

An Indispensable Upgrade

The U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

By Lauren Mai, Gregory B. Poling, and Japhet Quitzon

In 2025, U.S.-Vietnam relations will mark two important anniversaries: 50 years since the end of the Vietnam War and 30 years since the normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations. These anniversaries reflect the United States and Vietnam's long journey toward strong bilateral ties. Ties reached a new high-water mark in September 2023 when President Joe Biden and the late Communist Party of Vietnam general secretary Nguyen Phu Trong elevated the relationship to a **comprehensive strategic partnership**—the highest in Vietnam's diplomatic canon. This made clear to every official in Vietnam that the country's collective leadership prioritizes the bilateral relationship. The same is true of Vietnam's recently concluded comprehensive strategic partnerships with **Australia, India, Japan,** and **South Korea**. There is no reason to think that any future leader in Vietnam would seek to slow the momentum in those deepening relationships.

Strategic Cooperation amid Political Transitions

Trong's **passing** on July 19 after more than a decade in power marks a period of political transition that will continue at least until Vietnam's 14th Party Congress, scheduled for 2026. But the Communist Party of Vietnam, regardless of its leader, will continue to prioritize Vietnam's independence and agency amid great power competition. This has always been the bedrock of Vietnamese strategy. That means Hanoi will continue to deepen its relationship with the United States while seeking stable and productive relations with Beijing where possible.

In 2015, Trong became the first general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam to ever visit the United States, **meeting** with then president Barack Obama in the White House. To Lam, now serving as both president of Vietnam and general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, visited Washington for **meetings** with U.S. counterparts in 2019, as has nearly every Vietnamese prime minister and president in recent years. U.S. officials have reciprocated that attention, with every president since Bill Clinton visiting Hanoi at least once during their time in office.

During the Trump administration, the U.S.-Vietnam relationship **took** significant steps forward with an increase in direct investment in the country and an emphasis on energy cooperation. In 2019, the two countries **signed** a memorandum of understanding to establish a comprehensive energy partnership to boost energy market cooperation. Under the Biden administration, the United States doubled down on its commitment to Vietnam. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin made Vietnam part of his **first tour** of the region in July 2021, alongside U.S. ally the Philippines and strategic partner Singapore. A month later, Kamala Harris became the first U.S. vice president to **visit** Vietnam. The visit yielded enhanced bilateral security and economic engagements, playing a critical role in the eventual formation of the comprehensive strategic partnership. Harris **returned** to Vietnam in November 2022 to meet with then president Nguyen Xuan Phuc, reaffirming the bilateral security and economic ties and showcasing greater U.S. commitment to Vietnam. So, whether Donald Trump or Harris occupies the White House in January 2025, the United States will have a president already well-versed in U.S.-Vietnam ties.

And no matter what changes at the political level in Washington and Hanoi, the two states will continue to share similar views of regional security and anxieties about China. That has been and will remain the ballast in their security relationship.

Vietnam faces maritime coercion from and shares a land border with China, which officials and the broader public view as a perennial threat. Vietnam repelled a Chinese invasion across that border in 1979 and fought a series of skirmishes with China over the next decade. It faces regular gray zone challenges from China's navy, coast guard, and militia, which could escalate at any time. It maintains nearly 50 outposts in the Spratly Islands provisioned against a potential Chinese invasion or blockade in the South China Sea.

Despite the need to maintain ties with China, no Vietnamese leader will compromise on sovereignty, including in the South China Sea disputes. And as every available survey of **public** and **elite opinion** in the country shows, there is nowhere on earth more fearful of Chinese hegemony than Vietnam. That is why Vietnamese leaders value strategic ties with the United States and its allies as a counterweight to their necessary relationship with China.

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Too often, U.S.-based observers forget just how far and fast security ties with Vietnam have evolved. Washington only **lifted** an embargo on arms sales to Vietnam in 2016. Yet over the last decade, the two have regularly engaged in defense exchanges, including **visits** to Vietnam by U.S. aircraft carriers. Vietnam has been a major recipient of U.S. maritime security assistance, including the delivery of **Metal Shark patrol boats** and access to the SeaVision maritime domain awareness platform used by most U.S. allies and partners across the region. In late 2022, Vietnam hosted its first-ever international

defense expo, and major U.S. defense manufacturers, including Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, were there peddling their wares. This would have been unthinkable even a decade ago.

