

Beat: Politics

President Obama announces full lifting of Vietnam arms embargo

Ha Noi, Vietnam

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USPA NEWS - May 23, the US completely lifts arms embargo on sales of lethal weapons to Vietnam, announced President Barack Obama who is on the first day of three-day official visit to the country.

The information was released at a press conference in Hanoi following his talks with President Tran Dai Quang.

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"The United States is fully lifting the ban on the sale of military equipment to Vietnam that has been in place for some fifty years," he said at a joint press conference alongside his Vietnamese counterpart President Tran Dai Quang.

Both countries are warily eyeing China's military build-up in the South China Sea.

But Obama was keen to separate the decision to allow arms sales to the Southeast Asian nation from shared concerns over Beijing's claims to contested waters.

"The decision to lift the ban was not based on China's but on our desire to complete what has been a lengthy process moving towards normalization with Vietnam," he said.

"At this stage, both sides have developed a level of trust and cooperation including our militaries," the US leader added.

The rollback of the arms embargo is highly symbolic of a shift in relations that has seen a surge in trade and cultural changes between the two countries that were locked in a bitter, bloody conflict just a generation ago.

In the afternoon, President Obama had bilateral meetings with Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong.

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