

**The President's News Conference With President Trần Đại Quang of Vietnam in Hanoi, Vietnam**

*May 23, 2016*

*President Quang.* Your Excellency, President of the United States of America, Mr. Barack Obama, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of the leaders of the party, state, and the people of Vietnam, once again, I'd like to warmly welcome President Barack Obama and the high-level delegation of the U.S. Government on your official visit to Vietnam.

Mr. President and I had a very productive talk on bilateral relations, regional and global issues of common interest. We discussed the implementation of the joint statement on the Vietnam-U.S. comprehensive partnership signed in July 2013 and the joint vision statement between the two countries in July of 2015 concluded between the high-level leaders of the two countries. We agreed that important progresses in bilateral relations have been made in recent years. Both sides committed to implementing the principles of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political regime.

During President Obama's official visit, Vietnam and the U.S. agreed to a joint statement on strengthening the comprehensive partnership with added substance, depth, and effectiveness. Both sides agreed to place development cooperation at the center of the bilateral ties.

On this occasion, important deals were also reached in terms of trade, health care, humanitarian assistance, education and training, law enforcement and judicial cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges as well. Both sides agreed to give higher priorities to addressing war legacy issues and committed—continue to work together in this regard.

The U.S. will work with Vietnam on detoxing Bien Hoa Airport after both sides successfully conclude the cleanup project at Danang Airport. Vietnam very much appreciates the U.S. decision to completely lift the ban on lethal weapon sales to Vietnam, which is the clear proof that both countries have completely normalized the relations.

President Obama and I also discussed the future directions of bilateral ties and measures to further deepen bilateral cooperation. We underscored the importance of confidence building and priority for development cooperation in trade and investment, science and technology, human resource development, and addressing climate change. Both sides reaffirmed the commitments to promptly ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, or TPP.

With respect to regional and global issues, President Obama and I agreed that we should set up collaboration at regional and international forums and that the U.S. will support Vietnam in successfully hosting the 2017 APEC summit, as well as participating in U.N. peacekeeping operations.

We also exchanged views on recent developments in the South China Sea. We reiterated continued cooperation on addressing climate change and sustainable use of the Mekong River water resources. We believe that promised growth in Vietnam-U.S relations not only brings about benefits for each country, but also contributes to peace, stability, cooperation, and development in the Asia-Pacific and the world and the ASEAN-U.S. relationships as well.

I want to thank President Obama personally, the American leadership and people, and American friends for their good will and significant contributions to the normalization and the continued development of the Vietnam-U.S. relations. I wish President Obama and the members of your delegation a successful visit to Vietnam, with fond memories of our country, culture, and hospitality of the Vietnamese people.

Once again, thank you very much for the presence of American and Vietnamese press and media here today. Thank you very much.

*President Obama.* Well, good afternoon. *Xin chào.* Thank you, President Quang, for your generous words. And let me thank you and the Government and the people of Vietnam for the sincere welcome and hospitality that has been extended to me and to my delegation.

Over the past century, our two nations have known cooperation and then conflict, painful separation, and a long reconciliation. Now, more than two decades of normalized ties between our governments allows us to reach a new moment.

It's clear from this visit that both our peoples are eager for an even closer relationship, a deeper relationship. And I was moved to see so many people lining the streets as we were driving into town today. I bring greetings and friendship of the American people, including some outstanding Members of Congress who are joining me on this visit and so many Vietnamese Americans whose families bind us together and remind us of the values that we share.

I've indicated before that one of my highest foreign policy priorities as President is to ensure that the United States continues to play a larger and long-term role in the Asia-Pacific, which is vital to our security and to our prosperity. We believe the people of this region should live in security, prosperity, and dignity. In pursuit of this vision, we're more deeply engaged across the Asia-Pacific than we have been in decades, and that includes our comprehensive partnership with Vietnam.

If you consider where we have been and where we are now, the transformation in the relations between our two countries is remarkable. Over the past two decades, our trade has surged nearly a hundredfold, supporting jobs and opportunities in both countries. Since I took office, we've boosted U.S. exports to Vietnam by more than 150 percent. We're now the single largest market for Vietnam's exports. American companies are one of the top investors here.

