

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Greig Craft - Road Safety Ambassador Receives Vietnam's Friendship Medal**

Hanoi, 27 July 2011 - Mr. Greig Craft, President of the AIP Foundation, was awarded Vietnam's highest civilian honor - the Friendship Medal - for his philanthropic work and contributions to improving road safety in Vietnam. Authorized by the President of Vietnam, the medal was given by Minister of Transportation Ho Nghia Dung at a ceremony in Hanoi. Craft was also awarded the Ministry of Transportation medal for his contributions and a Certificate of Merit.

“Established in June 1960 the Friendship Medal is Vietnam’s highest award given to foreigners. It is presented to those who have aided Vietnam in defending or building our country” said Minister Ho Nghia Dung. He thanked Greig Craft “for your outstanding contributions to road safety initiatives in Vietnam”. He added, “Your innovations in the development and design of a tropical motorbike helmet have already saved many lives”.

Greig Craft retired from business in 1999 to devote his life to public service. Appalled by the unprecedented death and injury of young people from the rapid increase in motorbike use in Vietnam, with 35 people dying daily on the roads, he was determined to stop the slaughter.

His innovative mission was built around a basic safety device – the helmet – as a catalyst to save lives and improve road safety. Craft launched the *Helmets for Kids* campaign in 2000 with US President Bill Clinton during his historic visit to Vietnam. *Helmets for Kids* has since donated 500,000 motorbike helmets to Vietnamese children throughout the country. According to government officials, Craft’s efforts greatly accelerated the implementation of Vietnam’s national mandatory helmet law in December 2007, resulting in a 12.5% reduction in deaths and a 24% decrease in injuries in 2008.

From 2000, Craft assisted the government to develop appropriate helmet standards for tropical climates, provided technical assistance to traffic police, introduced a road safety education curriculum into primary schools, and produced award winning public awareness campaigns. He also built the world’s first non-profit helmet factory in 2002 to produce high quality and affordable helmets in Vietnam.

Protec, the helmet manufacturing company, has also been a leader in championing the rights of the physically disabled in Vietnam, including modifying assembly lines and work areas and offering them a fully functioning and productive life. 30% of Protec’s workforce is physically disabled.

The success of Greig Craft's traffic safety programming has become a blue print for the developing world, and has resulted in the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative. Craft launched the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative at the first United Nations Ministerial Meeting for Road Safety in November 2009 in Moscow, and is now replicating Vietnam's success in other developing nations.

"Since the beginning of this year, government delegations from Uganda, Tanzania, Senegal and Nicaragua have visited Vietnam to study our model," says Craft. "This is a testament to the possibilities available to affect massive change throughout the world and tackle this 'hidden epidemic'. 1.3 million deaths and 50 million injuries per year is unacceptable. Through the Helmet Vaccine Initiative, I hope millions of young people at risk will protect their lives and brains by the simple act of wearing a helmet as a daily 'vaccine'."

His initiatives have resulted in two Prince Michael International Road Safety Award; a commendation from US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the first Road Safety Award from FIM (International Federation of Motorcyclists).

In addition to his road safety activities, Craft is known for his work with infants and children who have suffered traumatic loss of genitals and malformation, beginning with his famous godson Thien Nhan, who was abandoned at birth and mauled by animals. He is now arranging surgery for 60 other young children similarly afflicted. He intends to provide corrective surgery for all, starting in November in collaboration with the Hanoi Medical University Hospital, Surgeon Dr. Roberto DeCastro of Italy, and Dr. Dinh Tue, a Vietnamese-American surgeon from Houston, Texas.

---

## **BACKGROUND**

A resident of Vietnam since 1989, Greig Craft has carried out humanitarian and philanthropic projects since the early 1990's while waiting for the US trade embargo against Vietnam to lift. In 1991, former Vice President and Ho Chi Minh colleague General Dam Quang Trung honored him for donating large shipments of rice, pharmaceuticals for children, and medical equipment to Cao Bang Province.

Craft was an active proponent of the normalization of relations between the US and Vietnam during 1990 - 1992 and carried out his own "civilian" diplomacy, shuttling between Hanoi and Washington to "communicate a balanced, neutral and honest perspective from both sides. The distrust between the two sides was so deep and complicated because of the POW/MIA issue," Craft says, but he believes his efforts helped build the foundation for a strong relationship that began with official normalization.

The Council of Ministers in 1992 authorized Craft to organize a delegation to the US, led by Dr. Ho Si Thoang, President of the Vietnam National Academy of Sciences and the Chairman of PetroVietnam. The mission included visits to New York, to meet economist Milton Friedman, and to Washington D.C. Craft arranged meetings with members of the National Security Council, Senators John McCain and John Kerry, and Dr. Henry Kissinger. Meetings with heads of oil and telecommunications companies in Texas helped spark commercial interest in the new 'Asian Tiger.'

The embargo was eased 2 months later and Craft then evaluated oil exploration opportunities for his family company. He subsequently became a senior advisor to oil giants Occidental Petroleum and Dresser Industries. This was followed by appointments serving as senior advisor to Motorola and Ford Motor Company, which culminated in their successful establishment of Vietnam operations.

In 1996, Mr. Craft obtained the first US Trade Development Agency Grant after the lifting of the trade embargo for Vietnam Steel Corporation for a major iron ore project. He was a founder of the American Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam in 1993, and went on to serve as Vice Chairman of the Asia Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce (APCAC).

Today he manages the AIP Foundation and the Global Helmet Vaccine Initiative with partners FIA Foundation, the World Bank, the International Federation of Motorcyclists, and the CDC.

Visit [www.asiainjury.org](http://www.asiainjury.org) and [www.helmetvaccine.org](http://www.helmetvaccine.org)

For inquiries contact:

Ms. Mirjam Sidik  
Executive Director  
AIP Foundation  
18bis/21 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai  
District 1  
Ho Chi Minh City – Vietnam  
Tel: (84-8) 6299 1409  
Fax: (84-8) 6299 1408  
Email: [mirjam.sidik@aipf-vietnam.org](mailto:mirjam.sidik@aipf-vietnam.org)