

EDITORIAL NOTE

Indochina Chronology is a quarterly publication devoted to historical and contemporary events in Việt Nam (including the Việt Nam War), Cambodia, and Laos; a bibliographic resource on book, monograph, periodical and journal literature; and as a source of news of the field. It was begun in 1982 at the University of California (Berkeley) and moved to Texas Tech University (Lubbock) in mid-1997. It is made available, gratis, to academics, historians, writers, researchers, journalists, veterans, and government officials. Editorial responsibility for the publication is the Vietnam Center, Texas Tech University, James R. Reckner, director. Editor is Douglas Pike. Editorial assistance is supplied by Alison Honig, David Morokoff, Khanh Lê, and Myrna Pike. *Indochina Chronology* operates in conjunction with the Vietnam Archive, also at Texas Tech University (Ronald Frankum).

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On the Cover: Proposed Vietnam Center Building

Centerfold: Architectural drawing of proposed Vietnam Center Building

Glossary of Commonly Used Terms and Abbreviations

- AFP**—Agence France Presse
AI—Amnesty International
AMAZON.COM—For reviews, cite Amazon.com as source, URL (<http://www.amazon.com>)
ASEAN—Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPP—Cambodian People's Party (ruling party)
CS—Council of State
DK—Democratic Kampuchea
THE ECONOMIST—International Weekly (London)
FEER—*Far Eastern Economic Review*
FBIS—Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FBIS-CHI—Daily Report/China
FBIS-EAS—Daily Report/East Asia
FDI—Foreign Direct Investment
FUNCINPEC—National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (opposition party)
GSSP—Grandfather Son San Party (Cambodia)
INDOCHINA INTERCHANGE—USIRP quarterly, New York
JPRS-SEA—Joint Publications Research Service, SE Asia (Dept. of Commerce)
KPL—Lao News Agency
KR—Khmer Rouge
LPDR—Lao People's Democratic Republic
LPRP—Lao People's Revolutionary Party
NATION—Bangkok Newspaper (English)
NHÂN DÂN—People's Daily (Hà Nội)
NRC—National Radio of Cambodia (Phnom Penh)
PAVN—People's Army Việt Nam
PDK—Party of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge)
PPP—*Phnom Penh Post*
PRC—People's Republic of China
RENMIN RIBAO—People's Daily (Beijing)
RGC—Royal Government of Cambodia
RKAF—Royal Khmer Armed Forces
SRV—Socialist Republic of Việt Nam *Review* (Hong Kong)
UNDP—U.N. Development Program
UNHCR—U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva
USIRP—U.S.-Indochina Reconciliation Project, New York
VBJ—*Vietnam Business Journal*
VC—*Vietnam Courier*
VIR—*Vietnam Investment Review*
VNN—*Vietnam News* (Hà Nội daily news sheet)
VNU—Vietnam National University
VVN—Voice of Vietnam Network (Hà Nội)
VTN—Vietnam Television Network
XINHUA—China News Agency
- EXCHANGE RATES—U.S.\$**
- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| đồng (Việt Nam) | 14,000 (buy) |
| | 14,150 (sell) |
| riel (Cambodia) | 3,800 |
| kip (Laos) | 5,600 |
| baht (Thailand) | 36.85 |
| renminbi (China) | 8.28 |
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Việt Nam: Another Year Begins

With the advent of the new lunar year in Việt Nam, now begins the Year of the Cat. Last year was the Year of the Tiger (some in Washington say last year in the U.S. was the Year of the Rat).

The Party's agitprop theme was: ready the country for a year of economic austerity. Spend less but celebrate, was the motto; "joyously but economically," said VCP Sec. Gen. Lê Khả Phiêu. There was not this year the spending frenzy witnessed earlier in the decade, but reduced buying was less a response to the Party's moral exhortation and more to worries over the new 10 percent value-added tax (Jan. 1), smaller bonuses from companies, and new highs in unemployment (10% in Hà Nội). Fireworks were permitted—10 minutes worth—in Hà Nội, HCMC and Huế only. And the Việt kiều returned in numbers, free spending as usual.

As far as the movers and shakers of the society (170 CC members) were concerned, the chief event of 1999's first quarter was gathering for the Second Plenum of the Eighth Party Congress, Jan. 25- Feb. 2 in Hà Nội.

Here, with studied calm during the nine days, Sec. Gen. Phiêu and others outlined the problems facing Party and State: low productivity, ubiquitous corruption, and loss of the spirited self-assurance that once characterized Party cadre. They laid out the required response: tinker with the machinery but don't put it at risk. No institutional systemic change is necessary. The VCP is the sole force to lead the Vietnamese revolution. Genuine patriotism must be combined with the pure internationalism of the proletariat. Democratic centralism remains the basic operating principle for the Party. The ideal remains national independence along socialist lines. The ideological basis of life in Việt Nam is Marxism-Leninism and thoughts of Hồ Chí Minh. The Secretary General's political report read like musty verbiage out of a time warp.

However, it and the planned discussions were candidly expressed—the word "mistake" was

frequently employed; "weaknesses show...political ideology is degraded...corruption, dense bureaucracy, and waste have nearly brought the Party to its knees." Nothing moldy about that rhetoric. There was specificity. Ten "tasks" were outlined to include: "battle corruption, fight individualism, repulse threats to Party validity, streamline the public payroll." Also the cryptic significant instruction: "do not discriminate against Party members who hold minority opinions."

Leadership. Slowly, it appears, the tide of discontent rises in Việt Nam. Challenges mount; the leadership complains. For the leaders the danger is not crisis, but a sense of irrelevancy in trying to face a challenge they cannot understand, the Party as "fifth wheel" on the cart. As always, political instability remains the top priority. There is no doubt that political instability is increasing with dissent from farmers, intellectuals, students, artists, the military – for various reasons. And the Politburo addresses these in various, often innovative ways. The difficulty in accessing the political dynamics involved is measurement. Dissent itself is not a reliable index, only if it is translated into action or revolution. The Vietnamese are tough long-suffering people. The Revolution in 1989 in the USSR and East Europe has not moved into Confucian Asia including Việt Nam; no one has satisfactorily explained exactly why.

Legitimacy in Confucian states such as Việt Nam is of extraordinary importance to the elite (without it they are mere "bandits"). Anything that questions the Politburo's legitimacy is addressed in a serious manner and not just with verbiage. However, there does not seem to be a connection between the Vietnamese economic situation/Asian economic downturn and the legitimacy of its ruling system. Economic policy decisions may reflect incompetence but not illegitimacy.

The South. SRV Prime Minister Phan Văn Khải was in Sài Gòn for a mid-January conference

with southerners. He told them that not only was the South all important in Việt Nam's economic development, but in fact must take the lead. Attending were representatives from HCMC, Bà Rịa/Vũng Tàu, Bình Dương, Bình Phước, Bình Thuận, Đồng Nai, Lâm Đồng and Tây Ninh provinces, an area that comprises 12 percent of Việt Nam's total land area, 16 percent of the population, and accounts for the creation of 32 percent of the GNP, 52 percent industrial output value, 50 percent of total export value (\$4,657 million) and 57 percent of State revenue. The area has 1,264 licensed foreign direct investment projects with registered capital totaling \$18.5 billion, as of the end of last year. Khải said priority must be given to developing petroleum, energy, fertilizer, steel, building materials, electronics, textiles and garments, foodstuffs and agro-product processing.

Meanwhile, Deputy PMs Nguyễn Tấn Dũng and Phạm Gia Khiêm chaired a similar conference for the 12 provinces of the Cửu Long (Mekong) River Delta, the western part of the southern region. It has long been a major rice basket for Việt Nam. Its economy grew by 6.5% in 1998, producing million tonnes of paddy (an increase of 8 percent over the previous year). The region is noted for its agro-fishery production: industry is concentrated in food processing. Delta workers caught or raised 874,000 MT of fish half of the country's fish production. The area's 1998 export turnover totaled \$1.3 billion, a 4.6 percent increase from 1997.

The Economy. Việt Nam's relatively good economic performance during 1998 and going into 1999, writes Adam Fforde, "is mainly due to its relative insulation from economic trauma and the relative success of the authorities in getting better economic performance through focusing resources on priority areas. This is a 'sectoral' rather than an 'institutional' prioritization. Through 1999, the macro economy will be subject to pressures from ongoing problems in export markets as well as the possibility of stock rundowns domestically. It will be interesting and important to watch the performance of the non-state sector, and especially in exports."

As he and others have noted, the two dragons ragging the heels of the economic planners are, first, the regional economic crisis and general slowdown in the world economy, which in Việt Nam has meant a drop in foreign investments and loss of exports due to decreased demand abroad, and second, socio-political problems intruding into the economic sector such as bureaucratic inefficiency, leadership fears of moving too fast, corruption, rural unrest.

Hà Nội officials profess optimism about the progress they see in U.S.-Việt Nam bilateral economic and trade relations, at least as judged by official rhetoric. They note that U.S.-VN trade turnover has reached a billion dollars. This and the continued waiver by President Clinton of the Jackson-Vanik amendment have created a favorable environment for the 400 U.S. companies now operating in Việt Nam. By official statistics, the U.S. ranks 12th in joint venture projects, with 70 valued at \$1.1 billion. In his review (Feb. 8) of the year 1998, Gen. Sec. Vũ Xuân Hoàn of the U.S.-Vietnam Friendship Assn. reported:

*The Association received 43 delegations of 290 visitors, who came for friendship, culture, education, sports, information, economic, science and technology purposes.

*American veterans aided Vietnamese agencies in locating 84 places where Vietnamese soldiers were buried and collected more than 300 remains.

*The Vietnam Veterans of America Fund (VVAFF) pledged \$584,181 from March 1998 through 2000 for rehabilitation projects.

*The Ford Foundation granted \$5.87 million for 33 projects.

*The Vietnamese Children's Fund built a school in Trà Vinh Province and a kindergarten in Sơn La Province in the northern mountainous region.

The military. Key PAVN players in the economy seem to be increasingly caught between a rock and a hard place. In the face of growing outspoken criticism by their own two and three-star generals and grumbling in the ranks about low pay, poor food, and inadequate housing, they manfully attempt to match their image of loyal and

unquestioning defenders of the system. During the quarter, Defense Minister Phạm Văn Trà (PB member) and others stepped into the ideological breach. Trà's New Year message stressed PAVN's chief "task" of the moment, to serve well in the face of increased adversity: "We must profoundly understand the political task of struggling (that seeks to push Việt Nam toward the open society)." This on New Year's day; then in a February interview he complained candidly, even bitterly, about the plight of the poor in Việt Nam, not only his troops but civilians in the remote areas where he said only the military seem interested in alleviating the poverty.

Foreign Relations. Business as usual in foreign relations.

Party Chief Lê Khả Phiêu led a delegation to China on an official good will visit (Feb. 25-Mar. 2). An agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed and an eight point final declaration issued (VNA Feb. 27). The two sides "expressed satisfaction" with the visit and the "constant consolidation and positive developments in the friendly and cooperative relationship...(and) expressed determination to accelerate work on the land border treaty and demarcation of the Tonkin Gulf" (hope to sign next year). Then banquets and toasts. (Meantime back in Hà Nội, Reuters reported "deafening drumbeats and battle cries rang out in Hà Nội on Saturday (Feb. 20) as thousands of Vietnamese marked one of the country's 'greatest military victories over Chinese invaders.'" (Emperor Quang Trung's route of the Qing army 210 years ago).

Relations with the U.S. during the quarter seemed largely confined to a slanging match (as they say in Texas) over Việt Nam's human rights policies and performance. The U.S. State Department's mandated annual report said the Việt Nam record was poor, marked by repression of political and religious freedoms, harsh prison conditions, arbitrary arrests and restrictions on speech, press, assembly and association. SRV spokesman Phan Thúy Thanh's official reply (Feb. 28) was to the effect that Việt Nam was the victim of human rights abuses under French colonialism,

and that it was a shame the report should have been issued at a time when U.S.-Vietnamese relations were warming. And anyway, how about the Little Merchant's First Amendment Rights in Little Sài Gòn. A new round of trade talks between the two countries began (March 15) in Hà Nội. Joseph Diamond is the U.S. Trade Representative chief negotiator. Ostensibly the Vietnamese negotiators are now showing flexibility; have signaled this by granting a 12-month waiver on 50% tariff surcharges on goods from countries, such as the U.S., which do not accord Việt Nam Most Favored Nation status. Congress woman Loretta Sanchez from Little Sài Gòn raised the human rights issue while on a visit (March 26) with a MIA-POW delegation, an intrusion that did nothing to impact the relationship. In mid March the U.S. State Department criticized the arrest of dissident Phan Thúy Thanh; an SRV FM statement called this "brazen interference."

Elsewhere on the diplomatic front:

*The Vatican and Foreign Ministry continued their waltz of the flowers over a papal visit. Rome says the Pope would like to visit. Hà Nội says he is most welcome. A bit later Rome says the Pope cannot obtain an entry visa. After a pause, Hà Nội says, yes he can. It is clear the Politburo does not want the Pope in country, but does not want to be seen as stopping it, might become amiable if it gets something out of it, such as Vatican diplomatic recognition. (AP March 5, Reuters March 15)

*The Foreign Ministry March 13th announced its list of exemptions or entry visas for citizens of Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cuba, South Korea, Indonesia, Hungary, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Russia.