This cooperation should be expected to deepen, but there will remain limits to how much the United States and Vietnam can do together in the short term and how much they will align on strategic issues beyond China. For instance, Vietnam maintains close ties to Russia, and Russian president Vladimir Putin **visited Hanoi** in June despite objections from Washington. Vietnam has not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has **abstained** from all UN votes on the issue. This does not mean that Hanoi supports Russia's war; indeed, it allowed state media to report openly about the war, and there is considerable sympathy for the Ukrainian cause among much of the Vietnamese public. However, Vietnam's government cannot afford to alienate Russia without compromising its own security. More than 80 percent of Vietnam's military equipment is Soviet- or Russian-made.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine makes it a strategic liability, and Hanoi knows it. As a result, it is accelerating the **diversification** of its military procurement, including exploring acquisitions from the United States and its allies. However, that will be a very long-term process. In the interim, Washington will need to accept that Hanoi cannot risk its own military preparedness by overtly condemning Moscow.

Growing Opportunities: The U.S.-Vietnam Economic Partnership

Vietnam's meteoric economic rise is a remarkable success story. From the launch of its *Doi Moi* reforms in 1986, fortuitous global trends and adept policymaking have **led** to rapid development. In the nearly 40 years since, Vietnam's GDP per capita **increased** sixfold, from \$600 to \$3,700. The poverty rate **was** slashed from 14 percent in 2010 to 4.2 percent in 2022. Its rapidly growing middle class, stable political environment, and willingness to join economic agreements, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (an earlier version of which the United States **abandoned**) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (of which **the United States is a part**), have **made** Vietnam an attractive investment destination for foreign firms.

U.S.-VIETNAM ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Since the normalization of ties in 1995, the United States and Vietnam have become strong economic partners. The two countries concluded a bilateral trade agreement in 2001 that led the United States to grant Vietnam most favored nation status and support its accession to the World Trade Organization. Trade has greatly increased in the two decades since. U.S. goods and services trade with Vietnam **amounted** to \$114.6 billion in 2022, a huge **jump** from \$2.9 billion in 2002. The United States is the largest export destination for Vietnamese goods, ranging from textiles to footwear and electronics. In 2022, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) **provided** Vietnam with \$142 million in official development assistance, including through projects addressing the legacies of the Vietnam War, such as dioxin remediation.

Vietnam's growing role in the regional economy of the Indo-Pacific **makes** it a vital partner for the United States. The Biden administration has made engagement with Vietnam a key priority in the region. Economics, trade, and investment cooperation were key tenets of the comprehensive strategic partnership concluded in September 2023: the two governments reaffirmed their commitments to **create** favorable economic conditions; facilitate the opening of each country's market to the other,

including by tackling barriers to entry; and support other mutually beneficial trade and economic policies. Vietnam is also partnering with the United States on semiconductor manufacturing under the International Technology Security and Innovation Fund established by the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The joint statement from Biden and Trong **acknowledged** Vietnam's **request** for a review of its market economy status. On August 2, 2024, the Department of Commerce **determined** that Vietnam will continue to be classified as a nonmarket economy.

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In the face of ever-intensifying U.S.-China competition, Vietnam, more than any of its Southeast Asian neighbors, has benefitted from the diversion of new foreign investment away from China. Vietnam is becoming a production **destination** for high-value electronic goods, from smartphones to semiconductors, with a **growing** renewable energy market and a **nascent** critical mineral production and processing industry.

SEMICONDUCTORS AND ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURING

Vietnam is often **seen** as a viable “friendshoring” partner for the United States and its allies as businesses seek to “de-risk” the high-tech sector. Its highly educated **workforce** and stable political environment have made it an attractive alternative for companies interested in relocating from China. Vietnam participates in 16 free trade agreements, more than its neighbors, and offers tax breaks and exemptions for high-tech projects. It boasts low labor costs and maintains a steady output of skilled students. USAID's Partnership for Higher Education Reform has **provided** \$14.2 million to boost teaching, research, and innovation in Vietnam's three largest national universities. Moreover, the United States has **committed** \$2 million to a joint initiative between the two countries to develop the semiconductor workforce. This closely aligns with Vietnam's goal of **expanding** its semiconductor workforce tenfold to 50,000 engineers by 2030.

