

AMERICAS DEPARTMENT

Keynote address

By Deputy Minister, Ambassador Pham Quang Vinh at the Indo-Pacific Dialogue

December 7, 2018, Park Hyatt Hotel

Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink,

Assistant Secretary Ian Steff,

Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish,

Mr. Jonathan Moreno, President of AmCham Vietnam,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor to be here and to be given the opportunity to speak at this important Forum.

I am pleased to see representatives from reputable economic institutions, Vietnamese and American large businesses, and quite a few familiar faces who became friends of mine when I was in Washington D.C. This is an excellent chance for us to discuss investment, business potential and opportunities as well as policy issues to further enhance Viet Nam – U.S. economic and trade cooperation [as part of the Indo – Pacific Strategy].

I believe that many of you here closely follow recent developments in the world politics and economy. Despite differing forecasts, there seems to be a growing consensus that the major trends remain peace, cooperation, development and prosperity. These are shared interests and desires of countries in this dynamic region, including the United States and Viet Nam.

Distinguished guests,

Over the past two years, the Viet Nam – U.S. relations have grown strongly at bilateral, regional and international levels. Viet Nam's Prime Minister was the first Southeast Asian leader to visit the United States since President Donald Trump took office. President Trump visited Viet Nam as the first country in his Southeast Asian tour, making him the first American President to visit Viet Nam during his first year in office. On the sidelines of the recent East Asia Summit, Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc had a productive meeting with Vice President Mike Pence. Our leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further advancing the Comprehensive Partnership, launched in 2013, to new heights. More substance and depth should be added to our cooperation ranging from politics, economy, science-technology, education-training, and health to defense-security and war legacy issues.

We have also enhanced our coordination at regional and global forums such as APEC, the ARF, the EAS and the ADMM+ and worked closely together in such issues as climate change, maritime security, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism.

Distinguished guests,

We are happy to note that the bilateral trade and investment cooperation, despite a number of challenges, remains a clear emphasis and a driving force in the broad picture of the Viet Nam – U.S. ties.

Viet Nam is gratified to note that the U.S. is our 3rd largest trading partner, with USD52 billion in total bilateral trade in 2017 that is expected to reach 60 billion USD this year. U.S. exports to Viet Nam in the first 10 months grew by 39 percent from a 5,7% growth in 2017. In addition, Viet Nam has put in efforts to address the U.S. concerns in terms of electronic payment, auto imports, and veterinary drugs.

In the past few years, the U.S. have solidified her place as one of the top ten largest investors in Viet Nam, with nearly 900 projects up and running and close to USD 10 billion in total registered capital. The U.S. currently ranks 9th out of 127 economies investing in Viet Nam. This is an impressive number, not to mention the actual number that might be even higher!

In 2018, despite complicated developments in the regional and the global, Viet Nam's economy continues to grow at an impressive rate of 7%. Most importantly, the macroeconomic stability has been well maintained; the investment climate has been remarkably improved and the international integration process has opened up new opportunities for growth. The Amcham's 2018 ASEAN Business Outlook Survey found that Viet Nam continues to be an attractive destination for US investors.

In a colorful picture of the Vietnamese economy, Ho Chi Minh City proves to be an engine for economic growth, generating 1/3 of GDP, 1/3 of industrial outputs, 30% of budget revenue and more than 30% export-import values as well as attracting a considerable amount of FDI.

The Vietnamese Government is exerting efforts to realize the goal of building a strong, resilient economy based on innovation and high technology. These are indeed the advantages of the U.S. economy and businesses. Generally speaking, our economies are complementary. Thus, the US business community has been and will continue to be an important part in making Viet Nam's development vision a reality for the mutual interests of both countries. Given the Vietnamese government's strong actions in macroeconomic reform, the CPTTP taking effect in early 2019 and the expected conclusion of 14 FTAs in 2015-2020 as a crucial part in the economic linkages with 55 other countries (including 15 G20 members), it is a certain that Viet Nam will provide an increasingly favorable environment for all businesses, including American ones.

Distinguished guests,

The Indo – Pacific is a potential region which constitutes more than 60% of the world GDP, 70% of world trade and more than 40% of the world population. This is

also a dynamically growing region with vast untapped potentials. Cooperation and willingness for cooperation to settle disputes among countries will remain the prevailing trend in this region.

Viet Nam highly welcomes all open and inclusive initiatives, including the IPS, in contribution to peace, cooperation, stability and development in the region with respect for international laws, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of regional countries as well as the assurance of ASEAN's centrality. We welcome countries in and out of the region that have been putting forward concrete initiatives in the areas of economy-trade, infrastructure development to open up effective and practical cooperation prospects among relevant countries.

Accordingly, we are confident that our forum today is an important event and it is expected to be concluded with a large number of major effective projects, especially in such highly-needed areas as railway, aviation, energy and seaports infrastructure. We highly welcome growing investment from the U.S. and other partners such as Japan, India, Australia, UK and the EU into Vietnam in the above-mentioned areas on the basis of shared benefits and in line with international standards and laws.

It is our view that the support from our two governments as well as your engagements will significantly contribute to the successful implementation of concrete projects for substantial benefits of all parties.

Thank you very much for your attention. /.