

THE WHITE HOUSE

**Office of the Press Secretary
(Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam)**

For Immediate Release

November 17, 2000

FACT SHEET

Expanding Cooperation Between the United States and Vietnam

The President's trip to Vietnam is the capstone of a step-by-step process to normalize relations that has been predicated on progress in getting the fullest possible accounting for American POW/MIAs in Vietnam.

Today, in a speech to students at Vietnam National University - Hanoi, President Clinton discussed the importance of the growing ties between the two countries and outlined a vision for advancing the relationship between the United States and Vietnam. The United States is increasing cooperation with Vietnam in several key areas - infectious diseases, science and technology, disaster relief and employment and labor issues.

Combating Infectious Disease and Other Health Threats

The United States is doubling its support for Vietnam's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and other health threats. Beginning in FY 2001, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plan to allocate \$22.5 million over five years to Vietnam for HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and care - more than double current funding levels. In addition, the United States will also significantly increase funding for HIV/AIDS programs throughout the Mekong River region. The new funding for Vietnam over the next five years will include:

- \$15 million through CDC to provide technical assistance to the Vietnamese government, improve surveillance, strengthen laboratories and infrastructure, and undertake AIDS research;
- \$7.5 million through USAID to support AIDS surveillance, capacity building, education and counseling for at-risk groups, training of health care providers; expansion of on-going prevention programs from four to six provinces;
- New support from the Department of Labor for workplace AIDS prevention and education programs;
- Joint support from the CDC and the Rockefeller Foundation for Vietnam's first School of Public Health, which has now graduated 48 public health professionals; and
- New support for the "Safe Vietnam" initiative, which was launched in 1999 by Ambassador Peterson in coordination with other major donors, NGOs, and private companies to address the growing problem of injuries from motorcycle/moped accidents.

Expanding Science and Technology Cooperation

Today, the United States and Vietnam signed an Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. This agreement will facilitate cooperation between American and Vietnamese scientists in areas such as health, technological innovation and entrepreneurship, disaster mitigation and marine and water resource management. Increased cooperation in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, including typhoid fever and HIV/AIDS will strengthen Vietnam's ability to meet critical health challenges. The Agreement will expand joint research in a number of areas by:

- Creating a U.S.-Vietnam Committee on Scientific and Technical Cooperation to define and

- review areas of cooperation under the agreement;
- Addressing forms of cooperation, including the conduct of joint research and development projects, the exchange of information, the exchange of scientists and experts and the organization of conferences and workshops;
- Specifying how to handle intellectual property generated through collaborative projects; and
- Outlining dispute-resolution procedures.

Scientists and officials from the United States and Vietnam will also meet in Singapore at the end of this month to discuss joint research on the health risks and ecological effects of dioxin contamination.

Providing Disaster Relief

The United States is actively supporting disaster preparedness and relief in Vietnam, through a number of projects, including:

- 1.4 million over the next three years to help establish a coastal storm warning system in Vietnam for fishing boats at sea. This radio-based system will use U.S. technology to broadcast weather information through repeater towers along the coast to low-cost weather radios aboard fishing boats to help save lives during storms.
- Increased collaborative meteorological forecast activities between the United States and Vietnam and flood forecast technology from the United States will enable more accurate predictions of natural disasters before they hit Vietnam and the development of an early warning system to predict, monitor and respond to flooding.
- Relief supplies and funding to respond to the severe flooding from storms in Mekong Delta region earlier this year, including three airlifts of supplies - including water purification equipment, tarpaulins for emergency shelter and boats to assist in the delivery of assistance to areas inaccessible by road.

The United States has delivered a total of \$741,645 in disaster assistance for Vietnam so far this year, including \$497,645 in relief in response to the current flooding and \$244,000 for flood early warning systems in central Vietnam.

Strengthening Labor Protection

The United States and Vietnam today signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a program of cooperation and dialogue on labor matters. In addition, under the first phase, scheduled to begin this month, the United States anticipates providing \$3 million for technical assistance programs in six areas:

- skills training and employment services
- social insurance and safety nets
- employment of the disabled
- industrial relations and labor law
- child labor, focusing on street children and child trafficking, and
- workplace education and prevention programs on HIV/AIDS.

Additional technical assistance programs may be added in the future.

Additionally, Vietnam today ratified the International Labor Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, thus joining the United States and 45 other countries that have so demonstrated their commitment to ending the worst forms of child labor.

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