration of authorities at all levels.

4.2.2. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands must be implemented in a comprehensive and synchronized manner, closely linked with socio-economic development and with the harmonious resolution of ethnic and religious issues.

4.2.3. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands must be proactive, early, and from a distance, taking prevention as the primary approach, and must avoid passivity or surprise in all situations.

4.2.4. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands must promote the combined strength of the entire political system and the role of the People.

4.2.5. Ensuring political security in the Central Highlands must be approached in an integrated manner that combines traditional security, non-traditional security, and digital space governance.

4.3. SOLUTIONS FOR ENSURING POLITICAL SECURITY IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS IN THE NEW CONTEXT

4.3.1. Strengthening the Leadership Role of the Communist Party and Enhancing the Governance Capacity of Authorities at All Levels in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

4.3.1.1. Improving the Quality of Leadership and Direction of Party Committees and Party Organizations in the Task of Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands in the New Context

First, renewing leadership thinking toward a risk governance approach that is proactive, prevention-oriented, and grassroots-centered.

Second, improving the quality of the promulgation and organization of the implementation of resolutions in the direction of “closely adhering to the locality, addressing the right issues, and clearly defining responsibilities.”

Third, closely linking leadership in ensuring political security with leadership in socio-economic development and the consolidation of national defense and national security.

Fourth, improving the quality of the contingent of leading cadres, especially at the grassroots level in the new context.

Fifth, strengthening inspection and supervision, and promoting accountability and exemplary responsibility in relation to incidents concerning political security occurring in the locality.

4.3.1.2. Perfecting and Enhancing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of State Management and Administration of Authorities at All Levels in Organizing the Implementation of the Task of Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, renewing the management of sensitive fields such as land, ethnicity, and religion in the direction of publicity and transparency, strengthening dialogue, and ensuring the lawful rights and interests of the People.

Second, enhancing professional competence, governance skills, and public service ethics of grassroots government officials.

Third, modernizing state governance in association with digital transformation and strengthening cyberspace management, ensuring data security, and proactively orienting information.

Fourth, perfecting inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, clearly identifying focal points, responsibilities, and handling procedures in resolving complex and sensitive cases.

Fifth, establishing and operating an early warning mechanism for risks to political security from the grassroots level, based on an indicator system and regular, continuous situation monitoring.

4.3.1.3. 3. Renewing Inspection, Supervision, Discipline, and Administrative Order in the Direction of Risk Governance and Early Prevention from the Grassroots Level

First, shifting from case-based inspection to risk-point-based inspection, focusing on sensitive fields and localities with potential instability risks.

Second, associating the responsibility of heads of agencies and units with indicators reflecting the level of local stability, considering this a criterion for evaluating task performance.

Third, ensuring synchronization between Party discipline, administrative discipline, and legal handling, avoiding gaps or overlaps in the handling of violations.

Fourth, substantively monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of remedial actions after inspection, taking social stability and the satisfaction of the People as measurement criteria.

Fifth, promoting the application of digital transformation in inspection and supervision to enhance the effectiveness of ensuring political security in the new context.

4.3.2. Linking the Ensuring of Political Security with Socio-Economic Development and the Harmonious Resolution of Ethnic and Religious Issues from the Grassroots Level

4.3.2.1. Closely Combining the Ensuring of Political Security with Socio-Economic Development

First, integrating the requirements of ensuring political security from the stage of planning, appraisal, and implementation of development programs and projects, especially in sensitive fields.

Second, focusing on thoroughly resolving bottlenecks related to land, forests, and livelihoods of ethnic minority communities, limiting the accumulation of social contradictions.

Third, improving the quality of development governance and implementing substantive democracy at the grassroots level, considering this a mechanism for preventing risks to political security.

Fourth, ensuring digital security and data safety during the digital transformation process, preventing risks arising from cyberspace.

Fifth, taking human security and the consolidation of the “people’s security posture” as the fundamental and long-term foundation for political stability.

4.3.2.2. Improving Governance Quality and Resolving Emerging Issues from the Grassroots Level

First, building a proactive social governance mechanism that forecasts and prevents risks from the grassroots level.

