

## Address by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Youth of Vietnam: (August 6, 1995) "U.S. - Vietnam Relations: A New Chapter"

*(BPT: Bài diễn văn này được trích ra từ Internet; Xin gửi đến Ái Hữu Công Chánh đọc để suy ngẫm. Diễn giả có nêu hai câu:*

1. "After so many years of war, only life remains." của Thi sĩ và Công thần Nguyễn Trãi.

2. "The people are the roots of the nation". của một thi sĩ Việt Nam ở thế kỷ 16.

Ái Hữu nào biết lời Việt của câu thứ nhất và lời Việt và tên tác giả ở câu thứ hai, xin gửi đến Bản Tin Ái Hữu Công Chánh để đăng vào Bản Tin số 67).

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Thank you, Director-General Ngoc, for that kind introduction. It is a pleasure to be here with Vice Minister Le Mai and other distinguished guests. I am grateful to the Institute for International Relations for helping to organize this event. The staff and students of the Institute are playing an important part in charting a broader role for Vietnam as it continues to integrate itself into Asia and the world.

I have come to Vietnam on behalf of President Clinton and the American people to begin a new chapter in the relationship between our nations. And I have come here this afternoon to speak directly to the people of Vietnam about the future that I hope we can share.

I am especially pleased to be able to address an audience that includes so many students. One of the startling facts about Vietnam is that

three-fifths of your countrymen and women are under 25 years of age. Vietnam is an old country, but a young nation. Its future, and its evolving place in the community of nations, are yours to shape.

This is the first generation of Vietnamese students in many decades to enter adulthood informed by the memory of war, but inspired by the promise of peace. This is what I know you call the "peace generation" – the first that can devote all its energies to renovation at home, and to cooperation with your neighbors and the world. Without forgetting the past, or abandoning tradition, you have a chance to help your country move forward with greater freedom and prosperity.

The ties between the United States and Vietnam reach back further than you might think: In 1787, Thomas Jefferson, a champion of liberty, as well as a man of science, tried to obtain rice seed from Vietnam for his farm in Virginia. Fifteen years later, when Jefferson was President, the first American merchant ship sailed into a Vietnamese port. Almost 150 years later Jefferson's words that "all men are created equal" were echoed in Vietnam's own declaration of independence.

Because of the war American troops fought on your soil, I have no doubt that American history books will always include a chapter on Vietnam – just as Vietnamese history books will surely include a

chapter on America. Today our peoples are still scarred by the war. But let us remember that history is a work in progress. That bitter past has also planted the seeds for a better future.

More than three million Americans served in Vietnam. Even amidst the death and destruction of war, many came to appreciate the culture of your people and the beauty of this land.

We have other bonds as well. The one million people of Vietnamese origin who now live in the United States can also be a bridge for reconciliation and cooperation between our two countries. Just south of my home city of Los Angeles, there is a place called "Little Saigon," where Buddhist temples and neighborhood groceries selling rau muong coexist with the freeways and shopping malls of southern California. And when I look out my window from the State Department in Washington, I can see Arlington, Virginia – a historic old American community and also a vibrant new center of Vietnamese culture and commerce. Indeed, the United States has been enriched by our Vietnamese-Americans, one of the most successful immigrant groups in our recent history.

Yet apart from visits by returning veterans and family members has been little direct contact between our two countries over the last twenty years. I know these have been difficult years for Vietnam –

years of economic hardship and until recently, years of conflict. But we have now reached a time of promise and of change. We still have history to make, a new chapter to write in the history we share.

A month ago, President Clinton decided the time had come to normalize diplomatic relations between the United States and Vietnam. He was supported in this decision by a majority of the American people, and by an important group of American veterans who had served here during the war and who now serve in the United States Congress. The President believes, as do they, that closer ties are in the interest of both our nations. The diplomatic relations we initiated yesterday will help us to account fully for those who sacrificed in the past, and will also allow our countries to work together on behalf of regional prosperity and security.

Our most important priority in restoring ties with Vietnam is to determine the fate of each American who did not return from the war. Each soldier who was lost remains cherished, with a name, a family, and a nation that cares. There should be the fullest possible accounting for each one. That is a solemn pledge my government has made to the American people. Fulfilling it remain the key to a closer relationship between our two countries.

I want to thank the Vietnamese officials, veterans, and citizens who have helped us find answers, by sharing their memories of the war and by leading us to crash sites and burial grounds. They have come forward time and again to help Americans ease our sense of loss. I know that the people of Vietnam have endured great losses as well. That is why the United States has released

thousands of documents to help Vietnamese authorities search for those of your countrymen who are still missing in action. That is why we have funded humanitarian projects for war victims.

Of course, we cannot heal every wound or settle every debate from the past. We will leave that to students of history, and to future generations. This moment belongs to the families looking for answers about lost loved ones, and to the Vietnamese villagers who have given them a helping hand. It belongs to the American veterans who have returned to this country to provide prosthetics to victims of the war, and to the Vietnamese veterans who welcome them as friends. It belongs to the entrepreneurs who are rebuilding this country, now that it is finally at peace. It belongs to the students who question old assumptions and embrace new ways of thinking. As the great Vietnamese poet and statesman Nguyen Trai put it five hundred years ago: "After so many years of war, only life remains."

