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**PRESS RELEASE**

**June 21, 2006: Democracy and Freedom for Vietnam Day on Parliament Hill**

A press conference has recently been organized by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, in collaboration with some federal Members of Parliament and other Vietnamese organizations, to provide background information on a petition submitted by the Vietnamese community in Canada to Parliament in support of *Manifesto 2006*, a historic call for democracy and freedom in Vietnam.

Held on Wednesday afternoon, June 21, 2006, at the Charles Lynch Press Room in the Centre Block, Parliament, it was attended by Mr. Rob Anders (Conservative, Calgary West, Alberta), Mr. Alan Tonks (Liberal, York South – Weston, Ontario, on behalf of Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough – Rouge River, Ontario)), Mr. Paul Dewar (NDP, Ottawa Centre, Ontario), Dr. Can D. Le (Vietnamese Canadian Federation), Mr. Giao H. Pham (Canada Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam), Mr. Hai T. Ngo (International Committee for a Free Vietnam), and Dr. Tri M. Truong (Democracy for Vietnam - Montreal Centre). The Parliamentary Television Networks (OASIS) carried live coverage of this event.

On the same day, the above mentioned petition was presented to the House of Commons by Messrs. Anders and Dewar, as did Mr. Lee the following day, June 22. Ms. Meili Faille (Bloc Québécois, Vaudreuil – Soulanges, Québec) plans to present the petition after Parliament resumes sitting in the fall.

Following are the comments made by Messrs. Anders, Dewar, and Lee in presenting the petition.

Mr. Anders: “Mr. Speaker, I am standing on behalf of people who have presented a manifesto on freedom and democracy in Vietnam on April 8, 2006. Some 118 democracy activists in that country signed a petition.

They are basically asking that Vietnam go from a monolithic one-party non-competitive system where the Vietnamese Communist Party has its absolute power enshrined in article 4 of the Vietnamese constitution to a pluralistic multi-party system with healthy competition.

These are people asking for freedom of information and opinion; the freedom to assemble, form associations, political parties, vote and stand for election; the freedom to participate in independent labour unions; and the freedom of religion.”

Mr. Dewar: “... (The petitioners) are calling on our government to recognize those brave Vietnamese who stood up for freedom and democracy in Vietnam. They ask for the same rights that we are able to have and freedom of expression to join a labour union, freedom of association and religion.”

Mr. Lee: “... The petitioners bring the attention of the House to a document called *Manifesto 2006* which, among other things, describes circumstances in Vietnam with respect

to freedom of information, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion. They urge that Vietnam move toward adoption of these fundamental rights. They ask the House to call upon the government of Vietnam to give its utmost consideration to this document.”

In an effort to publicize *Manifesto 2006* in Canada and to offer moral support to those who are struggling for democracy and freedom in Vietnam, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation plans to provide a testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs in the fall. Subsequently, the Federation will ask the Committee to present a motion to the House of Commons in support of *Manifesto 2006* towards the end of this year.

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For immediate delivery: June 29, 2006