Delegate Biographies

U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin Members
(Last Updated January 2012)

Seven Original Dialogue Group Members

Convener:

Susan V. Berresford became the Convener of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group in 2007. She served as Ford Foundation President from April 3, 1996 to January 4, 2008. She joined the Ford Foundation in 1970 and in 1980 was named Officer in Charge of the Foundation’s Women’s Programs. In 1989 she became Vice President of the Program Division in charge of the Foundation’s programming in the U.S. and overseas. Ms. Berresford serves on the Board of Directors of the Council on Foundations and is a board member and chair of United States Artists. She is an Advisory Board Member of the Trinidad Trust Fund (California) and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the European Foundation Centre’s Governing Council. She was a director of the Chase Manhattan Bank, the Center for Global Partnership and the Popper Foundation.

Delegates:

Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh was the founding Vietnamese co-chair of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin from 2007 to 2008. She then retired from her position as Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam and from the Dialogue Group and moved to Ho Chi Minh City to take up her current post of President, Founding Committee, Tri Viet University Project. In her position in the National Assembly she developed and enhanced Vietnam’s relations with the countries of North America (particularly, the United States) and Western Europe. She travels frequently to the United States and Europe and regularly interacts with senior government and business leaders both abroad and in Vietnam. She has also represented Vietnam in international conferences among world leaders to discuss issues with global implications. Prior to serving in the National Assembly Ambassador Ninh served, for over two decades, as a diplomat in Vietnam’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, specializing in multilateral institutions and global issues. As advisor to Vietnam’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, she was responsible for key international efforts on behalf of Vietnam, such as the holding of the Summit of French-Speaking Countries in 1997 in Hanoi. From 2000 to 2003, she was Vietnam’s Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and Head of Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Ambassador Ninh was educated at Sorbonne University and Cambridge.
University and started her career as an academic. Born into a traditional family of Central Viet Nam, she developed her political commitment to the National Liberation Front for South Viet Nam early on during her student days in Paris. Since then she has been consistently active in social issues, with a special interest on gender. She served a term on the Central Executive Committee of the Viet Nam Women's Union.

Bui The Giang was a founding member of the U.S. –Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2007 and served until 2008 when he was appointed Vietnam’s Deputy Ambassador at the United Nations in New York. He was formerly the Director-General of the People to People Relations Department of the External Relations Commission of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Commission, where Bui The Giang had served for nearly 30 years, is responsible for advising the Party’s Central Committee on all aspects of Vietnam’s foreign policy and relations. Bui The Giang graduated from the Foreign Language Teachers’ Training University in Hanoi with a bachelors degree in 1979 and three years later received a certificate in international relations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1988 he studied at the Canberra College of Advanced Education, where he received the Certificate in English. He was awarded a Certificate in Inflation Control and Macro-economic Management by the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank in 1991. In 1993-94 Bui The Giang studied in the U.S. at the Paul Nitze School of International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, from where he received the Masters in International Public Policy degree. Bui The Giang is a Vietnam War veteran.

Professor Vo Quy was a founding member of the U.S. –Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2007 and is a professor at Vietnam National University-Hanoi. He received his PhD in Biology from the State University of Moscow in 1966. Before becoming lecturer and then professor at Hanoi University in 1956 he worked as a secondary school teacher of biology, first in his home village and then elsewhere in his home province. He was Dean of the Faculty of Biology at Vietnam National University, Hanoi, from 1980 to 1990 and founded and was the first director of the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at the same university, 1985-1995. Professor Quy initiated research on the effects of the war on the environment. During the war (in 1971 and then in 1974) he led the first team of environmental scientists to go south of the 17th parallel to investigate the environmental damage caused by U.S. Army’s herbicides (Agent Orange/Dioxin) program. Through these risky travels he came to realize the effort that lay ahead to repair Vietnam’s environment. In 1981 he established the first national research program on ‘Rational utilization of natural resources and Environmental Conservation” in Vietnam. As a co-founder and leader of this program through 1990, he played a key role in initiating new environmental policies to ensure sustainable development during the rapid economic growth of Vietnam. He was the editor and co-author of the first draft of the National Conservation Strategy for Vietnam (1985) and designed the first draft of the Environment Law for Vietnam (1989). Other fields of his research are biodiversity and endangered species, establishment and management of protected areas, rural societies in relation to the use of biological resources and forests and the natural resources needs of poor people. In recognition of his contribution to education and research, Vietnamese Government/authorities have awarded him 14 Medals and Orders. He was also selected as a recipient of a number of international honors, including the WWF Gold Medal (1988); the Global-500 Award from UNEP (1992); the highest Award of IUCN, The John Phillips Medal (1994); The Bruno-
Shubert Award, I Category of Germany (1994); The PEW Scholars Award of University of Michigan, USA (1995); the Golden Ark Order of the Netherlands (1997); the Blue Planet Prize of Japan (2003); in recognition of his lifetime dedication to the conservation of nature and natural resources, his pioneering work on a National Conservation Strategy for Vietnam, his strong support for activities in the field of biodiversity, species survival and protected areas, his distinguished Service in International Conservation, and his teaching and other educational work of some 50 years.

Walter Isaacson is the American co-chair and a founding member of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin and President and CEO of the Aspen Institute. Prior to moving to Aspen he was Chairman and CEO of Cable News Network (CNN) and Managing Editor of Time Magazine. He began his career at the Sunday Times of London and then worked for the Times-Picayune/States-Item of New Orleans. He joined Time magazine in 1978 and served as political correspondent, national editor and editor of new media before becoming the magazine’s 14th managing editor in 1996. He is the author of Einstein: His Life and Universe (2007); Benjamin Franklin: An American Life (2003); and Kissinger: A Biography (1992). He is the co-author of The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made (1986). Born in New Orleans, Mr. Isaacson was appointed after Hurricane Katrina to be the vice-chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Board. He is on the Board of Directors of United Airlines, Reader’s Digest, Tulane University and the National Constitution Center, and he is chairman of the board of Teach for America.

William Mayer was a founding member of the U.S. –Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2007. He is President and CEO of Park Avenue Equity Partners, which he founded in 1999. Prior to that he was a founding Partner of Development Capital, which invested in private and public companies. Mr. Mayer worked for The First Boston Corporation (now Credit Suisse), a major investment bank, for twenty-three years. During his career at First Boston, he held numerous management positions, including President and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Mayer is a former professor and Dean of the College of Business and Management of the University of Maryland and Dean of the Simon Graduate School of Business at the University of Rochester. During his tenure at the University of Maryland, Mr. Mayer organized and led an effort that significantly improved the school’s programs and made it one of the top twenty-five ranked business schools in the country. Mr. Mayer was Chairman of the Aspen Institute from 2000 to 2006. He is on the boards of Lee Enterprises and Reader’s Digest, and is a Trustee of the Columbia Group of Mutual Funds. Mr. Mayer is a Vietnam veteran, where he served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

Christine Todd Whitman was a founding member of the U.S.–Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2007. She served in the Cabinet of President George W. Bush as Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency from 2001 to 2003. Prior to that she served as Governor of New Jersey, the first woman elected to that position in state history. Governor Whitman is now President of the Whitman Strategy Group, a consulting firm that serves both government and business clients on environmental and other policy issues. She is co-chair of the National Smart Growth Council and a public member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Governor Whitman serves on the Board of Directors of the Council on Foreign Relations and co-chaired its task force on developing a U.S.
strategic approach to Africa. She is also a member of the governors board of the nonprofit Oquirrh Institute, which seeks innovative solutions in environmental management and other critical policy areas. Governor Whitman serves on the corporate boards of Texas Instruments and United Technology. Governor Whitman is the author of *The New York Times* bestseller *It's My Party Too*. She founded and heads a political action committee of the same name that supports moderate Republican candidates. She was educated at Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

Membership changed over time. In June 2007 it was decided to expand from convener plus three Americans and three Vietnamese to convener plus five Americans and five Vietnamese. There was some attrition among the three original Vietnamese, with Madame Ninh retiring and Bui The Giang becoming ambassador to the UN. The following members were added.

**Ambassador Ngo Quang Xuan** succeeded Madame Ton Nu Thi Ninh (see below) in 2009 as Vietnamese co-chair of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin. He is currently Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam and Secretary-General of *La Francophonie*, the alliance of countries with a connection to French language and culture. Ambassador Xuan was born in Nghe An province about 200 miles south of Hanoi and after finishing university joined Vietnam’s diplomatic service. He was Vietnam’s ambassador to the United Nations in New York from 1992 to 1999 and worked closely with Madeleine Albright, then U.S. ambassador to the UN, on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1995. Returning to Hanoi, he headed the newly-formed Department of Multi-lateral Economic Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2002 he was appointed Vietnamese ambassador to the World Trade Organization in Geneva, where he led the negotiations which resulted in Vietnam’s entry to WTO in 2006.

**Do Hoang Long** succeeded Bui The Giang (see below) as a member of the U.S.–Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2009. He is the Director-General of the People to People Relations Department of the External Relations Commission of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The Commission is responsible for advising the Party’s Central Committee on all aspects of Vietnam’s foreign policy and relations.

**Dr. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Phuong** became a member of the U.S.–Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2008. She has been the Director of Tu Du Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City and chairperson of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department. She is Chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the Medical University of Ho Chi Minh City and Director General of Ngoc Tam Hospital Corporation there. Dr. Phuong has researched and published extensively on the health impacts of Agent Orange on the people of Vietnam including the impact of toxic chemicals on reproductive outcomes and dioxin induced risk to pregnancies. Dr. Phuong has coauthored articles with American scientists on Agent Orange and the risk of gestational trophoblastic disease in Vietnam and chlorinated dioxins and dibenzofurans in human tissues from general populations. As Director of Tu Du Hospital, Dr. Phuong established a “pregnant care network” to promote appropriate and quality births for women in remote areas of Vietnam.
She established a training program for rural midwives from various ethnic minorities living in Vietnam’s mountainous regions to educate people about reproductive health issues.

**Lt. General (Rtd) Phung Khac Dang** joined the U.S.–Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2008 and is Vice President, Veterans Association of Vietnam. He was born in Ha Tай province in the Red River delta west of Hanoi and in 1965 joined the Peoples Army of Vietnam as a platoon commander. He was successively promoted from political officer in his company to the battalion and regiment levels. He then became deputy chief and then vice director of the political department at the Peoples Army Military Academy and then vice commander of a military region. General Dang completed his military career as the Deputy Chief, General Political Department, Ministry of Defense.

**Vaughan Turekian** became a member of the U.S.–Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2008 and is the Chief International Officer for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). At the Academy he leads, develops and coordinates the broad range of AAAS's international activities. Prior to this position, Dr. Turekian served as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, where and was her lead advisor on international science, technology, environment and health issues, including, clean energy, sustainable development, climate change, scientific outreach and avian influenza. He is the two time recipient of the Department’s Superior Honor Award for his work on climate change and avian influenza. Prior to his time at the State Department, Dr. Turekian worked at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). In 2001, he was the Study Director for the White House requested NAS report on climate change science. He has published a numerous articles on the linkages between science and international policy. Dr. Turekian received his masters and doctorate in atmospheric geochemistry from the University of Virginia, where he focused on applying stable isotopic tracers to characterize aerosol sources and chemistry in the marine boundary layer and was awarded the Maury Prize as the Outstanding Student in Environmental Sciences. He is a graduate of Yale University with degrees in Geology and Geophysics and International Studies.

**Mary E. Dolan-Hogrefe** became a member of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin in 2008. She joined the National Organization on Disability (NOD) in 1995 and serves as Vice President and Senior Advisor of NOD and Director of NOD’s international arm – the World Committee on Disability. Mary, a member of the senior management team, overseas the international program, development operations, personnel recruitment, and advises on organizational management and strategic planning. She is the author of ten NOD annual reports and since 1995 has been in charge of NOD’s highly regarded survey research program executed by the Harris Poll. She is the organization’s lead representative on Capitol Hill and at the United Nations. As Director of the World Committee, Mary has managed and administered all nine of the Franklin D. Roosevelt International Disability Award presentations to heads of state at the United Nations.

**Resource Person**

**Dr. Le Ke Son** is the Deputy Director-General, Vietnam Environmental Administration. He also directs the Office of Committee 33, the Inter-ministerial committee of the Government of
Vietnam which is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and supporting research and field activities to rectify the consequences of herbicides/dioxin in Vietnam. Dr. Son received his undergraduate degree from the University of Military Medicine in Vietnam in 1978 and a graduate degree from the same institution in 1980. From 1986 to 1990 he studied in the German Democratic Republic, where he received his PhD with dissertation research on the effects of plant protection chemicals on human health. On return to Vietnam he taught toxicology at the University of Military Medicine. In 2001 he became director of the Vietnam Red Cross Support Fund for Agent Orange Victims and moved to his present position in 2004. He has participated in numerous scientific conferences on dioxin, both in Vietnam and in other countries.