

EDITORIAL NOTE

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Cover: *The world as viewed from Hanoi. Artwork courtesy the Price Communication Group, Lubbock, Texas*

Vietnam Foreign Relations into the New Millenium

General. The Vietnamese language, like diplomatic French, is often purposely vague, made deliberately imprecise so as to obscure more than it reveals. At the Ninth Congress FM Nguyen Duy Nien employed such a semantic dodge in outlining Vietnam's current foreign policy:

"Our message to the world is that socialist orientation, independence, self-reliance and national identity are principles that enhance our national potential and strength, with a constant policy of independence, self-reliance, openness, diversification and multilateralization while seeking partners over the world who strive for peace, independence and development".

Note that in lining up these words and terms especially when using the original Vietnamese (which Hanoi watchers are obliged to do), some terms contradict others. Vietnam tries to have it both ways. (Logic law: when either of two propositions are so related that if one is true, the other must be false). But as they have long said in Moscow, "It is no accident comrade....."

As things stand at the end of the Ninth Congress, these are the five tasks set forth for Vietnam's foreign policy establishment:

- 1) Broaden friendship and cooperate with all countries, and international and regional organizations that respect national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, mutual benefit, non-intervention in each other's internal affairs, without use of force; the settlement of disputes and differences through peaceful negotiations. Fight all acts of peaceful evolution, outside pressure, imposition and hegemony. Attach importance to ties with socialist and neighboring countries, also countries that have traditional friendly relations with Vietnam, both major countries and international organizations of which Vietnam is a member.
- 2) Serve Vietnam's national development and international integration process;

draw in foreign investment and foreign aid; expand markets and outlets for Vietnam's products; promote international labour cooperation; increase tourism, mobilize the overseas Vietnamese community's contributions.

- 3) Actively integrate Vietnam into the world, in the spirit of turning to good account internal strengths, making fullest use of external resources and raising the efficiency of international cooperation. Maintain independence, self-reliance, socialist orientation, national interest, national security, socio-economic stability, national cultural identity and the ecological environment of Vietnam. Increase integration into ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- 4) Combine: bilateral and multilateral relations (including) State diplomacy and Party external affairs; the National Assembly, mass organizations and social organizations. Raise the efficiency of the Party's external relations. Closely combine bilateral and multilateral relations, the State's diplomacy and the external affairs of the Party, the National Assembly, mass, and social organizations. Raise the efficiency and role of the Party's external relations and the people's mutual assistance and cooperation in foreign affairs. National security, defence, economic development are more necessary and important than ever before to form a front of all-peoples defence, security and foreign affairs, thus contributing to National socialist construction and defence.

- 5) Assemble a foreign policy contingent with high political and professional qualifications. Meet the demand and fulfill the tasks set by the Party and government for national industrialization, modernization and international integration.

The basic truth about Vietnamese's external relations is that the society has never had a successful relationship with anyone. Each past relationship over the centuries has thus contained the seeds of its own destruction.

Foreign Policy Principles. What is the ultimate source or origin of relationships? What are the fundamental truths, doctrines and motivating forces on which foreign policy is based? What is the essential right conduct in external behavior?

These questions are being asked anew in Hanoi as they are in other countries in the region. Like elsewhere, they receive differing replies, depending on whether the orientation is diplomatic, strategic, cultural, social, religious or something else. In Vietnam, as elsewhere, there intrude differing leadership perspectives parallel to which is a strong desire to find consensus.

One can report in Vietnam, as elsewhere, proffered statements to the effect that the great overreaching objective is to achieve national unity. People from all religions, social classes, strata, background, gender, ages and localities need to be brought together uniting Party and non-Party members, working people, pensioners, those residing in and outside the country.

Those principles were officially expressed anew by SRV Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Duy Cam at the Ninth Party Congress at its 2001 meeting: "Vietnam's foreign policy is one of "independence, self-reliance and multilateralization closely associated with economic development and national security and defense consolidation."

