



Summary of World Broadcasts

April 18, 2003

Hanoi commentary rejects contents of US Vietnam human rights bill

SOURCE: Voice of Vietnam text web site, Hanoi, in English 17 Apr 03

Text of station commentary in English carried by Vietnamese radio text web site on 17 April

At a press briefing last week, some US congressmen, including Chris Smith, tried to advocate that the House of Representatives approve the Vietnam human rights bill. They cooked up a series of allegations, distorting the truth of human rights practices in Vietnam. They described Vietnam as pursuing policies of suppression, discrimination and threats of jail for any dissident. They alleged that Vietnam had no democracy, no freedom of religion or information. With these fabrications, they urged the US Congress to ratify the so-called Vietnam human rights bill in order to promote democracy and human rights in the country.

Vietnamese people who have self-respect and a high sense of responsibility towards the process of their national reconstruction are indignant over these brazen and dangerous fabrications. Many Americans have also showed their indignation.

USA Today columnist Brad O'Leary has totally rejected these fabrications. He visited Vietnam several times during the US war and again, more recently, when the country was in the process of renovation. Therefore, he was able to make persuasive comparisons. He wrote that under the old puppet regime in southern Vietnam, wherever he went, there were roadblocks and security checks and that now it is much easier to move around. At that time, it was impossible to open a business without paying all kinds of bribes, but now not a single dollar is paid in bribes.

Regarding the fabrication that Vietnam has no freedom of information, Brad said the reality in Vietnam proved that ordinary Vietnamese people can access the Internet. In many localities throughout the country, people can follow programmes broadcast by well-known international television and radio networks.

Some congressmen also cooked up the idea that Vietnam suppressed religion. But, the truth is that foreign visitors to Vietnam, who are religious followers, are free to go to any place of worship to practice their religion. The Vietnamese government has officially recognized Buddhist, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai and Muslim organizations.

In September 2001, when Vietnam and the United States had just concluded their bilateral trade agreement, Chris Smith and his companions put forth the so-called Vietnam human rights bill in an attempt to hinder the development of bilateral relations. At that time the US Senate made a good decision to reject the bill. This year, the bill has been tabled along with a report from the US State Department on the state of human rights in the world. This report also includes some distortions of the real situation in Vietnam.

But not all Americans have such hostile and ill-intentioned attitudes. Up to now only 30 out of 410 have given their support. The majority of American people are ashamed of the new US allegations on human rights practices in places around the world including Vietnam.

According to columnist Brad O'Leary, it was shameful of the US to claim that Vietnam suppresses and discriminates against its ethnic minorities, while racial and religious discrimination still exists in the US itself. The United States, the richest countries in the world, still has many poor people and street children. It is even more ridiculous to urge the US Congress to approve the Vietnam human rights bill, when thousands of Iraqi civilians and children have been killed or wounded by thousands of tonnes of US bombs dropped on the country during the Iraqi war.

Any American who respects Vietnam and wishes for further development of relations the two countries urges that no consideration be given to the approval of the Vietnam human rights bill. Instead the people around the world believe it is necessary to adopt an act prohibiting the US from using smart bombs and cluster bombs as it did during the Iraqi war. The use of such terribly destructive weapons is a gross violation of human rights as it violates the most sacred right of humankind, that is to live in peace and stability.