
UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREATER SEATTLE VIETNAM ASSOCIATION

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U.S Wants to Help Businesses in Vietnam

While the U.S. took the last step in normalization with Vietnam, it was opening the gates to full economic relations between the two countries.

Speaking in Seattle August 9, a key player in the process that brought the countries together said the POW/MIA issue was the driving power behind the action. But the immediate consequence is a boon to business.

Dennis Harter, Director of the State Department's Office for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, spoke at a program of the Washington Council on International Trade co-sponsored by APEC, the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle, the World Trade Club and the Greater Seattle Vietnam Association.

Harter told his audience that the full potential for U.S. economic ties will not be met for a long time. He said, "you need to be patient." Vietnam, he said, "is where China was 20 years ago."

The Department of State and the Department of Commerce is offering help to qualified individuals and companies in the U.S., including the provision of advocacy letters.

The official also said that Vietnam intends to open a consulate on our West Coast. San Francisco and Seattle are two contenders for the location. Mr. Harter believes Seattle has a good chance to be picked because of its proximity to Vancouver. Vietnam is very interested in Vancouver, he said. If they put their consulate in Seattle, "they get two markets for one."

The U. S. is expected to open a consulate in Ho Chi Minh City within a year.

Even though U. S. business people and the U.S. government are geared to move quickly, formidable obstacles may await Vietnam.

The two countries must create trade and tax treaties, which may take months or years to accomplish, and then require ratification by the U.S. Congress. It is assumed these treaties would be the best way to reassure

international investors, creating the kind of foundation that turned Thailand and Malaysia into economic powerhouses.

Ex-Im Bank, considered the best source for loans for big infrastructure projects and purchase of big items like airplanes, requires certain criteria. Recipients must meet human rights standards that have prohibited many Marxist countries from funding. Harter said he is not certain Vietnam would qualify now.

Some countries may get a waiver of human rights requirements or an exemption, but since many people in the U.S. Congress opposed normalization it is uncertain if Vietnam would be treated leniently for loan purposes.

The same human rights standards apply to recipients of loans from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, OPIC, which in addition imposes certain labor standards.

Harter pointed out that South Korea, a longtime U.S. ally, lost its OPIC certification a year ago over labor rights. He said, "I can't imagine Vietnam qualifying when South Korea can't."

It is clear, said Harter, that Vietnam holds a great wealth of interest and goodwill toward the United States, and many consultants from Seattle are well known to Vietnam.

He said American businesses have an internationally good reputation. He said factories established by Americans are favored over those from all over the world. The U.S. is seen as the best partner a country can have for getting its products out and marketed quickly abroad.

Other points:

- Talks between Vietnam and Boeing are close to a transportation agreement.

- U.S. is conducting an airport security survey, with results expected soon.

- At least three U.S. airlines are applying for exclusive rights to routes.

Seattle Celebrates Normalization with Vietnam

The Greater Seattle Vietnam Association will celebrate "normalization" with a buffet dinner party for members and friends September 26, 6 p.m., at the Burke Museum at the University of Washington.

Highlight of the evening will be a special viewing of the film "Kontum Diary," presented by Seattle producer Steve Smith.

This critically acclaimed film was broadcast on Public TV earlier this year at the 20th anniversary of the American evacuation of Vietnam.

The real life story is classic. A Vietnamese soldier lost his diary in the battle of Kontum. An American soldier, David Reed picked it up after the battle and

brought it home with him. That changed both of their lives.

Back in the U.S. Reed had the diary translated, allowing him to recognize similarities between himself and the man who had been part of the enemy.

Reed returned to Kontum, then located the owner of the diary, Nguyen Van Nghia, at his village in the North. The two men returned to Kontum together in friendship, and now Reed is planning to bring the Vietnamese man to the U.S. for an operation to correct a wartime injury.

Smith will talk about the making of "Kontum Diary" and about the new chapter in the lives of Reed and Nguyen.

