

President Obama delivered the speech on Vietnam-US relationship

Ha Noi, Vietnam

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In his speech, he said "my heart has been touched by the kindness for which the Vietnamese people are known"^[1], and that he is among the first generation to have grown-up following the war in Vietnam.

The President expressed his appreciation for Vietnam's thousands of years of history, but also the enormous progress in the past two decades, including a vibrant economic growth with the emergence of high-rise buildings, urban areas and shopping malls in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the successful launch of satellites into outer space and a widespread start-up movement.

Vietnam's middle class is growing. The rates of poor households and maternal and child fatalities are all down while the rates of access to clean water, electricity and school education are high. This is extraordinary progress that Vietnam was able to achieve in a very short time.

As regards bilateral cooperation in post-war recovery, he expressed his pride about bomb and mine clearance and dioxin clean-up at Da Nang airport and committed to continued support to Vietnam at Bien Hoa airport.

Vietnam and the US affirmed their determination to build peace together, he said.

"I believe our experience hold lessons for the world. That at a time when so many conflicts seem intractable, seem as if they will never end, we have shown that hearts can change, and that a different future is possible when we refuse to be prisoners of the past. We've shown how peace can be better than war"^[2].

According to him, the two peoples have become closer than ever, with the US welcoming more Vietnamese students than from any other Asian country, and more and more Americans are touring many of Vietnam's cities and provinces.

The US takes interest in Vietnam and its successes, and gives priority to the comprehensive partnership with Vietnam, he said.

Apart from economic collaboration, the leader called for all possible resources for human development, which he said, is the US's strength and potential area of cooperation, contributing to Vietnam's development and further deepening friendship with the Vietnamese people.

Looking forward, he said a number of leading American corporations have recently arrived in Vietnam to seek the possibility of forming joint ventures in the fields of science-technology, mathematics and health care. He hoped they will connect with Vietnamese enterprises and will also encourage talented Vietnamese women to unleash their potential, thus ensuring gender equality.

On the Tran-Pacific Partnership (TPP), he said "the US is ready to assist Vietnam as it works to fully implement its commitments. I want you to know that as President of the U.S. I strongly support TPP because you'll also be able to buy more of our goods. Moreover I support TPP because of an important strategic benefit. Vietnam will be less dependent on any one trading partner, and enjoy broader ties with more partners, including the US"^[3].

He also informed the convention that both sides have agreed to build trust. The US will continue assisting Vietnam in maritime defence and humanitarian assistance in times of disasters, as well as declaring the US will fully lift the ban on legal weapons sales to Vietnam, manifesting its full normalisation of ties with Vietnam.

Any disputes should be settled on the basis of peaceful means, while regional mechanisms such as ASEAN should be promoted, he said.

In order to address global challenges such as public health and environmental protection, he appealed for realising the commitments to cope with climate change and rising sea levels, particularly in the Mekong Delta "" a major food supplier to the world.

Concluding his speech, he said he is optimistic about the future of the two countries, and the US is always a partner and a friend of Vietnam.

President of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations Vu Xuan Hong, in his speech, hailed the Vietnam-US ties as crucial to peace, stability, cooperation and development in Southeast Asia, Asia-Pacific and the world.

The VUFO and the Vietnam-US Society have partnered with the Vietnamese and US organisations to foster bilateral ties in the principle of setting aside the past, overcoming differences, upholding similarities, looking towards the future based on sincere, straightforward and constructive dialogues, he said.

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