*PM Phan Văn Khải spend three days in Japan (March 28-30) accompanied by his wife, Nguyễn Thị Sáu. An official working visit. Khải held talks with Japanese PM Keizo Obuchi, and met Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. Several loan packages were arranged, in the neighborhood of \$730 million.

*A PAVN military delegation led by Lt. Gen. Lê Văn Dzũng, PAVN Chief of Staff and

SRV Deputy Minister of Defense, paid an official visit to Singapore March 15-17. Most was Lt. Gen. Beisoo Kiang, Chief of Defense Forces. The delegation visited the Defense Academy, the Industrial Technologies Group and cultural and historical places in Singapore. (VNA)

*Legislators from ASEAN countries gathered in Hà Nội March 10 to discuss the regions current economic and financial crisis. The two-day conference, hosted by the National Assembly, drew the participation of AIPO-member countries including Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and special observers from Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar, and AIPO's observer in Cambodia. The Republic of South Korea attended as a guest. The conference elected the Vietnam National Assembly External Relations Committee chairman Đỗ Văn Tài as Chairman; Anh Dũng as Vice-Chairman; and AIPO General Secretary Ms. Azacorn, secretary. (VNA March 10)

Dissent. All major Vietnamese and foreign-language dailies (Feb. 25) printed an identical report of a Resolution aimed at halting declining Party standards. While the Resolution pledged "ideological freedom" and to refrain from discriminating against Party members who hold minority views, it said public dissent would not be tolerated: "Party committees should strictly criticize and punish those Party members who...keep disseminating their own opinion or distributing documents contrary to the platform, statutes and resolutions of the Party."

In March the noted dissident Nguyễn Thanh Giang's arrest was acknowledged officially for the first time. Giang, 62, a retired geophysicist, had circulated letters critical of the regime. His arrest was first reported by the Free Vietnam Alliance, an overseas group that said a wide scale crackdown on dissidents was underway in Việt Nam. This was dismissed as "complete fabrication" by Hà Nội officials. FVA replied: "According to our {in-country} sources, mid-level Party cadres are working out the detailed timetable and arranging excuses to carry out...actual arrests." One the list are: former head of the Marxism-Leninism Institute, Hoàng Minh Chính; writer Hoàng Tiến; journalist

Vũ Huy Cường; political analyst Nguyễn Kiên Giang, and former Party secretary of Hải Phòng Province, Hoàng Hữu Nhân.

Sources: Sixth Plenum Resolution: VVN Feb. 24. "Vietnam Readies for New Year and Economic Austerity" (AFP Feb. 16); "Vietnam Communist Party to Clamp Down on Dissent", Andy Soloman, Reuters Feb. 25; "Let's Build Our Party Strong, Politically, Ideologically and Organizationally Firm" in *QDNH* Feb. 3. See also: "Last Refuge: Hanoi Calls on Heroes and Values for Stability" by Faith Keenan (correspondent) in *FEER* July, 16, 1998); and Adam Fforde, "Vietnam: Monthly Economic and Social Analysis", Australian based newsletter, available via Internet. Website: (<http://www.aduki.com.au>) e-mail: (aduki@compuserve.com), also faxed for a nominal charge. See also Vietnam: Economic Commentary and Analysis'-VECA. From Adam Fforde, Aduki p/l, P.O. Box 506, Mawson Canberra, ACT 2607, Australia; tel: 61 2 6232 4773; fax: 61 2 6232 4775.

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Việt kiều Conference. Plans are underway at Texas Tech University to stage a two-day conference titled "The Việt Kiều Experience," in April of 2000. Says the announcement: "Following the fall of South Việt Nam in April 1975, the world witnessed a massive exodus of Vietnamese people willing to risk everything in order to realize their desire to live in freedom, free to pursue their own goals. The tragedies of the "boat people" who have since become known as Việt kiều, were well documented. In the years since the fall, the Việt kiều, particularly the younger ones, have registered remarkable levels of achievement in academia and business. But, in the drive to succeed and adapt, they have largely neglected their culture. Many cannot read or write Vietnamese. Few are interested in the turbulent events that shaped and ultimately caused the loss of the Republic of Việt Nam." (It is this condition the April 2000 conference is to address.)

Cambodia: Facing Up To the Past.

The hottest potato being tossed around in Phnom Penh this quarter has been the "returned killers problem." It was the surrender of two top Khmer Rouge leaders—Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea—and their initial welcome by the government. The event aroused buried public emotions of an intensity that seemed to surprise all. Judicious governance in the name of social order, notwithstanding, the fact remains that twenty years on the issue has ignited anger among virtually the entire Cambodian population. Many long silent come forward to tell of the pain, the unspeakable horror they witnessed during the Khmer Rouge years and have long suppressed. Military leader Ta Mok has been arrested and his fate is under consideration by the Court according to a March 19th statement by PM Hun Sen.

The surrenders presented the government with the most delicate policy problem: what to do next? In political philosophy terms, it is an old problem, traceable at least as far back as the Roman Empire, whose citizens often had little confidence in the people appointed to positions of trust and would ask: *Qui custodiet ipsos custodes* (who guards the guardians)? Should the DK leaders be put on trial and the hand of true justice be allowed to fall where it may? Virtually all outsiders make this demand. The U.S. for example. And the French, whose official statement from Paris (Dec. 30) said sternly: "The duty to see justice cannot be evaded and *all those responsible* for the crimes will have to answer for their actions."

Aye—all *those responsible*—there's the rub. Virtually every official in Phnom Penh who was of age during the Pol Pot years, and in the country, could be put away by a sharp prosecutor given access to all the evidence. To paraphrase Voltaire; Treat every man as he deserves and who will escape hanging?

Not even King Sihanouk is free from this tar brush. The Palace early in the quarter rose to his defense amid mounting criticism that as Chief of

State he appointed Pol Pot to office, that his association with the DK went far back. Said the Palace statement: "His Majesty the King was told by the U.S., China, and ASEAN that unless he joined with the Khmer Rouge, Sihanoukist guerillas at the Thai-Cambodian border would be wiped out." The statement pointed out how many relatives Sihanouk had lost during the DK regime, five children, 14 grandchildren, four cousins, a brother-in-law and a half-uncle.

"Stop talking about a trial" said the EeChhean Governor of Pallin in a speech (Jan. 7). "If there is a trial there will be no peace. Soldiers fought in the past but now there is reconciliation." The Governor is a one time Khmer Rouge general. He symbolizes the problem of sorting out the past. It is estimated that a full fifty percent of the current personnel in the government of Cambodia are ex-DK.

Some diplomatic observers in Phnom Penh see the "return of the killers" problem as strengthening, not weakening the power base of the remaining DK political elements. Operating from semi-autonomous zones, they could wield a major influence. "These are hardened rebels and mass murderers: to think they have changed their desires overnight would be naïve; all this means is that Pol Pot's cadre is back together, but this time they are officially sanctioned and in control of autonomous areas guarded by private armies," said one Western diplomat.

The thinking all around in Cambodia by judicious minds seems to be that the overriding consideration—and operative principle for government—must be to preserve a fragile peace. A trial even abroad in the hands of the international community threatens civil war. So warn aides close to Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan.

Meantime, a Cambodian prosecutor—Justice Minister U.K. Vithun—announces (Jan. 8) he has opened an investigation to determine whether indictments are in order. It was the first

judicial move by the Hun Sen government and presumably was still in process as the quarter ended.

In the absence of political will in Phnom Penh, acting Chief of State Prince Norodom Ranariddh (Jan. 13) threw the issue squarely into the hands of the international community: "We should have an international court to bring justice to our nation. We want peace and national reconciliation, but our main concern is law, history and justice for our country. Right now we have to wait for the decision of the United Nations concerning this matter." Even if a tribunal is given the go-ahead by UN chief Kofi Annan and then passes the Security Council, it could be two years before an apparatus is in place.

Back to early Rome for advice: *quidquid agas prudenter agas* (whatever you do, do it with caution).

Armed Forces. Hun Sen resigned (Jan. 26) as Commander in Chief of the Royal Khmer Armed Forces, was replaced by RKAF Chief of Staff Gen. Ke Kimyan (sworn in Jan. 28). The move was part of a reorganization effort to downsize the military and police. Over the next five years, 55,000 troops and 24,000 policemen are to be demobilized (and provided with mustering-out pay and vocational training). Hun Sen asked Japan to fund this "integration" program, at a cost of some \$24 million.

Factionalism within the military, with multiple units loyal to different political factions, heightens political tensions and sparks armed confrontations among rivals. Hun Sen acknowledged that while he is resigning as commander in chief, the military remain under the control of his government. He said the country's armed forces could no longer be intertwined in politics, must instead work to end corruption, crime, illegal logging and other problems hurting Cambodia's economy.

The royal decree (Jan. 24) that appointed General Ke Kimyan as commander also appointed four other generals as deputies: Pol Saroeun, Meas Sophea, Khan Savoeyun, and Khoem Saophoan. Rear Admiral Um Samkhan was named naval deputy commander and Major General Ung

Samnang was named air force deputy commander and promoted to brigadier general.

Economy. The political deadlock in Phnom Penh had its expected influence on the economy—making everything fiscal tentative, economic planning short run, renewed fear of inflation out of hand. One senior diplomat was quoted by *FEER* as saying: "The political stalemate is achieving the clear side effect of keeping this poor country hostage to political machinations. The international community is getting quite vexed with the political antics." The National Assembly adopted a law on financial administration in 1999 (chaired by Samdech Heng Samrin). It adopted the first chapter of the draft law with 86 votes out of 106, went on to the second chapter, regulations dealing with the balance of the state budget, and two other chapters of the draft law which comprises 10 chapters and 25 articles.

Foreign aid continued to trickle in. Sweden donated \$20 million (Jan. 11) for cooperation and development to run during 1999 and 2000. The cooperation between Cambodia and Sweden began in 1979 through UNICEF in the education and public health sectors. In 1997 and 1998, Swedish aid helped provide primary education to 135,000 children and ordinary education to 18,000 women. Between 1992 and 1998 Swedish aid reached 767 million krona and dealt with rural development, education and public health. Australia donated a A\$5 million (\$3.1 million) through the World Food Program under an agreement with the Royal Government (signed on 28 December 1998). The Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh issued a communique saying the Australian Government's aid will alleviate the food security situation for needy people in Cambodia. Through labor-for-food programs, it will also help restore infrastructures in rural areas and essential services, such as the construction of roads and irrigation networks and the development of other agricultural works.

Sources. "20 Years On, Anger Ignites Against Khmer Rouge", Seth Mydans in *The New York Times*, Jan. 10; "Cambodia Analysts: Defections Strengthen, Not Weaken the Khmer Rouge" (AFP Phnom Penh, Dec. 30, 1998); "Cambodian Khmer Rouge Defectors Must Face Justice" (AFP, Paris, Dec. 30, 1998)

LAOS WOOS THE WORLD

Laos began its new year with an effort to encourage travel by launching "Visit Laos Year", and facilitating investment in the economy by ordering all FDI proposals to pass through a single gateway: the Foreign Investment Management and Cooperation Committee (FIMC). Under a decree (Feb. 18) by PM Sisavath Keobounphanh, the Committee will handle all foreign investment documentation, as well as negotiate and directly sign contracts. This will allow applications to be processed "in accordance with the time frame identified by law," the order said.

No longer will foreign investors or middlemen be permitted to "directly connect with organizations concerned" or "communicate with any middlemen or state employees who are not assigned by the FIMC." The Committee also will be responsible for inviting state organizations and provincial authorities to consult on, and approve projects.

Deputy PM Bounyang Vorachith was named president of the FIMC, and its former chairman, Bountiem Phissamai, is vice-president. The Committee comprises three working offices: Foreign Investment Management, Domestic Investment Management, and Foreign Cooperation. (*Vientiane Times*, 19 March 1999)

Tourism is the fastest growing economic sector in Laos, and the national campaign to promote 1999 as Visit Laos Year is opening up the country to visitors as never before. The number of foreign visitors increased 28 times from 14,400 to 400,000 from 1990 to 1996, and in 1997 tourism brought in \$37.2 million, the fourth largest source of national income. Businesses and entrepreneurs look forward to a new influx of tourists and potential investors this year (but this can bring its own set of problems, see Opium Tourism below). (From speech by Minister Soubanh Srithirath to the USIRP Forum on Việt Nam, Cambodia and Laos, 1998)

The Thai Connection. PM Sisavath Keobounphanh paid an official visit to Thailand March 4-6, calling for an end to Thai naval patrols on the Mekong and settlement of issues in the agreement on Thailand's purchase of electricity from Laos. In his first visit since assuming office, Sisavath said the two countries should settle all differences and make the 21st century one with the best relationship between them.

Thailand began Mekong River patrols in 1975, and Sisavath said it is now time to end them as Laos did in 1990. However, his host, PM Chuan Leekpai, stressed the importance of the patrols in suppressing smuggling and drug trafficking and in aiding Thais living along the river. He said he would consider the Lao proposal in light of maintaining good relations. According to the *Bangkok Post*, Laos rejected a proposal for joint patrols, claiming they are unnecessary.

On the electricity issue, the Thais need to defer purchases due to the big drop in power demands as a result of the financial crisis. Laos, on the other hand, has major hydropower project commitments whose viability is based on sale of the electricity produced. There is also disagreement on partial payment in baht (the Thai wish) or all in dollars as the Lao want.