Second, standardizing procedures for receiving, classifying, and promptly resolving recommendations and complaints of the People.

Third, promoting the role of traditional institutions such as village elders and reputable persons in mediation and community stabilization.

Fourth, standardizing the capacity of commune-level officials and promoting the application of digitalization in grassroots governance.

Fifth, integrating grassroots governance with sustainable development goals in association with strengthening national defense and national security.

4.3.2.3. Proactively and Effectively Resolving Ethnic and Religious Issues Arising from the Grassroots Level

First, identifying ethnic and religious affairs as long-term strategic tasks closely linked with socio-economic development and the consolidation of national defense and national security.

Second, prioritizing the transparent and thorough handling of land and forest issues, ensuring harmonized interests and long-term stability.

Third, implementing ethnic policies in an inclusive manner, narrowing regional and ethnic disparities, and improving the living standards of ethnic minority communities.

Fourth, ensuring freedom of belief and religion within the framework of the Constitution and the law, in association with strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of state management.

Fifth, promoting the role of reputable persons and religious dignitaries and strengthening synchronized coordination of the entire political system in resolving ethnic and religious issues.

4.3.3. Proactively Preventing and Firmly Grasping the Situation, Avoiding Passivity or Surprise in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

4.3.3.1. Improving the Quality of Situation Monitoring, Analysis, Forecasting, and Strategic Advisory Work on Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, fundamentally renewing the approach to situation monitoring regarding political security in the locality.

Second, enhancing strategic and inter-sectoral forecasting capacity based on multidimensional and interconnected data.

Third, standardizing strategic advisory procedures to ensure specificity, feasibility, and practical action plans.

Fourth, clearly identifying “risk thresholds” in each field to activate timely and appropriate intervention measures.

Fifth, perfecting inter-regional and inter-locality coordination mechanisms associated with the application of science and technology and digital transformation in situation monitoring and forecasting of political security.

4.3.3.2. Strengthening Mechanisms for Early Detection and Timely Handling of Risks and Complex Factors Affecting Political Security

First, building and operating an early warning system on political security based on specific and easily monitored risk indicators in the locality.

Second, clearly identifying responsibilities, unifying direction, and determining focal points for handling when complex cases arise.

Third, prioritizing dialogue, mediation, and ensuring the lawful rights and interests of the People before applying conflict-handling measures.

Fourth, implementing a mandatory review and experience-drawing mechanism after each complex case in order to perfect governance procedures.

4.3.3.3. Ensuring Political Security in Cyberspace in Association with Improving Digital Literacy for the People of the Central Highlands

First, shifting from technical handling to comprehensive governance of cyberspace within the overall framework of social governance.

Second, proactively providing timely and transparent official information when sensitive issues arise.

Third, improving digital literacy for the People, especially in ethnic minority areas.

Fourth, promoting the role of village elders, reputable persons, and religious dignitaries in orienting public opinion in the digital environment.

Fifth, building safe community models in cyberspace associated with the practical interests of the People.

Sixth, strengthening the capacity of state agencies and the armed forces to ensure cybersecurity, protecting data infrastructure and response capability in all situations.

4.3.4. Promoting the Combined Strength of the Entire Political System and the Role of the People in Ensuring Political Security

4.3.4.1. Perfecting Inter-Sectoral, Multi-Level, and Inter-Regional Coordination Mechanisms within the Political System in Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, clearly defining the role and responsibility of each subject within the political system on the foundation of the unified leadership of the Party committees.

Second, shifting from case-based coordination to regular coordination by locality and by groups of sensitive issues.

Third, standardizing coordination regulations associated with mechanisms for evaluating implementation results.

Fourth, strengthening regional linkage within the Central Highlands in identifying and handling inter-provincial and inter-locality risks.

Fifth, promoting the application of digital technology in coordination and regularly reviewing practice to perfect operational mechanisms.