With our Fulbright programs, thousands of our students and scholars have studied together. And more than 13,000 young people across Vietnam are learning new skills as part of our Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative. Vietnam has become one of the top 10 countries with students in the United States. This year, we've welcomed nearly 19,000, the most ever. And last year, Vietnam welcomed nearly half a million American tourists to this country, and I will assure you that more are on the way.

Our two governments are also cooperating more closely than ever. As part of our engagement with ASEAN and the East Asia Summit, we're working together to advance regional security and stability. Vietnam has welcomed American navy ships to your ports. Our militaries are conducting more exchanges and partnering on maritime security.

Together, we're pursuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, not only to support trade, but to draw our nations closer together and reinforce regional cooperation. We're doing more to meet global challenges, from preventing nuclear terrorism to promoting global health security so that

outbreaks of disease don't become epidemics. And with this visit, the United States and Vietnam have agreed to a significant upgrade in our cooperation across the board.

We're taking new steps to give our young people the education and skills that they need to succeed. And I'm very pleased that, for the first time, the Peace Corps will come to Vietnam. Our Peace Corps volunteers will focus on teaching English, and the friendship that our people forge will bring us closer together for decades to come.

American academic and technological leaders—including Intel, Oracle, Arizona State University, and others—will help Vietnamese universities boost training in science, technology, engineering, and math. Harvard Medical School, Johnson & Johnson, GE, and others will join with Vietnam universities to improve medical education. And now that the Government of Vietnam has granted the necessary license, we can say that Fulbright University Vietnam—this country's first nonprofit, independent university—can move forward and open its doors and welcome its first class this fall.

We're increasing trade. With Vietnam's announcement on multiple-entry visas, it will be easier for Americans to come here and do business and travel. President Quang and I just attended a signing ceremony that many of you saw, where American and Vietnamese companies are moving ahead with the new commercial deals worth more than \$16 billion. Boeing will sell a hundred aircraft to VietJet. Pratt & Whitney will sell advanced engines. GE Wind will partner with the Vietnamese Government to develop more wind power. Deals like these are a win for both of our countries, helping to fuel Vietnam's economic growth and supporting tens of thousands of American jobs.

We agreed to work to ratify and implement the Trans-Pacific Partnership as soon as possible, because it will support vital economic reforms here, further integrate Vietnam into the global economy, and reduce tariffs on American exports to Vietnam. And we discussed the high standards that Vietnam has committed to meet under TPP on labor, the environment, and intellectual property. And I conveyed that the United States is prepared to offer technical assistance to Vietnam as it works to fully implement these standards so that TPP delivers the benefits that our peoples expect.

With regard to security, the United States will continue to do our part to address the painful legacy of war. On behalf of the American people, including our veterans, I want to thank the Government and the people of Vietnam for the many years of cooperation to account for Americans missing in action, solemn efforts that we'll continue together. We'll continue to help remove unexploded landmines and bombs. And now that our joint effort to remove dioxin—agent orange—from Danang Airport is nearly complete, the United States will help in the cleanup at Bien Hoa Air Base.

We've agreed to continue deepening our defense cooperation, including patrol boats and training for Vietnam's Coast Guard and to work more closely together in responding to humanitarian disasters. And I can also announce that the United States is fully lifting the ban on the sale of military equipment to Vietnam that has been in place for some 50 years. As with all our defense partners, sales will need to still meet strict requirements, including those related to human rights. But this change will ensure that Vietnam has access to the equipment it needs to defend itself, and it removes a lingering vestige of the cold war. It also underscores the commitment of the United States to a fully normalized relationship with Vietnam, including strong defense ties with Vietnam and this region for the long term.

More broadly, the United States and Vietnam are united in our support for a regional order—including in the South China Sea—where international norms and rules are upheld, where there is freedom of navigation and overflight, where lawful commerce is not impeded, and where disputes are resolved peacefully, through legal means, in accordance with international law. I want to repeat that the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, and we will support the right of all countries to do the same.