Other issues are border demarcation (50 percent complete), bans on imports of agricultural products from Laos, and Laotians living in Thailand (some refugees and some resistance groups that Vientiane argues are stirring up unrest in Laos.) Most of these matters will be studied further.

The Việt Nam Connection. Laos and Việt Nam have agreed to establish a joint venture bank. An aide-memoir was signed March 6 by Phoupheth Khamphouvong, vice-governor of the Laotian central bank, and Trịnh Ngọc Hồ, director-general of Vietnam's Investment and Development Bank (IDB). Full banking operations, to be run by the

IDB and the External Commercial Bank of Laos, are expected to be open to the public by year's end. (KPL, 8 March)

A Vietnamese senior military delegation, led by Defense Minister Gen. Phạm Văn Trà, paid a six-day official visit to Laos Feb. 25-March 2 at the invitation of Lao Defense Minister Gen. Choummaly Sayasone. A protocol on cooperation between the two ministries was signed, and visits paid to various military units and other organizations in the capital and in Savannakhet and Khammouane provinces. (VNA, 3 March)

And Mayor of Vientiane Bounheuang Duangphachanh ended a week-long visit to Hà Nội March 9, where he observed Party building and economic development. (*Vientiane Times*, 25 March)

UXO. The Japanese government agreed to contribute US\$430,000 to provide for five UN volunteers in a two-year project to support managerial and planning operations in UXO LAO (unexploded ordnance) provincial staffs. Management development is critical for sustaining UXO LAO and improving its services. As the risk of injuries is reduced, more land becomes available for use. Four districts of Savannakhet Province remain "riddled" with UXO left from American bombing campaigns more than 25 years ago, *Vientiane Times* reported.

Roads. A \$3 million contract to complete the final section of National Route 2A, linking Luang Prabang and the northern Lao provinces with Thailand, was awarded March 18. The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is funding 90 percent of the project, which has been ongoing since 1986. The completed sections already have had positive economic impact on communities in Sayaboury and Luang Prabang provinces, a UNCDF representative said, and the new section will provide more access to markets in Thailand for agricultural products and such services as schools and hospitals.

A new link to the sea for landlocked Laos was created with the opening March 23 of two sections of national highway 14B traversing central Việt Nam. The Việt Nam section runs 76.8 km. from the port of Giang in Quảng Nam Province to the Laotian border (cost: \$174,320), and the Lao

section 146 km. from Sepong to the Vietnamese border (cost: \$1.2 million). A border post is to be opened by 1 May. Việt Nam will expand the highway in Quảng Nam to a width of 7.5 meters at a cost of \$20 million, VNA said.

Opium Tourism. Foreigners mostly young Westerners) who travel to Laos in search of drugs may not be able to shop for the drug of their choice but they can get all the opium they want. It has always been cheap and available, especially in the well-known opium towns along the northern borders with China and Myanmar. Recently, however, the traffic has become an "underground" (it is illegal) but highly visible tourist industry.

Visas are cheap and easily obtained, new guest houses are going up, new restaurants offer menus in English, and young boys ply the streets in the evenings soliciting customers for the opium dens. The potential patrons vary from spaced-out drug users (a minority) to young people out to have a good time and experiment in an exotic locale far from home.

The surge in activity coincides with, and may be due to the government's heavy promotion of "Visit Laos Year", which already has produced a record number of tourists and the businesses to serve them. Drug control officials fear police will not want to hassle tourists to enforce drug laws. Halvor Kolshus, the UN Drug Control Program representative in Laos, told a news conference Feb. 23 that he had warned government officials that the country's image could be damaged if Laos becomes known as an opium haven.

Muang Sing, one of the border towns, is the hot new spot on the drug trail through Southeast Asia, AP reports. Backpackers make their way up from Bangkok, and the dealers waiting for them provide opium at 50 cents a pipe.

Cambodia, where marijuana is sold for \$2.25 a pound in Phnom Penh and guest houses are cheap, is also a popular destination, as are the trekking tours in Thailand. The Trekking Assn. president estimated that a fifth of the 150,000 people who take organized tours through the highlands of northern Thailand are drug travelers who seek out the tour operators who can promise opium. He said the only solution the police have

been able to offer is to shut down trekking, which is important to the local economy. Most of these travelers will go on into Laos where they know the opium is cheaper, easier to get, and involves less risk.

Laos outlawed opium production two years ago but it is still the world's third largest producer. There are stiff penalties for trafficking and operating opium dens but little ability or will to enforce the laws in a poor, remote country that is promoting tourism as part of its opening to the world. "Of course we are against opium smoking . . . we try our best," an aide in the National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision told *International Herald Tribune* reporter Thomas Crampton. Diplomats and officials like Kolshus say current efforts are inadequate.

Sanya Abhay of the National Tourism Authority said his office had not yet received a "formal report" from drug authorities, but "if opium tourism becomes a trend," it will be very bad for "Visit Laos Year." He said his office is preparing brochures advising visitors of Laotian law, including penalties for drug use and possession. Except for one Italian arrested for disturbing the peace in Muang Sing, Crampton wrote, no foreigners have been charged with opium offenses under the recent laws.

In the old royal capital of Luang Prabang, the local authorities are expected to crack down harder than in other areas, but on those who supply opium and not on the foreigners who buy it – "this is the Lao way," one tour operator explained. He said that enforcement may not be so strict in other parts of the country, but here "we will preserve the atmosphere for the right kind of tourist." (*International Herald Tribune* (Paris), 1 March; AP, 13 March).

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"The Past is never dead. It's not even past." William Faulkner.

Fulbrights. There exist two types of Fulbright Scholarships. The Fulbright Full Grant provides round-trip transportation, language orientation, tuition, book and research allowances, maintenance, and supplemental insurance. Fulbright Travel Grants are available only in certain countries; they supplement awards from non-IIE sources and provide no travel allowance. For both, applicants should be U.S. citizens. Preference goes to those whose higher education was received primarily at U.S. educational institutions. Applicants must hold a B.A. degree or its equivalent. Language skills may be necessary. Deadline for application is approximately one year prior to commencement of study. For senior academics there is now a USIA administered program in Việt Nam. Five arrived last September: two in American studies, one each in law, economics, and environmental policy. They teach in Hà Nội National Economics University, Hồ Chí Minh City National University, Hà Nội National University, and Nha Trang Sea Products University. Three Vietnamese scholars in higher education administration, economics and environmental studies from Việt Nam National University, the Institute of World Economy, and the Hà Nội University of Science have received grants to work with the Americans. For application forms and additional information, visit website at: www.acls.org/pro-fetp or contact: Teaching Program, Vietnam Fulbright Program, American Council of Learned Societies, 228 E. 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017; FAX: (212) 949-8058.

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Clinton on Immigrants. "We should share our country with immigrants, not shun them or shut them out. But unless we handle this well, immigration of this sweep and scope can threaten the bonds of our union." President Clinton—Portland University graduation ceremonies June 16, 1998.

Bibliography: Books and Monographs

Webster's New World Dictionary of the Vietnam War, Mac Leepson (ed.) with Helen Hannaford. New first-rate reference work: 1,500 entries on people, places, battles, abbreviation and acronym list. Extensive bibliography, maps. Also seven appendices: Chronology; Order of Battle (U.S. Military); Order of Battle (ARVN); Order of Battle (PAVN and PLAF); The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution; Paris Peace Accords; and Việt Nam War Medal of Honor Recipients. Work of some 50 contributors. All that is missing is an entry on Việt Nam war archives and academic resource centers. Belongs on the desk of all Việt Nam war specialists. Simon and Schuster Macmillan, New York, \$17.95. (1999)

Vietnam: The Country and Its Geographical Regions by Lê Bá Thảo, Chairman, Vietnamese Geographers Assn. (Hà Nội). Authoritative, full-scale study of Vietnamese geography. Twenty chapters (620 pages) on geographic regions; the East Sea; landscapes; the geographical base of the economy; the two deltas; rivers; islands and major cities. Lê throws his net widely. There is as much here about Việt Nam's social and economic problems and Vietnamese history as on strictly geographic matters. Also the expected ideological rhetoric (probably to get the his work past the censors) which can easily be ignored. Useful as reference work, college textbook and guide book for travelers. Recommended Thế Giới Publishers, Hà Nội. Available through Global Directions, Inc., San Francisco. (1997)

Asia 1999 Yearbook, Michael Westlake (*Far Eastern Economic Review*), ed. Once more comes this invaluable reference work (now in its 40th year). About 100 contributors. In addition to 31 country rundowns, there are entries on Asia-Pacific organizations, environment, population, trade, commodities, and regional economic performance. This 40th edition has a new format and layout to make

it more "user friendly." Military balance tables have been dropped to focus on economic affairs. Review Publishing House, Hong Kong, \$60 (hardcover), \$48 (softcover). (1999)

Sketches for A Portrait of Hanoi by Hữu Ngọc (Hà Nội writer, "cultural researcher"). A fine coffee table portrayal of Hà Nội's capital, but much more. Product of a 1997 Francophone conference on Hà Nội funded in part (as was this publication) by the Government of Quebec. The erudite text captures well the lingering bouquet of early Vietnamese culture—its myths and images—portrayed through the art collections and architecture of the city. Graphics are stunning. The history of the city is intricately woven into the history of the country, in both text and graphics. A sophisticated product. Most interesting perhaps is the treatment of the three original parts of Hà Nội: the Old Citadel to the north the Old Quarter north of the lake, and the French Quarter (ville Francaise) south of the lake and west of the Old Citadel. This work is an absolute must for any serious foreign traveler to Hà Nội, or to Việt Nam for that matter. It is not made clear who is the publisher but if, as it appears, it was printed in Việt Nam it means the Vietnamese graphic art industry has now risen to a first world level. Recommended. Thế Giới Publishers, Hà Nội. Available from Global Directions, Inc., San Francisco. (1998)

The Mass Media in Vietnam, David Marr (Australian National University), ed. A gem of a book on the communication of ideas via mass media in Việt Nam. Its creation was no mean feat considering Politburo sensitivity to the idea of sending representatives to a conference in Australia that examines the workings of Việt Nam's ubiquitous communication and propaganda institutions. But a goodly number of Vietnamese did show up or submitted papers. This volume resulted. Separate essays deal with each medium as well as journalistic

problems singular to the Vietnamese, and/or everywhere. Should be read by everyone seriously interested in Việt Nam. Marr is to be commended. Available from Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, the Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia (FAX: 61-2-6249-5523); (e-mail: <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/Depts/PolSoc/psc-home.html>). (1998)

One Day Too Long: Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Vietnam by Timothy Castle (Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama). This book is of several parts: the war in Laos; the battle of Site 85 Radar Base overrun by PAVN in March 1968; an investigation into the fate of nine U.S. Air Force personnel missing in action in Laos; and Castle's involvement in an NBC documentary on Laos. However, the common thread is what is often labeled the "secret war" in Laos although if truth be known it was not so much secret as inconspicuous and ignore -- "The ugly war in Laos." Castle's working title was "Breach of Trust," which suggests a better term to convey the flavor of the work: Laos as place of mistakes and duplicity on the part of the U.S. seeking to maintain the façade of Lao neutrality, and Laos as obfuscation and outright deceit on the part of the Pathet Lao and their Hà Nội allies during the war and afterwards. Makes for good reading. Recommended in part because it is such a rare work. Columbia University Press, \$24.95. (1999)

Dispatches From the Front: A history of the American War Correspondent, Nathaniel Lande (Univ. of North Carolina, ex-*Time*), ed. Press scribblers have been on the battlefield from the earliest days of U.S. history—from Isaiah Thomas in 1775 reporting from Philadelphia for the *Massachusetts Sun*, to the newsmagazine people in the Gulf War. These are their words—history written under pressure. The Việt Nam War is represented by ten of the biggest names whose examples of reportage obviously were selected in the name of balance and journalistic objectivity (Pepper Martin, Dave Halberstam, Bill Buckley, etc.) A useful work. Oxford University Press, New York, \$17.95. (1996)

Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations, Bruce Jentleson and Thomas Paterson, senior eds. An essential research tool. Some 1,000 articles (500 to 10,000 words) by a team of prominent historians, political scientists and foreign policy experts. With chronology of events, bibliographies, 150 maps, tables and charts. Four volumes, 1,936 pages. Prepared under the auspices of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations. Excellent addition to the literature. Oxford University Press, \$375 plus s/h. (1999)

Bibliographies on Southeast Asia compiled by Herman Kemp. Lists 5,380 titles, 1,335 of which are annotated. Includes Indochina 81; Việt Nam 329; Cambodia 77; Laos 97; Southeast Asia (gen) 433. From Cellar Book Store, Detroit, \$126.50. (1998)

Food Supplies and the Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, Paul Kratoska, ed. Study of the World War II days when Japanese troops were looting the rice stocks of Việt Nam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia to feed themselves and starve the locals. St. Martin's Press, \$75. (1998)

Vietnam and the Transformation of American Life by Robert Buzzanco (University of Houston historian). There was indeed a worldwide Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution launched in the 1960s by an 80-year old Chinese "emperor." In the U.S. it changed gender relations, race relations, music styles, the length of hair, sexual mores, and attitudes towards patriotism. The Việt Nam War was both cause and effect of this cultural revolution in the U.S. Here, Buzzanco offers a slightly left of center popular cultural analysis of the phenomenon. His methodological difficulty lies in the question: would there have been this "transformation" had there been no Việt Nam War (as there was none in France, Britain, Italy nor ultimately in the USSR)? Most interesting chapter is No. 6: "Love me: I'm a Liberal: the Politics of the 1960s and Việt Nam." Whatever else this is a book worthy of wide discussion. Blackwell Publishers, Williston, Vermont, \$22.95. (1999)

