The United States and Vietnam have reaffirmed a common commitment to the responsible expansion of civil nuclear power and reiterated that this expansion must proceed in a manner that maximizes nuclear safety and security and minimizes proliferation risk.

On March 30, 2010, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Michael Michalak and Vice Minister of Science and Technology Le Dinh Tien of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed a Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation in the Civil Nuclear Field. This MOU will open the door for increased cooperation in such areas as the development of human resources and safety and security infrastructure, access to reliable sources of nuclear fuel, and the management of radioactive waste and used fuel. Vietnam has demonstrated its commitment to the responsible expansion of nuclear power through careful steps taken in cooperation with the United States, among other international partners, towards the development of the robust nuclear infrastructure needed to oversee the deployment of its first nuclear power plants over the coming decades.

President Obama has signaled his commitment to nuclear security by announcing a new international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years and by convening next month’s Nuclear Security Summit. At President Obama’s invitation, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung will be leading an official delegation to join the Summit. Vietnam has also demonstrated its commitment to greater nuclear security, in particular through its efforts to improve physical protection at the Dalat Nuclear Research Institute and return its highly enriched uranium (HEU) fresh fuel to Russia in September 2007. The two countries are working together to further our mutual nonproliferation goals by fully converting the Dalat Nuclear Research Reactor from HEU to low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel and returning the HEU spent fuel to Russia by the end of 2012. As part of our nonproliferation collaboration, we also look forward to a joint effort on deployment of radiation detection equipment at Vietnam’s major seaports.

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