



Ford Foundation records, Asia Programs, Regional Director, Office Files of Peter F. Geithner

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator:	Ford Foundation
Title:	Ford Foundation records, Asia Programs, Regional Director, Office Files of Peter F. Geithner
ID:	FA505
Date [inclusive]:	1990-1994
Physical Description:	0.8 Cubic Feet
Physical Description:	(2 document boxes)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	<p>The Asia Programs office originated in 1958 as the Office for South and Southeast Asia, a subdivision of the Overseas Development Program. After a Foundation reorganization in 1966, the Office for South and Southeast Asia became part of the International Division, and in 1968, was renamed Asia and the Pacific. In 1981, the Office for Asia and the Pacific became part of the Developing Countries Program. In 1989, the Asia Programs was constituted as a full program area. Peter F. Geithner joined the Ford Foundation in 1966 and became Assistant Representative of the India Office in 1968. He served as Representative of the Southeast Asia office and later Representative in China before being appointed Regional Director of the Asia Programs in 1990, a position he held until 1996. The Office Files of Peter F. Geithner span in date from 1990 to 1994, during the time he served as Regional Director of the Asia Programs. The bulk of the files consists of correspondence concerning the Ford Foundation's work in assisting the economic development of Vietnam. Other files document the Foundation's relations with the government of Vietnam, including the process of seeking and obtaining permission from the Vietnamese government to operate within its national borders. There are also files containing materials from the Aspen Institute Indochina Policy Project (1991-1992) and the Vietnam Reconstruction Conference in Arlington, Virginia (1992).</p>

Preferred Citation note

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <http://www.rockarch.org/research/citations.php>

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Organizational History

The Asia Programs office originated in 1958 as a division of the Overseas Development program then called the Overseas Development/South and Southeast Asia. In 1966, South and Southeast Asia office shifted to the International Division program area as part of a Foundation reorganization and, in 1968, the office was renamed Asia and the Pacific. In 1981, the office became part of the Developing Countries Program. The Asia Programs became a full program area in 1989.

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Biographical Note

Peter F. Geithner joined the Ford Foundation in 1966 and became Assistant Representative of the India Office in 1968. He subsequently served as Representative of the Southeast Asia office and later Representative in China before being appointed Regional Director of the Asia Programs in 1990, a position he held until 1996.

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Biographical / Historical

Segment One: International Activities of the Ford Foundation: An Overview

The Foundation's aspiration to become a national and international philanthropy for the advancement of human welfare was first formally expressed in the seminal 1949 report of the Gaither Study Committee, *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program* (RAC Library, call letters 361.7 GAI), which was commissioned by the Board of Trustees to chart the Foundation's future. Foundation Trustees launched Ford's international grantmaking activities in 1950 when they approved the committee's report and its embrace of peace, democracy, and freedom. Since then, the Foundation has tackled these goals using a variety of strategies and responding to changing contexts, from the Cold War to the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and beyond.

Toward the Foundation's aspirational goal, "the establishment of peace", its international activities have comprised a wide range of conceptual approaches and focus areas. These include international affairs, international studies, international understanding, arms control and disarmament, international law,

international economic concerns, and overseas development in nearly every region of the world. Three distinct periods emerge for the international grantmaking defined by external contextual changes and internal changes in Foundation leadership and structures: the expansion era of 1950-1965; the transition and restructuring years of 1966-1988; and the post-1989 shift away from Cold War dichotomies. During each of the distinct historical periods the consistent objectives were: 1) to ensure freedom and democracy in developed countries; 2) to foster education and international understanding in all countries; and 3) to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of less developed countries.

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Biographical / Historical

Segment 4. Period Summary - The Post-1989 Shift Away from Cold War Dichotomies

Franklin Thomas's presidency, lasting until his retirement in 1995, was defined by a commitment to connect the Foundation's US and international activities around a few key themes. These themes were addressed through grants that created private sector partnerships, enhanced support for local community groups, and enlarged initiatives to promote human rights, with special attention to women's rights. Throughout Thomas's tenure, Ford staff reinforced his special commitment to bolstering marginalized communities and broadening access to the law and educational opportunity. The Ford Foundation led the way in building the fields of international security studies, arms control, human rights, and governance. Moreover, in this period, Ford was innovative in drawing together the fields of international cooperation and human rights into one program.

