

I think we can look at Vietnam now, and I have not been back since then. But I understand the economic strides that they have made are really tremendous. And that is almost 100 percent due to their changing their economy so that it can thrive and it can grow and is not held back by the 100 percent socialistic tendencies that it seemed to have at the time.

Also I think that there is no question but that our trade will grow with Vietnam, because this is an agreement that works both ways. Their tariffs come down, our exports will increase, there is no question about that. As usual, and we find in most countries, that the tariffs of the country that we are taking down tariffs with has a higher tariff than we do.

So we should benefit, Vietnam should benefit and the economy of both countries will be better off for it. And when an economy as small as Vietnam mixes with an economy as large as the United States, it is very easy to realize that any type of stimulus that you give those economies will be a very, very big impact on their economy.

I have a letter here from the U.S.-Vietnam World Trade Coalition, and it is signed by Madeleine Albright, Jim Baker, Charlene Barshefsky, Samuel Berger, Harold Brown, Warren Christopher, William Cohen, Lawrence Eagleburger, Carla Hills, Michael Kantor, Henry Kissinger, Anthony Lake, Robert McNamara, Colin Powell, Robert Rubin, George Shultz, Robert Strauss, and Clayton Yeutter, very much in favor of this agreement.

*Washington, DC, September 8, 2006.*

DEAR COLLEAGUE: As the bipartisan sponsors of H.R. 5602, to provide Vietnam with Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status, we forward you the following letter signed by numerous former Cabinet Secretaries, U.S. Trade Representatives and others involved in trade and foreign policy in previous administrations.

We hope you find this letter useful as you consider your vote on this important issue.

Sincerely,

JIM RAMSTAD,  
*Member of Congress.*  
MIKE THOMPSON,  
*Member of Congress.*

U.S. VIETNAM, WTO COALITION,  
*July 11, 2006.*

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT, *Speaker,*  
*House of Representatives.*

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,  
*Minority Leader,*  
*House of Representatives.*

Hon. BILL FRIST,  
*Majority Leader,*  
*U.S. Senate.*

Hon. HARRY REID,  
*Minority Leader,*  
*U.S. Senate.*

We strongly support the President's proposal to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status to Vietnam. America's long-term security and economic interests will be advanced by Vietnam's full integration into the rules-based global trading system. Vietnam can become a catalyst for growth and development in Southeast Asia, and will offer significant opportunities for U.S. companies, workers, and consumers.

In the thirty years since the end of the conflict in Southeast Asia, the United States

has worked steadfastly to normalize relations with its former adversary. This effort proceeded, step by step, as we sought the fullest possible accounting of American prisoners of war and personnel missing in action. The "Roadmap" to normalization helped to achieve significant progress in this regard. We enjoy today a multifaceted, mutually beneficial relationship with Vietnam that has enabled us to engage on a range of issues, including protection of religious freedom, labor, and human rights.

Vietnam is home to nearly eighty-five million people, more than half of whom are under the age of twenty-five. As a country facing a host of infrastructure and human development challenges, Vietnam merits not only our attention, but also our support for the promising reform process that is underway. In this vein, the 2001 U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement was an important milestone, and it has contributed to the development of a more open, market-oriented economy with important potential benefits for the Vietnamese and American peoples.

PNTR and WTO accession for Vietnam will strengthen America's linkages with the commercially and strategically important region of Southeast Asia, which, with a GDP of nearly \$3 trillion, represents our fourth largest export market. The comprehensive WTO accession agreement reached by Vietnam and U.S. negotiators will provide even broader market access across a range of U.S. goods and services. Equally important, it will enhance transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

The granting of PNTR for Vietnam represents the logical next step in the normalization of relations between our two countries, a process that has been made more effective by broad bipartisan support in Congress, and that has spanned successive presidential administrations during the past three decades. We support the granting of PNTR in advance of Vietnam hosting the Annual APEC Leaders Meeting in November, in which President Bush will participate. This will further encourage Vietnam's emergence as a responsible regional partner, as we together address a myriad of complex international economic and security issues.

We urge the Congress to approve PNTR for Vietnam at the earliest possible opportunity this summer.

Sincerely,

Madeleine K. Albright, James A. Baker III, Charlene Barshefsky, Samuel L. Berger, Harold Brown, Warren Christopher, William S. Cohen, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Carla A. Hills, Michael Kantor, Henry A. Kissinger, Anthony Lake, Robert McNamara, Colin L. Powell, Robert E. Rubin, George P. Shultz, Robert S. Strauss, Clayton K. Yeutter.

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I think the Members on both sides of the aisle will certainly find somebody on that list that they have a great deal of respect for for their particular view with regard to matters pertaining to trade.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank Mr. RAMSTAD, who

is trying to get back here in order to take time on the floor, and really I think if he were here, and I will not hesitate because he is not, to praise him for the good work that he has done and his foresight in bringing this particular bill forward.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns about establishing Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with Vietnam without mandating essential human rights protections.

In August, the Government of Vietnam arrested and held a U.S. Citizen, Cong Thanh Do, on false charges. Only with the efforts of many U.S. officials was Mr. Do released.

The Government of Vietnam arrested and imprisoned Mr. Do, a U.S. citizen, on false charges even when it was trying to convince the U.S. Congress to grant permanent normal trade relations.

What practices will the Government of Vietnam engage in when they are not trying to convince the U.S. Congress to pass PNTR?

I believe that had the Majority allowed us ample time for consideration and debate on PNTR, we may have been able to include critical human rights protections.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill until sufficient time is granted to include necessary human rights protections.

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for the permanent normalization of trade relations (PNTR) with Vietnam. With the Doha round of global trade talks in limbo, the U.S. must continue to pursue an active bilateral trade agenda that makes real gains for America's working families.

My hometown of Laredo has been transformed by trade. Since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), I have watched as trade transformed communities in Texas from areas of marginal business activity, to some of the most rapidly developing counties in the nation. Laredo now serves as the largest inland port in North America and takes in 60 percent of all NAFTA traffic.

But our current trade agreements are simply not enough. In today's global economy, we cannot afford to stand idle but instead must push ahead with increased trade liberalization. The Vietnam agreement does just that.

Agricultural products are crucial exports for my congressional district. With Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and our new trade relations, Vietnam will reduce tariffs on most U.S. agricultural exports to 15 percent or less. Texas farmers will be able to sell in the Vietnamese market on a level playing field with competitors in other WTO member countries. Without PNTR with Vietnam, Texas's exporters will lose. I urge my colleagues to join me today in making history and supporting America's working families by granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Vietnam.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 5602 legislation to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Vietnam, and to establish a procedure for imposing quotas on imports of subsidized textile and apparel products of Vietnam.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak American soldiers are dying in Iraq in support of a noble effort to create a democratic government. Why