

## Remarks at a State Luncheon Hosted by President Tran Dai Quang of Vietnam in Hanoi May 23, 2016

*President Quang.* The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, distinguished American guests, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of the Vietnamese leaders and people, once again, I have the great honor to extend a warm welcome to Mr. President and his high-level delegation. Mr. President, thank you very much for traveling such a long way, across the globe, to visit Vietnam. I'm sure that during your stay here, you'll be able to see for yourself the hospitality and friendship that the Vietnamese people extend to you and to the American people.

With a deepened mutual understanding between the two countries and impressive talks between the two sides, your visit marks another crucial milestone in our bilateral relationship and creates a strong momentum for our comprehensive partnership to endure with greater substance in the future, both bilaterally and within the regional and global frameworks.

To become comprehensive partners, as we are today, both countries have had to traverse many ups and downs of history and overcome the profound grievances left behind by the war syndromes and prevail over seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Even during those days, the pioneers in promoting the Vietnam-U.S. friendly ties never wavered in the conviction of a brighter future for the bilateral relations. The reversed development of the Vietnam-U.S. relations in the past years is clear evidence of President Ho Chi Minh's statement, "Bear the cold winter, and we shall be welcomed by warm spring."

Proceeding from the tradition of peace and friendship, the Vietnamese people always wish to cultivate the friendship with peoples around the world, including the American people. We will always remember and are grateful to American people's contributions to putting an end to an unhappy chapter in the two countries' history. While the wounds of the war have not been fully healed in both countries and differences remain in the bilateral rela-

tions, as time goes by we have become more deeply aware of the past and present and have conviction that a friendly and cooperative relationship between our two nations will be in the best interest of both peoples, as well as that of peace, stability, cooperation, and development in the Asia-Pacific and the world.

Mr. President, as you once said—and allow me to quote—"If you're walking down the right path, and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you will make progress." And I would like to recall a historical event in February 1946. In his letter to President Harry Truman, President Ho Chi Minh expressed his wish that Vietnam and the United States of America would develop a full cooperation. With the establishment of the comprehensive partnership, we're taking the path that President Ho Chi Minh had chosen. We're confident that relations on the basis of friendship, equality, cooperation, and respect for each other's political regimes and legitimate interests is the only path leading to a brighter and more prosperous future for our next generations. Our nations have a bright future. And together, we can write new chapters of our relationship.

With that, I would like to kindly invite Mr. President, distinguished American guests, and you all to join me in a toast. To the friendship and comprehensive cooperation between Vietnam and the United States of America. To the good health of Mr. President and to you all. Thank you.

[*At this point, President Quang offered a toast.*]

*President Obama.* Good afternoon. President Quang, General Secretary Trong, Prime Minister Phúc, Chairwoman Kim Ngân, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. To you and to the Government and the people of Vietnam, I want to thank you for your kind welcome and hospitality that you've extended to me and my delegation today. *Xin cảm ơn.*

I'm told there is a saying here in Vietnam—which I will not say in Vietnamese—but it says, "When you eat the fruit, think about the one who planted the tree." And today we pay our respects to all who came before us—Vietnamese and Americans—who planted and tended the tree that has become our comprehensive partnership.

I especially want to thank all those who served both our countries decades ago and then took on one last mission, and that was the mission to help our nations reconcile. For you, that conflict was a bitter memory. But today Vietnam and America show the world that hearts can change and peace is possible. And we thank Secretary Kerry and all our veterans here today, both Vietnamese and American, who had the courage not only to fight, but more importantly, had the courage to make peace.

I think oftentimes our veterans can show us the way. One American veteran came here and described meeting a former North Vietnamese soldier. "He came up and shook my hand, and now we're friends," this veteran said. "Without the high-powered politicians, people can just get along as human beings."

The Vietnamese and Americans are now following that advice, getting along as human beings: as students and scholars, as entrepreneurs

and innovators, as doctors and as scientists, as sailors and peacekeepers on behalf of the security and peace that we seek around the world.

I know that here in Vietnam, you draw inspiration from the lotus flower—*hoa sen*. It takes root in the mud and thus is a symbol of hope amid hardship. It survives where other flowers cannot and thus is a symbol of strength and endurance. It radiates color and is thus a symbol of beauty.

So I'd like to propose a toast: To the spirit of the lotus, in the perseverance and the hopes of the Vietnamese people, in the strength and endurance of the partnership between our two nations, and in the beauty of both of our peoples and the desire to live in peace, dignity, and justice. *Chúc sức khỏe!*

[President Obama offered a toast.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the ceremonial banquet hall at the International Convention Centre. In his remarks, he referred to St. Francis, SD, resident and Vietnam war veteran Francis Whitebird. President Quang spoke in Vietnamese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Joint Statement by President Obama and President Tran Dai Quang of Vietnam May 23, 2016

At the invitation of the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Tran Dai Quang, President of the United States of America Barack Obama paid a historic visit to Vietnam to celebrate the Comprehensive Partnership between the two countries and to advance their shared vision for the future. On the occasion of the visit and the May 23, 2016 meeting between the two leaders, the United States and Vietnam adopted this Joint Statement.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the rapid, substantive, and comprehensive growth of U.S.-Vietnam relations over the past year,

guided by the U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership of 2013 and the Joint Vision Statement issued during the historic visit to the United States by General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong in July 2015.

The common interests of the United States and Vietnam continued to expand through intensifying exchanges of delegations at all levels and maintaining dialogue mechanisms; promoting economic growth thanks to enhanced trade and investment relations; and deepening cooperation in education, science and technology,