

AF Magazine Daily Report eNewsletter: US, Vietnam Advance Partnership The United States & Vietnam last week announced the formation of a "comprehensive partnership" to deepen bilateral ties in a host of areas from [defense & security](#) to trade & science & technology. News of the partnership came in [a joint statement](#) following the July 25 meeting of Presidents Obama & Truong Tan Sang in the White House. The agreement is meant to "contribute to peace, stability, cooperation, & prosperity in each country, in the region, & in the world," reads the statement. With regards to defense & security, the two leaders "agreed to expand mutually beneficial cooperation to enhance capabilities such as search & rescue & disaster response," reads the statement. The US also will conduct an environmental assessment of dioxin contamination at Bien Hoa Air Base northeast of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) as part of its assistance in cleaning up toxic materials from the Vietnam War, according to the statement. Vietnam has expanded ties with the US in recent years, particularly as it seeks to strengthen its position against China's growing military power & influence in southeast Asia. (See also Voice of America [report](#) & Sang's July 25 [speech](#) at the Center for Strategic & International Studies.)

The White House Office of the Pres Secretary For Immediate Release July 25, 2013 Joint Statement by President Barack Obama of the United States of America & President Sang of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Pres Barack Obama welcomed Pres Sang of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the White House on July 25, 2013. During their meeting, the two Pres affirmed their commitment to opening a new phase of bilateral relations between Vietnam & the US based on mutual respect & common interests. Pres Sang's visit comes at an important time for both nations, reflecting a shared desire to build a forward-looking relationship between the two countries. The Presidents decided to form a **US-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership** to provide an overarching framework for advancing the relationship. They underlined the principles of the Partnership, including respect for the UN Charter, international law, & each other's political systems, independence, sovereignty, & territorial integrity. They stated the Partnership is intended to contribute to peace, stability, cooperation, & prosperity in each country, in the region, & in the world. The new Partnership will create mechanisms for cooperation in areas including political & diplomatic relations, trade & economic ties, science & technology, education & training, environment & health, war legacy issues, defense & security, protection & promotion of human rights, & culture, sports, & tourism.

Political & Diplomatic Cooperation As part of the US-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership, the two sides agreed to increase high level exchanges as well as contacts at all levels, & to intensify dialogue & cooperation mechanisms. Pres Obama affirmed the US' support for Vietnam's independence, sovereignty, prosperity, & integration into the international community. Pres Sang welcomed the US' enhanced cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, which contributes to the peace, stability, & prosperity of the region. The Pres welcomed the establishment of a regular dialogue between their two foreign ministers, & encouraged dialogues & exchanges between entities associated with political parties in both countries. The Presidents agreed to enhance cooperation at regional & international forums including The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit (EAS), & the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus (ADMM+) to support peace, stability, cooperation, & development in the Asia-Pacific region. They reaffirmed their support for the settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Pres also reaffirmed their support for the principle of non-use of force or threat-of-force in resolving territorial & maritime disputes. The Pres underscored the value of full observance of the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) & the importance of launching negotiations to conclude an effective Code of Conduct (COC). Pres Sang expressed his appreciation for the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI). The Presidents agreed the two sides would work together with other member countries & the Friends of the Lower Mekong to further strengthen regional cooperation to promote prosperity & sustainable development, narrow the development gap, enhance connectivity, & respond to transnational challenges in the region. The two Pres instructed relevant agencies to conclude as soon as possible a bilateral agreement on the construction of new embassies & missions. The Leaders affirmed the US' & Vietnam's diplomatic presence in their respective capitals should reflect the development of their bilateral ties.

