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Press Release

Call for Freedom, Democracy, and Respect for Human Rights in Vietnam:
 Demonstration on the Occasion of the Visit to Canada
 by Communist Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai:
 12 noon to 2 p.m., Monday June 27, on Parliament Hill

The Vietnamese community in Canada will stage a demonstration on Parliament Hill Monday June 27 (12 noon to 2 p.m.), on the occasion of the visit to Canada by Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Vietnam, to call public attention to some serious issues concerning Vietnam:

1. The obstacle to democratic reform in Vietnam due to the monopoly of power vested in the Communist Party of Vietnam by the Vietnamese constitution;
2. Lack of freedom of expression;
3. Harassment and imprisonment of religious leaders and political dissidents;
4. Lack of transparency in the application of the laws; and
5. Unfair treatment of people in South Vietnam on the part of the Vietnamese government and its refusal to commit to an unconditional reconciliation with all its citizens, regardless of their past and present political orientation.

These issues were highlighted in an open letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin, endorsed by several organizations within the community¹, and published in the Ottawa Citizen on June 23.

¹ Vietnamese Canadian Federation, World Vietnamese Buddhist Order, Alliance for Democracy in Vietnam, Vietnamese Human Rights Association of Ontario, Democracy for Vietnam – Montreal Center, Viet Democracy Network, Vietnam Reform Party, Canadian Federation of Vietnamese Veterans, International Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam (Canada)

This letter calls upon the Prime Minister to use Mr. Khai's visit to demand the freeing of Vietnamese religious leaders and political dissidents who are either imprisoned or under house arrest, and to press Vietnam for promoting freedom, democracy, and respect of human rights. The Prime Minister was also asked to urge Vietnam to proclaim a policy of national reconciliation so that all Vietnamese - both inside the country and overseas - can contribute to its reconstruction and development.

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For immediate release

June 24, 2005

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