

U.S.-VIET NAM JOINT VISION STATEMENT ON DEFENSE RELATIONS

*Between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the
Ministry of National Defense of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*

REAFFIRMING the U.S.-Viet Nam Memorandum of Understanding for Advancing Bilateral Defense Cooperation (2011) (hereafter referred to as the 2011 MOU) and the U.S.-Viet Nam Comprehensive Partnership announcement (2013);

RESPECTING the political system, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and laws of each country;

EMPHASIZING the mutual trust, respect, and understanding that both sides have built over the past two decades;

RECOGNIZING the positive contributions made by the Ministry of Defense of each country in enhancing the peace, stability and development of Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific, and their interest in promoting closer cooperation to address common security issues and challenges;

REAFFIRMING the commitment to respecting international law, the peaceful resolution of disagreements and conflict, and the right to free navigation and commerce;

REAFFIRMING FURTHER that Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its subsidiary organizations are key components of a robust, effective, open, and inclusive regional security architecture that enhances friendship, mutual trust, and confidence in the region;

RECALLING the shared history of the war in Viet Nam and the cost that it inflicted on both countries' populaces;

RESPECTING the steps that both countries have undertaken to build a new bilateral relationship while continuing to cooperate in addressing the consequences of the past;

COMMENDING the valuable work of the Defense Policy Dialogue, the Bilateral Defense Dialogue, and the participation of the two Ministries of

Defense in the Political-Security and Defense Dialogue, over the past several years;

COGNIZANT that the future will present greater security challenges but also greater opportunities;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of the two Ministries of Defense to enhance peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region;

The U.S. Department of Defense and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense hereby declare to establish a joint vision for the U.S.-Viet Nam defense relationship to guide the expansion of bilateral ties based on shared principles and interests.

It has been 20 years since the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the United States normalized relations. In this short span of time, the U.S.-Viet Nam defense relationship has been transformed based on a shared commitment to a stable and peaceful Asia-Pacific region and mutual understanding of and respect for each country's sovereignty. The relationship continues to develop and reflects the desire and trust of both countries to seize future shared opportunities while cooperating on addressing the shared legacies from the war. The U.S. Department of Defense and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense, therefore, seek to establish a joint vision to guide the expansion of bilateral ties, to seize new opportunities, to meet the challenges of the 21st century, and to support the broader U.S.-Viet Nam Comprehensive Partnership.

GUIDING THEMES

The U.S.-Viet Nam defense relationship seeks to advance shared security interests and derives from a common commitment to peace and the rule of law. These interests include:

- Maintaining security and stability within each country and the region;
- Defending international law and principles;
- Addressing non-traditional security threats, including the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated materials, data, and technologies;

- Protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air, and sea lanes; and
- Overcoming the legacies of war from our shared past.

AREAS AND FORMS OF COOPERATION

In pursuit of this shared vision of an expanded and deeper U.S.-Viet Nam partnership, within their responsibility and authority, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Viet Nam Ministry of National Defense commit to:

- Conduct increased cooperative activities to enhance trust and mutual understanding;
- Collaborate in multinational fora and organizations—including ASEAN—when it is in their common interest;
- Strengthen the capabilities of our defense institutions and militaries to enhance cooperation, promote security, and address non-traditional security threats;
- Expand defense trade between our countries, potentially including cooperation in the production of new technologies and equipment, where possible under current law and policy restrictions;
- Expand collaboration on maritime security and maritime domain awareness, including, where possible, port visits and voyage repair visits to ports and facilities of each country, as mutually identified;
- Expand training and education opportunities of each country's military academic institutions;
- Strengthen the ability of each country to conduct search and rescue activities and respond quickly to disasters and provide humanitarian response;
- Assist in building capacity to conduct successful United Nations peacekeeping operations;
- Increase exchanges of information and best practices on topics of mutual interest, including science and defense technology exchanges;
- Enhance cooperation to overcome the legacies from the war;

- Continue strategic-level discussions by senior leadership from each side's defense ministry on international security issues of mutual interest; and
- Welcome regular exchanges of defense leadership to each country.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Defense Policy Dialogue (DPD) is to continue to serve as the primary mechanism to review and guide the U.S.-Viet Nam defense relationship. Both countries commit to utilize the existing Bilateral Defense Dialogue (BDD) mechanism to determine how to implement the understandings reached in the DPD, and the annual Service-level talks shall facilitate the execution of those initiatives proposed during the BDD and DPD. The U.S. Department of Defense and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense are to rely upon this Joint Vision Statement for guidance on the principles and objectives of the U.S.-Viet Nam defense relationship, and to strive to achieve those objectives.

Both sides recognize that this Joint Vision Statement represents a mutual understanding of the participants, and is not intended to be a legally binding document.

Signed in Ha Noi on June 1, 2015 in duplicate with one copy in English and one copy in Vietnamese, both texts being equally authentic.

**For the Department of Defense
of the United States of America**



**The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense**

**For the Ministry of National Defense
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam**



**General Phung Quang Thanh
Minister of National Defense**