Trade & Economic Ties Recalling their discussions in Cambodia in Nov 2012, the Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to conclude a comprehensive, high-standard Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement as soon as possible this year. A 21st-century TPP agreement will advance regional economic integration, further development objectives, & lead to the creation of jobs in the US, Vietnam, & all TPP countries, while taking into account the diversity of the participants' levels of development in the context of a comprehensive & balanced package. The Pres welcomed continued efforts to further bilateral economic, commercial, & investment ties, & Pres Obama noted Vietnam's reform efforts as a developing economy. They underlined the critical value of these efforts to advancing the bilateral relationship, & the importance of economic cooperation as a foundation & engine for the new US-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership. The Pres agreed to enhance cooperation under the US-Vietnam Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council as well as under the ASEAN Enhanced Economic Engagement initiative & in APEC to increase economic & trade engagement in line with the bilateral Comprehensive Partnership & shared objectives in the World Trade Organization (WTO), APEC, & ASEAN fora. Pres Obama applauded Vietnam's progress in economic reform Pres Obama noted Vietnam's interest in pursuing market economy country status & is committed to intensifying the US' constructive engagement with Vietnam on its economic reforms. The Pres acknowledged Vietnam's intention to accede to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment (CTC). Both Pres noted the importance of growing commercial ties between the two economies, & made special mention of: the MOU signed between PetroVietnam & US Export-Import Bank to support trade & investment in the petroleum & energy sectors in Vietnam; the Framework Heads Agreement on the Ca Voi Xanh offshore Vietnam development project between Exxon Mobil Corporation & PetroVietnam; the Cooperation Agreement between Murphy Oil Corporation & PetroVietnam Exploration Production Corporation (PVEP); an MOU between Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) & Bank for Investment & Development of Vietnam (BIDV); & the Vietnam Ministry of Finance's approval in principle for establishment of a fund management company by ACE Insurance. The Pres welcomed US Department of Agriculture support for capacity building & training programs designed to help Vietnam adopt & apply sound science & technology to the benefit of Vietnamese farmers, agricultural companies, & consumers. The two leaders recognized the importance of protecting the most vulnerable populations while pursuing economic development, including working together to combat child & forced labor.

Science & Technology Cooperation The Presidents discussed the importance of scientific & technological cooperation. They welcomed the 8th meeting of the Joint Committee for Scientific & Technological Cooperation to be held this autumn, & highlighted efforts to build ties between the scientific communities in the US & Vietnam to strengthen bilateral relations, respond to climate change & other global challenges, & foster innovation-driven economic growth. The Presidents reiterated their intention to continue scientific cooperation, including in the areas of civil nuclear energy, space technology, & maritime research. The Pres highlighted the successful conclusion of a joint effort to remove all highly enriched uranium from Vietnam. The two leaders agreed to continue cooperation to support Vietnam's aspirations for a peaceful nuclear energy program with the highest standards of safety, safeguards, & security.

Education Cooperation The Pres agreed on the need to enhance educational, cultural, & people-to-people ties between the US & Vietnam. They remarked on the rapid growth of Vietnamese students studying at US universities & colleges, & expressed hope that more US students will pursue study abroad opportunities in Vietnam. They agreed that close cooperation on education & training are critical elements to the next phase of the relationship. They also noted that robust English language instruction will help Vietnam compete in the 21st century global economy. The Presidents noted the success of bilateral education & exchange initiatives, especially the Fulbright program & the Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program. The two Pres noted the success of the Fulbright Economics Teaching Program & Pres Sang welcomed the initiative establishing a Fulbright University in Vietnam.

Environment & Health The Presidents welcomed increasing bilateral cooperation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam through promotion of clean energy, energy efficiency, & sustainable forestry, & to strengthen Vietnam's resilience to climate change, rising sea level & natural disasters, including through the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Clean Energy Program & Forests & Deltas Program. Pres Obama reaffirmed the US' commitment to providing further medical & other care & assistance for persons with disabilities, regardless of cause. The two leaders also agreed to work together, along with their LMI partners, to promote scientific research, capacity-building, & dialogue to ensure the long-term health & sustainability of the Mekong Delta & the Lower Mekong River Basin. Pres Obama expressed appreciation for Vietnam's leadership as the co-chair of the LMI Environment & Water Pillar, which has included two joint research proposals from Vietnam on water resources management in the basin. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the recent conclusion of the Agreement on Healthcare & Medical Sciences Cooperation & looked forward to enhanced public health cooperation to promote global health security. Pres Sang expressed his appreciation for the US government's continued support through the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) for Vietnam's efforts to build sustainable systems for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, & care.

