

CHUCK SEARCY remarks, Aug. 5, 2011

To Vice Chairman Chinh and other officials of the government of Quang Tri Province, and district and local officials . . .

To Mr. Don Tuan Phong, our good friend from PACCOM in Hanoi . . .

To our American friends and long-time supporters Christos Cotsakos, David Wells, and Sally Benson and Steve Nichols, and many others, such as Graeme Freeman and his mother Dorene of the Freeman Foundation, who could not be with us today . . .

To Gus Guthrie and Paul Eldred and other NPA colleagues who have supported Project RENEW with such professionalism and confidence . . .

To my good friend Hoang Nam who helped to bring this project from just an idea, a challenge that started back in 2000, to a functional and successful model that Project RENEW represents today . . .

And to the whole staff of Project RENEW, whose dedication and hard work have brought tremendous benefits to the people of Quang Tri Province, in greater safety for their children and families today, and in more hope and opportunity for the future . . .

Today, on this 10th anniversary of Project RENEW, we can all be proud.

But we must use this 10-year history of achievement not just for looking back, but as a foundation for the future. There is still much work to be done. We still cannot say with confidence that Quang Tri is safe. It is *safer* – yes, much safer than 10 years ago. But we must keep working, along with friends and colleagues in the government, other NGOs, and donors – including the U.S. government, which continues to fund the work of Project RENEW – until we can state with confidence that never again will any child or adult be killed or injured by an accidental explosion from wartime ordnance.

Today, let us pledge anew that we will seek to achieve that goal, and we will work with people like Huynh and Dang and Ms. Me and others who have suffered such pain and loss, to make sure that the future is brighter, and safer, for the next generations of Vietnamese children and families.

Now I would like to read a letter of greeting from one of our project partners, Mr. Ralph Cwerman, President of the Humpty Dumpty Institute in New York:

August 2, 2011

Dear RENEW Team partners,

On behalf of the Directors and staff of the Humpty Dumpty Institute, please accept my hearty congratulations on the celebration of your Ten Year anniversary. I am sorry I could not be there with you on this joyous occasion, but I wanted all of you to know that we are thinking of you. We are also very proud to have become your new partners as you continue the important mission that you embarked upon ten years ago.

Project RENEW has come a long way in a decade and is now poised for even greater growth and expansion. The people of Quang Tri are safer because of your diligent work in removing UXO, assisting those who have been injured by UXO, and educating residents about the dangers of UXO.

RENEW is well known throughout Vietnam for its comprehensive approach to mine action and with the opening of the new Visitor's Center, your reputation and fame as an effective organization will spread even further.

All of us are looking forward to a productive partnership for years to come.

Ralph L. Cwerman, President

Let me conclude by thanking you all for being here today, thanking you all for what you have done. Let us move forward with confidence and commitment to a future of safety and opportunity for the people of Quang Tr Province, in partnership with Project RENEW.