Vietnam's semiconductor market **grew** 7.1 percent per year between 2016 and 2021 and was valued at \$18.2 billion in 2022. Vietnam specializes in the assembly, testing, and packaging (ATP) process. By February 2023, its semiconductor chip exports to the United States reached \$562 million, compared to \$321.7 million in 2022. Vietnam has **become** the third-largest Asian semiconductor chip exporter to the United States. In April 2023, it **accounted** for more than 10 percent of semiconductor chips imported by the United States for seven consecutive months.

Intel, a top global semiconductor manufacturer, began operations in Vietnam in 2006. Its ATP **factory** in Ho Chi Minh City is the largest in its manufacturing network. Amkor Technology, a packing and testing services provider, **invested** \$1.6 billion in a new factory in Bac Ninh in 2023. U.S. semiconductor companies such as Intel, Marvell, and GlobalFoundries took part in a business delegation alongside Biden's visit to Vietnam in September 2023.

Vietnam has also become a key destination for electronics manufacturers seeking to diversify and secure their supply chains. Apple has **steadily** been moving production into Vietnam, investing **\$15.8 billion** in the country since 2019. It now operates 28 factories in Vietnam, mostly in the country's

northern provinces. Vietnam assembles a variety of Apple products and is **projected** to be responsible for a growing percentage of all Apple product production by 2025: 20 percent of all iPads and Apple Watches, 5 percent of MacBooks, and 65 percent of all AirPods.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Vietnam **pledged** to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Geographically, it is very well placed to achieve this goal: The country **possesses** immense potential for renewable energy. Between 2018 and 2022, renewable energy production **rose** fortyfold. Vietnam must further develop its clean electricity grid to maintain and grow its manufacturing capacity.

In 2022, Vietnam **signed** a Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) with the United States and other donor nations, which will provide \$15.5 billion in public and private finance to support the country's clean energy transition. Vietnam's JETP Resource Mobilization Plan aims to **create** both a regulatory and infrastructural framework for the energy transition while working to reduce emissions and improve upon power transmission and energy storage systems. USAID cooperates with Vietnam on a series of projects aimed at lowering emissions and stimulating investments in infrastructure and energy. With \$36.2 million in funding from 2020 to 2025, the USAID Vietnam Low Emission Energy Program aims to **support** Vietnam's clean energy transition. Meanwhile, the \$13.9 million Vietnam Urban Energy Security program **works** with the Vietnamese government to identify clean energy solutions to urban energy challenges.

With the Vietnamese government's **approval** in July of Decree 80 on Direct Power Purchase Agreements, direct sale of renewable energy to customers via private transmission lines and the national grid is now possible. Foreign businesses will be able to purchase renewable energy from private producers instead of relying on the state-owned Vietnam Electricity for power. In January, 15 U.S. companies had **expressed** an interest in investing \$8 billion in Vietnam's clean energy infrastructure contingent on the adoption of such a rule. The approval of Decree 80 and subsequent deregulation of the renewable energy purchasing process could prove to be appealing to more foreign partners seeking to set up shop in Vietnam.

CRITICAL MINERALS

Vietnam's critical mineral reserves could also prove crucial to its rise in high-value global supply chains. Rare earth minerals are **vital** to the production of modern devices ranging from electric vehicle batteries to smartphone screens. Vietnam has the world's second-largest known reserves of rare earth minerals after China. Seeking an opportunity in the wake of global supply chain reorientations, Vietnam is **increasing** its rare earth mining exponentially. In 2022, it produced 4,300 tons of these minerals compared to just 400 tons in 2021. The country **aims** to process 2 million tons of rare earth ores and 60,000 tons of rare earth oxides by 2030. Under the auspices of the U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the two countries have **signed** an agreement to strengthen technical cooperation to help Vietnam improve its rare earths industry and attract investment.

