



Christian Juhl

Tale ved fejringen af 45-års jubilæet  
for oprettelsen af de diplomatiske  
forbindelser mellem Vietnam og  
Danmark

Den Sorte Diamant, 7. oktober 2016

Your Excellency  
Ministers  
Fellow parliamentarians  
Dear friends

It is a great honor for me to take part in these celebrations.  
45 years ago, Vietnam and Denmark established diplomatic relations.  
Ever since the relations between our two countries have improved.

Allow me to share some personal experiences.

My own engagement in politics started in solidarity with Vietnam in the years during the war for independence.

A lot of us young people were astonished about the fight between the worlds strongest US-army and the Vietnamese. A fight between David and Goliath – where David won its independence. However, the price was high – millions of people lost their lives in the war.

At that time every young man and women knew the words Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh, everybody knew what napalm bombs and agent orange could do to people. At that time it was very common to discuss, what colonialism and imperialism did to the world, and to find out, what we could do for a better world, without war.

Vietnam gave us a lot of inspiration in the work for peace and a fair world.

Without these years being a part of the solidarity with Vietnam – and later on with ANC in South Africa, I think, I would never had become a politician and a member of the Danish parliament.

Peacefull years came - and friendship, trade and cooperation between Vietnam and Denmark were build up.

In my office, there is still a poster from 1975: A school for Vietnam – where we as youth collected money to help Vietnam.

The danish-vietnamese friendship-association has been one tool. Trade and cultural exchange another.

Today the relations are excellent. Both on a political, economical and cultural level.

I visited Vietnam a few years ago for the first time.

I were at that time local leader of the General Workers

Union in Silkeborg – a Danish city in Jutland.

One of our textile-companies in our city, Mascot International had moved their production to Vietnam. We lost during the 80'ies thousands of workplaces in our area – and some of them are now in Vietnam.

But we wanted to be sure, that the Danish company treated the Vietnamese workers good.

Sometimes companies goes to other countries with low salary and bad working conditions to earn extra money. That is what we learned of globalization. Do I need to say Bangladesh, India etc. ?

We met the manager, the workers and the workers union – it was a very positive experience.

We were a bit surprised to see a picture of Ho Chi Minh on the wall at the managers office.

It is not very often you see Ho Chi Minh or Karl Marx at the manager's office in Denmark – or in the Danish ministeries – although both (after my opinion) have helped us to a better understanding of the world,we live in.

We kept the contact – and the Vietnamese workers have now visited our region.

Back to the official words

Our countries have beenthrough an impressive development during the last 45 years. Your Excellency. I must admit that the development in Vietnam is a bit more impressive compared to the development in Denmark. Vietnam has for instance the world record in reducing poverty.

In 1993 about 60 percentage of the population were defined as poor. Today only about 10 percentage are living in poverty. And the positive development continues!

The Comprehensive Partnership from 2013 illustrates the good perspectives for cooperation for the future.

One issue I will like to highlight from the Partnershipconcerns climate protection and green growth. Economical growth can have negative impacts on the climate. We have seen that trend all over the world.

Vietnam and Denmark take that very seriously. And we are cooperating to make the growth more sustainable. That will benefit everyone.

Another area where we are cooperating is between our two parliaments. Since 2008 the Danish Parliament and the Vietnamese National Assembly have had a very fruitful cooperation.

Let me finally emphasize that cultural relations are also very important and I know everyone is looking forward to the great show after my speech.

Your Excellency, I will stop now and just underline that I look forward to continue the good relations and give the hope, that we together can strengthen peace and friendship – and together can give our small contribution to a better world.

Thank you!