

**U.S. VIETNAM**  
**TRADE COUNCIL**

## **BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES**

The Council was founded in 1989 to serve as a focal point for American private sector leadership efforts aimed at developing and strengthening economic ties between the U.S. and Vietnam. The Council has four primary objectives:

- ★ To be the business community's most reliable source of information on U.S.- Vietnam trade and on the developing bilateral relationship.
- ★ To assist in developing a consensus on far-sighted public policies that will encourage and expand bilateral relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.
- ★ To help American companies establish relationships with Vietnamese government and commercial enterprises responsible for trade and investment activities.
- ★ To monitor and assess Vietnam government policies which guide their economic relations with the global community in general, and the U.S. in particular.

## **KEY ISSUES**

The Council's core agenda is built around three interdependent issues: the process leading to full normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations; the framework of policy essential to building a new economic partnership between the two nations; and the establishment of direct links between U.S. companies and Vietnamese commercial entities that result in increased bilateral trade and investment transactions.

## **PROGRAMS & PROJECTS**

The work of the Council is concentrated on five principal areas of activity: 1) sponsoring and convening policy forums; 2) assessing issues and providing up-to-date information; 3) engaging in government relations; 4) facilitating U.S. business access in Vietnam; and 5) arranging or conducting programs of exchange and outreach in Vietnam, the United States, and the region.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

More than 60 leading U.S. corporations and prominent professional firms representing a cross-section of America's industrial and service sectors are members of the Council. In addition, affiliate membership in the Council is open to non-profit organizations, including educational institutions, think tanks and economic development agencies by invitation.

## **GOVERNANCE & STAFF**

The Council is chaired by the Hon. William H. Sullivan, former U.S. Ambassador to Laos, the Philippines and Iran. The Council's Vice Chairman is Belvin Friedson, chairman of the Windmere Corporation. In Washington, DC, the Council's staff is directed by its President, Virginia B. Foote. The Council also has an office in New York City with its Vice President and Counsel Frances Zwenig. The Vietnam Representative for the Council is Jefferson Edwards who is based in Hanoi.

## **FUNDING**

The Council was established as a non-profit organization and has applied for 501(c)(6) status of the Internal Revenue Code. It is affiliated with the International Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational foreign policy organization, through the Center's U.S.- Vietnam Forum. The Council and the Forum are privately supported by contributions from its members, foundations and other granting institutions.

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

To promote public awareness, the Council and its educational affiliate, the U.S.- Vietnam Forum, publish reports and position papers, prepares information packets on specific sectoral interests and issues Vietnam Update, a bi-monthly memo on trends and developments in U.S.- Vietnam economic relations. The Council also co-publishes the U.S.- Vietnam Business Guide and is developing an on-line system for accessing current U.S. and Vietnam public policy and economic data. The U.S.- Vietnam Forum and the Council, sponsor special projects, including policy studies, Vietnamese fellows studying in the U.S. and hosting visiting delegations from Vietnam.

★ **Policy Forums**

Council members are invited to join with top American policymakers, trade experts and Vietnamese government and commercial officials at conferences, seminars and workshops, scheduled regularly.

★ **Washington, New York and Vietnam Staff**

With offices and staff in Washington, New York and Hanoi, the Council is available to assist members with research, access, appointments, and up-to-date expertise.

★ **Special Briefings**

Briefings are held on timely issues or topics of particular interest to specific market sectors. Corporate members may request special meetings prior to individual or delegation visits to Vietnam.

★ **Government Relations**

The Council can help set appointments and provide briefings for corporate members interested in meeting government officials in the United States and in Vietnam.

★ **Major Conferences**

Council members are invited to attend major programs such as the July 1994 Washington D.C. conference co-sponsored with the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

★ **Seminars & Workshops**

Seminars and workshops are scheduled from time-to-time on sectoral trade and investment opportunities as well as current U.S. and Vietnamese laws and regulations affecting trade.

★ **Vietnam Update**

A bi-monthly executive memo to all members reporting on recent trends and developments in U.S. Vietnam relations as well as current and upcoming Council activities.

★ **Reports, Studies & Papers**

Members receive copies of Council reports and other pertinent studies, position papers, testimony, and trade and investment assessments.

★ **Information Packets**

The Council prepares and disseminates information packets on current policy issues and trade and investment opportunities.

★ **Research**

Council staff are available by phone or in person to discuss issues of concern to members. Corporate members may also request customized research assistance on a fee-for-service basis for projects involving considerable staff time.

★ **Delegation Visits**

The Council organizes periodic member delegation visits to Vietnam to meet with government officials and commercial leaders. The Council staff can assist corporate members in preparation for individual delegations.

★ **U.S.- Vietnam Business Guide**

New members receive a copy of this authoritative reference to doing business in Vietnam. Quantities are available at a special member discount.

★ **Database Services**

The Council provides members with information on the current databases and resources available from a variety of sources. The current "Vietnam Info 1994-1995," a database covering Vietnam and its economic/business environment with four three-inch 1.44 MB disks, produced by the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, is available through the Council.