CHALLENGES

Though Vietnam has enjoyed significant international attention and investment, it faces considerable challenges. Infrastructure constraints are giving many interested investors pause, particularly when it comes to the availability of clean water and energy—a shortage of the latter led to unexpected blackouts

that affected many foreign manufacturing operations in 2023. The national and local governments are well aware of the need for major infrastructure upgrades but have been slow to grant approval and disperse funds for major projects because of the ongoing *dot lo*, or blazing furnace, campaign against corruption. Between 2021 and early 2023, the Vietnamese government launched **criminal investigations** of 7,500 individuals and indicted more than 4,400 for graft. The Communist Party of Vietnam has disciplined tens of thousands of its own, including high-ranking officials and eight members of the Politburo, the country's top decisionmaking body. From early 2023 to mid-2024, two presidents, the National Assembly chair, and the permanent member of the Secretariat (the fifth-most-senior official) were ousted. The breadth of the anti-corruption campaign has created **bureaucratic paralysis**, with officials hesitant to make any bold decisions or approve large projects for fear of future prosecutions. As a result, many investors are adopting a wait-and-see approach until they can better assess the future of their investments.

Trong's death might lead to a slow winding down of the anti-corruption campaign, either before or after the 2026 National Party Congress, but that is unclear. High-profile arrests are likely to continue for some time, if only because of cases already under investigation. On July 22, for instance, police **arrested** five senior officials, including a former deputy environment minister, for violating mining regulations. Wherever the anti-corruption campaign goes, the atmosphere of bureaucratic caution is not going to ease overnight, so the slow disbursement of government funds and infrastructure shortfalls will continue to hamper growth for some time.

Moreover, the potential for a second Trump administration in the United States could complicate future progress in U.S.-Vietnam economic cooperation. A Trump administration would be likely to complain again about the growing U.S. trade deficit and may seek to address it via punitive measures, as it did the first time around with investigations into alleged currency manipulation and unfair trade practices. Given the huge U.S. commercial interest in Vietnam, a second Trump administration would be unlikely to reverse the trend of growing economic cooperation, but it could certainly slow the momentum of recent years. Despite these challenges, Vietnam will likely continue to enjoy **sustained** GDP growth over the next three years.

Beyond the War: Deepening the United States and Vietnam's Friendship

With the anniversaries of the end of the Vietnam War and of diplomatic normalization on the horizon, and a comprehensive strategic partnership in place, the United States and Vietnam have intensified efforts to reinforce people-to-people ties. The U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership should include redoubling efforts to address historical legacies, deepen linkages between Vietnam and the Vietnamese diaspora, and expand educational exchanges. All three categories are critical in strengthening U.S.-Vietnam relations, providing opportunities for people from both countries not only to understand one another but also the complex history of war and reconciliation between them.

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HISTORICAL LEGACIES

The United States and Vietnam have prioritized addressing the legacies of war. In April 2023, USAID announced a **partnership** with the War Remnants Museum (WRM) in Ho Chi Minh City. The partnership involves adding an exhibit to the WRM to showcase efforts by both countries to overcome the consequences of the Vietnam War. This historical exhibit marks the **first time** that the U.S. government has had a direct stake in how the war is memorialized in Vietnam. The WRM has previously faced many **criticisms** for lacking a balanced perspective, portraying U.S. soldiers as criminals while ignoring atrocities committed by North Vietnamese forces. The new collaborative exhibit showcases the United States and Vietnam's joint commitment to address war legacies based on mutual understanding and an honest acknowledgment of history. The exhibit is expected to open in 2025, in time for both anniversaries.

Despite its strong commitment, the United States still has work to do to address the legacies of the Vietnam War. As of 2022, the remains of 1,244 U.S. service members killed or missing in action were still **not accounted for**, with 470 of those declared “non-recoverable.” Progress toward recovering remains has slowed, given the logistical and scientific hurdles involved. In 2023, only four service members' remains were successfully **recovered**.

In 2021, Austin, the U.S. defense secretary, and Vietnamese defense minister Phan Van Giang **inked** a memorandum of understanding in which the United States committed to assist Vietnam in locating, identifying, and recovering the war dead of Vietnamese forces. The Department of Defense intends to home in on relocation efforts by **partnering** with the United States Institute of Peace, USAID, U.S. academic institutions, and the Office of Defense Attache in Hanoi. While detailed implementation plans have not yet been established, the United States intends to target the following areas to aid in Vietnamese accounting efforts: archival research; digitization of documents; building technological accounting capacity; media outreach; exchanges between veterans, academia, policymakers, and technical and working-level people; and DNA analysis assistance.

