

*17 November 2006*

President Nguyen Minh Triet of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was pleased to welcome United States President George W. Bush to Vietnam. Looking back on the June 2005 Joint Statement by President Bush and then Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, both leaders expressed satisfaction at the progress the bilateral relationship has made, resulting in a U.S.-Vietnam relationship today that is multi-faceted and forward looking. It encompasses significant and growing trade and economic ties, an emerging military-to-military relationship, successful cooperation on health and development issues, growing cultural and educational links, a commitment to resolving remaining issues stemming from the war, a shared interest in ensuring peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, and frank and candid discussion of differences. The two sides reaffirmed their efforts to ensure that bilateral relations are stable, constructive, broad-based, and conducted on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual benefit.

President Triet and President Bush applauded the historic milestone of Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization and President Bush reiterated his firm support for the earliest possible Congressional approval of Permanent Normal Trade Relations. President Triet confirmed that Vietnam would fully uphold the rules-based trading system embedded in the WTO and join other members in their efforts to create a level playing field based on fairness, openness, and transparency. He welcomed President Bush's assurances that the United States would maintain open access to the U.S. market and support Vietnam's process of integration with the world economy. The two leaders anticipated an even greater amount of bilateral trade and investment, benefiting the people of both nations. President Bush also welcomed the Vietnamese leadership's determination to accelerate the course of doi moi reforms, build the rule of law, and combat corruption, and held that such efforts are important for Vietnam's economic vitality and favorable business and investment climate. The two Presidents also looked forward to the signing of a Maritime Transport Agreement at an early date to further accelerate growth in our vibrant economic relationship.

President Bush and President Triet discussed the growing cooperation between the United States and Vietnam to address regional and global concerns. President Bush welcomed Vietnam's active engagement in international affairs aimed at maintaining peace, cooperation and development in the Asia-Pacific region and the world, and noted his appreciation of Vietnam's support for a denuclearized Korean Peninsula and the consensus views of the UNSC as expressed in UNSCR 1718. President Triet welcomed the reconvening of the Six Party Talks and expressed the hope that a peaceful solution for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would be reached.

The two leaders pledged to increase cooperation to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related technology and materials in accordance with international and national laws and each country's capacities. They also pointed to the agreement on nuclear fuel replacement at the Dalat Research Reactor, and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security, as examples of the diverse ways in which the two

countries are working together to protect the safety and security of their peoples and others in the region.

The two leaders looked especially to cooperation on the health front as an example of the tangible benefits of the United States and Vietnam working closely together. President Bush praised Vietnam's timely, effective, and transparent response to avian influenza in the country, which has prevented any further human outbreaks in Vietnam since October 2005. He noted that Vietnam's efforts were a model for the region, and pledged continued U.S. support in responding to the threat of avian influenza. As Vietnam is one of the focus countries for President Bush's PEPFAR initiative on HIV/AIDS, the United States and Vietnam have also worked closely together to combat the scourge of this disease. The two leaders agreed to further strengthen the present positive cooperation. President Triet praised the work of the STAR initiative in Vietnam and the extension of this activity. President Triet also expressed appreciation for the U.S. Government's increasing development assistance to Vietnam and urged the U.S. side to increase humanitarian assistance including through cooperation on areas such as unexploded ordinance and continued assistance to Vietnamese with disabilities. The United States and Vietnam also agreed that further joint efforts to address the environmental contamination near former dioxin storage sites would make a valuable contribution to the continued development of their bilateral relationship.

President Bush explained the National Security Strategy of the United States, which stresses the importance to world peace and stability of the development in every country of full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. President Triet apprised President Bush of recently promulgated laws and regulations on religious freedom that are to be implemented in all localities of Vietnam. The two leaders also noted the importance of continuing to make progress in the bilateral human rights dialogue and reaffirmed that it should be conducted in a comprehensive, constructive and results-oriented manner.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with progress on resolving outstanding issues from the war and agreed that the two sides would continue cooperation in this respect. President Triet reaffirmed his Government's continued efforts to assist the United States to ensure the fullest possible accounting for Americans who remain missing in action, through both joint and enhanced unilateral actions. President Bush reaffirmed U.S. contributions to help obtain information on Vietnamese MIA cases. Presidents Triet and Bush discussed cooperation in regional affairs, and President Bush praised Vietnam's hosting of APEC this year as a demonstration of Vietnam's active and important role in promoting trade and economic liberalization and strengthening security in the region. President Triet noted the robust engagement by the United States with ASEAN, and looked towards increasing that cooperation through the U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership. The two leaders pledged continued efforts to seek mutual understanding on issues of regional and global concern.

The two leaders noted the importance of high-level visits between the two countries to the development of Vietnam-U.S. relations in the future. President Bush invited President

Triet to visit the United States in 2007 to continue these discussions; President Triet thanked President Bush and accepted the invitation with pleasure.