Now, even as we make important progress in the ways that I've just described, there continue to be areas where our two governments disagree, including on democracy and human rights. And I made it clear that the United States does not seek to impose our form of government on Vietnam or any nation. We respect Vietnam's sovereignty and independence. At the same time, we will continue to speak out on behalf of human rights that we believe are universal, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. And that includes the right of citizens, through civil society, to organize and help improve their communities and their country.

We believe, and I believe, that nations are stronger and more prosperous when these universal rights are upheld and when our two countries continue to discuss these issues as part of our human rights dialogue in a spirit of construction—constructive and cooperative effort.

And finally, the United States and Vietnam are expanding our cooperation in ways that benefit the world. Under our growing climate change partnership, we'll support Vietnam as it works to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement. Because our two countries and others have committed to joining the agreement this year, we're within striking distance of it entering into force before anybody expected.

In the meantime, we'll help communities in vulnerable regions, like the Mekong Delta adapt to a changing climate and assist Vietnam's transition to a low-carbon economy. And that includes the low-carbon energy that will come from our cooperation on civil nuclear power. And as Vietnam prepares to deepen its commitment to U.N. peacekeeping, the United States is proud to support Vietnam's new peacekeeping training center.

So, again, President Quang, thank you for your hospitality. Thank you for our work together. I'm looking forward to the opportunity to visit with the Vietnamese people. Maybe I will enjoy some *cà phê sữa đá*. [Laughter] I believe that the relationship between the Vietnamese people and the United States can be one of the most important in this critical part of the world. And I believe that the upgrade in our ties that we've achieved today will deliver greater security, prosperity, and dignity for both of our peoples for many decades to come.

*Xin cảm ơn.*

*Moderator.* Thank you, President Obama and President Quang. And now it's time for questions. The floor is open. I invite Mr.—[inaudible]—from Vietnam News Agency.

*Q.* I'm from the Vietnam News Agency. I have a question for President Quang. Your Excellency, could you advise us and make some comments on the notable advances in Vietnam-U.S. relations over the past two decades? Thank you.

*President Quang.* Thank you for your question. I want to affirm that over the past two decades, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in July 1995, Vietnam-U.S. relations have made great strides in many fields. In terms of politics and diplomacy, Vietnam and the U.S. are former enemies turned friends. And now we are comprehensive partners.

The high-level leaders of the two countries often pay a visit to each other, and the relations have grown very well bilaterally and multilaterally. We share the common interests regarding the regional and international issues. And our common interests grow day by day, particularly in relations to the maintenance of peace, stability, cooperation, and development in the region.

With respect to economic cooperation, I'm very pleased to inform you that the two-way trade has grown 130-fold to 44.5 billion U.S. dollars last year. The U.S. is currently the seventh largest investor in Vietnam, and I hope that the U.S. will soon become the biggest investor in Vietnam, as Ambassador Ted Osius once mentioned. The bilateral trade between the two countries has enormous potentials to grow, particularly once the TPP enters into effect.

Regarding education and training cooperation, we have obtained many important progressions. Take, for example, the Fulbright University in Vietnam has recently received its operating license. The number of Vietnamese students studying in the U.S. has grown 56-fold to 28,000 students, the highest number among the ASEAN countries. And our cooperation in defense and security continues to grow in line with the needs of both sides.

The cooperation in remedying the war legacy is now growing more substantively. The two countries have recently completed the phase one of environmental cleanup at Danang Airport, and we will continue to implement the second phase of the project at various other sites, including Bien Hoa Airport. Together with the progress in bilateral ties, Vietnam and U.S. are working together and enhancing the collaboration on regional and international issues of common interest in international forums.

The advances in the bilateral relations stem from the fact that we increasingly share common concerns and interests. And both sides have fully realized the commitments to respect each other's independence, sovereignty, political regimes, and legitimate interests. The visit of President Barack Obama this time to Vietnam will surely create stronger momentum for the development and promotion of the Vietnam-U.S. relations in the future, contributing to maintenance of peace, stability, cooperation, and development in Asia-Pacific and the wider world.