Ho Xuan Huong, a Tenacious Poet

Since earliest recorded evidence, around the fifth century B.C., poetry has been integral to the Vietnamese culture. It has made important contributions to the driving forces of social and civil change.

Ho Xuan Huong, a renown poet during the Tay Son era (1771-1802), was a woman who fought hard for women's rights. She candidly spoke against polygamy in a polygamous society. Ho Xuan Huong also tackled many important "taboo" subjects, including sex, mainly female, in a blunt manner. Following are some samples of her work.

"To a Woman Mourning Her Husband"

Someone's mourning for a husband - listen. You hear?
But no more crying, or the world will laugh.
Who will be going there? Tell my little sister
It's too bad, she's alone now, that's all.

"Written on Shin Yi-Tung's Shrine"

Up there, a hanging panel:
The Governor's Shrine.
Oh, well, if I were turned into a man
I'd do better things than that!

"Jackfruit"

I am like a jackfruit on the tree.
To taste you must plug me quick, while fresh:
the skin rough, the pulp thick, yes,
but oh, I warn you against touching -
the rich juice will gush and stain your hands.

If you are interested in finding out more about Vietnamese poetry, please contact either the University of Washington Suzzallo Library or the Seattle Public library for translations.

Governor Lowry Goes After Emerging Tiger

Governor Mike Lowry has decided to travel to Vietnam in September, the first U.S. governor to visit that country officially since normalization.

The governor's plans were announced by Bob Randolph, the Special Trade Representative for the State of Washington.

Mr. Lowry will be in Hanoi September 24 to 27, and Ho Chi Minh City the 27th to 29th. This is the only portion that he will be able to attend of a larger 3-country trip sponsored by the Washington State Department for Community Trade and Economic Development.

The trip has been designed to open opportunities for small business people and minorities throughout the state. He said the state has an active Vietnamese community, and "we consider our multiculturalism as a great asset." He said Lowry wants Washington State to have an important role in supporting that country's economic and political change.

Randolph pointed out that the State of Washington is the number one trading state in the U.S., and he called Vietnam an "emerging tiger."

Travel Film Features Vietnam and Burma

"Raise the Bamboo Curtain: Vietnam & Burma" will be shown as part of the World Cavalcade 1995-96 Film Series at the Opera House on October 13 & 14, 1995. Narrator Rick Ray will take his audience on a world class tour from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi, among various points along the journey.

For more information, and reserved seatings, please contact World Cavalcade at (206) 682-5255.

Greater Seattle Bulletin Board System

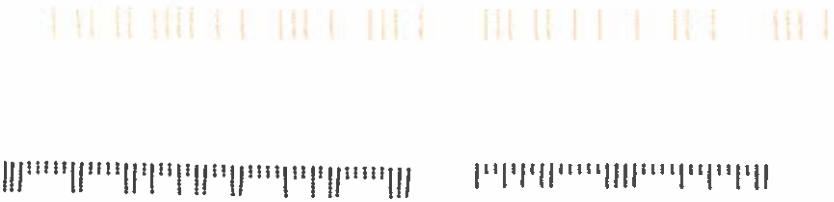
The Bulletin Board System has a lot of new information. Check out the "News" section under "Forums". News articles include updates on Secretary Christopher's opening of the new Embassy in Hanoi. Also there is new information on several United Nations projects, as well as news about Microsoft's Vietnamese version of Win 95.

We encourage our members to take advantage of the BBS. If you would like to post your own news items, please leave a message with the System Operator, John Sutherland at 946-6336.

Greater Seattle Vietnam Association	
A grassroots, non-profit, duly incorporated and registered organization dedicated to helping the people of Seattle create and maintain links with the people of Vietnam.	
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“Ostracized Priest”, by Ho Xuan Huong

Dragging heavy stones? Easier than staying pious!
Poor fellow, he did such a small thing.
Sailing straight to Buddha
The wind confused him and
He went the other way.



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