

Bill Clinton visits Vietnam to mark 20th anniversary of ties

By Grant Peck

The Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — For Bill Clinton, President Barack Obama's announcement of plans to resume diplomatic relations with Cuba must have stirred memories. It was 20 years ago this month that Clinton pulled off a similar diplomatic and political success, normalizing relations with Vietnam.

Not that Clinton needed a reminder — he was in Vietnam recently to commemorate his largely forgotten breakthrough. He spoke as guest of honor at a reception hosted by the U.S. Embassy to celebrate American Independence Day.

The former president, in a speech reviewing U.S.-Vietnam cooperation, described normalization of relations as “one of the most important achievements of my presidency,” and said it helped lift the burden that had been weighing down the American spirit since the Vietnam War.

He said it helped “heal the wounds of war, build bonds of genuine friendship, and to provide proof in an increasingly divided world that cooperation was far better than conflict.”

Clinton has good reason to be fond of Vietnam. A November 2000 visit to the country was the swan song of his tumultuous presidency, and he received a rock star's welcome in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City as he worked the crowds.

This visit was his fifth to the country, with his efforts largely in support of his Clinton Foundation's work in fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

Clinton was the first U.S. president to visit Vietnam since Richard Nixon in 1969 visited South Vietnam, then



at war with Communist North Vietnam. American troops withdrew from the South in 1973, and two years later North Vietnam defeated southern forces and unified the country. Between 2 million and 3 million Vietnamese civilians and soldiers died in the conflict, along with 58,000 U.S. soldiers.

America's pride was another victim of the war. Washington imposed a trade embargo on Vietnam after the Communist victory, even blocking aid from multilateral agencies such as the World Bank.

It was the politically volatile issue of resolving the cases of more than 2,000 Americans missing in action in the war that provided the opening for a new diplomatic approach.

CELEBRATING DIPLOMACY. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton gestures during an event celebrating the 239th anniversary of U.S. independence and the 20th anniversary of normalization of relations between the U.S. and Vietnam in Hanoi, Vietnam. Clinton lifted the trade embargo against Vietnam in 1994 and normalized relations with the communist country a year later. (AP Photo/Tran Van Minh)

Vietnam, for its part, saw U.S. trade and investment as a way to help restore its battered and limping economy — an opportunity that the U.S. business community also warmed to.

Step by step, Clinton went down the path to restoring relations, first lifting Washington's veto on multilateral aid, then ending the U.S. trade embargo, and finally on July 11, 1995, announcing normalization of relations.

Clinton was philosophical about the move to reconcile former enemies. He called the day he announced normalization “a different form of independence day.”

“Vietnam had captured our imagination and taken up so much space in our spirit,” he told a crowd of Vietnamese VIPs and members of the foreign community in Vietnam.

“There were people who were wounded ... no American my age didn't know someone who was killed there. There were raging debates at home, people on both sides thought the others were crazy. And somehow, when our Vietnamese friends finally said they would accept us, and we said we would accept them, we were set free.”

Clinton singled out for thanks four distinguished Vietnam War veterans who as U.S. senators helped shepherd normalization.

Charles Robb, Max Cleland, John Kerry, and John McCain “were the wind beneath the wings of this movement,” he said. “They made what I was able to do as president possible.”

Massive debris-removal project underway in Alaska

By Becky Bohrer

The Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — A massive cleanup effort is underway in Alaska, with tons of marine debris set to be airlifted from beaches and taken by barge for recycling and disposal in the Pacific Northwest.

Some of the debris was likely sent to sea by the 2011 tsunami in Japan. It can be hard to definitively distinguish tsunami debris from the run-of-the-mill rubbish.

Hundreds of heavy-duty bags of debris, stockpiled at a site in Kodiak, also will be shipped out. The barge is scheduled to take a roughly one-month venture from Kodiak to the Pacific Northwest.

Chris Pallister, with the group Gulf of Alaska Keeper, says the complex project was spurred, in part, by the mass of material that's washed ashore and the high cost of shuttling small boatloads of debris from remote sites.

UNH looking forward for first harvest of hardy kiwi collection

DURHAM, N.H. (AP) — The University of New Hampshire (UNH) is working on a long-term program for growing hardy kiwis — the ones without the fuzz.

Iago Hale, plant breeder and assistant professor of specialty crop improvement at UNH's Agricultural Experiment Station, says the goal is to support New England farmers and consumers through the crop's development.

The grape-like sweet fruit is smaller than its better known, fuzzier relatives. A single, mature hardy kiwi plant can yield up to 100 pounds of fruit. It is native to China, Japan, Korea, and Siberia.

At UNH, Hale is growing nearly the entire USDA collection of hardy kiwis in order to characterize the collection and identify parent plants for his breeding program. He will see a first harvest this fall.

Fruit fly prompts quarantine in part of Northern California

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Officials have quarantined an area of Northern California after finding six fruit flies.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture said the fruit flies were trapped around Cupertino, a Silicon Valley city south of San Francisco. Residents in the 90-square-mile area can eat fruits and vegetables grown at home, but they are asked to not take them off their property.

The Oriental Fruit Fly is a pest found throughout much of southern Asia. The fly feeds on more than 230 kinds of fruits and vegetables. Fly eggs lead to maggots that make produce unfit for consumption.

This is the third time in eight years that there has been an Oriental Fruit Fly infestation in Cupertino. The fly typically makes its way into the country from contraband fruit.

Chinese light exhibit coming to Norfolk Botanical Garden

NORFOLK, Va. (AP) — A massive Chinese light exhibit is coming to the Norfolk Botanical Garden early next year.

The *Virginian-Pilot* reports that the attraction, dubbed LanternAsia, will feature 25 structures — some two or three stories tall — that will be installed by a 30-person assembly team from China's Sichuan province. Organizers say the \$250,000 show will be the first art

exhibit of its kind on the eastern seaboard.

The exhibit will feature a walking tour that will extend at least a mile, with works of art made from silk, steel, glass, and other materials illuminated from within by LED lights.

The garden hopes to draw 100,000 visitors during its two-month run, tentatively set for March and April.

Education Matters

Just ask Christina. She's the 2015 recipient of the Asian Reporter Foundation's \$2000 Scholarship Award, funded by the Oregon Lottery. Christina is at the top of her class at Franklin High School in Portland and is involved in so many clubs and activities, it'll make your head spin. Christina plans to attend the University of Oregon to study business and economics.

Christina Kuang
2015 Asian Reporter Foundation
Scholarship Award Recipient



Congratulations
Christina!



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