



# Viet Tan (Vietnam Reform Party)

*With a network of members inside Vietnam and around the world,  
Viet Tan aims to establish democracy and reform the country through peaceful means.*

*www.viettan.org*

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## **Opportunity for America to Stand With the Vietnamese People**

The president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Nguyen Minh Triet wants his visit to the United States to be all about business according to recent statements. This attitude reflects the Vietnamese Communist Party's hope that the world will turn a blind eye towards human rights violations once Vietnam is engaged in the world economy.

Since Vietnam's accession to the World Trade Organization and attainment of PNTR status from the US, the Hanoi authorities launched a systematic crackdown of pro-democracy voices. Religious leaders, human rights lawyers, trade unionists, and internet activists have been arrested and imprisoned for peacefully expressing their views.

This upcoming visit is an opportunity for the United States to tell Communist Vietnam's leadership that engaging in the world economy is a multi-faceted act. Hanoi cannot only commit to trade, but must also share the civilized world's basic norms.

"We are in the 21st century where democracy and freedom are universal values. It is shameful for any country not to achieve this minimum standard. Democracy and freedom are the foundation for human rights, political stability, regional security and long lasting economic prosperity. The Vietnamese Communist Party should not fear democracy if it is truly committed to serving the people," says Diem H. Do, Viet Tan chairman.

The democracy movement in Vietnam today is similar to Czechoslovakia during the 1970s and Poland in the 1980s. For the first time, the movement no longer consists of individuals but organized groups with increasing popular support. In addition, these groups are building coalitions such as the Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights for Vietnam, an umbrella organization with support from many political parties and associations from both overseas and inside Vietnam.

While the Vietnamese people must ultimately bring about democratic change in Vietnam, the international community can play a key role in upholding human rights and furthering democratic reform.

"By sending the Hanoi leadership the message that human rights violations are not acceptable, the Bush administration and Congressional leaders can demonstrate that America stands with the Vietnamese people," according to Diem H. Do.

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