This sounds fine, can hardly be criticized except when parsed, as it must be by Hanoi watchers working through language deliberately made vague and obscure and when they must then wrestle with conflicting translations.

National Security. Vietnam leaders define security in the same all-encompassing terms used by other remaining Marxist-Leninist societies.

The basic precept is that any effort to alter the status quo is a threat to political stability and national security and is to be dealt with quickly. The threat can come from ideas as well as invading armies. Responsibility for maintaining security rests with all the people, is not simply vested in the police, armed forces, and other coercive elements of the system. National security is regarded as a function of proper communication with, and motivation of, the people by various Party and government organs. This approach, a careful mix of compulsion and persuasion, has created in Vietnam a social discipline that contributed to the success of the Vietnamese Communist Party in the South after unification in 1976.

Official attitudes on national security have risen from an amalgam of the country's heritage, historical experience, internal sociopolitical strengths and weaknesses, and geopolitical position. They are also the product of a singular kind of leadership. The Vietnamese look back at the great events of their past and see themselves as victims of history. They perceive that Vietnam always has been threatened by formidable enemies, frequently has been beleaguered, and on occasion has only narrowly escaped destruction. For centuries China repeatedly sought to establish hegemony over Vietnam. A century of colonial control by the French was shaken off in 1954, following a long, bitter struggle that concluded by planting the seeds for still another political struggle for complete unification of the country. The Vietnamese now perceive their country to be surrounded by hostile neighbors, and dependent on the Soviet Union in an intimate association that is a military alliance in all but name. Internally, the country is viewed as divided by geographic regionalism stemming from ancient cultural differences among the people of the North, Center, and South. Such perceptions are widely held in Hanoi and condition the leadership's thinking about national security.

The central factor in Hanoi's strategic thinking, applicable to both external and internal threats, is the concept of *dau tranh* (struggle). Briefly stated, *dau tranh* strategy is the sustained application of total military and nonmilitary force over long periods of time in pursuit of an objective. Its chief characteristic is its conceptual breadth, for it is of

greater scope than ordinary warfare and requires the total mobilization of a society's resources and psychic energies. The strategy, it is held, is unique to Vietnam. Journals on military theory define these strengths as the heritage of unity and patriotism; the supportive collectivist state system; the technologically and "spiritually" developed armed forces; a superior strategy (the *dau tranh* strategy), the undeviating justice of Vietnam's cause, and the support of the world's progressive forces. The leadership's faith in these strengths emboldens it to take an implacable approach to world affairs and to treat external activities, such as diplomacy, like quasi-military campaigns.

The specific national security issues at the moment are a) the geo-political triangle of US-China-Russia; b) weapons competition; c) the Spratlys

Hanoi strategists have taken sides with Russia and China in opposition to the proposed U.S. National Missile Defense System, the so-called anti-missile umbrella. The system, Hanoi military say, will "sabotage global strategic balance", have an adverse effect on international arms controls and open a two-way arms race in outer space (as say also Moscow, Beijing). Vietnam calls for a multipolar balance of power (US, Europe, Russia, and China), a new "friendship" treaty (strongest sign yet of Hanoi's shared unhappiness with the supremacy of the United States with its plans to build ballistic missiles shield.)

Center of this geopolitical jockeying is Cam Ranh Bay. Vietnam must decide the future of this naval and air base. It is more knotty a problem than first appears. Can there be a determination satisfactory both to China and Russia? The Russians reportedly are keen to hold on to the facilities, in part because doing so would irritate Beijing.

FEER December 28, 2001: "Hanoi has a crucial decision to make: to keep its best port and the adjoining air base as a military center or to develop it as a commercial venture for foreign vessels, including even American warships. The choice will be a clear signal of whether Vietnam will stick to a largely state-dominated economy and a wary foreign policy closely allied to China, or shift to a

more open-door economic policy and broader relations with the West."