Women's Bodies, Women's Worries: Health and Family Planning in a Vietnamese Rural Community by Tine Gammeltoft (Danish researcher). Reportedly this is the first full-scale ethnographic study on health-related issues to come out of today's Việt Nam. In fact, it examines the entire subject range of rural Vietnamese women (8 out of 10 in the total female population). Topics explored: Vietnamese women in history; contemporary socio-cultural forces influencing women's lives; contraception practices, and "ways women manage and negotiate their moral demands and social relations in daily living." Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen. (1999)

A Business Guide to Vietnam by Michel Pitron et al. (lawyer with Gide Loyrette Nouel, leading French law firm). The law firm of Gide Loyrette Nouel has offices in 15 world cities, including Hà Nội. It has 70 partners and 260 associates, which if nothing else means it has assets and does careful work. It has been in Hà Nội for a decade. This slim volume is the product of the firm's team in Việt Nam—and says it is a guide not a "professional opinion" (whatever that means); in any case, it is a fine brief on the law in Việt Nam in terms of its meaning to foreign investors. Covers forms of investment, real estate, banking, labor law, industrial property, copyright, and technology transfer. Cut off date was October 1997, which means some information may be outdated. Recommended. Thế Giới Publishers (available through Global Directions, San Francisco) or Gide Loyrette Nouel, Metropole Centre 404-4, 56 Lý Thái Tổ Street, Hà Nội. (1998)

The War in Vietnam by Anthony Edmonds (historian, Ball State, Muncie, Indiana). A sincere, honest, well-intentioned text for high school and lower division college use. Not exactly a cut and paste job but close to it. Appears to be the work of an anti-war type whose nerves are still raw 30 years later. All the weaknesses we have seen in Việt Nam history writing this past quarter century: same stereotyped accounts, same trite citations, same platitudinous judgments. Even so, useful (perhaps even recommended) for students needing an entry-

level understanding of the war (in the hope they will go on from there to something more nuanced). Save for nine pages on Hồ Chí Minh, Edmonds more or less writes off the "other side"; longest explanation of the NLF is in the Diệm entry in the biographical appendix. On the other hand, there is here good extensive (more than half the book) appendices, reference materials, photos, etc. Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, Conn., \$39.95. (1998)

Asian Freedoms: The Idea of Freedom in East and Southeast Asia by David Kelly (Australian Defence Force Academy) and Anthony Reid (Australian National University). A gathering of optimists here argue that the Western concept of freedom is now widely accepted across Asia as the key determinant in judging ethical, legal and political practices. The question is, accepted by whom exactly? Certainly not by the politburos of Việt Nam, China, North Korea, and Burma. However, if freedom is defined in terms of justice, then probably they are right—it is one of the few true world universals. In any event, this comes from a prestigious group of contributors: Thanet Aphornsuwan, Bill Jenner, David Kelly, Ian Mabbett, Vera Mackie, Tony Reid, Josef Silverstein, Jim Scott and Alexander Woodside. Cambridge University Press, Port Chester, NY, \$64.95 (hardcover), \$22.95 (paperback). (1998)

Who Speaks for America: Why Democracy Matters in Foreign Policy by Erik Alterman (*National Magazine* columnist). Author argues that the American public, the masses, separates foreign and domestic policy and that this is bad. Most professionals in the field—demur—none more forcibly than Mr. Professional himself, George Kennan: "The public's role in diplomacy is one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as this room and a brain the size of a pin; he lies there in his primeval mud and pays little attention to his environment: his is slow to wrath—in fact, you practically have to whack his tail to make him aware that his interests are being disturbed; but once he grasps this, he lays about him with such blind determination that he not only destroys his adversary but largely wrecks his native habitat." The history of

this matter, of American leadership seeking to serve national interests vs. U.S. public detachment, is brought on by suspicion and resentment on both sides, which we must all live with. Many good points and insights are offered here. Alterman's weakness is ignoring the complexities involved; largely ignoring Congress and seeming to dismiss the role of leadership. Diplomacy cannot be a function of public opinion polls. Leaders must convince the public of necessity (would the American public have approved Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana?) Cornell Univ. Press, \$25. (1998)

The Shadow University by Alan Charles Kors (Univ. Pennsylvania) and Harvey Silverglate (civil liberties lawyer). Once more into the breach by this Don Quixote academician, lance unsheathed to run down the aging 1960s radicals, the sensitivity enforcer, the grim-lipped feminist—all in the spirit of take no prisoners. His battle cry: "Citizens arise; the university is now the enemy of our free society." The campus is a maze of censorship, indoctrination, intimidation, and official group-think. Students and faculty who challenge this orthodoxy find they are not dealt with kindly. Hyperbole here but point taken: abuses do exist and they should be fixed. The Free Press, New York, \$27.50. (1998)

Sectoral Analysis of Trade, Investment and Business in Vietnam, Trần Văn Hòa (University of Wollongong, Australia), ed.. For foreign investors, present and potential. Deals with investment opportunities, trend forecasts, and potential problems. Contributors are expert in various sectors of commerce and industry in Việt Nam St. Martin's Press, New York, \$69.95. (1999)

Into Cambodia by Keith William Nolan (Việt Nam War historian). Nolan continues his effort to balance a record that gives more space to the Mỹ Lai and *Platoon* representation of American soldiers (as baby killers, rapists, drug abusers, cowards) than to those who honorably served their country. This book covers the incursion into Cambodia in 1970 to try to root out North Vietnamese sanctuaries and supplies. Based chiefly on interviews with the officers who commanded the operation and the soldiers who

fought. Paperback edition. Presidio Press, Novato, CA, \$18.95. (1990)

Badge of Courage: The Life of Stephen Crane by Linda Davis (biography writer). Always a civilian, Stephen Crane was one of those rare creatures, a true war lover. He found great inspiration on the battlefield and from the drums and bugles sounding. He was, of course, author of the classic ***Red Badge of Courage*** set in the tragedy of America's Civil War—a book that made him famous but also subjected him to critical parodies ("The Red Badge of Hysteria" and "The Blue Botch of Cowardice"). As war correspondent (Greece-Turkey, Spanish-American War), Crane's writings offer great insights into the terror and pity of war. Those writing about the Việt Nam War are well advised to attend to him. Crane died, age 28 of tuberculosis and other ills, eased only by morphine. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, \$35. (1998)

Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma by Amitav Ghosh. A three-part book, the first two on Cambodia. "Dancing" is the result of a 1993 visit by the author in which he visits Pol Pot's village and meets family members, then discusses the impact of his brutal regime and the importance of dance to a nearly destitute country. Part two, "Stories in Stone", is on Angkor Wat and its meaning for Cambodians. Ravi Dayal Publisher; orders from D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd., A/15-176 Mohan Garden, Najafgarh Road, New Delhi 110059.

Chemical and Biological Warfare: An Annotated Bibliography by Eric Croddy. There is something truly scary about CBW, of a magnitude outmatching our forbidding fear of the Bomb, frightening as that was/is. CBW is a method of mass death that is cheap, easily delivered and silent. How to defend? Governments can be stopped (or at least retaliation is possible). But any fanatic with a toxicology handbook and a bathtub can wipe out a city. The great wonder is that it has not yet happened. How do you stop this level of threat? No one has an answer. This work is a bibliography only and a good one, listing all the source materials one could ask for: books, journal articles, Internet. Scarecrow Press, Lanham, Maryland, \$45. (1997)

The Vietnamese Family in Change: The Case of the Red River Delta by Phạm Văn Bích. Examination of the dynamics involved in the transformation by Marxism-Leninism of the Vietnamese family, with focus on husband-wife and parent-child relationships and what changes in them mean to the wider society. Creation of the ideal "socialist family" never met the goals of the Party, but collectivization of property and labor (now moribund in at least parts of Việt Nam if not in the Red River Delta) did produce change in the North quite different from that in the South. Curzon Press, Richmond (Surrey) UK, 40 pounds. (1999)

Those Who Gave, and Gave by Jerry K. Benfield (USA "lifer", Việt Nam veteran). Sergeant Benfield was a real stand-up guy in Việt Nam--and a successful soldier. He describes his experiences, emphasizing the admirable qualities of those with whom he served, how camaraderie helped each survive. Honest, sentimental. Privately printed. Minors Printing, Boone, NC. (1995)

New Left, New Right and Beyond, Geoff Andrews et al. (Univ. Hertfordshire), eds. Revisionism of the 1960s history is fast becoming a merry-go-round: the orthodox interpretation is revised, then re-revised, then re-revised. Here a team of left-wing Brits and Americans re-examine the Great World Wide Proletarian Revolution, conclude that far from being over; ideologically it continues to influence us all in a thousand ways. Sample chapters: "Dialectics of Liberation" (R. Cockett); "The Short Sad Instructive History of the U.S. New Left" (M. Gettleman); "The Libertarian Left" (H. Wainwright); "From Political Blackness to Ethnic Pluralism" (T. Modood); "From Berkeley to Blair" (A. Showstack Sassoon); etc. St. Martin's Press, New York, \$69.95. (1999)

Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology by J.M. Balkin (Yale University). A serious intellectual effort to develop a model or field theory of how, in various cultures, "shared understandings" occur to become ideologies; based on anthropological, philosophical, and evolutionary theory. Purpose is to

better understand political ideology. Yale University Press, \$35. (1999)

Unwinnable Wars: American Power and Ethnic Conflict by David Callahan (Twentieth Century Fund fellow). The new face of war, it seems generally agreed, is communal, tribal, ethno-linguistic and the product of religions, cultures and ancient territorial disputes. And, the author suggests, unwinnable at least as far as American intervention is concerned. The U.S. record to date, which is likely to be continued, is one of indecision, hesitancy, and self-defeat. Often the only thing the disputants agree on is that the Americans don't begin to understand the struggle. The author offers the obvious advice: seek to mediate, be consistent, be cautious. Perhaps there is not much more that can be advised. Hill and Wang, 19 Union Square West, New York, 10003, \$24. (1998)

Global Security Beyond the Millennium: American and Russian Perspectives by Sharyl Cross (San Jose State Univ.); Igor Zevelev (Russian Academy of Sciences and Senior Fellow at U.S. Institute of Peace); Victor Kremenjuk (Institute of USA and Canada Studies) and Vagan Gevorgian (editor, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), eds. How now with the Russians and Americans in the next century, these 16 specialists ask. Much has changed in the relationship, much remains the same. The future, they find, will have us both divided and united by our respective national interests. Policy decisions will turn more on political strategic thinking and less on ideology. St. Martin's Press, New York, \$72. (1999)

The Lost Art of Declaring War by Brian Hallett (University of Illinois). The last time anyone declared war on anyone was in 1945, the USSR vs. Japan. The author is strongly in favor—not for going to war, but for declaring war if that is your intent. A declaration, he says, forces the establishing of a fully reasoned statement. This then can serve to fix clearly political purposes; guide military strategies and hopefully help fix limits that distinguish between justifiable war making--and unjustified devastation. University of Illinois Press, \$36.95 (hardcover), \$16.95 (paperback). (1998)

VIETNAM CENTER BUILDING

Pictured is the architect's rendition of the \$20 million building to be built on the campus of Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. It will be home for what probably will become the largest research center on the Vietnam War anywhere in the world. When completed it will bring together under one roof archival, artifactual, research and educational functions relating to the American Vietnam experience.

The West Wing of the building will be a major state-of-the-art museum embracing Vietnamese history, the French war in Vietnam, and detailed treatment of the American Vietnam experience. With this approach, we expect to gain support from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for regular exhibitions of important Vietnamese cultural artifacts, as well as materials relating to their interpretation of the war. The bulk of the displays will provide interpretations of the American Vietnam experience following a generally middle-of-the-road interpretation. Installed technology will permit presentation of alternate viewpoints.

The East Wing will be devoted to archival activities, administrative offices and class rooms. One level is given over to facilities to accommodate the Vietnam Center's regularly scheduled conference/symposia series. It will be available to Vietnam

veteran groups for reunions, during which Vietnam Center staff will provide specialized presentations on the war, assist veterans to research specific questions in our archival holdings, and enable them to enjoy—and comment critically upon—the exhibitions in the museum wing.

The Vietnam Center building will support vital, important academic research and teaching. It also will remain firmly focused on supporting the needs of American Vietnam veterans, regional primary and high schools' educational needs, and the desire of the general public to re-examine and understand more deeply the American Vietnam experience. And it will function as a central point for growing interactions by Texas Tech with the people of Vietnam and their institutions of higher learning.



AT TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The two major program plans for the Center:

- A \$1 million endowment for an academic exchange program with Vietnam. Initial goal is a program to teach Vietnamese professors to teach American history. At this point we have signed memoranda of understanding with Vietnam National University, Hanoi, and Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City. Both universities have agreed to undertake a program of "American studies" based on American textbooks. As this program develops, we plan to include studies in American political science and modern American literature.