## Programs and Activities

### **POLICY FORUMS**

The U.S. Vietnam Trade Council sponsors conferences, delegations, seminars and periodic briefings on issues affecting Vietnam. Focused on broad policy questions, as well as region and sector-specific topics, these programs bring Council members together with key U.S. public policymakers, governmental trade and investment experts and top leaders in Vietnam's government and commercial sector. Briefers at these events have included the National Security Council, State Department, Department of the Treasury, The World Bank, Vietnam government leaders, experienced regional observers, Department of Defense, Members of Congress and authorities on international trade.

A cornerstone of these programs has been the Council's Vietnam Briefing Book, a comprehensive, up-to-date reference on the significant political, economic and social trends in Vietnam and the status of U.S. and Vietnam policies which affect the prospects for bilateral trade and investment. Produced by the Council's educational affiliate, the U.S.- Vietnam Forum, the Vietnam Briefing Book contains information on current U.S. regulations and policies, Congressional action, trade and investment statistics, economic analyses, key documents on outstanding bilateral issues, recent news reports and addresses and phone numbers for useful contacts in the U.S. and Vietnam.

### **ISSUES RESEARCH & INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Monitoring and assessing the issues in U.S.-Vietnam economic relations has made the Council a valued resource both to the private sector and, increasingly, to those public policymakers addressing the trade implications of the step-by-step process toward achieving fully normalized relations. Through a combination of research and a continuing dialogue with U.S. and Vietnam business and policy counterparts, the Council disseminates information and supporting data which is vital to both public debate and private decision-making.

In addition to the Vietnam Briefing Book, the Council compiles reports, economic analyses, position papers and other materials on U.S.-Vietnam trade and investment opportunities. Vietnam Update, a monthly executive memo, keeps Council members apprised of developments on the policy and trade fronts and of current Council activities and events. In addition, the Council co-publishes the U.S.- Vietnam Business Guide, the definitive annual resource for conducting business with Vietnam. It also maintains an extensive document with current information on U.S. and Vietnam government statistics, laws, regulations and policies affecting trade and investment.

The Council serves as an information clearinghouse on U.S.-Vietnam economic relations, responding to inquiries from its members, government, the media and the general public. Council members may suggest research projects and request in-depth research or assistance on a specific subject on a fee-for-service basis. The Council also accepts grants for selected projects and will engage in contract research in those areas consistent with its mission and expertise.

## **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

Evolving a new economic partnership between the U.S. and Vietnam involves a focused approach to a growing agenda of issues essential to harnessing the potential for bilateral trade and investment. The Council's Washington presence places it in a unique position to maintain direct contact with legislators, regulators and other government officials who make and administer U.S. policy affecting activity between American business and Vietnam. To this end, the Council has formalized its government relations program to pinpoint priority issues, marshal private sector support and ensure that U.S.-Vietnam economic positions are credibly represented in debate.

The Council's initial quest was two-fold: to build strong links between the U.S. business community and Vietnam and to foster a climate for the renewal of official ties between the two nations. With removal of the trade embargo in early 1994, the Council's focus has now shifted to the critical, phase-by-phase process of achieving full normalization through the establishment of diplomatic relations and trade agreements. Despite the dramatic increase in actual business transactions between U.S. companies and Vietnam, the Council believes that the full potential for bilateral trade ultimately depends upon such factors as whether Vietnam will be accorded MFN status and American trade and investment will be supported through the Ex-Im Bank, OPIC, the Commodity Credit Corporation and trade and tax agreements including key sectors.

## **ACCESS IN VIETNAM**

Council members have access at high levels throughout Vietnam. With a representative in Vietnam, the Council organizes and assists business delegations to meet with key Vietnamese government officials and commercial leaders responsible for formulating and implementing economic policy and business transactions. These missions include periodic visits to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, as well as other centers of Vietnam commerce. The Council has facilitated extensive member contact within Vietnam's principal ministries and among the governors and directors of its industrial, agricultural and financial market sector.

The Council also maintains close relationships with Vietnam's 1000-plus member Chamber of Commerce and Industry, numerous economic organizations in the region and the sponsors of trade expositions now being held in Vietnam. The Council assists the growing number of trade delegations visiting Vietnam.

## **OUTREACH AND EXCHANGE**

The Council continues to be a principal host to delegations of Vietnam government and commercial officials visiting Washington. In the last year, the Council has hosted events for Vice Prime Minister Pham Van Khai, Deputy Vice Prime Minister Tran Duc Luong, Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Man Cam, Minister of Trade Le Van Triet. In July 1994, the Council and the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service co-sponsored a week-long seminar for Vietnam government and commercial leaders, with a full-day conference with top U.S. public policymakers.

The Council also coordinates a Visiting Fellows exchange program which enables Vietnam government officials, entrepreneurs, lawyers and other professionals to come to the U.S. and corporate offices in the region for delegation visits and fellowships.

