

Vietnamese Response to *From Enemies to Partners- Vietnam, the U.S. and Agent Orange*

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Summary: *From Enemies to Partners* has resonated in Vietnam. Over three hundred officials, social activists, scientists, NGO leaders and diplomats took part in the three public book events. The events received extensive coverage in the media and VTV4's "Talk Vietnam" broadcast a 45 minute program on Agent Orange, the book and the authors on November 4th. Thế Giới printed 500 copies, of which 20 remained as of mid-October 2018.

At the Hanoi launch of the book on September 26th the book's publisher, Dr. Trần Đoàn Lâm (Thế Giới publishing house) observed that "For the Vietnamese people it's very easy to see the impacts [of Agent Orange]" but "the U.S. wants to do the right thing." He quoted with approval Senator Patrick J. Leahy from the book's opening pages: "I felt that instead of turning our backs on the problem we had a moral obligation to do something about it." Dr. Lâm commended the book for its style-- brief, easy to understand and concise.

Vice Foreign Minister Pham Quang Vinh in his remarks said, "Dealing with the consequences of the war is the way to broaden the relationship [with the U.S.]. The book is about the past but it's really to foster collaboration in the future." Molly Stephenson, public affairs counselor at the American embassy, concurred: "We are committed to building this partnership...But nothing illustrates our common sense of purpose more than our collaboration with the Government of Vietnam, and particularly the Ministry of National Defense, to resolve war legacies."

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh sent a letter of congratulations to the authors at the Hanoi launch, in part noting.

Going forward, I look forward to the two sides continuing to work closely and do better to address the consequences of the war, clean up dioxin at the Bien Hoa Airbase, as well as support in terms of health and medical care to victims of Agent Orange/dioxin.

I send you and your families my best wishes for your health and look forward to continuing to receive your support for the development of the comprehensive partnership between Vietnam and the U.S.

For the full text of the Minister's letter and English translation see https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2018/10/DPM-Pham-Binh-Minh-letter-VN-2.pdf?_ga=2.266699854.1126255599.1540260196-780748850.1466627258

Aside from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense received complimentary copies of *From Enemies to Partners*. They then went ahead and bought an additional thirty copies. The Vietnamese scientific community also responded positively to the

book. High officials in the ministries of Health (MOH) and Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) were sent complementary copies of the book.

The authors also introduced *From Enemies to Partners* at well-attended book events in Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang on October 3rd and 4th. For media coverage and photos of the three events see <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/of-interest/vietnamese-react-to-publication-of-from-enemies-to-partners-vietnam-the-u-s-and-agent-orange/>

Son and Bailey were interviewed on VTV4's "Talk Vietnam" for a 45 minute segment about their book. The program aired on November 4, 2018 can be viewed here:

<https://vtv.vn/video/talk-vietnam-tu-ke-thu-den-doi-tac-viet-nam-hoa-ky-va-chat-da-cam-333008.htm>

From Enemies to Partners also went on sale in bookshops in Hanoi.



On set of "Talk Vietnam"



On sale in Le Dinh Street, Hanoi