Despite the recovery efforts of both U.S. and Vietnamese forces at play, the loss of lives affiliated with the former Republic of Vietnam (RVN or South Vietnam) has still **not been officially recognized** or addressed. While their war memorialization and recovery efforts thus far are commendable, the United States and Vietnam must include the RVN forces in these efforts to reconcile the Vietnamese-American community, a critical step in strengthening bilateral ties.

The United States also continues to work with Vietnam to remove unexploded ordnance (UXO) and remediate soil contaminated by **Agent Orange**, an herbicide used during the war containing high levels of the deadly chemical dioxin. USAID completed a multiyear project to remediate soil at Da Nang airport; the project was launched during the Obama administration, and the agency is currently working to clean up Bien Hoa, a former U.S. air base containing high concentrations of Agent Orange. In December 2022, USAID awarded a contract to develop a facility to treat more than 100,000 cubic meters of contaminated soil at the base. The **project** is expected to cost \$450 million and be completed in 2030.

While the environmental remediation efforts are making considerable progress, more should be done to treat the victims of Agent Orange exposure. The U.S. government provides care and compensation for **U.S. veterans exposed during the war**, but **more should be done** in cooperation with Hanoi to

treat Vietnamese victims. The U.S. and Vietnamese governments do not agree on who qualifies as being affected by Agent Orange exposure. Reaching such an **agreement** and increasing support to victims accordingly would mark an important step in reconciliation.

The United States continues to support demining efforts in Vietnam, **investing** over \$206 million as of 2022 and **removing** 5,979 mines and UXO from 1,247,425 square meters (308 acres) of land as of July 2021. In 2022, the Department of State initiated technological support to the **Vietnam National Mine Action Center** and two provincial mine action centers to develop the ability to carry out demining in Vietnam independently. The Department of State has also supported education on UXO risk in primary and secondary schools in affected Vietnamese provinces, including Da Nang, Quang Binh, Quang Nam, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue. Removal of all UXO from the war is a difficult feat, with **millions** of mines remaining undetected. The Vietnamese government **speculates** that, as of 2022, mines and UXO have caused over 40,000 deaths and 60,000 injuries since the war's end. A notable nongovernmental organization (NGO) tackling this challenge is **Project RENEW**, a partnership established in 2001 between the Quang Tri Province government and international NGOs. Over 20 years, RENEW has successfully **removed** 815,952 explosives from Vietnam, less than half of what is estimated to remain. While it is impossible to remove all UXO, continued efforts are critical in decreasing safety risks throughout Vietnam.

THE VIETNAMESE DIASPORA

The end of the Vietnam War triggered a **large-scale migration** of Vietnamese nationals to the United States. At the end of the war in 1975, the United States evacuated around 125,000 Vietnamese nationals, many of whom had ties to the U.S. military and risked persecution by the victorious Communist government. The evacuation marked the **first wave** of Vietnamese refugees immigrating to the United States. A second wave began in 1978 and lasted into the 1980s, as many Vietnamese fled by boat to neighboring Southeast Asian states and were eventually resettled in third countries. Today, around 1.3 million Vietnamese immigrants **reside** in the United States, and the Vietnamese-American population totals more than 2 million.

Vietnamese Americans play an important role in U.S.-Vietnam relations. Most second-generation Vietnamese Americans have never been to Vietnam and many Vietnamese immigrants and their children remain fervently anti-communist. The community's role in the deepening U.S.-Vietnam relationship has been conflicted, with many Vietnamese Americans eagerly forging new cultural and commercial ties, but others lobbying the U.S. government to adopt a more critical stance toward Hanoi.