### **VIETNAM BRIEFING BOOK**

The most comprehensive reference on the status of U.S.- Vietnam relations available. Compiled and updated regularly, the Vietnam Briefing Book tracks the significant political, economic and social trends in Vietnam, as well as the principal U.S. and Vietnamese policies affecting bilateral trade and investment. An indispensable resource for briefing Council members and public policy-makers, the Vietnam Briefing Book contains sections on: Vietnamese economic statistics; U.S. policy towards Vietnam; Vietnamese statements on foreign investment and relations; actions by the U.S. Congress; non-governmental opinions; trade and investment outlooks; articles and clippings; and useful telephone numbers and addresses in Vietnam and the U.S. Updated regularly. \$25.00 for members, \$50.00 for non-members.

### **INFORMATION PACKETS**

These timely packets provide lawmakers, government officials, business executives, trade groups students and the media with a dossier on U.S.- Vietnam relations and an introduction to the Council. Each packet is designed to answer basic questions about U.S.- Vietnam trade and investment, policy issues and developments and the Council's current programs, activities and services. Free upon request.

### **VIETNAM UPDATE**

An executive memo, Vietnam Update keeps Council members abreast of current trends and developments in U.S.- Vietnam relations, particularly those policies and issues affecting trade and investment. Vietnam Update also reports on Council programs, such as conferences, meetings with U.S. and Vietnam government officials and trade missions, and alerts members to upcoming activities and events. Published bi-monthly.

### **FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN VIETNAM**

Published by the Vietnamese State Committee for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI), this report contains annual figures on direct foreign investment in Vietnam, including general economic statistics, specific forms of investment, licenses by investment category and sector, investment protection, tax incentives, land and water lease costs, labor issues and lists of key projects.

## **KEY REPORTS AND POLICY STATEMENTS**

The Council provides copies of key reports and policy statements on U.S.- Vietnam relations and trade-related matters issued by the administration, officials of the executive departments and agencies, outside experts on Vietnam policy and trade relations with Vietnam, and by the Vietnamese government. The Council also makes available its own policy statements, studies and reports available. Free to members upon request.

## **U.S.- VIETNAM BUSINESS GUIDE**

Co-published by the Council and Global Business, Inc., The U.S.- Vietnam Business Guide is an authoritative reference for doing business in Vietnam. The Guide contains overviews of Vietnam's economy and political climate, analyses of trade and investment opportunities, U.S. and Vietnamese public and private economic development resources, a directory of U.S. firms active in the Vietnamese market and information to assist business travelers to Vietnam. \$34.95 per copy.

## **CLIPPINGS AND ARTICLES**

The Council's information library monitors news and editorial opinion about U.S.-Vietnam relations and trade activity appearing in the U.S. and overseas media. Copies or reprints of selected articles are available from the daily press, policy journals, business and regional publications. Research conducted on a fee-for service basis.

## **ON-LINE DATABASE**

The Council is developing an on-line service which will offer access to current data on U.S. and Vietnamese laws, regulations and policies, as well as official government information of trade, investment, commercial transactions and market sector activity in both countries. The database will comprise all relevant documents and publications issued by U.S. government agencies and key Vietnamese ministries.

## **U.S.- VIETNAM DATEBOOK**

The Council maintains a running calendar of events and activities in the U.S. and Vietnam which focus on interaction between the Council, its members, Vietnamese business counterparts and the governments of both countries. In addition to Council sponsored meetings, conferences, briefings and trade visits, the U.S.- Vietnam Datebook lists upcoming hearings, visits by Vietnamese delegations, and trade expositions. Updated regularly. Free upon request.

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**"The Council is the U.S. private sector's most informed resource and reliable guide to pursuing the new trade and investment opportunities that will surely arise from normalized relations with Vietnam."**

★ Belvin Friedson, Chairman  
Windmere Corporation

**"The U.S.- Vietnam Trade Council has a strong reputation for building good will and relationships with Vietnam decision makers and has been instrumental in dealing with the intricacies of U.S. policy toward Vietnam."**

★ Nelson Seto, Regional Director S.E. Asia,  
Boeing Commercial Airplane Group

**"Having worked in Washington with industry for over 16 years before moving to Asia, I believe that your Trade Council is most capable and positioned to take the lead in fighting the battles which will allow American companies to be equal players with our European & Asian competitors in Vietnam."**

★ Maureen Flanagan, General Manager  
Unisys Vietnam

**"We would greatly welcome any continued effort you could make in the months and years ahead to promote ties between Vietnam and the United States for the sake of the two people's interest."**

★ Nguyen Manh Cam, Minister of Foreign Affairs

**"I sincerely appreciate the extraordinary efforts you made to facilitate our CODEL's visit to Vietnam ... without your guiding hand and assistance, our visit would not have been as productive and constructive as it was."**

★ Senator Bennett Johnston, United States Senate

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The International Center ★ 731 Eighth Street, SE ★ Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: 202 547 3800 ★ Fax: 202 546 4784