After so many years of war and turmoil, Vietnam is turning its face to a changed world. Colonial empires have vanished and the age of independence struggles is over. In the last two decades, 45 more sovereign countries have emerged. But it is not only new nations that have been born and maps that have been redrawn. A powerful revolution of ideas has swept the world. Indeed, the main story of the late twentieth century is the ascendancy of open societies and open markets in country after country, lifting the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Today in the Western Hemisphere, for example, every nation but one has a freely elected government and a market economy.

After decades of struggle, South Africa is now a multiracial democracy. The former Soviet Union has been transformed. In Europe, the fastest growing economies are those Eastern nations that moved most decisively toward economic and political reform.

Communications technology is pushing the expansion of freedom for the individual at the same time as it is shrinking the distances between nations. My speech to you, for example, will be broadcast back to the United States by satellite. Through the Internet, it will be available to almost anyone in the world with a computer and a phone line. Governments cannot control this movement of ideas in the Information Age, even if they want to.

Consider how much Southeast Asia has changed as well. New civilian governments have been freely elected in Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Nations like Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are ten to twenty times wealthier today than they were in 1965. My visit this past week to Kuala Lumpur underscored for me the enormous scale and dynamism of the region's transformation.

Because of these remarkable changes, America's relationship with the nations of Southeast Asia has been transformed as well. Twenty-five years ago, the largest American communities in the region revolved around military bases. The United States has vital military alliances and a substantial military presence in the region that are widely welcomed. Our security presence will continue to provide the stability and reassurance necessary for sustained economic growth. But today, American communities in the region also revolve around Chambers of Com-

merce and universities. The most common interaction across the Pacific takes place today among private citizens – among business people, scholars, and tourists. I believe that these currents of culture and commerce are bringing us closer to a new Pacific community stretching from Los Angeles to Kuala Lumpur.

Vietnam is now moving into the mainstream of Southeast Asia. Last year, your country became a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the region's first multinational dialogue on security issues. This year, it has joined ASEAN itself. As its economy opens further, and its laws governing trade and investment develop, Vietnam will be in a position to join its Southeast Asian neighbors in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the World Trade Organization. We want Vietnam to enjoy the benefits, and to assume the obligations, that go with belonging to these international institutions.

With the Cold War over, we view Vietnam as the product of its own history and the master of its own destiny. As many of your countrymen and ours have urged, we look on Vietnam "as a country, not a war." We view it as a nation with immense potential as a partner in trade and diplomacy.

The process of establishing normal economic ties with the United States will take time. But we are prepared to move forward. We will do so in consultation with Congress and consistent with our laws. The first step in expanding our commercial relations is to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement that will provide for Most Favored Nation trading status. Our goal is to develop with Vietnam the same full range of economic relationships that we enjoy with your

Southeast Asian neighbors.

I hope that many more Americans will join companies like Ford, Coca-Cola and Baskin Robbins in betting on Vietnam's future. I also hope that more private American organizations will join groups like the Ford Foundation and World Vision in supporting Vietnam's development. I hope that more Vietnamese students will come to study in the United States, to join the 66 already participating in the Fulbright scholarship program.

There is a great deal our governments can do together. Through the ASEAN Regional Forum, for example, we can strive with others to assure stability in Southeast Asia. One of the key issues is the South China Sea, a vital sea lane through which one-quarter of the world's ocean freight passes. The United States will continue to urge countries with competing claims to resources there to resolve their disputes through dialogue.

Together the United States, Vietnam and its neighbors have an interest in cooperating to fight narcotics trafficking. Southeast Asia is the biggest source of heroin arriving on American shores. This deadly drug is ruining lives in the countries through which it passes, including Vietnam.

We have also started and will continue having a dialogue with Vietnam on human rights issues that are of great importance to the American people. Progress in this dialogue will enable our two nations to further deepen our ties.

This is a time of great possibility for our relations with Vietnam, for your country's continued growth and its integration in the region. But while further progress is possible, it is not guaranteed. If Vietnam is to

find an important place in the community of nations and to attract investment, it should move beyond just opening its doors. The key to success in this rapidly changing world is the freedom to own, to buy and to sell; the freedom to participate in the decisions that affect our lives.

As your nation and leaders have recognized, free market reform is a necessary start. All over the world, courageous reformers have understood that command economies cannot bring prosperity to their people. Experience teaches it cannot be dismantled piecemeal. I would ask you to look at economic reform as a passage over a ravine: you cannot do it by taking several little steps; only one giant leap will get you across.

There are many different models of market economies. But whether you go to New York, or Tokyo, or Bangkok, you will find most of the fundamentals are the same. All these places have private property rights, protected by an independent judiciary, and with ownership clearly defined by law. In each, one can borrow capital, buy insurance, and freely exchange information. In each, efficiency, hard work, and imagination are rewarded, not discouraged.

Vietnam has made great progress in creating these conditions, and the result has been stunning economic growth and a range of new opportunities. The policy of Doi Moi has been a tremendous success. But there is still much to be done to create an institutional framework in which a free market can flourish. Vietnamese entrepreneurs and foreign investors alike need a stronger system of private banking, and above all, less red tape and more transpar-

*(xem tiếp trang 100)*