Foreign Economic Policies. Second only to national security, the most important issue for diplomats today is the economy. Specifically this has been defined by FM Nguyen Duy Nien (January 2001) as "top priority going to expand product outlets and markets, promote exports, international labor cooperation, attract foreign investment, accelerate tourism and turn to good account the potentials and strengths of the overseas Vietnamese."

China. Beijing officials this winter have been busy as bees in Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia negotiating treaties of friendship with almost all countries in the region, including of course Vietnam. These treaties offer more than mere rhetoric, they offer deals on weapons, road and port construction, trade goods -- motorbikes, steel, pirated DVD's, etc.

As expected, China and Vietnam continue to plant on the Spratlys larger reefs and islets, signal stations, naval dockages or "fishermen's shacks" (poorly disguised military garrisons) that must be regularly provisioned (see below). For all the activity and posturing, a solution there will be years in the making. In the meantime, the issue needn't destabilize relations. China and Vietnam have settled their land-border dispute, and high-level political traffic between Hanoi and Beijing has never been busier. Economic and cultural exchanges are flourishing. China's VP Hu Jintao, in a Vietnam Television and Nhan Dan interview (April 22) called "friendship the precious treasure of the two (Communist) parties and the two peoples. China is convinced that under the CPV leadership of Nong Duc Manh, the Vietnamese people will build their country into a rich, strong, fair, democratic, civilized yet industrialized society." Since the normalization of relations between the two nations, Hu said, relations between the two parties, governments and peoples are now restored and swiftly developing. He said top level leaders frequently exchange visits, while contacts are increasingly expanding in the political, economic, military, scientific, technological and cultural fields. The two countries have signed important agreements: the land boundary treaty, the

agreement on demarcation for the Beibu Gulf over fishery cooperation. In March China delivered a consignment of goods worth 10 million yuan as non-refundable aid to be used to build a dormitory at the Ho Chi Minh National Political Institute. China's State Meteorological Administration (March 22) handed over some meteorological instruments to the Hydrometeorological Service of Vietnam (HMS), (including nine sets of rainfall equipment) under a voluntary cooperation program of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). At the ceremony attended by Chinese Ambassador to Vietnam Qi Jianguo, Director General of HMS Nguyen Cong Thanh described the instruments, made in China, as very suitable to Vietnam's weather conditions.

Russia. The current Vietnamese relationship with Russia, formerly the USSR, was long marked by avarice, mistrust and uncertainty on both sides, as each country tested the utility of close military and economic cooperation. Hanoi's official memory of the past is of a Moscow never being averse to sacrificing Vietnamese interests for marginal Soviet gain. Hence Hanoi officials have little sense of obligation toward Moscow. Moreover, Vietnamese leaders consider Russian mentality to be barbaric, believe Moscow leaders are incapable of grasping Vietnam's worldview or of offering meaningful ideological guidance. Many Asian nations fear that Vietnam will become a Soviet satellite, but the Vietnamese are confident that their nationalist spirit and sheer geographic inaccessibility make that a remote possibility.

Russia sees its relationship with Vietnam as the most promising and the most important exception to its efforts in Asia, most of which have resulted in only modest returns for considerable investment. Although the two countries are bound by mutual interests, they share neither common perceptions nor a common heritage. The forces dividing them seem as strong as the issues that would unite them.

Official Vietnam bemoaned the 1991 collapse of the USSR. On the 83rd anniversary of the Russian Revolution (Nov 7), a *Nhan Dan* editorial, under a front page picture of Lenin, said: "The brutal reality of its sudden collapse is beyond all human comprehension... (Russia) has become just another

exploited developing country selling its natural resources to import Western goods."