4.3.4.2. Promoting the Role of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, Mass Organizations, and Reputable Persons at the Grassroots Level in Communication, Mobilization, Mediation, and Public Opinion Orientation; Consolidating the “People’s Security Posture”

First, renewing the content, forms, and methods of communication and mobilization of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and mass organizations in a practical and people-oriented direction associated with specific interests.

Second, promoting the role of village elders, hamlet and village heads, reputable persons, and religious dignitaries as core forces in mediation and public opinion orientation.

Third, linking mass mobilization work with the timely resolution of legitimate recommendations and complaints of the People.

Fourth, expanding communication and mobilization activities into cyberspace and proactively orienting digital public opinion.

Fifth, consolidating the “people’s security posture” as a firm social foundation for ensuring political security.

4.3.4.3. Renewing and Improving the Quality of the Movement of All People to Protect National Security in Association with Local Characteristics and Sensitive Issue Groups

First, shifting from formalistic movement-based approaches to substantive approaches, taking effectiveness in maintaining political security at the grassroots level as the measurement criterion.

Second, designing models suitable to the characteristics of each village, hamlet, and community and each group of sensitive issues.

Third, replicating self-governance models associated with resolving land, ethnic, religious, and public opinion issues.

Fourth, integrating the movement with socio-economic development and the ensuring of national defense and national security.

Fifth, developing the movement of all people to protect national security in cyberspace.

4.3.5. Improving the Quality of the Cadre Contingent, Especially Grassroots Cadres and Cadres Who Are Ethnic Minority Persons

4.3.5.1. Improving the Quality of Planning, Training, and Fostering in Association with Mechanisms for Detection, Attraction, Utilization, Remuneration, and Development of Ethnic Minority Cadres; Ensuring Succession and Core Cadre Sources

First, renewing cadre planning in close adherence to the requirements of ensuring political security and practical competence.

Second, conducting training and fostering based on job positions, focusing on dialogue, mediation, and the handling of social hotspots.

Third, considering competence in understanding ethnic minority culture, customs, and language as an important criterion in cadre evaluation and utilization.

Fourth, proactively detecting, creating sources, and fostering ethnic minority cadres in a long-term orientation to ensure succession.

Fifth, arranging reputable cadres in the right positions, in the right places, with dedication and close attachment to the community.

4.3.5.2. Practical Training, Tightening Discipline, and Enhancing Digital Capacity

First, implementing cadre rotation associated with key localities, ensuring a sufficient duration for practical training and experience accumulation.

Second, tightening discipline, administrative order, and public service ethics, consolidating the People’s trust in grassroots authorities.

Third, improving dialogue, mediation, and conflict-handling skills from the grassroots level.

Fourth, equipping commune-level cadres with digital capacity and skills for handling information in cyberspace.

4.3.5.3. Perfecting Policies for Cadres and Soldiers Directly Performing the Task of Ensuring Political Security in the Central Highlands

First, building mechanisms to protect cadres who dare to think, dare to act, and dare to take responsibility when acting in accordance with procedures and for the common good.

Second, perfecting remuneration regimes and policies to attract and retain high-quality human resources, especially in key and difficult areas.

Third, increasing investment in infrastructure, equipment, working conditions, and ensuring information security and safety in service of task performance.

Fourth, paying attention to livelihood care and rear support policies, creating peace of mind for long-term service of cadres and soldiers.

Fifth, implementing evaluation and commendation mechanisms based on substantive effectiveness, associated with the level of consolidation of social trust and the “people’s security posture.”

Chapter 4 Summary

Chapter 4 has analyzed the international and domestic contexts affecting political security in the Central Highlands, indicating that strategic competition among major powers, non-traditional security challenges, global economic fluctuations, and information warfare are profoundly transforming the security environment. Domestically, the process of restructuring the development model, implementing digital transformation, and reorganizing local government structures poses new requirements for the governance capacity of the political system, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious area such as the Central Highlands. In this context, political security is not merely a matter of maintaining immediate stability but is closely linked to social governance, the regulation of interests, and the consolidation of social consensus and the People’s trust.

