

Chào tất cả các vị khách quý, các bạn và các đồng nghiệp. Cảm ơn AmCham đã mời tôi tham gia sự kiện này.

Thank you, Jonathan Moreno, for the very kind introduction and for your service as AmCham Vice Chair. Thanks also to Walter Blocker for gathering such an illustrious crowd on such short notice, and to AmCham Hanoi incoming and outgoing chairs Natasha Ansell and Ginny Foote for joining this event tonight. And finally, thank you to the newly convened 2017 Board of Governors of AmCham Ho Chi Minh City for inviting me to address you here today about the path forward for U.S.-Vietnam relations. It's an honor to speak with all of you.

When I spoke to your sister chapter in Hanoi back in November, we had just finished up an uncommonly contentious election season in the United States, and there was a great deal of uncertainty and speculation over the incoming administration's priorities, particularly regarding trade with our partners in East Asia. With the inauguration coming up on Friday, it's still too early to speak to the specifics of President-Elect Trump's foreign policy. But I'll tell you what I told your colleagues in Hanoi: irrespective of politics, the fundamental interests of the United States in Vietnam remain unchanged. And what's more, American interests and Vietnamese interests are closely aligned.

It remains in our mutual interest to collaborate on issues of regional security. It is vital to the economic interests of both our countries that freedom of navigation within the region be guaranteed and that international laws and norms be respected by all parties, including in the South China Sea. The recent lifting of the lethal weapons sale ban was an important symbol of our intention to work with Vietnam to help support its security and independence.

It remains in our mutual interest to protect the environment that we all share. Vietnam is among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and so its interest in developing measures to adapt to those effects is clear. But the United States also maintains an abiding interest, because a Vietnam that is food-secure and confident in its capacity to adapt to the worst effects of climate change is a country that will be a good partner in promoting economic growth and regional stability. In this regard, I'm very pleased to have with us today Ambassador Nancy Stetson, Secretary Kerry's representative on global food security issues. She joined the Secretary's trip here in part to develop new partnerships between U.S. and Vietnamese educational institutions to help Vietnam develop expertise in cutting-edge agricultural technology for growing food more efficiently and with greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.

And let's not just prepare Vietnam for the effects of climate change. We should also encourage Vietnam to meet its Paris commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making use of the vast natural resources this country has to offer. I want to thank the AmCham, and specifically Ginny Foote and John Rockhold, for your role in producing the Made in Vietnam Energy Plan. This plan offers a clear roadmap for how the Government of Vietnam can nurture an energy supply chain that will not only protect the health of its citizens, but also guarantee a privately financed, steady power supply to its private and industrial users.

It remains in our mutual interest to see that Vietnamese laborers are guaranteed the right to organize. We in the United States know from our own experience that a labor force that has the right to speak collectively in its own interest is one that can build wealth and that will be motivated to innovate. This freedom will not only stimulate growth in Vietnam's middle class and help jumpstart its economy, it will open an enormous new population of consumers eager for the high-quality goods and services produced by American firms.

But chief among our mutual interests is creating sustainable economic growth in Vietnam and the region by expanding trade and investment. I know that many of you here tonight have been strong advocates of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as have I, because of its potential to promote economic growth here in Vietnam. But even in the absence of TPP, we are not giving up on pursuing our positive trade agenda within the region. In fact, it is just the opposite. The values embedded in TPP – a rules-based approach to economic relations, higher standards on labor and the environment, safeguards against corruption – are all consistent with the demands of the Vietnamese people and the economic interests of the United States. And with the help of the members of this chamber, we will continue our advocacy of these values.

When Secretary Kerry spoke yesterday, he reminded us that “as a Pacific nation, the United States cares about what is happening here, and we want to continue to build a stronger and stronger partnership between our two countries.” We are linked to our partners around the Pacific by enduring networks of commerce, diplomacy, communication, and family ties. In APEC particularly, we have a forum to build powerful consensus among these partners to break down barriers to trade by promoting a rules-based regional architecture that supports free and open trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region, and further strengthen the ties that already bind us together. And Vietnam's hosting of the 2017 APEC year presents a tremendous opportunity to further the advocacy of American values with

Vietnam's leaders. They know they are in the spotlight, and as Vietnam looks to take on a larger role in regional policy discussions, they will be looking for chances to collaborate with the people in this room to show the rest of the APEC economies that Vietnam has arrived.

Vietnam has set an ambitious agenda for its host year, and the United States fully supports its priorities. We are both determined to increase regional economic integration and foster a more business-friendly environment through a rules-based architecture. We both want to ensure that economic growth is sustainable and includes all sectors of society. We are both committed to strengthening the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises. And we both share the goal of guaranteeing the security of Vietnam's food supply as it faces the consequences of climate change.

The private sector is going to play a key role in ensuring that Vietnam succeeds with its agenda, and it's going to require your persistent involvement. Don't get distracted by the Leaders' Summit in November; the real business gets done in the months leading up to it. From the High Level Dialogue on Human Resource Development in the Digital Age in May to the June Roundtable on Sustainable Tourism to September's Dialogue on Women in the Economy, the real decisions will be made throughout the year, and they'll only be influenced by the people who are in the room. I encourage all of the members of this chamber to participate actively. Join the sessions and the meetings on the margins. Make sure your voice is heard, and together we can build the consensus we want to see.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know that together, we can make 2017 a truly successful year both for Vietnam and for U.S. business. I look at initiatives like the imminent launch of Fulbright University Vietnam – the first private, nonprofit, independent American-style Vietnamese University – and I see Vietnam's tremendous desire to learn from America's model of higher education. I saw the same yesterday when Secretary Kerry spoke at the Ho Chi Minh University of Technology and Education, a university founded in 1962 with \$3.5 million from USAID, that continues to be one of the best universities for technology education in Vietnam, now with new partnerships with USAID and AmCham, U.S. universities like ASU, and companies like Intel, GE, Rockwell Automation, and Texas Instruments. This pursuit of excellence also extends to the economic sectors in which the United States excels.

With that in mind, the U.S. mission has launched four industry groups in key sectors that focus on helping U.S. companies in keystone industries expand

business opportunities in rebuilding Vietnam's infrastructure. American companies report to us that they are experiencing double digit growth in the aviation, energy, healthcare, and ICT sectors. Those sectors are all dominated by Vietnamese government actors, and the Consul General and I are committed to advocating on your behalf in those and other sectors. We look forward to strengthening our cooperation with AmCham committees in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to demonstrate the concrete business results of that advocacy. I look forward to working with all of you throughout Vietnam's APEC year and beyond, and I hope our discussion this evening can get us started on the right foot. With that, I'll be happy to answer your questions.

Tôi chúc tất cả quý vị và các bạn một năm mới mạnh khỏe và thành đạt.