War Legacy Issues The Presidents agreed that extensive cooperation in addressing war legacy issues to deepen mutual trust has allowed both countries to develop a relationship that looks to the future. Pres Obama expressed his appreciation for Vietnam's continued cooperation in providing for the fullest possible accounting for US personnel missing in action (MIA). Pres Obama reaffirmed the US commitment to assist Vietnam in its MIA accounting efforts. Pres Sang noted the US Govt's contributions to Vietnam's efforts to clean up unexploded ordnance (UXO), assist those injured by UXO, & prevent future casualties. The Pres expressed satisfaction with progress on USAID & the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense's project to clean up dioxin contamination at Danang International Airport. Pres Sang welcomed plans by the US Govt to conduct an environmental assessment of dioxin contamination at Bien Hoa Air Base.

Defense & Security The Presidents agreed the US & Vietnam would continue to cooperate on defense & security. They expressed satisfaction with the Memorandum of Understanding on Advancing Bilateral Defense Cooperation of 2011 & reaffirmed their commitment to its full implementation. They agreed to continue the US-Vietnam Defense Policy Dialogue & the bilateral Political, Security, & Defense dialogue as opportunities to review the defense & security relationship & discuss future cooperation. The Presidents agreed to expand mutually beneficial cooperation to enhance capabilities such as search & rescue & disaster response. The Presidents also underscored the importance of enhanced cooperation in non-traditional security matters & agreed to work more closely to counter terrorism; enhance maritime law enforcement cooperation; combat transnational crime including piracy, & narcotics, human, & wildlife trafficking; & address high-tech crime & cyber security. Pres Obama welcomed Vietnam's decision to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations & emphasized the US' desire to assist with training & other support for this effort through the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI).

Promotion & Protection of Human Rights The Presidents took note of the benefits of a candid & open dialogue to enhance mutual understanding & narrow differences on human rights. They emphasized the importance of protection & promotion of human rights. Pres Sang informed Pres Obama of Vietnam's efforts & achievements in promoting human rights & rule of law & in protecting the rights of religious believers. Pres Sang also affirmed that Vietnam was prepared to sign the United Nations Convention Against Torture by the end of the year & stated that Vietnam would invite the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in 2014. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to uphold the United Nations Charter & the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Culture, Tourism & Sports The Presidents highlighted the importance of enhanced cooperation on culture, sports & tourism to strengthening people-to-people exchange & mutual understanding. They took note of the success of the Vietnamese- American community in the US & their important contributions to the growth of bilateral ties. The Pres encouraged more people-to-people exchange through art performances, concerts, exhibitions & other cultural & sports events between the two countries.

7/30/2012 US-Vietnam Defense Trade Still "Nascent": A steady stream of US officials has visited Vietnam in the last year, as the US is investing more time & effort in building ties with Vietnam, said Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs [Andrew Shapiro](#). The bilateral dialogue has advanced much in the past few years, Shapiro, who visited Hanoi in June, told reporters in Washington, D.C., July 27. "The willingness to talk about important security issues has really improved," he said. The South China Sea has been on the agenda as have arms sales, he confirmed. The defense trade between the two countries is still "nascent," & the US is currently focused on non-lethal sales in areas such as airlift & disaster-relief capabilities, he said. But there is a great deal of potential, especially to build Vietnam's maritime & air capabilities, he noted. **However, US officials have made it clear there will be no sales of lethal weapons until the Vietnamese improve their human rights record,** said Shapiro. "I hope we see improvement because we would like to be able to move the relationship in that direction," he said. (See also [A SEA Change](#) from *Air Force Magazine's* July issue.) —*Marc V. Schanz*