- A \$2 million endowed chair in Vietnam War studies. It will seek to attract high quality undergraduate and graduate students to study at Texas Tech, and to use its growing research resources and, through scholarly publications, the occupant of the chair will communicate to the academic community the importance of the research resources at Texas Tech University. An underlying concept here is that it is not enough simply to gather and preserve records relating to the war. We envision the Chair as the catalyst for research and will generate an intellectual ferment amongst undergraduate and graduate students.



In the longer term, we hope to establish in the new Vietnam Center building an interdisciplinary School of Indochina Studies, with faculty members tenured within the School.

James R. Reckner, Ph.D.
Vietnam Center
Director

 **Vietnam Center**
at TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

The History of Diplomatic Immunity by Linda and Marsha Frey (Ohio State University). History of the development and institutionalizing of the privileges and protections for diplomats from ancient times to the U.N. in New York today. In point of fact, diplomatic immunity is imperative for the proper conduct of foreign relations. Ohio State University Press, \$80. (1998)

North to Canada: Men and Women Against the Vietnam War by James Dickerson. Some 500,000 Americans fled to Canada during the Việt Nam War, says the author (how he arrived at this figure is not explained since most were draft dodgers who did not want to be caught). Some (women mostly) sought to make the maximum political gesture against the war. Book is described as a "resister's eye view." Praeger Publishers, Denver, \$35. (1999)

Aztlán and Vietnam: Chicano and Chicana Experiences of the War, George Mariscal (University of California, San Diego), ed. There is an ugly streak running through the creation of this anthology of articles, fiction, poetry and speeches about Mexican-Americans and the Việt Nam War. Whereas in earlier years, Mexican communities in the U.S. were proudly patriotic, we are to believe here that what the Việt Nam War was all about for them was race and nothing else. With 60 contributors, there is something of a spread in viewpoint, but clearly Mariscal, a Việt Nam vet, sought to search out materials that stick it to the gringo. (Title of his feisty earlier work was *Contradictory Subjects*). The Chicano and Chicana deserve better. University of California Press, Berkeley, \$50 (cloth), \$18.95 (paperback). (1999)

Khmer American by Nancy J. Smith-Hefner (University of Massachusetts at Boston). On the tens of thousands of Cambodians who came to the United States in early 1980s. This is a story of their adjustment, attempts to preserve Buddhist conceptions of morality and sexuality. Author also examines how Khmer cultural heritage affected the children's performance in American schools.

University of California Press, Berkeley, \$55 (cloth), \$19.95 (paperback). (1999)

Cambodian Chronicles 1989-1996 by Raoul Jennar (Belgian political scientist). Raoul Marc Jennar is an ambitious, hardworking scholar of Cambodia. He researches deeply, has excellent contacts (such as King Sihanouk), writes with a deep passion for getting people told. Over the years he has turned out "chronicles" and writings in various formats. Volume I is an effort to pull these together. It covers the period during the run-up and staging of the 1991 Paris Conference and Agreements, is subtitled "Bungling a Peace Plan." It criticizes Thailand's economic "colonization" of Cambodia and collaboration with Khmer Rouge; denounces the weakness and contradictions of the Agreements. White Lotus Press, Bangkok, \$25. (1998)

Secrecy: The American Experience by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (U.S. senator). A major Washington insider, mover and shaker—sagacious and of long experience—addresses the U.S. culture of secrecy, its routinization and its uses, multifarious and otherwise. He calls, and has long crusaded for, less use of the classification stamp and more governmental openness. This is no easy matter in governance. There are two types of secrecy: (1) secret-secrets: any state undertaking whose outcome for success requires that it be unknown, unobserved or unanticipated (Allied landing on the Normandy beaches); and (2) secrets of convenience: any information that if released would invite nontrivial criticism of policies, endeavors or officials. How to distinguish? Yale University Press, New Haven, \$22.50. (1999)

A New and Interesting Description of the Lao Kingdom (1642-1648) by G.E. de Marini (Jesuit priest). One of the few early accounts of Laos (17th cen.). Published in Italian in 1663; translated here for the first time by Walter Taps and Claudia Bertuccio. Collaborator was G.M. Leria who lived in Laos in 1642-48. Detailed description of the Court, religion, customs, livelihood, and character of the Lao people. White Lotus Press, Bangkok, \$19.50. (1998)

Vietnam's Agriculture: The Challenges and Achievements by Trần Thị Quế. An analysis of the nature and impact of reforms on economic growth; changes in production structure; the shifting role of the state in agriculture; and the challenges that continue to confront rural Việt Nam. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, \$24.90. (1998)

The Inviting Call of Wandering Souls by Lữ Văn Thanh (Việt kiều). Its subtitle says it all: "Memoir of an ARVN Liaison Officer to U.S. Forces in Vietnam Who Was Imprisoned in Communist Re-education Camps and Then Escaped." Story begins with the 1968 Tết offensive, ends with the author's arrival in Seattle. With pen and ink drawings by the author. Available from the Cellar Book Shop, Detroit, \$23.50. (1997)

Foreign Relations of the U.S.: 1964-68, Vol. 30: ***China***, David Patterson, (series ed.) Official U.S. State Department history. Deals with US and PRC, Taiwan, Tibet. This period saw the high point of Việt Nam War fighting, which was very much on the minds of leaders in both Beijing and Washington. The U.S. had to turn down Chiang Kai-Shek's offer to help out in Việt Nam by invading the mainland, which the U.S. reasoned would only vastly expand the scope of the Việt Nam War. It was also the time of China's Cultural Revolution turmoil. Available from U.S. Supt. Of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburg, PA 15250-7954, \$41 (\$51.25 foreign orders).

Battling Weather and Terrain in the Conduct of War by Harold Winters, ed. When "Old Hands" memories drift back to Việt Nam, what comes most to mind is the weather—my God how it could rain. In this innovative work, the authors consider the impact of climate, terrain, soil, and vegetation on military operations. Examples: cyclones and Kublai Khan's efforts to invade Japan; World War One battlefields' muddy quagmires; and of course, the dense vegetation that impeded French and American actions in Việt Nam. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore, \$35.95. (1998)

The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the Twentieth Century by Tony Judt. A work worthy of the attention of those who write, teach, think about the French era in Indochina—and perhaps the American as well. Judt examines the French intellectual community from the turn of the century onwards, and finds it wanting. These intellectuals had, of course, vast influence on French colonial policy. After the Dreyfus trial, the fine principles of the French revolution—justice, tolerance, fraternity—began to wither among them. Tunnel vision followed, collective moral anathesia, infatuation with ideas at the expense of reality. The Left was divided and began its long allegiance to Moscow, which regarded colonialism as a window of opportunity. The Right was wary of meddling with French institutions, such as lucrative colonialism. Both were tempted by authoritarianism. There were a few sterling figures among them (those in the subtitle for instance, also foreigners like Koestler, Silone, Milosz) but they always were outsiders. Auden's man-in-the-street observed: an intellectual is a man who is unfaithful to his wife. University of Chicago Press, \$17.50. (1998)

Potpourri of War: Labors of Love Remembered and Memories of Maggie: Martha Raye by Noonie Fortin. Fortin tells the story of the women who served in the military, USO, Red Cross; includes Hollywood stars and relatives of soldiers. Although they didn't carry a gun, these women contributed and made sacrifices. ***Potpourri*** includes a chapter by photo-journalist Susan Christiansen. In her earlier book, ***Maggie***, author writes of the "Old Lady of the Boondocks" who entertained troops in three wars and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993. She was the soldier's "friend, mother, sister, aunt and sometimes nurse." LangMarc Publishing, P.O. Box 33817, San Antonio, TX 78265, \$15 each, \$25 set. (1995)

The Other Side of Heaven, Wayne Karlin, Lê Minh Khuê and Trương Vũ eds. Postwar fiction by 40 authors and eight translators presented in a kind of yin-yang manner. Some of the biggest names here: Robert Olin Butler, Lê Lưu, Philip Caputo, Bảo Ninh, Vũ Bảo, Ward Just, etc. Excellent

introduction to contemporary fiction oriented toward Việt Nam. Karlin writes, "it is time not only to heal wounds but to acknowledge the "mutual seeing of the humanness we hold in common." Karlin is a Việt Nam War veteran and novelist. Khuê is a war veteran, reporter, novelist: she served in the PAVN. Vũ is an ARVN veteran, aerospace engineer, and editor of Vietnamese language journals in the U.S. Curbstone Press, Willimantic, CT, \$17.95. (1995)

Unpublished U.S. Congressional Committee Hearings, 1973-76. Collection of 650 Senate Committee transcripts from the 93rd and 94th Congresses (1973-1976) with indexes. This is the ninth in the unpublished hearings series. We note in this and past installments: Dean Rusk briefing on Southeast Asia (6/15/64); Security Agreements and Commitments in Laos (7/21/70); Briefing by Henry Kissinger (8/26/76). The nine fiche collections range from \$3,505 to \$31,155 each; indexes from \$345 to \$2,585. Congressional Information Service (CIS), 4520 East West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814-3389.

Asia After the Miracle: Redefining U.S. Economic and Security Priorities, Selig Harrison and Clyde Prestowitz, eds. A review and assessment of the geopolitical scene in Asia in terms of newly emerging American economic and security priorities. The work of a 29 person study group in the Economic Strategy Institute co-chairmen: Selig Harrison (Woodrow Wilson Center) and Clyde Prestowitz. Southeast Asia chapters deal chiefly with the economy. A good brief. Published by the Institute, distributed by Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC. (1998)

Tarnished Glory by K.L. Bye. A book of poetry. Bye is bitter about the Việt Nam War: "What color glory, Choreographed white headstones, Shattered lives and minds." His work falls into the kind of popular culture art that B.G. Burkett condemns in *Stolen Valor*. Bye writes: "The proud, The many, Alcoholism, Homelessness, Drug addiction, Driven often to crime." Burkett argues that this sort of negative stereotype is a myth, that most veterans made a successful transition to civilian life.

Turtle Run Publishing, Circle Pines, Minnesota. (1998)

Prisoners by Wayne Karlin (veteran, novelist). Touching story of an Amerasian teenage orphan who escapes from the nightmare of Vietnam to find new nightmares in the U.S. as she searches for her roots in Tidewater, MD. She has a profound effect on 4 whose lives were seared by the war. Basically a book about how the past haunts the present. Curbstone Press, Willimantic, CT, \$19.95. (1998)

The Vietnam Victory Option by Norborne Robinson. Described as a basic reference on the Việt Nam War and era, and as an aid in assessing force as a foreign policy instrument. Divided into: Prologue (1930s through Eisenhower) and Combat (18 chapters of Việt Nam War history). Gram Press, Washington, DC, \$35. (1997)

The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States by Arthur Marwick (British historian). A quite well done history of the rebellious 1960s (1958-74), which among other things, makes it clear the period not only had to do with Việt Nam Author sees as chief historical meaning a breakdown of rigid social rules and hierarchies brought on by the young, the newly invented mass media, and the internationalizing of popular culture. Marwick rejects both conventional interpretations of the achievements of the decade—either trivial or evil—but sees their result as a lasting transformation of rigid social norms, in material conditions and personal freedom. A whopper book in size: 903 pages. Oxford University Press, New York, \$39.95. (1998)

From Both Sides Now: The Poetry of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath, Philip Mahony (poet and teacher), ed. Described as the first ever collection of poetry from both sides in the war, and as a haunting, biting, illuminating anthology seeking to revive awareness of the war. Simon & Schuster, \$16. (1998)

Warring Factions: Cultural Politics and the Vietnam War Narrative by Jim Neilson. Thesis is that commercial and academic interests have shaped fiction writing about Việt Nam, which is then critiqued. University of Mississippi Press, \$45 (hardcover), \$18 (paperback). (1998)

The Mekong River and the Struggle for Indochina: Water, War and Peace by Nguyễn Thị Diệu. Described as an examination of the symbolic, environmental, political and economic importance of the great Mekong River and its basin back through history to the earliest days of man. Praeger Publishers, \$59.95. (1998)

Fine Contemporary Vietnamese Art: Towards the Millennium, from Gallery La Vong (Hong Kong). Twenty of Việt Nam's best artists: Bùi Xuân Phái, Bửu Chi, Đặng Xuân Hòa, Tín, Đào Thanh Dzuý, Đỗ Quang Em, Hà Trí Hiếu, Lê Thanh Sơn, Nguyễn Quan, Nguyễn Sang, Việt Dũng, Nguyễn Trung, Nguyễn Tử Nghiêm, Nguyễn Xuân Tiếp, Phạm Luân, Nguyễn Thanh Bình, Trần Lương, Trần Lưu Hậu, Trần Trung, Trịnh Cung, and Phạm Cẩm Thương. With written critiques. Available from the Gallery 13/F, One Lan Kwai Fong Central, Hong Kong; tel. in US: (203) 661-5850; FAX: (203) 661-3218; \$72 + s/h. (1998)

Oral History in Southeast Asia: Theory and Method, P. Lim Pui Huen, James Morrison, Kwa Chong Guan, eds. Oral history, as a form of scholarship, has become a cottage industry in the U.S. and in Southeast Asia since the 1960s. The past is recorded through first person interviews. Here we find a range of papers on theoretical, methodological, and practical issues in oral history and the singular problems in Southeast Asia. The authors include both academics and practitioners with expertise in anthropology, history, sociology, publishing and archives administration. ISEAS, Singapore, \$44.90. (1998)

Even the Women Must Fight: Memories of War from North Vietnam by Karen G. Turner with Phan Thân Hào. North Việt Nam's "long haired

troopers" numbered, it is estimated, about 200,000 (PAVN, militia, local forces, others). Some were combat troopers, some in service forces, and some were regarded as the "water buffalo of the Revolution." Based on a good deal of research, and numerous oral histories gathered by the author in Việt Nam. John Wiley & Sons, \$25. (1998)

Guerre et Paix en Asie du Sud-Est, Nguyễn Thế Anh and Alain Forest (eds.). The subject is Southeast Asia which here chiefly means Indochina. A culturally oriented historical examination by 15 scholars from most everywhere: France, Việt Nam, Japan, Germany, Britain, and the U.S. The line-up includes Ralph Smith on Indochina "regionalism" in the 16th-19th centuries; Keith Taylor on 13th & 14th century Vietnamese village-court relations; Alain Forest on the Trịnh dynasty military; Nguyễn Thế Anh on Việt Nam's turbulent 18th century; and Pierre Lamant, Sorn Samnang and Gilles de Gantes on France's colonial experiences in Cambodia. In French and English. L'Harmattan, Paris. (1998)



Erratum: The last issue of the *Indochina Chronology* carried an item on Gary Flanagan which correctly should have read: "Gary Flanagan, Joint Task Force Full Accounting, Detachment 2, Hà Nội, while on home leave meets researchers and addresses the public at Texas Tech University (November 12). During his years in Việt Nam, Flanagan has directed more than 1,000 MIA/POW investigations and 100 excavations. He directs, conducts or participates in programs that support the President's Four Areas of Measuring the Progress (in resolution of casualties)."

