



Quý Cựu chiến binh Mỹ
tại Việt Nam
Vietnam Veterans of
America Foundation



Đồng sáng lập Phong trào Quốc Tế về Cấm mìn, nhận giải thưởng Nobel Hòa bình năm 1997
Co-founder of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines that received the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize

The sense of national ownership remains

TED PATERSON – Head of Strategic Management

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I am not an expert in Vietnam in general, and have little to comment on the country's overall prospects in the short-term (perhaps difficult due to global uncertainties) or long-term (probably good as Vietnam is located in one of the most dynamic regions in the world and has a disciplined and dynamic society).

More specific to what I have been working on, I see real hope that Vietnam will move more decisively on overcoming its long-term legacies of war – contamination from explosives and chemicals, plus the people who are disabled from this contamination. As well, I look to Vietnam taking a leading role in the international discussions on how countries can recover from conflicts, which increasingly is recognised as one of the most important development issues in the world today.

I've only worked on mine action issues in Vietnam, mainly since 2009. I've been very impressed, particularly by how seriously Government officials and the Ministry of Defense approach the issue of how to deal with unexploded bombs. Many other countries I work in expect donor countries to pay for the clean-up of landmines and bombs, and some countries are even happy for international experts to plan and manage their mine action programs. In Vietnam it's entirely different: officials start with the understanding that it is their country and they are responsible for determining what needs to be done and how to achieve it. I think there's a growing awareness that Vietnam can benefit from new approaches and techniques developed in other mine action programs, but it's also clear the sense of national ownership remains. Mine action officials here are interested in hearing about options – new equipment or techniques and so on – but it is they who will decide what to adopt and how. That's a lesson other countries should learn from Vietnam, and one of my hopes is that Vietnam will be more active in the international dialogue on mine action and, more generally, how countries can overcome the legacies of war.

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