Thank you very much.

*White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Eric H. Schultz.* The first question on the American side will come from Matt Spetalnick with Reuters.

Q. Thank you.

*President Obama.* Hi, Matt.

### *U.S. Weapons Sales to Vietnam/Vietnam-U.S. Relations/South China Sea Maritime Disputes/Human Rights*

Q. I have a question for both Presidents about the lifting of the arms embargo. To what extent do you see a need to build up Vietnam's military deterrent against China's behavior in the South China Sea as part of this decision? Could this include expanded U.S. access to Vietnamese ports, including Cam Ranh Bay?

Directly for President Obama, to what degree will the U.S. decide on weapons sales based on human rights considerations?

And for President Quang, how do you respond to the U.S. push for improved human rights situation in Vietnam?

*President Obama.* Well, Matt, the decision to lift the ban was not based on China or any other considerations. It was based on our desire to complete what has been a lengthy process of moving towards normalization with Vietnam, a process that began with some very courageous and difficult conversations decades ago, including led by our current Secretary of State John Kerry and Senators Tom Carper and John McCain and a whole bunch of other Vietnam veterans, as well as their counterparts in the Vietnamese Government.

And over time, what we've seen is a progressive deepening and broadening of the relationship. And what became apparent to me and my administration at this point was, is that given all the work we do together across the spectrum of economic, trade, security, humanitarian efforts, that it was appropriate for us not to have a blanket, across-the-board ban. Now, every sale that we make to everybody is viewed as a particular transaction, and we examine what's appropriate and what's not, and there are some very close allies of ours where we may not make a particular sale until we have a better sense of how that piece of equipment may end up being used. So we're going to continue to engage in the case-by-case evaluations of these sales. But what we do not have is a ban that's based on an ideological division between our two countries, because we think that, at this stage, both sides have established a level of trust and cooperation, including between our militaries, that is reflective of common interests and mutual respect.

In fact, one of the things that's happened through this comprehensive partnership is a dialogue between the U.S. and Vietnamese military that we hadn't seen in a very long time. And we already have U.S. vessels that have come here to port. We expect that there will be deepening cooperation between our militaries, oftentimes around how do we respond to humanitarian disasters in this region. There may be occasions in which that means that additional U.S. vessels might visit, but I want to emphasize that we will do so only at the invitation and with the cooperation of the Vietnamese Government, fully respecting their sovereignty and their sensitivities.

Now, there is, I think, a genuine mutual concern with respect to maritime issues between the United States and Vietnam, and I've made no secret of that. Vietnam, along with ASEAN, met at my invitation in Sunnylands, California, and we put forward a very clear statement that it is important for us to maintain the freedom of navigation and the governance of international norms and rules and law that have helped to create prosperity and promoted commerce and peace and security in this region. And it's my belief that, with respect to the South China Sea—although the United States doesn't support any particular claim—we are supportive of the notion that these issues should be resolved peacefully, diplomatically, in accordance with international rules and norms, and not based on who's the bigger party and can throw their weight around a little bit more.

At the same time, as I indicated in my initial statement, the United States is going to continue to fly and set courses for our ships as international law allows. Our hope is that, ultimately, various claimants and various disputes can be resolved, and we'll do everything that we can to promote that. In the meantime, part of our cooperation with Vietnam is to improve their maritime security posture for a whole host of reasons. But I want to emphasize that my decision to lift the ban really was more reflective of the changing nature of the relationship.

Last point, with respect specifically to human rights, as I indicated in my opening statement, this is an area where we still have differences. There's been modest progress on some of the areas that we've identified as a concern. TPP actually is one of the things that's

prompting a series of labor reforms here in Vietnam that could end up being extraordinarily significant. But that is not directly tied to the decision around military sales. Okay?

*President Quang.* Thank you very much for the question. I just want to make some comments on the human rights cooperation and the general relations between the two countries. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the consistent position and viewpoint of the Vietnamese state and Government is to protect and promote human rights. This is clearly codified and stipulated in the national constitution of Vietnam in 2013. We are now institutionalizing all the regulations into our laws and sublaw documents to respect and promote the human rights in Vietnam.