Bibliography: Periodicals

“Remarks on the 1998 Outturn” by Adam Fforde in Feb. 1999 issue of *Việt Nam: Monthly Economic and Social Analysis*. Projection for economic growth in Việt Nam this year is zero, or close to it. Worst current economic news is the balance of payments problem. The leadership struggle over foreign investment vs. stability remains unresolved.

“Cambodia: Peace or Justice?” by Nate Thayer (correspondent). Foreigners campaign for an international tribunal on Khmer Rouge genocide; Cambodians have mixed feelings--they want justice but also want to keep a fragile peace. A trial could tear apart the society since many KR have returned to mainstream Cambodian politics. Most present-day CPP leaders are one-time KR cadres, and most defected only when they were about to be purged. “Who would arrest whom?” asks Defense Minister Tea Banh. *FEER*, 21 January 1999.

“Losing Faith: Two Vietnamese Sects Disappearing from U.S.” The Cao Đài and Hòa Hảo sects may die out in the U.S., their leaders say, because “young people are not interested in the religion we grew up with.” Language is a major reason, one said because the young do not speak or read good Vietnamese. Scholars say many find the religions irrelevant and have little awareness of their cultural significance. (*Los Angeles Times*, Orange County edition), 7 September 1997.

FEER ran in February and March a three-issue economic survey asking what's next for Asia after its deepest recession in memory: Part I: “Missing Pieces” by economist Jeffrey Sachs on the need for Asian countries to invest in education and political institutions (“social software”); “Buying Binge Blues” by correspondents Faith Keenan and Charles S. Lee on M&A (merger and acquisition) and the reluctance of many Asian businessmen to

dilute ownership of their companies although it may be the only way to get needed funds; and “Trade Winds” by Henny Sender on China's export drive that may take market share away from its neighbors. All in the February 25, 1999, issue. Part II (March 4) offers a panel discussion by six top regional economists, and forecasts by *FEER* correspondents for five leading SE Asian economies: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. Part III (March 11) concluded the series with economic forecasts for China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

“Waterscapes World” by Phan Nguyễn. Travelogue on Lâm Đồng Province in the highlands of southern Việt Nam, land of waterfalls. Foreigners know it best for its capital, the old French hill station of Đà-lạt, set in one of the loveliest regions of Việt Nam: forested mountains, rivers, lakes, cool temperatures, and enough waterfalls surrounding it to be labeled a “waterfall museum.” Da Nhim, Gougah, Prenn, Pong Gua are among the falls the author explores. Easy to visit as one travels along Highway 20 from HCMC to Đà-lạt and beyond. *VIR Timeout*, 1-7 Feb. 1999.

“Consumed by Tragedy” by Từ Giang. The poorest of the working poor in Việt Nam are the *cửu vạn*, day laborers who wait each morning in urban labor markets for someone to hire them. One such is Nguyễn Văn Thanh, a farmer who said he could not earn enough on his allotment of land to support his family; his debts had become so high he “sold” his sons as laborers to a stranger. Now, he looks for work each day at Hà Nội's Giảng Võ St. labor market; on a lucky day he can earn 50,000 đồng (\$3.50) but this is rare. Despondent over his sons, Thanh can think of little else but food. *VIR Timeout*, 11-17 January 1999.

“Back to Vietnam, This Time to Build,” by Mark Landler. New Jersey contractor Samuel Champi and his fellow Việt Nam Vet partners in Point Enterprises International have a license to build 40,000 low-cost apartments in HCMC suburbs, one of the largest American business investments in Việt Nam. And this is business, but also as one said, “it’s nice to go back and do some good.” Champi, an Army engineer during the war, says his project will succeed because it will meet a need: affordable housing for a seriously overcrowded city. *NY Times*, 13 Sept. 1998.

“Take a (betel) Leaf Out of Their Book. . .” by Nguyễn Hanh. The “chew” in Việt Nam is not snuff but *trầu-cau* called simply betel in English (*trầu* is betel leaf and *cau* is areca nut). Aficionados, mainly rural elderly, are instantly recognized by their blackened teeth and red lips and gums. Old women seem to be the main users, and they give many reasons from strong teeth, to beauty (hard to sell today), to fellowship (like having tea). The *trầu-cau* is especially important in betrothal traditions, leading the array of gifts carried by the young man’s family to the home of his bride-to-be. *VIR Timeout*, 4-10 January 1999.

“Banking and Finance Report” by Reed Irvine in *Vietnam Business Journal*, Dec. 1998. A new Việt Nam banking law and a shake-up of top personnel in the State Bank portend to change and improve the Vietnamese banking sector. Article examines the meaning for foreign exchange, trade finance, joint ventures, sovereign risk, insurance, etc. Man behind it all is Nguyễn Tấn Dũng, State Bank Governor, about whom it is said, if he can pull it off, he may become the next prime minister. Technical financial guide behind the Bank is Lê Đức Thụy.

“Opening the Door” by Faith Keenan (correspondent) in *FEER* Feb. 11, 1999. A quarter-century after war ended, and five years after the restoration of diplomatic ties, the relationship between Việt Nam and the United States remains

tense and awkward. Hà Nội has finally taken tentative steps toward agreeing to a U.S. plan to open up its markets. Meanwhile, the fractious Vietnamese exile community in the U.S. tries to keep up the pressure on the Hà Nội regime as political fervor ebbs in the face of economic pragmatism.

“Chance of a Lifetime: Khmer Rouge Offered to Hand Pol Pot to the U.S.” by Nate Thayer (correspondent). *FEER*, Jan. 28, 1999. Revisionist history underway in Cambodia; Pol Pot actually died by his own hand; Ta Mok in March 1998 offered to turn Pol Pot over the U.S., but, Thayer’s sources claim, the U.S. refused.

“The Patient Lives.” An economic monitor of the Vietnamese economy in *FEER* (Feb. 18, 1999). Growth is slipping; foreign investment is rock bottom; exports are stagnating; currency is overvalued. But some think the leadership is beginning to take the necessary recovery steps.

“Half Million Workers Marked Out for Export” in *VIR*, 22 Feb. 1999. In 1999 some 25,000 will go to work abroad. Target for 2020 is ten times this figure. Since 1991 some 66,000 workers have gone abroad—South Korea, Japan, Libya, Laos and the Czech Republic.

“Building Toward a New Future in Vietnam” in *State Magazine Post of the Month*, Feb. 1998. Profile of the U.S. Embassy in Hà Nội and its occupants.

“In Memory of Movies as Grand but Futile Gestures” by Stuart Klawans (film critic). An intellectual look at one time symbolic role models in our society for such subjects as the nature and purposes of warfare, which no longer serve. Klawans does not like “Thin Red Line” because it did not generate controversy as did, for example, “Apocalypse Now” and “Birth of a Nation.” This is because big money is required for making a blockbuster today, he says. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 19, 1999.

“The Year As It Was: A Collection of Great Reporting on Vietnam” by John Stacks (*Time* Nov. 23, 1998). A look back at the magazine’s coverage of the Việt Nam War. “*Time* was upbeat about the effort to defend South Việt Nam against communism.” Then it turned against the war, “due in no small measure to words and pictures from its correspondents...who grew first into skeptics, then to critics.” He calls this “remarkable.”

“New Challenges to Japan’s Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy Making” by Keito Hirata (Univ. of Hawaii). Việt Nam and Cambodia as case studies of Japan’s foreign aid policies. Detailed examination of NGO’s, private sector, state (the “Japan Inc.” approach). In *Pacific Affairs* Fall 1998.

“Refugees in America’s Jails: A Life Sentence,” a “Special Detention Issue” in the January 1999 issue of *Refugee Reports*. Hard hitting sympathetic explanation of the Catch 22 immigration laws that permit prolonged incarceration in lieu of being able to deport. Case history of Trần Minh Trân, legal entrant who, at age 18, was convicted of car theft and five years later still remains a “lifer” at the Federal Detention Center in Oakdale, La. Prolonged incarceration without resolution is a fundamental violation of Anglo-Saxon law achieved when the English people wrested the right from King John in the Magna Carta (1215 A.D.). *Refugee Reports* is a publication from the U.S. Committee on Refugees, 1717 Mass. Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036-20036.

“Vietnam: Family Postal Cards, 1955-75” by Trần Anh Tuấn (philatelist, Oakland, Calif.) in *American Philatelist*, December 1997. The post card in Việt Nam since World War II was a main PTT communication medium since it satisfied the censor’s curiosity. This is a well illustrated lengthy examination. It is aimed at philatelists but should be of interest and use to historians—postage stamps are an underused source of historical data.

“The Asian Miracle, The Asian Contagion, & The U.S.A.” by Theodore Friend. Outlines which things went right in creating the Asian economic miracle, what went wrong to create the present crisis. A prescription for progress in the next century. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, Philadelphia, PA.

“Border Politics and the Broader Politics of Thailand’s International Relations in the 1990s: From Communism to Capitalism” in *Pacific Affairs*, Winter 1998-99. By Paul Battersby (Deakin Univ. Australia). The Thais live in a bad neighborhood, as it is observed, where the fires of nationalism still burn brightly. This tends to push all in that region away from the direction history is pushing most of the world, that is, toward downgrading the importance of territoriality.

“Why Indochina is a Dirty Word” by Jim Placzek (Langara College, Vancouver). Among the more sensitive Vietnamese, “Indochina” is connoted with “French Indochina” with the demand it be eschewed. To geographers it is a neutral term meaning the lands between Thailand and China. Historically, it grew out of “Southeast Asia” which grew out of “Further India.” Placzek finds three definitions for Indochina still in use: (a) all of Southeast Asia (the original meaning); (b) mainland Southeast Asia, but not to include Burma; and (c) Việt Nam, Laos and Cambodia. His point is that the term is “dirty” for some because of its association with the colonial era. (Over the years, Indochina Chronology editors have periodically received letters from readers complaining about the title of our journal. To which we reply: Give us a better geographic description for the three countries and we will adopt it.) From *Formative Visions*, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 1999.

“The Combined Action Program: A Tool for the Future” by Raymond Damm in *Marine Corps Gazette*, Oct. 1998. The Marine Corp CAP concept—putting troops into villages, fighting with the villagers—was one of the most successful counterinsurgency programs of the Việt Nam War.

“Shooting in the Field” by Peter Gilbert (documentary producer) in *Millimeter*, Sept. 1998. An experienced director of Việt Nam documentaries offers some technical guidance for directors, producers and film-makers.

“The Anti-War Movement” in *Congressional Quarterly Researcher*, 28 August 1998. What touched off the massive anti-war campus protests and subsequent violence in 1967 was new rules on student draft deferments.

“John McCain Walks on Water” by Charles Pierce in *Esquire*, May 1998. Biographical sketch of McCain dodging the bullet as a Việt Nam POW, with the Keating Five, etc.

“Unpaid Allies” by David Wagner in *Insight*, Aug. 1998. The Hmong tribal people from Laos played a crucial role as U.S. allies during the Việt Nam War, but never get their due.

“New Stake in Vietnam” in *Engineering News-Record*, Aug. 1998. International construction firms are pushing for contracts in Việt Nam. French contractors especially have returned in droves. But there are jitters among all because of the Asian economic turmoil.

“Big Tobacco Rides East” by Robert Dreyfuss in *Mother Jones*, 1 January 1999. U.S. cigarette sales go up in Việt Nam; cancer rates rise; the government regulatory measures are up in smoke.

“Tailwind: Behind the TV Story of the Year” by Mary Murphy and Dennis McDougal. *TV Guide*, 26 December 1998, began a four part series probing CNN’s claim that the U.S. used nerve gas in the Việt Nam War.

“Justified Doubts” by David Halberstam (author, war correspondent) in *Media Studies Journal*, Fall 1998. He says, “The media have been blamed for somehow exaggerating Tết. To the degree that we reporters had a fault there, it was that

we underestimated, particularly on television, the resilience and strength of the other side.”