Susan Berresford in her tenure as president from 1996-1997 continued and expanded the activities she helped initiate under Thomas. She and her colleagues increased support for the arts and established a variety of major international collaborative efforts implementing the concept of one foundation. Ford staff in this period drew on the Foundation's time-tested grantmaking strategies (supporting individuals and new institutions as needed), while concentrating on under-addressed issues and underserved populations. With Berresford's encouragement, Foundation staff explicitly took into account the new global context, increasing opportunities for inclusion of disadvantaged populations in all of their activities.

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Biographical / Historical

Segment 4. Period Sketch - The Post-1989 Shift Away from Cold War Dichotomies

Between 1989 and 1991, dramatic changes in the external international conditions created a significantly different context for Ford Foundation's international activities both in the United States and overseas. In

November, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. In February 1990, in South Africa, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. In December 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved. As a consequence, the Cold War was over, Western Europe no longer had a special strategic role in the Foundation, and program-related activities in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union multiplied. The Foundation not only continued the earlier efforts to fund leadership in the region; from 1990-1994, Ford also spent \$1 million on the training of newly-elected parliamentarians in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. By 1993, half of the funds for grantmaking related to the former Soviet bloc were going to in-country individuals and institutions.

In 1989, Thomas also instituted a major restructuring of the Foundation to fulfill his vision of "One Foundation." All programs were put into one division led by Vice President Susan Berresford. Carmichael joined the Institute of International Education to run a program on Soviet and Eastern European Affairs and then higher education in South Africa. All the Foundation grant programs - domestic and international - reported to Berresford: Africa and the Middle East (AME, formerly MEA), Asia (ASIA), Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC/OLAC), Human Rights and Governance (HRG), Education and Culture (EC), Program-Related Investments (PRI), and International Affairs (IA).

The change in South Africa opened up many new opportunities to work in partnership with a range of South Africa partners to promote and sustain the transition to democracy. The Foundation supported women's groups working on law, development and reproductive rights. It contributed, for example, to the groups working on the Women's Chatter in South Africa, resulting in the adoption in 1994 of the first constitution anywhere that specifically included sections on women's rights.

During the 1990s, the promising political changes in African countries and elsewhere provided a positive perspective to counteract the continuing economic constraints facing the Foundation and the rising debt in developing countries. Both to reinforce local democratic initiatives and to address its economic challenges, the Foundation's field offices across Africa and the developing world shifted their support toward the promotion of smaller scale community-based initiatives.

Thomas supported work on arts and culture, not as a goal in itself, but, instead, as a means for promoting social justice, education, and human rights, both in the United States and in developing countries. At the same time, while reducing support for cultural institutions in the United States, such institutions received support overseas to preserve and celebrate national and local cultural heritages. While in South Africa, for example, the Foundation provided support for Johannesburg anti-apartheid theatre groups, in West Africa it funded for nearly two decades a program to preserve and make accessible cultural heritage by expand the training of museum leaders and strengthening museum exhibit and outreach capabilities.

In the early 1990s, the Foundation through its India office helped establish an independent foundation to enhance sustainability in the arts community. Ford envisioned new opportunities for cultural institution to rely on local resources focus on new forms of creativity and encourage young artists, in particular. Similar to the Indian effort, the Ford office in Egypt in 1993 provided support for an arts-focused foundation.

When Susan Berresford became president in 1996, with a strong commitment to globalization as well as concern for the uncertainty it created, she reorganized the Foundation in to three large program themes that would inform grantmaking in the United States and developing countries: Assets with a focus on poverty, Peace and Social Justice on rights issues, and Education, Media, Arts and Culture to pull together related endeavors. She also created a separate communications program. Each program was led

by a vice president. Berresford strongly reinforced the institutional and grantmaking goal of affirmative action, an organizational goal that had been initiated in the Bundy era.

