



AMCHAM'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DINNER



Mr. Le Thanh Liem

Vice Chairman

People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City

Ông Lê Thanh Liêm

Phó Chủ tịch

Ủy Ban Nhân Dân Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh



SEPTEMBER 18, 2014





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- Mme. Claire Pierangelo, Charge d'Affaires of the United States of America to Vietnam,
- Mme. Rena Bitter, Consul General of the United States of America to Ho Chi Minh City,
- Mr. Marc Townsend, Chairman of AmCham Vietnam,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to attend and address the AmCham 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner today. On behalf of the administration of Ho Chi Minh City, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Madame Charge d' Affaires, Madame Consul General Bitter, Mr. Chairman of the AmCham and all the AmCham members on this special occasion.



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We take note with deep delight that the Vietnam-U.S. relationship has kept growing extensively across a wide range of areas over the past 20 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties. The forming of the Vietnam-U.S. Comprehensive Partnership in July 2013 has opened a new chapter in bilateral relations in the interest of our both peoples and for peace, security, cooperation and development in the region and the world at large.

Against that bright picture of bilateral ties, trade and investment have always stood out as the driving force for the development of Vietnam – U.S. relations. It is vividly testified by the establishment and development of the AmCham in Vietnam generally and in Ho Chi Minh City particularly.



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AmCham was founded in Ho Chi Minh City in the very early days of trade normalization and even prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations in July 1995. I believe that it is AmCham members' warmth of feelings toward Vietnam, toward Ho Chi Minh City and their strong desire to foster Vietnam-U.S. relations that have played a crucial role in exceptional growth of bilateral trade and investment, and thus substantially contributing to moving the bilateral relationship forward from trade normalization, establishment of diplomatic relations, conclusion of the Vietnam-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement, Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization to the forming of Vietnam-U.S. Comprehensive Partnership and today's negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).



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As a result, the Certificate of Merit granted by the Prime Minister of Vietnam to AmCham today shows the Vietnamese Government's recognition of AmCham's accomplishments in promoting bilateral trade and investment in Ho Chi Minh City.

Regarding Ho Chi Minh City, trade turnover with the U.S. continues to grow. In the first seven months of 2014, exports from Ho Chi Minh City to the U.S. surpassed US\$ 2 billion, up 3% against last year. Imports from the U.S. to Ho Chi Minh City reached US\$ 741 million, or an increase of 18% against last year. The City currently hosts 122 American representative offices. As of August 31, 2014, the City is home to 294 American investment projects worth over US\$ 530 million.



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This figure actually would be much higher if American investment into Ho Chi Minh City through third countries were taken into account. I am convinced that when the TPP Free Trade Agreement is concluded, it will create an extensively favorable platform for U.S. businesses to increase investment in Vietnam, including Ho Chi Minh City. On the other hand, Vietnamese businesses could take advantage of the TPP to better access the U.S. market.

Besides business activities, the AmCham has actively engaged in social undertakings, including granting scholarships, building environment-friendly community houses, providing training for women, launching environment campaigns, etc.



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We highly commend these lofty deeds and strongly encourage the business circle, including the AmCham, to continue to join hands with the local government in a collective effort to advance community development and social progress.

I am delighted to learn that many U.S. business persons who are present here today, including some members of the Board of Governors of AmCham, have been living and working in Ho Chi Minh City since the early days of trade normalization. I hold in high regard the heartfelt sentiments that you and your families have attached to Ho Chi Minh City and to Vietnam.



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You are, indeed, a bridge connecting our two peoples and our peoples with international friends. On the part of the City's administration, we will do everything we can to make Ho Chi Minh City a place where you not only can thrive but also feel at home and happy.

May the AmCham keep growing.

I wish you all the best of health and success.

Thank you for your attention.



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