A Vietnamese-Russian summit meeting opened in Hanoi with the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Feb 28, 2001). The SRV foreign minister, in an interview in advance of Putin's arrival, said Vietnam considers Russia as its chief strategic partner in the Asia-Pacific region. In the past, he said, "Russia/USSR rendered (us) fraternal military and economic aid....about 300 hydro-electric power generating and heating enterprises, enterprises for oil extraction, for the chemical industry, plants for producing construction materials and food stuffs, roads, bridges, communication which did not exist in Vietnam before, have been constructed in Vietnam with the assistance of Soviet specialists."

Putin was greeted at the presidential palace in Hanoi (March 1, 2001) by a military honor guard, a bouquet of flowers and a band playing Russia's new Soviet-style national anthem. "The Vietnamese people warmly welcome President Putin," said Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong "We think this visit is very important and marks a new stage in Vietnam-Russian relations."

The two sides signed cooperation agreements and then held a joint news conference. Talks were held on the strategic naval base at Cam Ranh Bay on which Moscow's lease expires in 2004. Russia is also seeking fresh arms supply contracts from Vietnam's armed forces, long reliant on Russia's weapons.

Hanoi does not object to the Russian presence at Cam Ranh but wants Moscow to increase lease payments. Moscow's access to the strategic facility (used by the Japanese during World War Two) is eyed enviously by the United States and China. During the Putin visit, the Russian ambassador to Vietnam tells *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* that Russia will increase shipments of arms to Vietnam. "Vietnam I know considers Russian weapons as the best in the world," and "we will expand cooperation with Vietnam in these fields."

Among the developments that emerged from the Summit meeting: A "strategic partnership agreement" was signed. No details offered. Putin said the relationship "has never been just

ideologically based, but has always been one of common strategic interests.”

A bilateral agreement on nuclear power engineering is in the mill and will be signed in the next few months (Min of Industry Dang Vu Chu, February 28, 2001)

What Russian officials called a “serious set of documents” was signed during the summit meeting, including those involving weapon supplies, oil and gas production, telecommunications and atomic energy. SRV ambassador to Russia Ngo Tat To said Russian arms supplies to Vietnam will continue, adding that this cooperation is not directed against third countries and does not disturb the balance of forces in Southeast Asia.

Agreements cut Hanoi’s debt to Moscow by 85 percent and allow for repayment of the remaining sum over 23 years. Before the deal, Moscow had estimated the debit at \$11 billion. Analysts do not expect Vietnamese repayment in hard currency but through business and other concessions. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov told Tass last week the Cam Ranh base would be maintained but Hanoi wanted more rent. “We shall try to find a mutually acceptable solution, although it will require long and difficult talks”.

The Putin visit fueled nostalgia among many Vietnamese who look back fondly to the heyday of socialist cooperation when tens of thousands studied in the former Soviet Union. Many today hold key positions in the Communist hierarchy. “Russia has a very deep influence in Vietnam,” said one native of Hanoi who runs a Russian restaurant in the Vietnamese capital. Moscow helped to train 33,200 Vietnamese officials and 25,000 workers from 1950 including many artists and musicians, not just military officers and political commissars. In 1956 Russian became compulsory in North Vietnam’s schools, and generations were brought up on Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Gorky. “Now Russian influence in Vietnam is more spiritual than economic,” said a man in his 30s who studied in Russia but now works for a South Korean firm in Hanoi.

The regular sea link between Vladivostok-Haiphong-Saigon-Vladivostok has been restored after a long break by the Russian International Logistics company. Russia is exporting trucks,

metals, tractors and construction materials; importing textiles, vegetables, fruits and other foods.

Vietnam and Russia (in March) reached agreement under which Vietnam will start repaying its debt to Russia/USSR. Over the next 23 years Hanoi will pay Moscow \$1.7 billion, 10% in cash, the rest in commodities and investment opportunities. (*FEER*, March 9, 2001)

An official in the “Irkutsk Aircraft Production Amalgamation” joint stock company told Itar

-Tass (Feb 20, 2001) that Siberian aircraft builders are prepared to resume deliveries of Sukhoi combat aircraft to Vietnam. Several years ago, the Amalgamation filled an order placed by Vietnam for the delivery of Su-27 planes. The contract, worth more than 100 million dollars, was filled within a short period of time. At present the aircraft builders work on a series of contracts with India and China.