Over the past 30 years of reform in Vietnam, Vietnam has achieved remarkable progress in socioeconomic development, defense and security, especially in protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of every citizen in Vietnam. Those achievements have been highly recognized and appreciated by the international community. One of the examples—very good examples—to showcase Vietnam's progress, that Vietnam has been elected as a member of the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2014–2016.

As President Obama mentioned earlier, between the two countries, Vietnam and the U.S., we do have the—some differences in some fields, and it is very easy to understand, particularly on human rights. We are of the view that based on the respect and the spirit of mutual understanding, we need to work closely together, expand our dialogue together, and by so doing, we can narrow the gap in understanding and narrowing the differences between the two countries, especially on human rights.

*Moderator.* And now the floor is still open. I invite other questions. Mr.—[*inaudible*]—from Vietnam Television. Please, you have the floor.

[*At this point, the reporter asked his question in English, as follows.*]

#### *Vietnam-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* [*Inaudible*]—introduce myself. I'm from Vietnam Television. [*Inaudible*] You have visited over 50 countries during your term as U.S. President, and Vietnam is among the last few on the list. So what does this say about the Vietnam-U.S. relations? And how important does the U.S. view on—what Vietnam and its foreign policy? Thank you.

*President Obama.* Well, I would have liked to have gotten here sooner. And maybe, one of the ways of thinking about it is, we have an expression in the United States: We save the best for last. [*Laughter*] So it's a remarkable country. It's a beautiful country. And I've told the President that, unfortunately, when I visit, I'm usually in meetings all day long. So hopefully, when I'm no longer President, I can come here with my family, and I can spend a little more time and travel the country a little bit more and get to know the people and eat the food and have a more relaxing schedule.

But the reason I'm here is because Vietnam is extremely important not just to the region, but I think to the world. First of all, I think highlighting the changes that have taken place between our two countries, how just a generation ago we were adversaries and now we are friends, should give us hope, should be a reminder of the ability for us to transform relationships when we have a dialogue that's based on mutual interests and mutual respect and people-to-people exchanges.

Second, Vietnam is a large, vital, growing country in a large, vital, and growing region of the world. I've said this before: The Asia-Pacific region is growing as fast as any place around

the world. It is a young and dynamic region. It is full of entrepreneurial spirit, and you're seeing new companies and new jobs being created constantly. So the United States wants to be a part of that.

And we, historically, have had good relations with many countries in this region. We want to make sure that as Vietnam grows and becomes more prosperous and achieves greater opportunity, that the young people of Vietnam have a chance to partner with the young people of the United States—trading, exchanging ideas, working on scientific projects, starting businesses together—because I think that will be good for both countries.

And we think that it is important, from our perspective, that as a leader in ASEAN, that we engage Vietnam bilaterally because we want to continue to strengthen our cooperation with the multilateral organizations like the East Asia Summit and ASEAN where we think we've seen some very real progress over the last several years on everything from commercial issues to disease control to humanitarian issues.

One of the things that we increasingly discover is, it's harder and harder to solve problems by ourselves. It's much easier for us to be able to tackle big problems like climate change or the outbreak of disease or responding to humanitarian disasters when we have a architecture of cooperation already established.

So on all these fronts, we've seen remarkable progress. The announcements that we're making today, I think, should give people an indication of the next stage of the U.S.-Vietnamese relationship. These are big deals, all the things that we mentioned here today. And it indicates a broader and deeper relationship that I'm confident will continue to grow in the future. Okay?

*Mr. Schultz.* The final question comes from Angela Greiling-Keane with Bloomberg.

*Q.* Thank you.

*President Obama.* Hi, Angela.