For its part, the Vietnamese government refers to Vietnamese Americans as **Viet Kieu**, or "overseas Vietnamese." After the war, the term was initially considered **derogatory**. But Vietnam's relationship with the diaspora has evolved since the normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations. Hanoi has worked to embrace the Vietnamese-American community, identifying it as a source of **inspiration** for Vietnamese at home. The cultural and political disconnect many Vietnamese Americans feel toward Hanoi will not disappear any time soon, but it is steadily shrinking. To further reconciliation efforts, the U.S. and Vietnamese governments should continue to support programs that allow Vietnamese Americans to return to Vietnam for cultural and educational exchanges. But they must also acknowledge and address the trauma suffered by Vietnamese on both sides of the war.

EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

About 30,000 Vietnamese students currently study in the United States, more than from any other country in Southeast Asia. The U.S. government is encouraging educational institutions to accept more Vietnamese students over the coming years. Vietnam has also welcomed U.S. universities to develop partnerships with Vietnamese institutions and even open campuses in Vietnam. The University of Arizona notably offers a **collaborative program** with Hanoi Law University (HLU) to earn both a bachelor of laws degree from HLU and a bachelor of arts in law degree from Arizona in only four years. Meanwhile, Troy University is currently **partnered** with Vietnam National University, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, and Saigon Technology University to offer a variety of undergraduate programs in Vietnam.

The United States' Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) played an instrumental role in the early normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations via educational exchanges. **Established** by Congress in 1999, the VEF was a flagship education exchange program created to **advance** Vietnamese science and technology capacities. The VEF, which **operated** in Vietnam from 2003 to 2016, allowed Vietnamese scholars of academic merit to study in the United States. Over its run, the VEF brought in 600 Vietnamese nationals to pursue graduate degrees in the United States and over 40 U.S. professors from U.S. universities to teach at Vietnamese universities. The VEF's foundational first steps toward normalizing educational exchanges **inspired** emerging programs such as the Fulbright Program to continue encouraging exchanges between the United States and Vietnam, with the two programs developing a strong working relationship until the VEF officially closed its doors in 2018.

The United States, through the **Fulbright Program**, gives U.S. professionals an opportunity to study, teach, or research in Vietnam while learning about Vietnam's language and culture. The Fulbright Economics Teaching Program **emerged** out of a 1994 partnership between Harvard University's Vietnam Program and University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City. The program is now part of Fulbright University Vietnam, Vietnam's first independent nonprofit university. Fulbright University Vietnam was **commended** in the announcement of the U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for its "growing role as a regional hub for public policy training," as well as for its recognition of the importance of investing in human capital "as a critical resource for future prosperity, security, stability, and development."

In 2022, the Peace Corps sent its **first delegation** of volunteers to Hanoi after 18 years of negotiations between the United States and Vietnam. The Peace Corps has **championed** "world peace and friendship through community-based development and intercultural understanding" since 1961. Internationally established and a hallmark for strong bilateral relations, the Peace Corps' establishment in Vietnam marks a historic win for U.S.-Vietnam relations. The United States and Vietnam had been negotiating the bilateral agreement for the Peace Corps since 2004, inking a formal agreement in 2016 during the Obama administration. Implementation agreements were finalized in early 2021, formally recruiting staff later that year. With the Peace Corps' Vietnam program established, the United States gives its citizens more opportunities to engage in both cultural and educational exchange opportunities, which are critical steps toward deepening mutual understanding between both nations.

A Bright Future for U.S.-Vietnam Relations

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Vietnam is only beginning to prosper. Expanded government-to-government ties have created deeper institutional linkages between the two countries. Their bilateral friendship will be able to endure changes in administrations in each country, regardless of their respective domestic political environments. Economic engagement in Vietnam is growing steadily in the wake of Western companies de-risking from China. In the semiconductor production sector, renewable energy sector, and critical mineral sector, among others, there are significant opportunities for a U.S.-Vietnam economic partnership.

Meanwhile, the United States and Vietnam continue to earnestly acknowledge their historical war legacies, paving the road toward an eventual mutual understanding between the two nations. Their strengthened bilateral relationship opens educational opportunities for people of both nations, including Vietnamese Americans, to play a role in the United States and Vietnam's complicated and deepening friendship. And with important anniversaries of both the end of the Vietnam War and diplomatic normalization quickly approaching, the United States and Vietnam will only work to continue the momentum in their growing relationship. ■

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