Global Partnership or Global Challenges: Higher Education in Vietnam in Transition

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I. A NEW WORLD ORDER

* Globalism, Regionalism and Nationalism
  1. Strength of each country: Economy, “soft power”
  2. Global interdependence
  3. Increase in the number of actors in international politics
  4. Market economy and democracy as common values

  - New opportunities and challenges

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II. VIETNAM BEFORE RENOVATION (DOI MOI)

- 2,000 years existence as a nation, 1,200 years under foreign domination

- Maintenance of identity, culture thanks to traditional values:
  - Spirit of national independence and self-strengthening
  - Home-village-country community character
  - Cult of ancestors
  - Tradition of love and respect for learning

- Temple of Literature: “Virtuous and talented people comprise the nation’s vital force” (1442) and “Knowledge is the greatest property of a nation” (1466).

- Ho Chi Minh: “An ignorant nation is a weak nation” (1946)
- Sixth Communist party congress (1986): Policy of doi moi (renovation)
  - Adoption of socio-economic reforms: From central planning to market-oriented economy
  - Transformation in foreign policy: From a model heavily structured by ideological considerations to a model emphasizing national interest and realpolitik
- Emphasis on integration into regional and global economies
  - 1995: Normalization with the US, ASEAN membership, framework agreement with the EU
  - 1996: Membership in Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM)
  - 1998: Membership in Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
  - 2005: Membership in World Trade Organization (WTO)?
- Some challenges facing Vietnamese education:
  1. Contradiction between quantity and quality
  2. Irrationality of training structure
  3. Problem with equality in education
  4. Low quality of teachers’ education and training

IV. THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – an international relations training program

- Contribution to building human resource capacity for reducing deficiencies in trade-related expertise and negotiation skills
- Advantages of new curriculum for international relations:
2. Certain level of flexibility in designing specific courses
3. Common framework for cooperation in teaching and training

- Disadvantages of new curriculum for international relations:

1. Remains very “traditional”, in term of emphasis on “political international relations”
2. As a discipline: Neglect of key courses like IR Theory, International Political Economy, Security Studies and Social Sciences Methods
3. As sub-fields: No attention for policy analysis, strategic studies, peace and conflict studies, comparative studies of international regimes and organizations, international governance, development studies, team work and problem-solving skills
V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. More investment to teach methodology and organize internship programs
2. Long term: Further help and assistance from international community in (re)training faculty, preparing textbooks and teaching materials, and providing methodological and pedagogical guidance
3. Short term: Summer school by GTZ, Humboldt University and Vietnam National University in August 2004 in Hanoi
Thank You!