On that basis, Chapter 4 establishes a system of perspectives and proposes a system of solutions for ensuring political security in the direction of shifting from a mindset of “maintaining stability” to proactive “governance of political security,” with early and preventive action taken from afar. The proposed solutions focus on strengthening the leadership of the Communist Party, enhancing the governance capacity of authorities; linking political security with socio-economic development and the harmonious resolution of ethnic and religious issues; proactively forecasting and preventing risks; promoting the combined strength of the political system and the role of the People; and improving the quality of the cadre contingent, especially grassroots cadres and cadres who are ethnic minority persons. Through this, it affirms that political security in the Central Highlands can only be sustainable when placed within the overall framework of development governance, under the unified leadership of the Communist Party, the effective administration of authorities, and the active participation of the People..

CONCLUSION

In the context of rapidly changing, complex, and unpredictable global and regional developments, ensuring political security increasingly affirms its foundational role in the stability and sustainable development of each nation. For Viet Nam, political security is not only associated with maintaining the leadership role of the Communist Party, the effectiveness of State management, and the stability of the political regime, but also constitutes a fundamental condition for consolidating social trust, sustaining political consensus, and creating a favorable environment for national development in the context of deepening international integration and digital transformation. Within this overall framework, the Central Highlands represents a distinctive socio-political space, holding a particularly important strategic position in terms of national defense and security, foreign affairs, and ecology, while also being an area where many sensitive factors converge, making it vulnerable to impacts and transformation if not governed effectively.

Approaching from the perspective of political science, the dissertation affirms that political security is not a static and immutable state of stability, but rather a dynamic socio-political process reflecting the dialectical relationship between political power, the legitimacy of the political system, leadership and governance capacity, and the level of social consensus. From this perspective, ensuring political security cannot be confined to preventing and addressing immediate risks; instead, it must be situated within the broader framework of development governance and risk

governance, with the aim of constructing sustainable social stability. This provides the theoretical foundation for the shift from a mindset of maintaining stability to one of governing stability, consistent with the requirements of ensuring political security in the new context.

On the basis of selectively inheriting domestic and international research works, the dissertation has developed a relatively comprehensive analytical framework for ensuring political security in the Central Highlands, clarifying the interweaving and transformation between traditional security factors and non-traditional security factors. By placing issues of ethnicity, religion, land, migration, socio-economic development, culture, and cyberspace within an integrated whole, the study approaches political security in the Central Highlands as a comprehensive process, thereby overcoming fragmented or purely event-based perspectives derived from specific incidents in the area in recent years.

The analysis of practical efforts to ensure political security in the Central Highlands during the period 2011–2025 indicates that, alongside significant achievements in maintaining socio-political stability, consolidating the great national unity bloc, and proactively thwarting numerous plots and subversive activities of hostile forces, there remain structural and long-term limitations. These limitations stem from disparities in living standards, inadequacies in the management of land, natural resources, and livelihoods, uneven governance capacity within the grassroots political system, as well as the increasingly profound impact of non-traditional security challenges and issues in cyberspace. If not adequately identified and fundamentally addressed, these issues may gradually erode the social foundation of political security in the medium and long term.

Based on theoretical and empirical research findings, the dissertation proposes a system of solutions for ensuring political security in the Central Highlands in the new context in a comprehensive, synchronized, and focused manner. These include strengthening the leadership of the Communist Party, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of State management and administration; consolidating and promoting the combined strength of the political system and the People; closely linking the ensuring of political security with sustainable socio-economic development; and proactively preventing and controlling risks so as not to fall into passivity or surprise in any situation. The proposed solutions are developed according to a stability governance approach, taking prevention as the primary orientation and considering the grassroots level and the people's heart-and-mind posture as the foundational basis.

The research results of the dissertation not only contribute to supplementing and deepening the theoretical foundation of political security within Vietnamese political science, but also possess practical value in providing scientific arguments for the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at ensuring political security in conjunction with the sustainable development of the Central Highlands in the coming period. Accordingly, the dissertation affirms that ensuring political security in the Central Highlands is not merely an immediate task, but a long-term strategic requirement, demanding a close combination of political leadership, State governance, and the promotion of the People's role as the central subject under new conditions.

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