National artificial intelligence sovereignty: New points from the Documents of the 14th National Party Congress

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● ***Abstract:*** **Artificial intelligence is a foundational technology field of Industrial Revolution 4.0, making a significant contribution to breakthroughs in enhancing production capacity, enhancing national competitiveness, promoting socio-economic development, and ensuring national security. This article systematically examines the formation and development of the Party's thinking and understanding of artificial intelligence and then analyzes the new points in the Party's 14th Congress Documents regarding national sovereignty in this field.**

● ***Keywords:*** **artificial intelligence; artificial intelligence sovereignty; documents of the 14th Party Congress.**

1. Introduction

In recent times, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has received special attention from the Party. The Politburo's thematic resolutions issued in 2024 and 2025, particularly Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW dated December 22, 2024, on breakthroughs in the development of science, technology, innovation, and national digital transformation; the draft Political Report of the 13th Central Committee of the Party at the 14th National Party Congress (Draft Political Report) and the Draft Action Program of the Central Committee of the Party to implement the Resolution of the 14th National Party Congress (Draft Action Program) show that the Party is shaping a comprehensive AI strategy, encompassing the pillars of legal framework, infrastructure, human resources, and the economy. This strategy represents a significant shift in thinking, from participating in and applying AI to mastering AI and exercising self-determination over it, considering it a decisive factor with a crucial role in ensuring national security, so that the country can be "self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-strengthening, confident, and proud", enabling our country to steadily advance into a new era of national development.

2. Content

2.1. Artificial Intelligence sovereignty

First and foremost, it is necessary to clarify the concept of "data sovereignty", which is a core issue in formulating Vietnam's national artificial intelligence sovereignty strategy. This strategy emphasizes that a nation's data must comply with its laws and regulations, particularly the rules regarding where data can be stored and processed. This is the first step in governing, exploiting, processing, and controlling this valuable national digital resource.

However, simply possessing data sovereignty is not enough in the AI era. A nation may possess data sovereignty (for example, by requiring that national data be stored within its territorial borders) but remain entirely dependent on foreign AI models, algorithms, and, most importantly, computing infrastructure to process that data. In this case, "sovereignty" is merely symbolic, because the real value (the knowledge and computational models for decision-making) is essentially created and controlled by external entities, dominated by external platforms.

Therefore, for each country, "AI sovereignty" emerges as an inevitable issue in the digital age. It is defined as an extension of data sovereignty to encompass both technologies and data uses, including training data for AI models, large language models (LLMs), and machine learning algorithms... AI sovereignty is "a country's capacity to understand, assemble, and develop AI systems while retaining control, autonomy, and self-determination over those systems"(1).

In general, an AI sovereignty strategy typically consists of five main pillars: (1) Data sovereignty; (2) Infrastructure autonomy (physical infrastructure and digital technology platform); (3) Endogenous capacity (high-quality human resources); (4) Financial autonomy; and (5) Ability to adapt AI to national interests (legal and security).

The major powers are pursuing different models to ensure their autonomy in this field. For example, China pursues a "military-civilian integration" strategy with the goal of becoming the world's leading AI innovation center by 2030, "integrating AI into military applications" and closely linking AI with the vision of a "community of shared destiny", emphasizing respect for "state sovereignty"(2). The European Union (EU) pursues "digital sovereignty", focusing on establishing a "global gold standard" through AI laws. This approach is based on two pillars, "excellence" and "trust", using legal power to shape the market and protect "human-centered" values(3). India is also deploying the "India AI mission", which focuses on building endogenous computing infrastructure and applying AI to core social sectors such as health and agriculture(4).

In Vietnam, the formation of an AI sovereignty strategy is taking place amidst increasingly fierce technological competition, alongside the emergence of new forms of warfare, particularly the rise of cyber warfare, leading to a race for AI sovereignty. In this context, Vietnam has researched and applied international experiences, creatively combining them with the country's specific conditions to build and refine its AI development strategy and ensure national AI sovereignty, contributing to socio-economic development.

2.2. The process of forming strategic thinking on Vietnam's AI sovereignty

In Party documents before 2024, the concept of "sovereignty" in cyberspace has deep roots in national defense and security thinking. The draft Report summarizing some theoretical and practical issues on the socialist-oriented renewal process in Vietnam over the past 40

years identifies the current international context: "Along with the combat environments on land, in the air, at sea, and in space, cyber warfare has become the fifth domain, with the emergence of cyberwar"(5). In Appendix 4, Draft Political Report, Assessment of 5 years of implementing the 10-year socio-economic development strategy 2021 - 2030, the achievement of "Maintaining national digital sovereignty in cyberspace" is mentioned in Section I-8, alongside the tasks of "consolidating and strengthening national defense and ensuring national security". Here, "digital sovereignty" primarily refers to a cybersecurity defense strategy, protecting the regime and ensuring the integrity of information sovereignty. It does not fully imply a proactive economic or technological strategy.

Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW dated December 22, 2024, of the Politburo on breakthroughs in the development of science, technology, innovation, and national digital transformation is a key document, marking a turning point in the Party's thinking. This is the first document to systematically link the strategy of digital sovereignty defense with the strategy of proactively developing and mastering AI. Resolution 57-NQ/TW is the first to introduce the concept of "AI sovereignty" in Vietnam's policy planning. AI, from a technological tool, has become a strategic territory that needs to be protected and mastered. Through this, our country has made a strategic shift, and the draft documents of the 14th National Congress identify the challenges as "not yet mastering strategic technologies and core technologies" and "information security, safety, and data protection still face many challenges."

To address this issue, Resolution 57-NQ/TW of the Politburo outlined a strategic viewpoint: ensuring national sovereignty in cyberspace; ensuring cybersecurity and data security, considering these as inseparable and overarching requirements, with the goal of gradually mastering several strategic technologies and digital technologies by 2030, such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and big data. This linkage reflects a shift in thinking in defining objectives, from "ensuring national sovereignty in cyberspace" to "mastering strategic technologies... such as artificial intelligence".

The AI sovereignty strategy, as defined in Resolution 57-NQ/TW, is concretized into overarching tasks in Resolution 66-NQ/TW dated April 30, 2025, of the Politburo on reforming the work of building and implementing laws to meet the requirements of national development in the new era; Resolution 68-NQ/TW dated May 4, 2025, of the Politburo on the development of the private economy; and Resolution 71-NQ/TW dated August 22, 2025, of the Politburo on breakthroughs in education and training development, as summarized in the Draft Action Program. This demonstrates a synchronized strategic preparation, shaping four main pillars of AI sovereignty, namely:

The first pillar is institutional breakthroughs and legal frameworks. Party documents all identify institutions as the biggest obstacle, as the Politburo's Resolution 66-NQ/TW clearly states the situation of "slow research and promulgation of policies and laws regulating new issues" and "not yet creating a favorable legal framework to promote new growth drivers". To address this bottleneck, Resolution 66-NQ/TW requires "Focus on building laws on science, technology, innovation and digital transformation, creating a legal framework for new, non-traditional issues (artificial intelligence, digital transformation, green transformation,

exploitation of data resources, crypto assets...) to form new growth drivers, promote the development of new production forces and new industries"[6].

This task has been elevated to one of the three "strategic breakthroughs" of the entire 2026-2030 term in the Draft Action Program, namely the institutional breakthrough (Section II-14-a): "Building a legal framework that meets the requirements of promoting the development of the digital economy, especially financial technology, digital assets, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and new technology industries". This approach by our Party has clearly recognized that the old management thinking "if you can't manage it, ban it" is the biggest obstacle. In the new term, the Party's strategy is to create development, aiming to "encourage creativity, liberate all productive forces, and unlock all development resources"[7].

The second pillar is the development of human resources and national capacity. AI sovereignty cannot be achieved without endogenous resources. Resolution 71-NQ/TW dated August 22, 2025, of the Politburo on breakthroughs in education and training development stated: "Digital technology and artificial intelligence are reshaping education globally" and acknowledged that the Vietnamese education system "has not yet met the requirements for training high-quality human resources." Therefore, Resolution 71-NQ/TW set a goal for 2030: "To achieve initial results in improving technology, artificial intelligence, and English language proficiency at the secondary school level." The Draft Action Program also concretized the goal by identifying the task of promoting the development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in education (Section II-4) and the strategic breakthrough of developing high-quality human resources and innovating personnel work (Section II-14b), aiming to "build a special mechanism to train high-quality human resources to meet the requirements of breakthrough development of strategic science and technology sectors..."[8].

At the same time, the Party has also determined that Vietnam's AI human resource strategy is fundamental and long-term. The draft document for the 14th Party Congress affirms the goal of "popularizing" AI skills from the secondary school level (through STEAM education). This is a prerequisite for ensuring domestic resources and reducing dependence on foreign experts.

The third pillar is national strategic infrastructure and data. This is the material pillar of AI sovereignty. Our Party has determined that Vietnam's AI sovereignty strategy pursues both aspects: sovereignty over data (assets) and sovereignty over computing infrastructure (machines). Regarding data, Resolution 57-NQ/TW requires "enriching and maximizing the potential of data, making data the main means of production", "data is considered a national strategic asset" and "data security has a similar meaning to protecting territorial sovereignty". Speaking at the Launching Ceremony and the First National Congress of the National Data Association (March 2025), General Secretary To Lam emphasized, "We are entering the dawn of the digital era, a period where data has become an important resource and means of production, becoming a 'new energy' and the 'blood' of the digital economy"[9].

Regarding infrastructure, AI sovereignty cannot exist without sovereignty over computing infrastructure. The Draft Action Program has identified breakthroughs in infrastructure (Section II-14-c), including: Building and perfecting digital infrastructure to ensure synchronization and modernization for national digital transformation; developing national

databases and large data centers in a synchronized manner to ensure interoperability, integration, and sharing. To ensure that data truly becomes a productive resource and a driving force for the development of artificial intelligence (AI), General Secretary To Lam also set strict requirements regarding the quality and availability of data. Accordingly, data development must be promoted according to six key criteria: "Highly focused on perfecting the institutional framework, infrastructure, and human resources for digital data... Data must be "accurate, complete, clean, vibrant, unified, and shared"; and data is the lifeblood of digital transformation, a resource and a driving force for AI development." This approach shows that Vietnam is pursuing a comprehensive strategy, both controlling resources (data) and mastering the means of production (computing infrastructure).

The fourth pillar is the economic ecosystem and innovation. This is the most distinctive feature of Vietnam's AI sovereignty model. Instead of a state-centric model like China's, Vietnam adopts a model of state-led, private-sector implementation. Resolution 68-NQ/TW dated May 4, 2025, of the Politburo on the development of the private economy pointed out the limitation that "the private economy largely has low technological and innovation capabilities." To overcome this bottleneck, Resolution 68-NQ/TW positioned the private economy as "the most important driving force of the national economy" and a pioneering force in the development of science and technology, innovation, and digital transformation. The Draft Action Program has institutionalized this viewpoint: "Issuing mechanisms and policies for assigning and commissioning the private sector to participate in key scientific research tasks, projects, works, important national tasks, and the development of the defense and security industry" (Section II-1-b).

The fifth pillar is AI sovereignty in national defense and security. This pillar is a concretization of the strategic thinking that considers AI sovereignty as a crucial part of national security. Draft documents have identified that the international context is witnessing the emergence of cyber warfare, and "cyber warfare has become the fifth environment." In this context, "digital sovereignty" is no longer a purely defensive concept. Resolution 57-NQ/TW of the Politburo strongly links security with technology. The fifth point of the Resolution clearly states that "Ensuring national sovereignty in cyberspace; ensuring cybersecurity, data security... is a continuous and inseparable requirement." Appendix 4 of the Draft Political Report, assessing the five-year implementation of the 10-year socio-economic development strategy 2021-2030, also acknowledges the achievements of "Maintaining national digital sovereignty in cyberspace" and "Paying attention to investing in the development of dual-use defense and security industries, applying high technology and diversifying products."

This represents a shift in the Party's understanding of national sovereignty protection, affirming that, in the current context, it is impossible to protect sovereignty without mastering technology. The Draft Action Program (Section II-8) has elevated these tasks to strategic actions, clearly demonstrating the Party's changing thinking on AI sovereignty in national defense and security. Regarding digital sovereignty, it is necessary to "ensure digital security, cybersecurity... Ensure national digital sovereignty in cyberspace in all situations and ensure a safe and stable digital environment for development." Regarding defense, it is necessary to

"build and develop the defense and security industry in a proactive, self-reliant, dual-use, and modern orientation, closely integrated and becoming the spearhead of the national industry...".

AI sovereignty is a comprehensive strategy of the Party, consistently reflected in the most important draft documents prepared for the 14th National Party Congress.

This is a strategic model developed, improved, and led by our Party in the new era of national development, in which the State plays a strategic guiding role, creates the legal framework, and "commissions" the private sector to carry out national strategic tasks, including in sensitive areas such as "defense and security sector".

2.3. National AI sovereignty - A new strategic point of the 14th Party Congress

It is clear that national AI sovereignty is a new strategic point of the 14th Party Congress, a synthesis and systematization of previously formed thinking. While the 13th Party Congress (2021) focused on digital transformation and participation in Industrial Revolution 4.0, the documents prepared for the 14th Congress elevated the issue in the context of fierce technological competition and considered AI as a strategic technology. This shift is from participation and application to mastery and self-determination.

Thus, "AI sovereignty" is not just a technology policy but has become a new direction to ensure security and economic development in the digital age. It is the concretization of the grand goal of building an independent and self-reliant economy linked to proactive international integration in the fields of high technology, strategic technology, and emerging technology. To achieve these goals, the biggest challenge is the institutional framework and implementation capacity. To realize the goal of national AI sovereignty, the draft documents have proposed three groups of breakthrough solutions, namely:

Firstly, there needs to be a breakthrough in institutional reform and the completion of a legal framework for controlled testing (sandbox mechanisms). This is a crucial solution, addressing the "legal pillar" for national AI sovereignty. The draft document clearly indicates that the biggest obstacle currently is outdated management thinking, as highlighted in Resolution 66-NQ/TW of the Politburo, which points out the slow pace of research and promulgation of policies and laws regulating new issues, and the tendency towards management-oriented thinking in lawmaking. Resolution 57-NQ/TW also points out the limitations of the "if you can't manage it, ban it" mindset, identifying it as a direct obstacle to innovation, putting Vietnam at risk of missing opportunities and becoming dependent on foreign technology.

