



Viet Tan Update

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

Diem H. Do Elected Chairman of Viet Tan



In the struggle to end the communist dictatorship and establish democracy, we often refer to the power of the people. But from where does the power of the people come? To answer this question, we need to consider the power balance between the Vietnamese people and the communist dictatorship. The power of every regime comes from the acceptance of the people. In a democratic system, the acceptance is achieved

through ballots in a fair and open election. In a dictatorial system, the acceptance is achieved through coercion and terror. Yet whether it is by ballots or coercion, the Vietnamese people have the ability to withdraw their acceptance of the communist regime.

- If citizens do not cooperate with the ruling machinery or follow its edicts then that machinery will be neutralized.

- If citizens refuse to participate in economic activities of the regime, engage in work stoppages, withhold taxes, then that regime cannot persist, and
- If citizens become less afraid and are willing to stand up then the oppressive tactics of the regime will no longer be effective because one cannot repress people who are unafraid of repression.

These are truths that demonstrate the power balance rests in the very hands of the people. The communist regime persists only because citizens have yet to be mobilized to wield the power in their own hands. If eighty million Vietnamese realize the strength that is within each person, and courageously and willingly apply it, this is the force that will topple the dictatorship.

Thus, the priority for Viet Tan is to mobilize the power of the people to eliminate the power and control of the Communist Party.

But how can we harness this power?

To do so, we must choose actions which are realistic, are suitable to the situation, and meet the following conditions:

- First, avoid any use of violence because this is where the regime is most able.
- Second, coincide with the basic needs and interests of the people.
- Third, are realistic and within the grasp of everyone so each person can readily participate, and
- Fourth, help to attract international support and the warring elements which are still serving the regime.

We must start from demands that serve the desires of the people, from the pragmatic needs of everyday life to the injustices that each person experiences. Protests by petitioners, mass strikes, and demands for freedom of worship are types of defiant activities that are effective in mobilizing citizens. From these activities, we along with the people inside the country

will spark a nationwide mass movement creating pressures along all fronts to paralyze the ruling machinery to ultimately bring an end to the dictatorship.

To truly weaken the Communist Party's hold on power, the opposition mass movement needs to target the pillars of power serving the regime, especially the legal system, the media, and the security forces. In parallel, the democratic forces will need to coordinate activities through a national alliance to direct the mass movement as it confronts the Communist Party. In short, this is when we must elevate the power of the people while wearing down the might and ability to rule of the Communist Party.

The power of the people is not limited to the 80 million inside the country but includes also each of us here, the three million Vietnam living abroad. We are not only a resilient rear base for the homeland, but the overseas community is also an important front-line.

- The overseas community is where international pressure will be achieved against the regime.
- The overseas community is where resources and knowledge will be transferred to the opposition movement inside the country, and
- The overseas community is where the democratic ideal will be steadfastly maintained, where dictatorship will not be tolerated, and where people inside the country will always find spiritual support.

In this struggle, each son and daughter of Vietnam, inside the country or abroad, can contribute

to the endeavor to achieve democracy for the country. And within this greater Vietnamese populace, Viet Tan wishes to be a tidal wave in the great ocean that will wash away the pain and suffering befalling our people. Viet Tan is only one means, one instrument to contribute toward the struggle to end the dictatorship, establish democracy, and reform the country. Viet Tan is an instrument belonging, not only to its party members, but also to the wider democracy movement, to each person, to all of you.

This is quite understandable and natural because we all share an aspiration: That, not thirty thousand, but no Vietnamese child will be sold into prostitution in Cambodia; no Vietnamese girl will have to auction herself on eBay like a piece of merchandise; and no Vietnamese woman must bear being a bride for sale and sex slave.

We share a common dream for Vietnam because the members of Viet Tan are just like you, carrying within us a Vietnamese heart, pained by the suffering of our people. From the hurt of the father working in a sweatshop in Dong Nai unable to provide money for his child to attend school, to the hurt of the young girl selling herself to foreign men.

So who are the members of Viet Tan? We are the student in Hanoi, the doctor in Sydney, the mechanic in Houston, the homemaker in Paris. We are your relatives, your co-workers, your classmates, your old acquaintances. We are all part of you. And we need you, from your feedback to your solidarity in action.

I became involved in Viet Tan as a university student. Over the last 25 years, during this struggle, there were times when I hoped the liberation of our people from dictatorship was imminent yet the road to democracy was still full of obstacles. Today, more than ever, I believe wholeheartedly in the ultimate triumph of freedom for our people in order to reform our nation.

