

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With General Secretary Nguyễn Phú Trọng of Vietnam in Hanoi, Vietnam

September 10, 2023

General Secretary Trọng. [Inaudible] The Honorable Joe Biden, President of the United States of America, distinguished U.S. delegates.

At the outset, on behalf of the leaders of the party, state, and people of Vietnam, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to you, Mr. President, and your delegation to Vietnam.

President Biden. Thank you.

General Secretary Trọng. This is an interesting and meaningful occasion for me to meet with you again as the two countries celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Vietnam-U.S. Comprehensive Partnership.

We highly appreciate the attention and support that you have extended to our bilateral ties in different capacities over the past years. To this day, I still vividly recall the fond memories of the sincere and frank discussions that we had during the reception you hosted when I visited the U.S. in July of 2015, and I also highly valued the exchanges we've had since that day to this very day.

I'd also like to thank you for the letter in June this year to invite me to return to visit the U.S. once again.

So the last time we met with each other in the U.S., during my visit to the U.S.—since that day, you have not had an occasion to visit Vietnam. Thus, I am very delighted to welcome you here today so that we can have a discussion here first.

And I still vividly recall how you looked like, Mr. President, when we met with each other in the U.S. the last time around. [Laughter] But today and as I see you again, you have nary aged a day. And, I would say, you look even better than before. [Laughter]

I'll say that every feature of you, Mr. President, is very much complimentary of your image. I myself have gray hair as well, but I don't seem to be able to recreate the—[inaudible]. [Laughter]

And as I've mentioned, I am very fortunate to welcome you here today to the headquarters of—[inaudible]—Vietnam to receive you, the most distinguished guest before us today. As you can see here, we have the statue of President Ho Chi Minh, and the decoration is just as it was the last time we had very cordially welcomed you.

Your visit to Vietnam today bears great importance. This is an excellent opportunity for the leaders of our two countries to exchange views on bilateral ties and relevant international issues of the interest of our two peoples and for the maintenance of peace, cooperation, and sustainable development in the region and the world.

You and your delegation will also have a chance to witness firsthand the country and people of Vietnam and experience the longstanding culture and history, the constant reforms—[inaudible]—and sincere and kindhearted people who always—[inaudible]—to further strengthen their bonds of friendship with others.

And this brings to mind the verse that's written by the great Irish poet, William Yeats: "Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends."

Mr. President, may your visit to Vietnam be a great success.

That was a rather long opening, and now I wish to pass the floor back to you, Mr. President.

President Biden. Well, thank you very much, General Secretary. I'll be twice as long.
[*Laughter*]

It's truly great to see you again. And my very close friend, Senator John Kerry—Secretary Kerry, my friend, will tell you, my colleagues in the United States Senate—all the years we served together—used to kid me because I was always quoting Irish poets.

They thought I quoted Irish poets because I'm Irish. That's not the reason. I quoted them because they're the best poets in the world. [*Laughter*]

It really is great to see to again, General Secretary. It's been almost 8½ years since I saw you. And being here with you in Hanoi is a great, great honor for me personally.

Vietnam and the United States are critical partners and, I would argue, at a very critical time for world history.

My friends and colleagues are probably tired of hearing me say this, but I believe that we are at a great inflection point in world history, where the decisions we make in the next 3 to 4 or 5 years are going to set the course for the world over the next 25 to 50 years. And I think we have enormous opportunities as the world changes to make it even better.

And Vietnam and the United States are critical partners at this very critical time. I'm not saying that to be polite; I'm saying it because I mean it from the bottom of my heart.

Together, we're tracking a range of challenges, from securing a free and open Indo-Pacific, to strengthening our supply chains, to seizing opportunities like climate change, and so much more.

But our nations are not only united by the challenges we face, we're united by the aspirations of our people, the aspirations they share together. The Vietnamese American generation is coming of age and is—shares that view as well: aspirations for the future of greater peace, greater prosperity, and greater security. And I'm convinced we can achieve it.

So, Mr. General Secretary, I want to thank you for having me here, because I think this could be the beginning of even a greater era of cooperation and benefit, not only for the United States and Vietnam, but for the entire Indo-Pacific, the entire world.

I'm sorry to take so long speaking, but I'm genuinely looking forward to our meeting today, setting us on a track to work together to build a future that our—all of our people deserve. And I think we can do it—[*inaudible*].

Thank you again for having me.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:50 p.m. at the Central Office of the Communist Party of Vietnam. General Secretary Trọng spoke in Vietnamese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Vietnam, General Secretary Trọng.

Locations: Hanoi, Vietnam.

Names: Kerry, John F.; Trọng, Nguyễn Phú.

Subjects: Climate change; Indo-Pacific, economic and security cooperation; Special Presidential Envoy on Climate; Vietnam, General Secretary; Vietnam, President Biden's visit; Vietnam, relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300770.