THREE PHASES OF US-VIETNAM RELATIONS

• Normalization of Diplomatic Relations, 1995
• Normalization of Economic Relations, 2006
• The Beginning of Military Rapprochement, 2003
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN US-VIETNAM MILITARY RELATIONS

• Visit to the US of Defense Minister Pham Van Tra, 2003
• Visit to the US of Prime Minister Phan Van Khai, 2005
• Visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, 2008
• Visit of Defense Minister Phung Quang Thanh, 2009
• Emergence of common strategic interests, 2010
IMPACT OF THE 11TH CONGRESS OF THE CPV ON US-VIETNAM RELATIONS

• No major changes, only reshuffle of top leadership, hence no major policy change.

• Consensus on Vietnam’s policy toward the US has been built and formalized over several years.
  – The 7th Party Congress with the adoption of a “multidirectional foreign policy” and friendship with all countries “regardless of their socio-political systems.
  – The 9th Party Congress making a distinction between “object of cooperation” and “object of struggle.”
  – The 11th Party Congress stressing the need for “actively taking the initiative to engage in international integration.”
DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER NGUYEN CHI VINH ON THE MAIN LINES OF VIETNAM’S FOREIGN POLICY

• We will not ally or collude with one country against another country
• We will not allow other countries to make deals on our back
• We must be strong, independent, and capable of protecting ourselves
• We must maintain peace and friendship with our neighbors, but not at the cost of losing our sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity
• Defense relations between Vietnam and the US will be strengthened in the days ahead. They must be based on mutual trust and respect
QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS REFLECTING VIETNAM’S CONCERN

• Two questions:
  – Does the US seek regime change in Vietnam?
  – Can the US be a reliable strategic partner of Vietnam?

• Two statements:
  – Geography puts severe limitations on Vietnam’s foreign policy options
  – Distant water cannot stop fire in the neighborhood

• Two influencing factors:
  – The China challenge
  – Vietnam’s perceptions of American intention and commitment
THE ROLE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN US-VIETNAM RELATIONS

• A possible obstacle, but indispensable issue affecting the level of bilateral relations
• Vietnam’s preparation to deal with the issue
FACTORS FAVORING IMPROVEMENT OF US-VIETNAM RELATIONS

• No conflict of strategic interests between the US and Vietnam
• Increased cultural and educational exchanges
• Increased exchanges of visits of government, military officials, and scholars
• Emergence of a new generation of Vietnamese, both at home and abroad, who carry no baggage of the Vietnam war
• Pressure for and effort to implement political reform in Vietnam
THANK YOU