To achieve an "institutional breakthrough," Resolution 66-NQ/TW sets the goal of focusing on building laws on artificial intelligence and digital transformation, creating a legal framework for new, non-traditional issues so that management is not based on old methods, but rather on fostering development, encouraging innovation, and unleashing the full potential of productive forces. The most important tool for this is the "controlled testing mechanism" (sandbox) mentioned in Resolution 68-NQ/TW on the development of the private economy. This mechanism allows new fields such as artificial intelligence, financial technology, and digital assets to develop in a controlled environment, based on the principle of "post-audit" instead of "pre-audit," controlling output instead of input. Building a proactive, flexible, and experimental legal framework is essential to ensure that "made in Vietnam" AI

models have the space to develop, thereby helping Vietnam adapt AI to suit national interests, instead of passively adopting legal standards from outside.

Secondly, we must build national sovereignty over computing and data infrastructure. If institutions are the "rules of the game," then infrastructure and data are the "playing field" and "raw materials" of AI sovereignty. International models have identified "data sovereignty" and "infrastructure control" as two indispensable pillars of national AI sovereignty. A nation cannot have AI sovereignty if it relies on foreign computing power and raw data.

Recognizing this, Vietnam's strategy focuses on both aspects. Regarding infrastructure, the "infrastructure breakthrough" focuses not only on physical infrastructure, but also on a synchronized, modern digital infrastructure system and large data centers. This is the condition to ensure computing sovereignty and to guarantee that Vietnam can independently process and train large-scale AI models.

Regarding data, it is considered a "national strategic asset." Resolution 57-NQ/TW requires "enriching and maximizing the potential of data, making data a primary means of production" and "data security is as important as protecting territorial sovereignty." To realize this goal, the State has issued many important policies to promote data creation and ensure that data is "accurate, complete, clean, active, unified, and shared," and that it is "connected, interoperable, and seamlessly shared" with all entities in society.

Thirdly, building endogenous capacity through a state-ordered strategy. At the macro level, Resolution 71-NQ/TW requires improving technological and artificial intelligence capabilities at the secondary school level; the Draft Action Program also outlines policies to promote the application of artificial intelligence in education, requiring the "establishment of a specific mechanism to train high-quality human resources" to develop strategic technologies. Regarding enterprise capacity, this is the most distinctive aspect of Vietnam's model. Resolution 68-NQ/TW acknowledges that the private sector still has "low technological and innovation capacity," but simultaneously identifies it as "the most important driving force of the national economy."

To address this bottleneck, the draft documents submitted to the 14th National Congress proposed the model of "State-created, private sector-implemented." Accordingly, the State uses resources to "commission" the private sector to research and implement the set goals. The Draft Action Program also clearly states the need to issue mechanisms and policies to assign and commission the private sector to participate in key scientific research tasks, national projects, important national tasks, and the development of the defense and security industry. This is an "AI sovereignty" strategy with a Vietnamese identity, where the State funds and directs private technology corporations to develop AI applications serving the interests and key activities of the nation, especially in crucial areas such as defense and security.

3. Conclusion

The draft documents submitted to the 14th National Congress affirm that "national AI sovereignty" is not merely a matter of technology policy, but a strategic breakthrough for Vietnam in the new era of development. It represents the systematization and elevation of strategic thinking, closely linking the requirement to ensure national sovereignty in

cyberspace with the aspiration to master strategic technologies and the determination to unlock all resources for development. While previous congresses focused on digital transformation, identifying it as an opportunity to participate in Industrial Revolution 4.0, the draft documents submitted to this Congress mark a fundamental shift in thinking, from participation and application to proactive mastery and self-determination.

In the context of increasingly fierce technological competition and the emergence of new forms of cyber warfare, mastering AI is no longer an option, but a prerequisite for protecting an independent and self-reliant economy, for strategic autonomy, self-confidence, self-reliance, national pride, and for confidently advancing into a new era. AI sovereignty represents the most advanced manifestation of the independent and self-reliant approach in the new global geopolitical and technological context, and successful implementation will be a key factor in determining Vietnam's ability to realize its aspiration to become a developed nation, standing alongside the world's leading powers in the new era of national development ■

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Endnotes:

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