She maintained significant support, domestically and internationally for women's issues. She endorsed and encouraged the worldwide meetings staff members and grantees to continue to hold joint meetings in order to create a greater sense of partnership and shared purpose. The more promising international situation enabled the Ford Foundation in 1996 to open an office in Russia (Moscow) and in Vietnam (Hanoi). Berresford encouraged the development of local and regional peace and security programs in developing countries. A regional security, peace, and cooperation program in India, for instance, focused on the work of civil society groups as an increasingly prominent regional interest in South Asia.

In this period, the Foundation gave renewed the prominence of arts and culture in the US and maintained the commitment in developing countries. By 2000, funding levels for the Education, Media, Arts and Culture division were approaching parity with the other two, Assets and Peace and Justice.

Berresford also encouraged each of the programs to hold worldwide meeting to promote cross-program and cross-national collaboration in fields such as human rights, income generation, cultural preservation, and building capacity in the arts and arts management. One persistent question of such initiatives. Toward that end, and building on the earlier experiences in India and Egypt, Berresford worked closely with her senior vice president, Barry Gaberman and other staff to establish new foundations at the local and national levels, particularly in developing countries. Gaberman had been at the foundation since 1973, starting as assistant to the representative in Indonesia. After serving in a number of different positions, by 1984, under Thomas, he served as deputy vice president in the U.S. and International Affairs program. After the 1989, Thomas and Berresford appointed him deputy vice president. 1996, Berresford appointed him senior vice president.

As the twentieth century came to a close, the economic conditions of the 1970s and 1980s that had resulted in so much global debt, with special impact on the developing world, were slowly turning around. Many countries were experiencing economic growth and burgeoning democratic initiatives. Not only was the global economic situation improving but the Foundation's assets were also growing. Consequently, the Foundation was in a strong position to bring attention to long-standing issues holding back developing countries. The grants programs addressed the pressing need both for advanced training of young- to mid-career adults living in marginalized and disadvantaged conditions along the equally, and for strengthening and building sustainability of universities across sub-Saharan Africa, along with enhancing broadband access for improved internet communications, promoting women in higher education, and strengthening postgraduate education.

Reacting to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, the Foundation provided immediate relief to affected local institutions in the United States. The Foundation also helped launch support a fund at the Institute of International Education to support scholars at risk in countries in conflict and under terrorist threats, especially in, but not limited to, the Middle East.

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Scope and Content Note

The Office Files of Peter F. Geithner span from 1990-1994, the period of the time Mr. Geithner was Regional Director of the Asia Programs. The bulk of the files consist of correspondence regarding the Ford Foundation's work in Vietnam.

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Arrangement

The files are arranged into 2 series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Ford Foundation archive was deposited at RAC in 2011. Ford Foundation records, correspondence, reports, program files and officers papers were transferred to, and accessioned by, RAC beginning in 2011. Accessions continue as necessary.

Processing Information Note

The original volume of 2 cubic feet accessioned by the Foundation Archives in 2011 was reduced during processing to two Hollinger document boxes.

Duplicates, reference files about non-Foundation related or personal interests, applications for fellowships and CVs, and rejected and unsolicited grant requests were not retained.

Conditions Governing Use note

Completion of a use agreement is required prior to providing scholarly access. See RAC Head of Reference (or applicable designee) for details. Ford Foundation holds title, copyright and literary rights in the collection, in so far as it holds them. The Rockefeller Archive Center has authority to grant permission to cite and publish material from the collection for scholarly purposes. Permission to publish extensive excerpts, or material in its entirety, will be referred to the Ford Foundation.

Conditions Governing Access

Records more than 10 years old are open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

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Related Materials

Separated Materials

Appendix A: Reports – Unpublished reports written by Ford Foundation staff and consultants were removed from their original folders, scanned and transferred to the Archives' collection of staff and consultant reports. See Appendix A for a list of these reports and their specific assigned number. The reports are listed in alphabetical order by author. The assigned number may be used to access reports in the online catalog.

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Collection Inventory

Conferences, 1991-1992

Scope and Contents

The Conferences series contains two folders. The first holds notes, background reading, the official conference report, and participant list for the Aspen Institute Indochina Policy Project (1991-1992). The second file consists

of notes, agenda, background reading, and a speech by a Vietnamese official from the Vietnam Reconstruction Conference in Arlington, Virginia (1992).

Title/Description	Instances	
Aspen Institute Indochina Policy Project -- Correspondence, Notes, Participant List, Background, Sep 3, 1991-Aug 10, 1992	box 1	folder 1
Vietnam -- Reconstruction Conference, Arlington, VA -- Agenda, Notes, Background Papers, Speech, May 21-22, 1992	box 1	folder 2

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Correspondence, 1990-1994

Arrangement

Mr. Geithner's correspondence is organized by subject and arranged chronologically.

Scope and Contents

The files reflect a focus by the Foundation to assist in the economic development of Vietnam. The Foundation found it necessary to closely coordinate with and achieve the permission of the Vietnamese Government to operate within the borders of Vietnam. The file for the Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1991-1993) holds internal Foundation memoranda as well as correspondence with grant partners about gaining necessary permissions from the Vietnamese Ministry for Foundation grant recipients to travel to and from Vietnam. It also contains correspondence with the Vietnamese Embassy intended to help develop a closer relationship between the United States and Vietnam. Another example is the file on Vietnam's National Economics University (1991-1992), which contains letters, memoranda and a newspaper clipping about Foundation support for a National Economics University in Hanoi.

Title/Description	Instances	
Vietnam -- National Center for Social Sciences -- Correspondence, Background, Proposal, Oct 3, 1990-Jan 5, 1993	box 1	folder 3
University of California, Berkeley -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Mar 19, 1991-Nov 16, 1993	box 1	folder 4
Vietnam / Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID) -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Reports, Apr 4, 1991-Aug 10, 1992	box 1	folder 5
Law and Legal Reform, General -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Clippings, May 6, 1991-Jul 6, 1992	box 1	folder 6
Vietnam Central Institute for Economic Management -- Correspondence, Notes, Jul 20, 1991-Jan 19, 1993	box 1	folder 7
Vietnam -- Volunteers in Asia -- Correspondence, Notes, Jul 29, 1991-Mar 31, 1992	box 1	folder 8
Vietnam -- Ministry of Foreign Affairs -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Aug 5, 1991-May 21, 1993	box 1	folder 9
Vietnam -- People's Aid Coordination Committee (PACCOM): Correspondence, Memoranda, Aug 5-6, 1991	box 1	folder 10

General Communications 1991 -- Travel, Government, Project LINK, Aug 7-Oct 16, 1991	box 1	folder 11
Vietnam Upland Management -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Background, Aug 8, 1991-Jun 7, 1992	box 2	folder 1
Economic Institute -- Correspondence, Program Discussions, Notes, Sep 24, 1991-Oct 19, 1992	box 2	folder 2
Vietnam -- National Economics University -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Clippings, Oct 11, 1991-Nov 4, 1993	box 2	folder 3
Vietnam -- Indochina Project -- Correspondence, Background, Notes, Nov 5, 1991-Mar 1, 1995	box 2	folder 4
Vietnam -- National Academy of Sciences -- Correspondence, Nov 22, 1991-Oct 13, 1992	box 2	folder 5
Vietnam -- London School of Economics -- Correspondence, Nov 25, 1991-Apr 29, 1992	box 2	folder 6
Vietnam -- Institute of Economic Research -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Notes, Clippings, Dec 2, 1991-Apr 9, 1994	box 2	folder 7
Australian National University -- Correspondence, Notes, Jan 10-Apr 10, 1992	box 2	folder 8
Vietnam -- The Asia Foundation -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Feb 14, 1992-Dec 8, 1993	box 2	folder 9
Vietnam -- Center for National Resources Management and Environmental Studies at Hanoi University: Correspondence, Memoranda, Mar 23-May 28, 1992	box 2	folder 10
Vietnam -- American Council of Learned Societies - Correspondence, Aug 3, 1992-Aug 2, 1993	box 2	folder 11
Vietnam -- National Endowment for Democracy -- Memoranda on Department of NED Representative, Nov 23, 1993	box 2	folder 12
Vietnam -- Ministry of the Interior -- Memoranda, Apr 25, 1994	box 2	folder 13

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