

Military Tribunals

Q. Mr. President, did you discuss the issue of David Hicks at all with the Prime Minister? And when do you think he might come to trial?

President Bush. Yes, we did. The Prime Minister brought it up. He was pleased that I was able to sign the military tribunal bill—in other words, a way forward for somebody like Hicks to be able to get a day in court. And he was asking me, do I have a timetable in mind as to when Hicks's trial will be coming forth? I told him I didn't, although we hope that Hicks is one of the early people that will have a day in court.

Interestingly enough, as I understand, Hicks has lawyers that may be trying to appeal certain aspects of the law we passed. If that's the case, he's having his day in court in an interesting way. But I believe Hicks deserves a trial and is going to get it.

Thank you all very much.

Prime Minister Howard. Thank you.

Q. One more, do you feel generous, one more?

President Bush. No, I'm not generous. It's also hot out here, Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News]. We're in the sun; you're not. [Laughter]

Q. I don't see you sweat.

President Bush. That's the problem; you might see me sweat.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Sheraton Hanoi. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; President Nguyen Minh Triet and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of Vietnam; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; President Roh Moo-hyun of South Korea; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Hu Jintao of China; Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan; and Australian citizen David M. Hicks, a detainee at the U.S. Naval Station in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Nguyen Minh Triet of Vietnam in Hanoi

November 17, 2006

Mr. President, thank you very much for your hospitality. Laura and I have been struck by the friendliness of the people of Vietnam. In our drive through this beautiful city, we were pleased to see thousands of your citizens with smiles on their faces. And we're so grateful.

I've been reading and studying about your country, and I have seen now firsthand the great vibrancy and the excitement that's taking place in Vietnam. You're like a young tiger, and I look forward to continuing to work to make sure our bilateral relations are close. And thank you for hosting APEC. And thank you for hosting a dinner for us tonight. We're really looking forward to it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. at the Presidential Palace. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Statement by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States of America

November 17, 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.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Senate Passage of the United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Bill

November 17, 2006

The United States and India enjoy a strategic partnership based upon common values. Today the Senate has acted to further strengthen this relationship by passing legislation that will deliver energy, nonproliferation, and trade benefits to the citizens of two great democracies.

The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreement will bring India into the international nuclear nonproliferation mainstream and will increase the transparency of India's entire civilian nuclear program. As India's economy continues to grow, this partnership will help India meet its energy needs without increasing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It will also help reduce India's dependence upon imported fossil fuels. By increasing India's demand for civil nuclear technology, fuel, and support services, this historic agreement creates new business opportunities for American companies and enhances our trade relationship.

I appreciate the Senate's leadership on this important legislation and look forward to signing this bill into law soon.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 5682, which was passed with amendments by the Senate on November 16.

Statement on the Death of Milton Friedman

November 17, 2006

America has lost one of its greatest citizens. Milton Friedman was a revolutionary thinker and extraordinary economist whose work helped advance human dignity and human freedom.

A champion of limited government and personal freedom, Friedman proposed bold ideas about school choice, tax reductions, and an all-volunteer army that serve as the foundation of many of America's most successful Government reforms. His work demonstrated that free markets are the great engines of economic development. His writings