



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

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Rockefeller Archive Center

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rockefeller Archive Center
<b>Creator - aut:</b>	Geithner, Peter F.
<b>Creator:</b>	Ford Foundation
<b>Title:</b>	Ford Foundation records, Asia Programs, Regional Director, Office Files of Peter F. Geithner
<b>ID:</b>	FA505
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1990-1994
<b>Physical Description:</b>	0.76 Cubic Feet 2 letter document boxes.
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Abstract:</b>	<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

Information regarding the Rockefeller Archive Center's preferred elements and forms of citation can be found at <https://rockarch.org/collections/access-and-request-materials/#citations>

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## Organizational History

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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

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Peter Franz Geithner (1932-2016) worked in the field of international philanthropy for more than 40 years. Between 1968 and 1996, he provided leadership for the Ford Foundation's program activities in Asia, becoming Ford's Regional Director of Asia Programs in 1990. After serving at Ford for almost three decades, he retired from the foundation in 1996, but remained active in philanthropic organizations and research institutions for many years after that through advisory positions, consultancy appointments, and memberships on various boards and committees. Geithner was married to Deborah Moore, and together, they had four children: Timothy, Sarah, Jonathan, and David.

Raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Geithner attended Northeast High School. He graduated in 1950 and then pursued his undergraduate education at Dartmouth College. Between 1954 and 1958, he served in the U.S. Navy as a naval aviator, and he earned his master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in 1959. Prior to his work at the Ford Foundation, Geithner had jobs at Columbia Carbon International in New York City between 1959 and 1962 and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Washington D.C. between 1962 and 1968.

Geithner began his career at Ford in 1968 as Assistant/Deputy Director for India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The Geithner family moved to New Delhi, India in order for him to take up the post. He held this position until 1973 when he and his family relocated to New York where he became Deputy Head, Office of Asia and Pacific. In 1976, he returned to Asia in order to serve as Ford's Representative for Southeast Asia at the Bangkok, Thailand Office. This position preceded a move back to New York in 1981 when he worked as Program Officer in Charge, Developing Countries Program. He became Ford's first representative for China in 1988 and was stationed at the foundation's new Beijing Office. He finished his career at Ford in New York as Regional Director of Asia Programs.

Following his retirement from the Ford Foundation in 1996, Geithner became Advisor to the Asia Center at Harvard University. He also worked as an advisor for the Japan Center for Global Partnership (CGP) and had a succession of consulting appointments with the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC), Ford, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), and the China Medical Board (CMB). In addition, he served on boards and committees for organizations like the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations (NCUSCR), the Institute of Current World Affairs (ICWA), the University of Pennsylvania Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI), and the Harvard-Yenching Institute (HYI).

Geithner continued to focus on philanthropy and research related to Asia in his post-Ford career. However, he also participated in some philanthropic work related to Africa such as when he assisted the Rockefeller Foundation's Nairobi, Kenya Office.

Geithner's work in philanthropy, international relations, and development intersected with and influenced many important historical events and movements affecting the Asia-Pacific Region such as the strengthening of diplomatic ties between the United States and countries like China and Vietnam, the international response to China following the June Fourth Incident at Tiananmen Square, China's economic development and growing place in world politics, the transfer of Hong Kong back to China, the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, and the impact of terrorism and the War on Terror on philanthropy and international cooperation.

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## Scope and Contents

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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

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The files are arranged into 2 series.

Collection arrangement is as follows:

Series I. Conferences, 1991-1992

Series II. Correspondence, 1990-1994

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

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

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 Access

Open for research. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC.

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## Related Materials

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### 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, 1991 September 3-1992 August 10	box 1	folder 1
Vietnam -- Reconstruction Conference, Arlington, VA -- Agenda, Notes, Background Papers, Speech, 1992 May 21-22	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, 1990 October 3-1993 January 5	box 1	folder 3

University of California, Berkeley -- Correspondence, Memoranda, 1991 March 19-1993 November 16	box 1	folder 4
Vietnam / Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID) -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Reports, 1991 April 4-1992 August 10	box 1	folder 5
Law and Legal Reform, General -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Clippings, 1991 May 6-1992 July 6	box 1	folder 6
Vietnam Central Institute for Economic Management -- Correspondence, Notes, 1991 July 20-1993 January 19	box 1	folder 7
Vietnam -- Volunteers in Asia -- Correspondence, Notes, 1991 July 29-1992 March 31	box 1	folder 8
Vietnam -- Ministry of Foreign Affairs -- Correspondence, Memoranda, 1991 August 5-1993 May 21	box 1	folder 9
Vietnam -- People's Aid Coordination Committee (PACCOM): Correspondence, Memoranda, 1991 August 5-6	box 1	folder 10
General Communications 1991 -- Travel, Government, Project LINK, 1991 August 7-October 16	box 1	folder 11
Vietnam Upland Management -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Background, 1991 August 8-1992 June 7	box 2	folder 1
Economic Institute -- Correspondence, Program Discussions, Notes, 1991 September 24-1992 October 19	box 2	folder 2
Vietnam -- National Economics University -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Clippings, 1991 October 11-1993 November 4	box 2	folder 3
Vietnam -- Indochina Project -- Correspondence, Background, Notes, 1991 November 5-1995 March 1	box 2	folder 4
Vietnam -- National Academy of Sciences -- Correspondence, 1991 November 22-1992 October 13	box 2	folder 5
Vietnam -- London School of Economics -- Correspondence, 1991 November 25-1992 April 29	box 2	folder 6
Vietnam -- Institute of Economic Research -- Correspondence, Memoranda, Notes, Clippings, 1991 December 2-1994 April 9	box 2	folder 7
Australian National University -- Correspondence, Notes, 1992 January 10-April 10	box 2	folder 8
Vietnam -- The Asia Foundation -- Correspondence, Memoranda, 1992 February 14-1993 December 8	box 2	folder 9
Vietnam -- Center for National Resources Management and Environmental Studies at Hanoi University: Correspondence, Memoranda, 1992 March 23-May 28	box 2	folder 10
Vietnam -- American Council of Learned Societies - Correspondence, 1992 August 3-1993 August 2	box 2	folder 11
Vietnam -- National Endowment for Democracy -- Memoranda on Department of NED Representative, 1993 November 23	box 2	folder 12



Vietnam -- Ministry of the Interior -- Memoranda, 1994 April 25

box 2

folder 13

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