

**AGREED MINUTES OF THE
UNITED STATES-VIET NAM
MARITIME BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS**

**June 8, 2015
Washington, DC**

In June 2015, a Viet Nam delegation composed of representatives from the Vietnam Ministry of Transport and the Viet Nam Maritime Administration traveled to Washington, D.C. and met with counterpart United States Government agencies that included the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration, Department of State and Federal Maritime Commission. The Honorable Maritime Administrator Paul N. Jaenichen led the United States delegation and hosted the meeting at the U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters. His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Cong Van, Deputy Minister of Transport, led the Viet Nam delegation. Delegation lists are attached.

The meeting focused on key maritime issues and new strategic priorities to achieve mutual goals in maritime safety, security and growth. The topics of discussion included maritime industry and the environment; port infrastructure management and development; leveraging joint ventures; mariner training and counter-piracy operations.

Maritime Administrator Jaenichen extended a warm welcome to the Viet Nam delegation. He cited significant advances in the United States-Viet Nam bilateral relationship in the last two decades and welcomed the opportunity to further engage and discuss maritime issues that are critical to both parties.

Deputy Minister Van Cong expressed thanks and gratitude to the Maritime Administration for hosting the meeting. He noted that there has been limited and progressive cooperation since the signing of the Agreement on Maritime Transport in 2007 and this meeting presented an opportunity to further develop and strengthen ties. He also emphasized that this meeting is one of the events in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the formal normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and Viet Nam.

The delegation of the United States provided an overview of its National Maritime Strategy that will serve as the overarching blueprint to inform the U.S. Congress, Federal departments and industry of actionable items necessary to invigorate and chart a sustainable course of the maritime industry. The United States invited Viet Nam to provide feedback once the policy options are made public. In particular, the United States welcomes thoughts on how and to what magnitude the proposed policy options will influence the global maritime industry.

Both delegations discussed the importance of increasing their international merchant shipping fleets and the need to remain competitive in the global market where changing alliances and market trends are affecting shipping and trade. During the dialogue regarding current practices, the two delegations exchanged information about coastwise shipping regulations.

Both delegations confirmed that their countries are experiencing similar logistical and distribution challenges in the movement of empty containers between seaports. On this matter,

the United States informed Viet Nam that the United States allows for foreign-flag vessels to move empty containers at ports provided that the country in question provides the reciprocal arrangement to United States-flag ships.

Viet Nam expressed its strong interest in extending current seafarer crew visas from one year to two years. The United States recalled that current visa discussions are taking place on a broad basis and that the United States sets visa terms on the basis of reciprocity. In this connection, U.S. visa officials have asked Viet Nam to extend the terms of its visas for all types of visitors. Both delegations agreed to bring their interest in the issue to the attention of their visa authorities.

On the topic of environmental issues, the United States agreed to provide to Viet Nam copies of maritime research on alternative fuels that will address port and vessel air emission, greenhouse gas reductions and energy efficiency. In addition, the United States shared that it has researched integrating liquefied natural gas (LNG) for marine propulsion. Viet Nam welcomed the chance to review U.S. studies and additional information regarding environmental protection that the United States might provide. Both sides share an interest in alternative energy sources and fuel-saving technologies that will allow operations to be more cost-effective.

The United States concurred that LNG exports to Vietnam will work to the advantage of both countries and asked Viet Nam to consider importing LNG on U.S.-flag vessels with U.S.-citizen seafarers.

There was mutual interest in the Panama Canal expansion and the impact it would have on international trade. The United States noted that it had released a Panama Canal Expansion Study – Phase I Report on the impact of the Canal expansion in November 2013 and will share the link to that report with Viet Nam.

At the request of Viet Nam, the United States made a presentation on port authority models employed in the United States and the Maritime Administration's StrongPorts Program that assists U.S. ports in planning, funding and executing infrastructure projects. Viet Nam inquired about trade and investment maritime proposals as well as best practices in managing port capacity challenges. Viet Nam further inquired about different agencies that regulate port operations. Viet Nam expressed a particular interest in the regulation of auxiliary fees charged by shipping companies. On this matter, the United States agreed to provide information about the Federal Maritime Commission and its regulatory framework, in particular information related to surcharge management. The United States also advised that the Federal Maritime Commission was scheduled to release a port congestion report in July 2015. Both countries agreed to consider facilitating trade missions.

Recalling the difficulties of the largest U.S. investor in Viet Nam's ports, the United States inquired about port policy and planning in Viet Nam. Viet Nam noted the problem of overcapacity in its ports and affirmed that it is making efforts to attract additional business including attempting to secure more transshipment cargoes bound to and from third countries. Viet Nam further reported that it is planning to upgrade waterways and landside connections to the ports of Cai Mep and Cai Lan to encourage more direct international service by large vessels.

Both delegations discussed the importance of a skilled and trained workforce. Viet Nam noted its relationship with the California Maritime Academy (CMA) and their robust student and lecturer exchange program. As part of this program, the United States requested that Viet Nam extend assistance in obtaining appropriate port clearance for the CMA training ship, TS GOLDEN BEAR, which could call at a port in Viet Nam in 2016.

Anti-piracy operations are important to both countries. Both delegations expressed concern over the increasing risk of piracy off the Horn of Africa, the Malacca Straits and the Gulf of Guinea. The United States discussed its interagency efforts to develop best management practices for anti-piracy and risk mitigation measures tailored to the specifics of each geographic area of concern. Viet Nam requested to view the details of the physical security and vulnerabilities checklist developed by the U.S. Anti-Piracy Assistance Team.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both countries thanked each other for a productive discussion and committed to continuing the dialogue to advance mutually agreed maritime development priorities. Both countries agreed to endeavor to meet again during the first half of 2016. The delegations agreed to extend the Maritime Transport Agreement with no proposed changes or amendments.

Done in Washington D.C. on the 8 June 2015.



Paul N. Jaenichen
For the Department of Transportation
United States of America



Nguyen Cong Van
Ministry of Transport
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam