The U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group: Make Agent Orange History
Track Two diplomacy and the case of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group

Meeting Simulation Instructions

This exercise is a simulation of the first meeting of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group. The simulation will blend role-play with open discussion about citizen-to-citizen dialogue. Students will be assigned to one of the members of the Dialogue Group listed in the biographies. It may be necessary to assign two students to one delegate, in which case students can work together as a team. Links to information about the process of convening this group, meeting minutes and reports, and the conditions in Vietnam related to Agent Orange/Dioxin that prompted the need for the Track Two talks, are provided in the syllabus bibliography. Most of the information is included in the course reader if one is offered for your module. Sources are in print, audio, and video formats.

Students are expected to review the information and prepare to represent the point of view of the delegate to whom they have been assigned as they engage in a simulated dialogue session recreating the first meeting of the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group. Encourage students to look critically, through the lens of their delegate, at Ford Foundation's design process for convening the group. Encourage them to see their own interest related to the legacy of Agent Orange within the larger context of the group. Discussion should address:

- who was selected for the Dialogue Group and why (consider why you were selected);
- what considerations might have been given to the selection process;
- what considerations must be given to the “first” meeting; and
- who gets to talk first and why details like that are important.

Charles Bailey, Director of the Special Initiative on Agent Orange, Ford Foundation, was challenged in 2006 to develop a Track Two process for the first genuinely two-way exchange on Agent Orange between eminent Americans and eminent Vietnamese. Bailey helped launch the first meeting in early 2007 of what became the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange Dioxin. Encourage students to consider the items listed above, and other critical elements of its first meeting such as engaging the group in building trust, framing issues, and developing convening "procedures" or "group conditions" that they could all agree to in order to begin to address the issues. It will be invigorating and an exercise in critical thinking about Track Two diplomacy and the legacy of Agent Orange/Dioxin in Vietnam.

About Charles Bailey, Director, Aspen Institute Agent Orange in Vietnam Program

Charles Bailey has worked on solving the lingering problems related to dioxin contamination in Vietnam for over a decade, first during his time as the Ford Foundation Representative in Hanoi.
(1997-2007) then in New York as Director of the Foundation’s Special Initiative on Agent Orange/Dioxin (2007-2011).

Bailey is one of the foundation’s most experienced grant makers. Over three decades he worked in Asia, Africa and the United States, beginning with assignments in New Delhi, Cairo and Khartoum. Thereafter he served in Dhaka as the foundation’s representative for Bangladesh and in Nairobi as representative for Eastern and Southern Africa before moving to Vietnam.

The Ford Foundation work on Agent Orange emphasized collaborative solutions to the persistent and highly toxic legacy of dioxin from the Vietnam War. The contaminant can shorten the life of humans exposed to it and degrade the health of future generations. It remains a problem for thousands of American veterans and millions of Vietnamese. The foundation served as a neutral party working with both sides—the government of Vietnam and the government of the United States—along with a bi-national eminent persons group, the U.S.-Vietnam Dialogue Group on Agent Orange/Dioxin. The foundation’s grant making confidence-building measures, demonstration projects on health care and dioxin clean-up in Vietnam and public education and action in the United States. These efforts attracted additional support from governments, foundations, NGOs and private citizens which all together totaled $72 million as of July 2011.

On May 1, 2011 Bailey became Director of the Aspen Institute Agent Orange in Vietnam Program. The Aspen program focuses on the unique humanitarian and strategic opportunity created by the earlier work to achieve the fullest possible resolution of the Agent Orange legacy in Vietnam.

Bailey has a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Cornell University and a master’s degree in public policy from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. He received a bachelor’s degree from Swarthmore College and then joined the Peace Corps in Nepal where he taught high school.