

EMBASSY OF VIET NAM IN THE UNITED STATES

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NEWSLETTER

1. VIET NAM – US RELATIONS

Sixth Meeting of Viet Nam - US Joint Commission (JMC) on Scientific and Technological Cooperation.

The meeting was held in Washington DC on February 25-28. Vice Minister for Science and Technology of Vietnam Dr. Tran Quoc Thang and US Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans, Environment and Science Claudia A. McMurray co-chaired the meeting, which was attended by more than 50 Vietnamese participants coming from 17 Vietnamese ministries, government agencies and research institutes and their US counterparts from 40 departments and institutions.



Addressing the meeting, Vietnam's Ambassador Le Cong Phung stressed the significance of the meeting as the first since the full normalization of bilateral relations and that the success of the meeting helped further deepen the two countries' scientific and technological cooperation.

Leaders from the Vietnamese Central Highlands Visited US

The delegation comprised of chairmen and vice chairmen of Daklak, Gialai and Kontum provinces and Vietnam's Central Highlands Affairs Committee visited Washington DC, North Carolina and San Francisco from February 26-March 8. They met with the National Security Council, State Department, local governments, Vietnamese communities and NGOs. The visitors brought to the meetings first-hand information that helped the audiences understand life and developments in various aspects of their localities. The US representatives valued the dialogues and expressed strong interest in working more with the Central Highlands provinces with concrete projects to help better the livelihood of people there.

The visit was part of an exchange program hosted by the US Department of State, aimed at promoting contact and mutual understanding between the people of the United States and Vietnam. It was the first of this kind made by Vietnamese officials from the Central Highlands.

US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill's Trip to Vietnam

Ambassador Hill visited Vietnam on March 2-3. He met with Chairman of the National Assembly's Committee for External Relations Nguyen Van Son and Vice Chairman of the Party Central Committee's External Relations Commission Ta Minh Chau and held talks with Deputy Foreign Minister Dao Viet Trung. The two sides had discussions on various bilateral issues. They pledged to deepen the already broad-based relationship in a stable and long-term manner as reflected in the Vietnam-US joint statements of 2005 and 2006. The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern and agreed to have frequent consultation on issues at the UN Security Council.

US Deputy National Security Advisor Visited Vietnam

Mr. Daniel Price, who was also Senior Assistant to President Bush on international economic policy and President special envoy at international forums such as the Group of Eight and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), concluded a two-day visit to Vietnam on March 21. During his first ever visit to Vietnam as Deputy National Security Advisor, Mr. Price met with top officials of the Government's Office, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Industry and Trade, Planning and Investment, and Finance to discuss measures to boost bilateral relations, especially in economics, trade and investment.

US Topped Among FDI Investors in Vietnam

The US outperformed among 82 countries and territories investing in Vietnam with a pledged investment of more than \$1.3 billion, accounting for 51.6 percent of the country's total foreign direct investment during the first two months of this year. According to American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham) Executive Director Adam Sitkoff this showed US investors' increasing trust in Viet Nam's investment environment. He also said on the sidelines of a conference to mark 20 years of foreign investment in Vietnam late last year that many US companies consider Vietnam the world's most attractive emerging market.

In addition to infrastructure, industry, telecommunication, tourism and services, US firms have also eyed the financial and banking sector through providing financial services or buying shares in Vietnamese financial institutions. US leading investment company Franklink Templeton has announced it will buy 49 percent of the Vietcombank Fund Management Company and another US giant Morgan Stanley recently came to a joint-venture agreement with Hanoi-based Huong Viet Securities Company.

Chevron Found Gas off Vietnam

The gas, which was estimated at 6 trillion cubic feet, was found in the Malay basin off Vietnam southwest coast, according to Chevron's statement on March 26. It was the result of a three month drilling program that ended in mid-March. Chevron projected that maximum total production would be about 500 million cubic feet (14 million cubic meters) a day within 5 years of start-up. That would be about 5 million dollars a day at current prices. Chevron and its local partner, PetroVietnam, are negotiating to finalize the commercial agreements in order to move quickly to the production phase.

2. INTERNATIONAL EVENTS TO BE HELD IN VIETNAM

Vesak Buddhist Celebration

Vietnam, host of the 5th International Buddhist Conference and the United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) on May 13-17, 2008, will expect more than 4,000 Buddhist dignitaries and scholars from over 70 countries. The event will prime on the theme “Buddhism for an equitable, democratic and advanced society”, according to Venerable Prof. Dr. Le Manh That, International Organizing Committee Chairman and Deputy Director of the HCM City-based Vietnam Buddhism Institute. The Vesak celebration, the most important Buddhist festival, marks Buddha’s birthday, his attaining Enlightenment and his entry into Nirvana. The festival, known as the Buddha’s Day, aims to spread a message of love, peace, harmony, mercy, and progress to the world.

2008 Global Summit of Women

The Summit will be held in Hanoi for the first time from June 6 to 7. More than 1,000 participants including ministers, CEOs, government officials and NGO heads from 100 countries worldwide are expected to attend. With the theme “Women and Asia - Driving the Global Economy”, the summit this year focuses on two major forces that will impact the 21st century global marketplace- Women and the Asia-Pacific economies. The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) will preside over the event in conjunction with the Vietnam Women's Union Central Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Convention Organization Board. The summit is held in different continents alternatively. Germany hosted the event last year.

17th International Association of Democratic Lawyers Congress

Viet Nam will organize the 17th International Association of Democratic Lawyers Congress next year. The Vietnamese government would create favorable conditions to ensure the congress' success, Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong said recently. The event would provide a good opportunity for the international community to understand the Vietnamese people and their culture, he added. The association, a non-governmental organization, works mainly to facilitate contact and exchange of views among lawyers and lawyers' associations of all countries, to develop democratic rights and liberties in legislation and practice and to promote the independence of all peoples.

3. EMBASSY HIGHLIGHTS

ASEAN Washington Committee in Action:



In February and March, Viet Nam, AWC chair, hosted a series of ASEAN Ambassadorial and DCM-level meetings with US government officials and Congress members, including Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Asian Affairs of the NSC, Dennis Wilder and Senator Richard Lugar. The meetings discussed recent developments in and measures to promote relations between

the US and ASEAN.

Ambassador Le Cong Phung visited the State of Colorado on March 23 - 26.

During the visit, he met with Governor Bill Ritter, former Governor Bill Owens, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, local businesses and Vietnamese Americans. He also talked with students at University of Colorado about Vietnam and its relations with the United States. The visit was the start of Ambassador Phung's outreach program to the Americans.



The Embassy has just brought a new face to its current website:

www.vietnamembassy.us.



The facelift not only makes readers' access and navigation easier but also adds several more features and links that enable the Embassy to provide readers with more information about the Embassy activities, cultural and tourist information as well as other consular affairs. Comments are welcome at info@vietnamembassy.us.

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