“Unfortunate Stupidity” by Winant Sidie (USA Maj. Gen. ret.) in *Media Studies Journal*, Fall 1998. “The Tet offensive was a major military victory for the United States and a most damaging defeat for the enemy. Surely, some of the blame for the fact that most Americans considered it an enemy victory must fall on the media.”

“The Johnson Administration Responds to Sen. Edward Kennedy’s Trip to South Vietnam” by Joseph Palermo in *Peace and Change*, Jan. 1998. Johnson was nervous about it.

“Crusade: George McGovern’s Opposition to the Vietnam War” by Darl Webb in *South Dakota History Journal*, Fall 1998. An explanation and defense.

“Through the Tempest: Staying the Course” in September 1998 issue of *Outdoor Life*. Outdoor recreation in Việt Nam minus the war: hunting the heaviest buck deer of all; worm fiddling; shooting upland game birds in the marijuana fields.

“Practice Tips” by Edward Nowakoski in *Los Angeles Lawyer*, March 1998. Advice, when in Hà Nội, on writing contracts and negotiating business deals.



The Century’s Top News. American news people at the Journalism Museum in suburban Washington were polled to name the century’s top 100 news stories. Number One was The Bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Việt Nam scored three of the 100: No. 62, U.S. troops land in Việt Nam, U.S. bombs North Việt Nam; No. 63, PAVN forces capture Sài Gòn (April 1975); and No. 91, the Gulf of Tonkin incident (1965).

New Publications:

UN in Việt Nam “Overview of Official Development Assistance in Vietnam” (December 1998) on the Internet. The United Nations Development Program website: <http://www.undp.org.vn/> (once on the website, click on “partners” and it will be the last document on the list). Both Vietnamese and English.

War in History, a new journal from Arnold Publishers. “Embracing war in all its aspects...” this journal attempts to understand military history from a broader perspective. Available on-line at: <http://www.arnoldpublishers.com/Journals/Journalpages/09683445.htm> or write to: VIP Mailing Services & Co., Ltd., 60 Priory Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8 JB UK.

Journal of Cold War Studies, new from the MIT Press. Freshly compiled information such as declassified documents and recently released first-person accounts. MIT Press Journals, Five Cambridge Center, Cambridge, MA 02142; tel: (617) 253-2889; FAX: (617) 577-1545; e-mail: journals-orders@mit.edu. For information via the Internet: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/JCWS>

Paideuma, a new electronic journal, (Greek, meaning “a place where something is generated, a place where you learn”) available on the Internet at: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/7867>. Devoted to cultural studies, approached from many different viewpoints.

The Vietnamese American Studies Center at San Francisco State University publishes a Vietnamese-American Studies quarterly newsletter. Address: Vietnamese American Studies Center, San Francisco State University, Department of Asian American Studies, College of Ethnic Studies, 1600 Holloway Ave, San Francisco, CA 94132; tel: (415) 338-6169; FAX: (415) 338-2276; e-mail: chchung@sfsu.edu; mhta@ccsf.cc.ca.us; kyla@sfsu.edu.

Communist and Postcommunist Studies journal can be found at: <http://www.elsevier.nl/locate/jnlmr/03010>. From Vincent Pollard, University of Hawaii.

From Paris comes a monthly Vietnamese magazine which can be found on the Internet at: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/diendan>.

A Europe-based Vietnamese-language literature magazine is also being published in Paris, available on the Internet at: <http://giodong@gmx.de>.

Population and Development Review, quarterly journal published by the Population Council, enters its 25th year. Sociographic studies, policy analysis, review essays, commentary, documents and archival writings – all dealing with population issues. Subscription: Population Council, One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York, NY 10017. \$36/year, \$60/two years.



Book Seller. Nguyễn Trọng Thụy has opened Asia Books Direct in suburban Paris, which stocks some 5,000 titles, most of which come from Asia, also from university and commercial publishers in U.S. and Europe. Catalogs available: Asia-Pacific Strategy and Geopolitics; Việt Nam; Greater China; Chinese Studies; Northeast Asia; Japanese Studies; Southeast Asia; Buddhism and Religions of Asia; South Asia; Indian Studies; Martial Arts; Arts of Asia; and Travel in Asia. Address: Asia Books Direct, 54 Rue Carnot, F-94700 Maisons Alfort; Tel: 33 1 43 53 92 61; FAX:

Papers Received:

Light at the End of the Tunnel, draft manuscript from Andrew Rotter at Colgate University. Subtitle: "A Vietnam War Anthology." Includes writings by dozens of journalists and scholars from the earliest days onward—Robert Shaplen writing about Hồ Chí Minh in his *The Lost Revolution* to Lê Lý Hayslip's "Letting Go" in *When Heaven and Earth Change Places*, etc. To be published later this year.

From the French Embassy in Hà Nội, two monographs, (a) *Cooperation France-Việt Nam: Répertoire Des Formations*, and (b) *Cooperation Việt Nam-France: Répertoire De La Cooperation Technique et Et De La Recherche*. (Both 1997)

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: A Commemorative History 1968-1998. ISEAS was established in 1968 in Singapore as an autonomous regional research center for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia, particularly the many-faceted dimensions and issues of stability and security, economic development, and political and social change. Its research programs are Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSS), Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS), and the ASEAN Transitional Economics Programme (ATEP). It is governed by a 22-member Board of Trustees comprising nominees from the Singapore Government, the National University of Singapore, the various Chambers of Commerce, and professional and civic organizations. A 10-man Executive Committee oversees day-to-day operations; it is chaired by the Director, the Institute's chief academic and administrative officer.

From the U.S. Army War College Commandant, Maj. Gen. Robert Scales: monograph

on *America's Army: Preparing for Tomorrow's Security Challenges*. Army Issue Paper No. 2.

The Gap Between American Society and its Military: Keep It, Defend It, Manage It by John Hillen, Olin Fellow for National Security Studies. Monograph. The gap between the U.S. society at large and the U.S. military over issues such as homosexuality its healthy and should exist.

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Assn. Historical Archive List. Some 500 entries. Materials to be donated to Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University.

The Paris Agreement on Vietnam: Twenty-five Years Later. Transcript of a Washington conference, April 1998. Panel one was moderated by Gen. Alexander Haig, with Steven Morris, Charles Whitehouse, and Peter Rodman. Second panel was moderated by Leslie Gelb with Charles Boyd, Walter McDougal, and Dimitri Simes. Henry Kissinger addressed the conference and participated.

International Conference on Vietnamese Studies, July 1998 in Hà Nội. Included papers by Dega V. Deopik (Director, Center for Vietnamese Studies, Moscow University), Jean-Pierre Drege (Director of EFEO), Shinkichi Eto (President, University of Tokyo), Yuan Yang Gu (Director, Institute of World Economics and Politics), Lê Đăng Doanh (Rector, Central Research Institute of Economic Management), Phạm Minh Hạc (First Vice Chairman, Central Committee for Education and Science), Keith Taylor (Cornell University), Trần Bạch Đằng (HCMC Social Science Council), Trần Văn Giàu (Chairman, HCMC Social Science Council), Gen. Võ Nguyên Giáp (Association of Vietnamese Historians, Hà Nội).

U.S. State Department Report: Cambodia, 1999. Deals with human rights. Annual report.

Foreign Investor Pitfalls and Perils in Vietnam: a Review and Commentary by Irwin Jay Robinson, senior partner, New York City law firm of Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin, Krim and Ballon, and President, Vietnam-American Chamber of Commerce. As title suggests, landmines abound for ex-pats in Việt Nam.

77 Conversations Between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964-1977, Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tonnesson, Nguyễn Vũ Tùng and James G. Hershberg, eds. Working Paper 22 from the Cold War International History Project, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Intermission: A Reflection of My Tour of Duty in South Vietnam, July 1967-July 1968. Manuscript by Spec 5/E5 Donald E. Anderson.

Urban Warfare: Options, Problems and the Future by Daryl G. Press. Report on a conference sponsored by the MIT Security Studies Program, May 1998.

The Principles of War for the Information Age by Robert Leonhard (University of West Virginia). Monograph. Leonhard argues that the tactics which won WWII and the Cold War are outdated, and offers new ideas to win future wars.



Lunar New Year

Welcoming the arrival of the lunar Year of the Cat on February 16, Vietnamese at home and throughout the world celebrated the Tết, their most cherished cultural and religious holiday. Reportedly, 100,000 overseas Vietnamese returned home. Markets bustled with shoppers buying new clothes, flowers, fruits, special foods and sweets, although shopkeepers reported a big drop in sales

from recent years. Still, the Tết traditions were happily observed--as were the efforts of the regime's morality police who reported raiding 564 gaming establishments and arresting 2,400. "There is not a single town or province where this scourge (gambling) does not go on," complained Hà Nội Police Chief Nguyễn Thanh Trường.

One woman told Reuter reporter Dean Yates: "This year is more joyful because society is going forward. In general everything is more beautiful, much more than in the past. Houses are nicer and the food nutritious. We are not as miserable as we were in the past." If the busy dog restaurants along the Red River in Hà Nội prior to the Tết are any gauge, people have money to indulge their taste for luxury food.

But ideas, conditions and fashions change as they do elsewhere. *Vietnam Investment Review* writer Nguyễn Hanh is nostalgic as she recalls the Tets of her childhood when her joy and excitement mirrored that of an American or European child at Christmas. Now, she writes, some of the old customs have declined or changed for the sake of cost, convenience, lifestyle, even safety with the banning of firecrackers in 1994. And people seem more driven by materialism, she says, as fewer shops and offices remain closed for the three or four days of Tết.

Along with new clothes and sprucing up the house, writes *VIR* reporter Bích Ngọc, there are more recent customs such as the purchase of something major for the home—a refrigerator, washing machine, or television—bought with the traditional Tết bonus due employees at the end of the lunar year. (Nine labor strikes during the Tết period were recorded in HCMC, four at joint venture companies. Reasons given: late payment of salaries and bonuses.) More food is purchased from shops or supermarkets than made at home by the family as in the past—especially *bánh chưng*—the essential Tết food in the North. And for leisure time at home these days, videos appear to be the entertainment of choice.

But even if somewhat modernized, the Tết festival retained its most important tradition: family members gathering to renew relationships with each

other and preparing the family altar to reestablish connections with their ancestors.

Người Lao Động (Worker) newspaper reports that a "simple, thrifty" Tết is the choice of more affluent city people. It claimed that Tết shopping in Hồ Chí Minh City had dropped 50% from last year. And Dow Jones Newswires found a similar situation in a survey of 18 shops in Hà Nội and HCMC. Reasons given, were changes in spending habits, worries about the slowing economy, and price increases resulting from the new (Jan. 1) value-added tax. Shopkeepers say people now spend more on a daily basis and less on holiday foods, especially sweets.

Thus, new lifestyles and economic factors may do more to change some aspects of the Tết festival activities than the efforts of Communist governments over the years to eliminate or cut down the "wasteful" indulgence in purchases and lost work days. These efforts at their most stringent had little effect on people's deep desires to keep to their traditions but economic hardship made things difficult 10 or 15 years ago.

A VNA writer recalls "the old miserable days" when Tết shopping was a challenge--"somewhere after the war up to the early 90s." Then, Tết supplies were provided, especially for public employees, by the state trade service, which rationed out the amounts for each person. Even so, hours or even days were spent standing in line to buy the subsidized foods, the well-stocked black market being too costly to patronize. She remembers the New Year Festival of 1985:

"As in previous years, that Tết, my bureau chief again 'flexed his muscles' to buy us some extra pork ration. He contacted his acquaintance in Nghệ An province and was offered a pig on State administered price. The news put everyone of us on elation. Four robust young men were dispatched on a military jeep to the province, which is a full day of bumpy drive from Hà Nội. At a stop on their way back, the pig escaped and ran away. The four men chased it hotly.

"An emergency happened: the pig was hit and killed by a passing truck. The four men had to hire local people to carve out the poor animal while

sending an 'urgent cable' to Hà Nội. The news hit a raw nerve at the office. It was already the night of the 29th of lunar December, only one night before the new year's eve. Hearts sank, but people had no choice but wait for the "dead meat." It would not arrive until 9 p.m. It took us two more hours to distribute the pork among us. 'Well, somebody commented loudly, 'dead meat is still much better than no meat at all.' Nobody said anything, but obviously everyone agreed. Again, we would have another Tết with enough meat on the table.

These days, with much improved conditions, the government issues gentler reminders. Party Secretary Lê Khả Phiêu, in his letter to the nation on the 69th anniversary of the founding of the VCP (Feb. 3), urged all echelons, including the Central Committee and Politburo, to practice thrift during the Tết festival. PM Phan Văn Khải issued a formal directive on Jan. 26 that banned all organizations from spending public funds on gifts or "inappropriate" year-end bonuses, and said annual review meetings and conferences could not be used to organize big parties or present gifts. But most of his directive dealt with orders to ministries and provincial people's committees to provide good services (electricity, transport, health, etc.), take safety precautions, control price gouging, and insure circulation of commodities throughout the country. A number of agencies, including Customs, border-guard forces and Public Security, were asked to create favorable conditions for overseas Vietnamese returning home for the Tết.

Nhân Dân (Feb. 13) reported that the government had freed 184 people from two detention camps in Hà Nội to coincide with the lunar new year. No reason was given for their detention, the paper stating only that they were released for good behavior.