### *Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement/U.S. Monetary Policy/Death of Taliban Leader Akhtar Mohammad Mansur in Afghanistan*

*Q.* President Obama, the Trans-Pacific Partnership seems fairly stalled in Congress, and other countries are looking to follow the U.S. lead in terms of how they advance their approval of the agreement. With the deals today announced for Boeing and GE and your visit here to Vietnam, are you looking to change your strategy in how you seek approval for the Trans-Pacific Partnership in Congress? And do you think that the agreement should be amended to address currency manipulation?

Secondly, President Obama, can you comment on the killing of Taliban leader Mullah Mansur and on Pakistan's concern about that strike happening on its soil? Can you also comment on whether this signals a new offensive in Afghanistan and whether you're concerned that an even more hardline leader might take his place?

For President Quang, are you concerned about the lack of enthusiasm for the Trans-Pacific Partnership in the U.S. Congress and what that means for the deal in the end? And how do you respond to China's criticism of the U.S. pursuing what China says is a one-sided, selfish agenda in Asia that risks regional peace?

*President Obama.* So, first of all, on TPP, Angela, I haven't been around as long as Senators Carper or Secretary Kerry, but I've spent enough time in the Senate to know that



every trade deal is painful, because folks are always seeing if they can get an even better deal. And especially when you have multiple parties involved, folks are going to be scrutinizing it, they're going to be debating it, and in an election year, you can anticipate that some folks are going to try to score political points off it.

Having said that, I remain confident we're going to get it done. And the reason I'm confident is because it's the right thing to do. It's good for the country. It's good for America. It's good for the region. It's good for the world.

And I know I've sold this to you before, but let me reiterate: This is the fastest growing part of the world. This represents an enormous market for the United States. Most countries here already sell their stuff to the United States, and we have relatively low tariffs. In other words, we put relatively low taxes on goods that are coming into the United States. In contrast, tariffs are significantly higher for U.S. goods being sold here. So a deal that gets rid of 18,000 taxes on U.S. goods into the largest, fastest growing markets of the world, that's a good deal for American businesses and American workers.

Number two, one of the biggest complaints about trade deals historically has been that it opens up our markets to countries with lower wages, harsher labor practices, less environmental regulation. Well, if you're signing up for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, you are making commitments that are enforceable to raise labor standards, to ensure that workers have a voice, to attend to environmental problems. And so this gives us the ability to engage with a country like Vietnam and work with them on all those fronts, the precise things that people, in the past, have been concerned about when it comes to trading with other countries.

So I have not yet seen a credible argument that once we get TPP in place we're going to be worse off. We are demonstrably better off. American workers and American businesses are better off if we get this deal passed. And I'm confident we will get it passed.

Now, the politics of it will be noisy. That was true when I, for example, inherited the Korean free trade agreement or the Colombian and Panamanian free trade agreements when I came into office. But we got them done. And I'm confident that we'll get them done this time, as well, although it will—there will be ups and downs and bumps along the way.

With respect to currency manipulation, we have provisions in TPP that advance the transparency and reporting functions that allow us to monitor whether we think that currency manipulation is taking place. One of the debates that took place—and there have been some who argue that we should have enforceable provisions that if you see a currency going down too far that we should be able to impose tariffs on that country. The problem is, is that it's very hard to sort out sometimes why a currency is going down and whether it's actually being manipulated. And frankly, for us to bind other countries to commitments about their monetary policy would mean we were also binding our Federal Reserve to the claims of other countries in terms of how it implements our monetary policy, and that's not something that we would do. We would not give up sovereignty with respect to our monetary policy in that way. But we have strengthened a number of the provisions that are already contained in TPP that will allow us to put on notice folks who we think are engaging in competitive devaluations.

Finally, on the Taliban leader, Mr. Mansur, it has been confirmed that he is dead. And he is an individual who, as head of the Taliban, was specifically targeting U.S. personnel and troops inside of Afghanistan who were there as part of the mission that I've set to be able to maintain a counterterrorism platform and provide assistance and training to the Afghan military forces there. So this does not represent a shift in our approach. We are not reentering

the day-to-day combat operations that are currently being conducted by Afghan security forces. Our job is to help Afghanistan secure its own country, not to have our men and women in uniform engage in that fight for them.