Our struggle has taken great strides forward in the last two years, with much more progress than all of the last 15 years. Fifteen

years earlier, a great opportunity to end the dictatorship came with the collapse of the Soviet Union and communist bloc. But that opportunity was lost not because the Vietnamese people lacked courage but because the circumstances and conditions were not right. The opportunity came but the timing was not ripe.

Today, we are presented with another opportunity. Never before has the Communist Party been so divided internally as today. Never before has the ruling machinery been so decayed as today. And

never before has the power of the people been awakened as today. The nation and people are awakening. Let us together end the suffering that has lasted too long in our homeland. Let us together become the tidal waves to carry the boat of democracy to the shore of freedom and happiness.

Remarks by Diem H. Do, Viet Tan Chairman

(Southern California, October 8, 2006)

Viet Tan Holds Party Congress

Viet Tan held its 6th Party Congress in September to elect a new leadership and adopt a strategy to end the dictatorship and

democratize Vietnam based on the power of the people.

Members elected a Central Committee headed by Do Hoang

Diem (Diem H. Do) as chairman and Ly Thai Hung as general secretary.

Remarks by Congressman Ed Royce, Viet Tan Reception



Left to right: Rep. Ed Royce, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, Orange County Supervisor Lou Correa, Viet Tan Chairman Diem Do, California Assemblyman Van Tran.

Hello. My name is Congressman Ed Royce, and I represent Orange County. I would like to thank my good friends Dung Tran and Diem Do for invit-

ing me here today to speak before you. As many of you know, I serve on the International Relations Committee and have a chance to work closely on many issues important to Vietnam.

At the forefront of our agenda has always been the focus on human rights and the nurturing of democracy. Much like what the Viet Tan party believes, I agree that the strength and resources of the Vietnamese people will be vital to seeing to a successful transition from the current oppressive communist regime to democracy.

Of course, a large part of this transition will be through the dissemination of information. We have seen the power that information can have in bringing about change. The hearts and minds of those behind the Iron Curtain were turned by the opportunity to listen daily to a radio broadcast which explained what was actually happening inside their society, and explained liberty, tolerance, political pluralism and



democracy. However, efforts to propagate these beliefs are systematically squashed by the Communist regime.

As everyone is well aware, the Communist Government in Vietnam continues to restrict all forms of media inside the country and is taking active measure to keep its citizens from freely accessing news and information.

Over the last several years, in an effort to contain public dissatisfaction with official corruption and a lack of political reform, Vietnam's government tightened its already stringent control over the media. Writers were detained, harassed, placed under tight surveillance, or arrested for expressing independent viewpoints, while authorities targeted those who use the Internet to distribute independent news or opinions.

Of particular concern is Vietnam's recent state crackdown on Internet usage to oppress free speech. Cyber café owners and Internet service providers are now required by law to monitor customers' activities and prevent distribution of unsanctioned material.

One political dissident was sentenced to four years in prison for publishing an essay online. He joined a growing list of students imprisoned for expressing support for either democracy or free speech on the Internet. This sent a clear message to the burgeoning Internet generation that freedom of expression will not be tolerated by the Vietnamese government. Reports estimate that the number of people online in Vietnam jumped to 1.3 million in 2002 from only 300,000 in 2001.

Vietnam's authoritarian regime knows that unrestricted access to news and information is a threat to their repressive rule - so they work to block access to the Internet. More and more young people are turning to the Internet to obtain international and domestic political, religious, and economic news and information.

As many of you know, we are currently considering granting Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations. This issue has been percolating for some time, and will likely come before Congress in the upcoming session. While I am a major proponent of free trade, there are still important issues that need working out regarding our deal with Vietnam.

Recently, I had a chance to question the Deputy

United States Trade Representative on U.S. media access to Vietnam. Under our current agreement, the Vietnamese government maintains strict control over what is imported from the U.S., effectively banning any media material - such as books, movies, and newspapers - from entering Vietnam. We heard from Mr. Nguyen Bich, who told of his own difficulty gaining access to Vietnamese markets. His books on Vietnamese history and culture have been deemed threatening to the communist regime because they lack the Marxist taint of state material. The Deputy USTR testified before our Committee soon after our meeting, and I had a chance to once again press this issue.

In conclusion, I would just like to commend the work that the Viet Tan Party has done in supporting the movement towards democracy. Indeed, it will be a mass effort from the people, tirelessly opposing the oppression of the communist regime that will ultimately see to its demise.

Congratulations to Diem Do as you embark on a journey to lead this group as Chairman for the next 5 years. The call for your leadership comes at a critical juncture as we continue the fight for freedom and democracy in Vietnam. You have my full support.

Again, I thank you for inviting me here today.

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