As in the past, the government, provincial agencies and social organizations distributed gifts to the needy, disabled, soldiers, Hero Mothers, war invalids, and widows and families of soldiers. The army units stationed in the nearly uninhabited Spratly archipelago got money, TV sets, radios and cassettes, books, newspapers, food and personal items from various groups.

Names in the News:

Phạm Văn Đồng. Việt Nam's eldest statesman, last of the true "old masters" came out of the shadows to be interviewed by Reuters Television (Feb 11). He wore spotted pajamas, sweat socks and sat in an old wicker chair in the garden of his villa near the Hồ Chí Minh mausoleum. Đồng was the DRV/SRV prime minister for 33 years. Now nearly blind but apparently in good health for his age, officially 93 (he says 95), the television crew was impressed by his sharp mind and his answers that were succinct, and never waffling. The fire still glows, they said. Đồng was one of the Party's chief intellectuals, and generally was considered more Confucian than Marxist, more a pragmatist than an ideologue. He was personally close to Hồ Chí Minh, was unwaveringly loyal to the Party. It is not certain how much influence he wields today (or wants to wield), but generally it is believed he still has enormous influence at the Politburo level if he chooses to use it. The chief interview point he seemed interested in making (which probably represents current thinking of the Politburo) was that Việt Nam should give top priority to tapping the country's internal resources, "even while recognizing the importance of foreign investment." Presumably these "internal strengths" mean an industrious population, abundance of natural resources and an estimated several billion dollars in hard currency and gold stashed in the mattresses (an investment system inherited from the 19th century French). Reuters, Hà Nội, (Dean Yates) Feb 12, 26, 1998.

Trần Phú. The remains of the Vietnamese Communist Party's founding father and first Party Secretary General was found in early January in an unmarked grave in what had been Chợ Quán Hospital cemetery (bulldozed into a park) in HCMC. Trần Phú died at age 27 on September 6, 1931 while under French guard. He had been arrested the previous April, reportedly was tortured,

and went on a prolonged hunger strike. He was born to a gentry family, graduated from Huế high school, went to China in 1926, then to the Orient University of International Communism, Moscow. At the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party meeting in Hong Kong in October 1930 he wrote the Party political manifesto. Phú has been re-buried in his home village in Hà Tĩnh province.

Lt. Gen. Phạm Hồng Sơn. Becomes the second high ranking PAVN officer to voice open dissatisfaction of the VCP. His open letter (faxed anonymously to the AP in Hà Nội) criticizes the Party for its corruption, lack of democracy, and failure to live up to the ideals of Hồ Chí Minh. "The Party decides everything, he says, even the right to arrest and detain people illegally. (Việt Nam's) two ruling mechanisms, the State and the Party, are both cumbersome and costly." (AP Hà Nội Feb 13, 1999)

Takeshi Nakamura. Named new Japanese ambassador to Việt Nam (succeeding Tatsunari Suzuki), Nakamura, 61, comes to Hà Nội from his ambassadorship in Chile. He is a graduate of Kyoto University School of Law, has held diplomatic posts in Africa, Indonesia, and the U.S. He entered the Japanese foreign service in 1962. (Kyodo Jan 19).

Thuận "Scotty" Nguyễn. At Binions Horseshoe Casino, Las Vegas, this 35-year old Việt kiều wins the 29th annual World's Series of Poker and one million dollars. Nguyễn arrived in Chicago from Việt Nam as a teenager, took up serious poker playing under the nickname "The Prince". The championship game was Omaha Hold 'Em (high-low). He played against 350 gamblers. (Las Vegas Sun May 15, 1998)

Col. Gary Hogan. Named Australia's first Defense Attache to Việt Nam Announcements

come in Canberra from Defense Minister John Moore who says Australia in the years ahead hopes to establish a more substantive defense relationship with Việt Nam. (Reuters Feb 19)

Thích Quảng Độ. The famed thorn in the side of the GVN, and then in the side of the SRV, is profiled by *Time*. Correspondent Tim Larimer, "I Wish I Were Free to Fly Out My Window". After the war, Độ criticized the SRV's use of pagodas as storage warehouses, was sent to a re-education camp for 22 months. Released, he was exiled to his native village in Thái Bình province. In 1992 he returned to HCMC, organized a food drive for flood victims, which security officials said was a cover for anti-government activity and jailed him for 20 years. He was released last September and is now under some sort of informal house arrest (A UN official was blocked from visiting him last October). *Time Asia*, Jan 18, 1999.

Nguyễn Thanh Giang. Prominent Vietnamese dissident, arrested (March 4), draws protests from human rights groups in the U.S. and Europe, and a statement by U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin: "A troubling event...we call on Vietnamese authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally." (AP Mar 12)

Judith Banister. Demographic specialist has left the U.S. Census Bureau and moved to Hong Kong. She is author of Vietnam Population Dynamics and Prospects. Banister has specialized in what is called catastrophic demographic studies, i.e. trying scientifically to estimate the devastated populations in countries like Cambodia.

Nguyễn Xuân Ngãi M.D. The San Jose cardiologist (and citizen) was on a medical teaching mission in Việt Nam at the invitation of the Hà Nội government. He was detained by HCMC security police and "brutally interrogated, mentally not physically" – then released. He was welcomed home (March 5) by a crowd of 4,000. He said security police were particularly curious about his People's Action Party of California, of which he is

the founder. Nguyễn was an ARVN doctor at the Nguyễn Văn Học Hospital in Sài Gòn at war's end, spent three years in a re-education camp. He is now affiliated with the Columbia San Jose Medical Center. (San Jose Mercury News, 3/6/99)

Official Bios. The SRV Foreign Ministry March 16, 1999 published biographical profiles of 16 Vietnamese leaders. They are brief, essentially factual, and appear to be intended as handouts for foreign journalists working in Hà Nội. Included are Politburo members and top Foreign Ministry officials; no PAVN. Available on the website of Việt Nam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mofa.gov.vn>



Obituaries

Đoàn Khuê. Former SRV Minister of Defense and long time important PAVN military figure died January 15th of liver cancer at Hà Nội Military Hospital No. 108. He was 75. Khuê joined the Party in 1939 (age 16), was imprisoned for a year by the French. He worked his way up the ranks within the Ministry of Defense and, was its Minister 1991-97. Khuê was regarded as a "political" rather than a "professional" general, one whose rhetoric was feisty, a formidable figure with a stony gaze and thick-set jaw. He was buried with full military honors at Mai Dịch cemetery outside Hà Nội. (VNA, AFP, AP Reuters, Jan. 18, 1999)

Tai Sung An. Professor of political science, author and Việt Nam scholar at Washington College in Maryland. Died at age 67 on December 16, 1998 at Chestertown, Maryland.

Maynard Parker. Việt Nam war correspondent, later editor at *Newsweek* for 17 years. Died October 16, 1998 at age 58. Pneumonia.

THE STUBBORN LITTLE SHOPKEEPER

When the confrontation in Orange County, Calif., began it seemed to be a resumption of the Việt Nam War via street demonstration and the Internet. But along the way, it turned into something else that has engaged Việt kiều across the United States.

It started suddenly on Jan. 17 with a peaceful gathering of some 50 people protesting Trường Văn Trần's display of Hồ Chí Minh's photo in his Hi-Tek TV and VCR shop in "little Sài Gòn", the bustling Vietnamese strip mall in the city of Westminster. A shop employee took the photo down and the demonstrators dispersed. But Trần put it up again the next morning and added the SRV flag (same as the DRV flag before unification), inciting the community and bringing out an angry crowd of 350. Fifteen police officers were deployed. As police escorted Trần to his car after he closed the shop in early afternoon, someone struck him on the back of the head and he fell but was not seriously hurt. Thus began a battle of wills between one stubborn shopkeeper and an equally unyielding community.

On February 15, the eve of Tết (lunar new year), police in riot gear faced around 600 angry demonstrators. By the end of February, crowds had grown to 10,000 or more, and on February 26 a peaceful flashlight vigil drew 15,000 people. A core group insured round-the-clock vigils.

The story, covered daily by Orange County and Los Angeles English and Vietnamese-language media, soon spread across the country and to Việt Nam itself. The AP and NBC assigned reporters, as did Voice of America; the *New York Times* headlined its story, "Passions of Vietnam War are Revived in Little Saigon" and the *Boston Globe* called it a "Divisive Echo of Vietnam: Immigrants in a Free-Speech Standoff." In Hà Nội, the Vietnam News Agency (VNA), Xinhua, Reuters, and Việt Nam's official Party newspaper, *Nhân Dân*, all carried Hà Nội's indignant reaction to the

event. "A flagrant violation of human rights," trumpeted *Nhân Dân*, and a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said the rights of all Vietnamese overseas need to be protected from "the violent behavior of extremists." The Việt kiều naturally found Hà Nội's defense of human rights quite ironic.

Thousands of words, calm and impassioned, flooded the Internet. There was "flaming" and denunciation, reasoned argument, ingenious (if impossible) solutions -- shades of the Việt Nam War. Talk shows on Vietnamese-language radio stations became forums for reactions and feelings about the war, communism, America's First Amendment rights.

By early March, it was reported, the demonstration was becoming a movement. Solidarity rallies were planned in San Jose in northern California and in Houston; in other cities throughout the U.S., Vietnamese-Americans sought to mobilize their communities.

Trần is accused of being a communist, of sympathizing with the SRV government. But what surely was most important of all, his display of the photo and flag were seen by many in the Orange County community as a deliberate insult to their suffering during and after the Việt Nam War. It was not so much the hated symbols themselves that inspired the pain and anger that many described; it was their flaunting by a fellow Vietnamese -- one of their own. Anticommunist banners were hung above the store (now closed), demonstrators marched and sang, a petition drive was started calling for Trần's deportation, and on Jan. 20 his landlord, Danh Nhứt Quách, posted an eviction notice ordering Trần out in 30 days. "He is causing a public hazard and people are losing business," Danh said. "I want him out." His lease prohibits activity that "interferes with tenants' orderly business," the attorney for the owner said.

A superior court judge on Jan. 21, responding to a request filed by the owner, issued a

preliminary order that Trần remove the photo and flag and set a date for a hearing. This, of course, provoked a barrage of commentary on Trần's right, under the First Amendment, to display the items in his shop. Constitutional lawyers, law professors, the ACLU, Vietnamese law students and countless e-mail writers argued over the judge's order and the balance between public order and individual rights.

There was little overt indication that many Việt kiều appreciated the meaning of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment to average Americans, or if they did, that they cared. One Việt kiều legal mind suggested in all seriousness that there could be two first amendments – one for Vietnamese and one for everyone else.

Trần, for his part, denied he is a communist, saying: "I love this community, I love the U.S. and I love Việt Nam." He claims the right to express himself. He believes, on the basis of what he has observed on several trips back to Việt Nam to visit family, that the SRV government has improved the country since he left as a teenager in 1980, that people's lives have changed for the better. These views would not have aroused comment as he apparently has expressed them over the past few years in an occasionally published newsletter, "The Voice of Truth", which has attracted little attention. In it he had urged Hà Nội to improve economic conditions in the country and called on the public to debate him on U.S. normalization of relations with Việt Nam.

But sometime toward the end of the lunar year, something made him escalate discussion into confrontation. He not only put up the photo and the flag, he sent two FAXes challenging anyone to make him take them down. "I defy you all...if you dare to come to take them off."

Trần is not an easy person to understand – or to like. He expresses no doubts, claiming he was trying to force people to face reality. "Once they get past the anger," he said, "they will understand I am right." But others who know him in the community say he is an attention seeker, and his earlier experience in the worldwide Vô Vi meditation group describes a highly charged, if not

fanatic personality. (See excellent *Los Angeles Times* story by Tini Trần, Feb. 25).

At the hearing on February 10, the judge reversed her ruling, saying Trần's display, while "indisputably offensive," was a form of political speech and thus protected. The Vietnamese who jammed the halls outside the courtroom were outraged and circled the courthouse chanting "down with communists." Trần, feisty as ever, went to his store later that day, accompanied by his wife and children, to re-hang the photo and flag. Again, someone pushed him and he fell to the ground; several people shouted, "Let him die! Let the Communist die!"

But suddenly, imperceptibly, the atmosphere changed. As plans got underway for the massive rally on the 26th, the hurt and anger turned into something else: a galvanizing force for community solidarity.

Many young people – second generation Vietnamese -- were getting involved, as were businesses who were donating services and food to protesters, senior citizens and housewives cooking and handing out food, war veterans maintaining security and directing traffic, and all of the above picking up the trash accumulated each day. The rally on Feb. 26, which police estimated at 15,000, was organized by members of 18 youth groups. It attracted busloads of people from Northern California, from Arizona and Texas, even some from Virginia. College students came from all over Southern California. Seven religions were represented by priests and monks who led the crowd in prayers.

Most important, the rally moved the issue from the shopkeeper's action to focus on peace, prosperity and freedom for Việt Nam itself.

At this writing, nothing has really been settled and various attendant issues have arisen, but the atmosphere is calm. Merchants in Little Sài Gòn are again doing business (many claimed they nearly lost their shops for lack of customers during the demonstrations), the Westminster police and Orange County sheriff's offices can get back to normal, and the city can begin toting up the costs of policing the demonstrations and loss of sales tax from shops in Little Sài Gòn.

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