On the other hand, where we have a high-profile leader who has been consistently part of operations and plans to potentially harm U.S. personnel and who has been resistant to the kinds of peace talks and reconciliation that ultimately could bring an end to decades of war in Afghanistan, then it is my responsibility as Commander in Chief not to stand by, but to make sure that we send a clear signal to the Taliban and others that we're going to protect our people. And that's exactly the message that has been sent.

*President Quang.* Let me respond to this question concerning the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP. In our view, TPP is a significant trade and economic linkage, contributing to sustaining the dynamism and the role as a driver for economic growth in our country, as well as in the Asia-Pacific region. And for Vietnam, TPP and Vietnam's participation in TPP is one step undertaken by the Vietnamese Government in our process of extensive international integration.

*President Obama.* Mr. President, sorry to interrupt. We're not getting a translation.

*Interpreter.* Testing one, two, three.

*President Obama.* For you?

*Interpreter.* Can you hear, Mr. President?

*President Obama.* Okay.

*Interpreter.* Testing one, two, three.

*President Obama.* It's just, I'm sure that he was saying something very wise and important, and we wanted to make sure that we all heard it.

*President Quang.* So I would like to add that Vietnam, together with other TPP countries, have been making efforts to narrow differences, to promote cooperation in the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual respect. And we will try to reduce differences in a spirit of constructiveness and understanding and paying attention to one another's legitimate interests. And the finalization of TPP is also the successful outcomes of all 12 members of the TPP, rather than any individual effort. And we are prepared to ratify TPP, and we stand ready to implement all the commitments under TPP.

*Moderator.* Your Excellency, now we have a technical problem with the translation system. So, Mr. President—President Quang, could you please repeat again your answer?

*President Obama.* [Laughter]

*President Quang.* And, yes, I want to redirect my comments on the TPP. In our view, the TPP is a very significant trade and economic linkage contributing to the sustainment of dynamism and the role as a driver of economic growth in Asia-Pacific region.

As for Vietnam, TPP is a one step forward in implementation of the country's deep and comprehensive international integration policy, which aims at promoting the national economic growth of Vietnam. Vietnam has worked together with other member countries to narrow the differences in the spirit of constructiveness, understanding, and paying new attention to one another's legitimate interests. The finalization of TPP is also the result of the endeavors from 12 members of the agreement, rather than the individual effort of any single country. And

Vietnam is now very actively promoting and accelerating the ratification of the TPP, and Vietnam is committed to fully implementing all the policies and provisions of the TPP.

*Moderator.* Thank you very much, President Trần Đại Quang, and President Barack Obama.

Ladies and gentlemen, with that, I declare the press conference adjourned. And please stay in the room for the departure of the two Presidents. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 12:59 p.m. in the hotel ballroom at the International Convention Centre. President Quang, the moderator, and a reporter spoke in Vietnamese, and their remarks were translated by interpreters.

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*Locations:* Hanoi, Vietnam.

*Names:* Carper, Thomas R.; Kerry, John F.; Mansur, Akhtar Mohammad; McCain, John S., III; Quang, Trần Đại.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : Former regime; Afghanistan : Reconciliation efforts; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: POW/MIA remains, recovery efforts; Asia : Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Asia : East Asia Summit; Asia : Relations with U.S.; Asia : South China Sea, maritime territorial disputes; Commerce, international : Environmental protection standards; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Commerce, international : Labor protection standards; Deaths : Mansur, Akhtar Mohammad; Education : Foreign exchange programs; Environment : Paris Agreement; Peace Corps, U.S.; State, Department of : Secretary; Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); United Nations : Peacekeeping operations; Vietnam : Educational exchanges with U.S.; Vietnam : Human rights issues; Vietnam : Nuclear energy, cooperation with U.S.; Vietnam : President; Vietnam : President Obama's visit; Vietnam : Relations with U.S.; Vietnam : Science and technology, cooperation with U.S.; Vietnam : Security cooperation with U.S.; Vietnam : Trade with U.S.; Vietnam : Unexploded ordnance removal and dioxin remediation, U.S. support; Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).

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