A Russian naval squadron set sail (late January 2001) on a voyage into the Indian Ocean. It includes two large anti-submarine vessels, the Admiral Vinogradov and the Admiral Panteleyev and an escort tanker, Vladimir Kolechitsky. Sailors will be at sea for two and a half months. This trip is the first step to bring the Russian Navy back to the world’s oceans. The ships are to pay an official visit to the Indian port of Mumbai (Bombay) then will proceed to the Vietnamese port of Danang.

At the 7th meeting of the Vietnam-Russian Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Commercial Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Moscow (Dec 7, 2000), the two sides agreed to boost cooperation in energy, coal mining, the chemical industry, steel manufacture, mechanical engineering, pharmaceuticals, farm produce, food processing, science and technology, education and training. The delegations agreed to focus on oil and gas exploration, exploitation and processing, and devise plans to raise the efficiency of Vietsovpetro, boost cooperation in gas production and speed construction of the Dzung Quat oil refinery in central Vietnam. Khistenko said Russia had always considered Vietnam a strategic partner in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam and Russia signed a banking cooperation agreement to encourage their

commercial banks to establish and expand their networks and to boost economic and commercial relations (Feb 27, 2001) The agreement was signed by Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam Duong Thu Huong and her counterpart from the Central Bank of Russia, V.N. Melnhikov. The bankers agreed to promote cooperation in the provision of banking information, share experiences in banking services between the two countries and with third countries, and exchange experts between the two central banks.

An agreement on bilateral co-operation in economics, trade, and science and technology was reached by the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the International Congress of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (ICIE) of Russia in Hanoi Nov. 21. The VCCI and ICIE will assist in setting up partnerships between Vietnamese businesses and ICIE member countries. They will provide their businesses with information on national policies on industry, trade, taxation and investment as well as international fairs, exhibitions, seminars, etc.

USA. There is remarkably little to be said about US-Hanoi relations this quarter. The all important trade bill remains in limbo, awaiting action in the U.S. Senate (perhaps by July). It may be in serious trouble. There has been diplomatic sparring over unrest in the Highlands involving causes, roles, and human rights and religious freedom. Hanoi asserts none of this is U.S. business. Periodically, Vietnamese officials and think-tankers will lash out at the U.S.: "Imperialist Washington is to blame for all of the world's troubles." (*Nhan Dan*, January 30, 2001). "Imperialist culprits cause wars, led by Americans whose sole and ultimate aim is to eliminate socialism and force other nations to follow the orbit to capitalism led by the US." The charge has some validity. Most Americans would indeed like to see the command economy replaced in Vietnam and some form of representative government, if not democracy, installed. If truth be known, so would most Vietnamese.

Economic concerns run through most of the Hanoi leadership's thinking about the U.S. Trade Minister Vu Khoan (April 20) warned that Vietnam will review the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status accorded to the U.S. if the U.S. Congress does not

move to ratify the trade deal. He said he did not want to deal in threats, would like relations to be free of pressure from either side. "This agreement brings benefits to both sides," he said. "I think it's time to work together to rectify (differences)."

President Bush has yet to bring the trade deal before Congress amid mounting US criticism of Vietnam's human rights record. Émigré dissidents and religious leaders explicitly called on Congress to block ratification at a special hearing on Vietnam held by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. Last winter a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Vietnam resents U.S. "interference" over the issue but is prepared to enter into dialogue: "On human rights and ethnic issues, the two sides are divergent at the moment. We have many times said no state has the right to give judgment on other states. But now the world is moving to more openness and we should be ready to carry out dialogue in goodwill." He said Vietnam would discuss human rights "at the official level" with the U.S. State Department.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is set to visit Hanoi in late July to meet Southeast Asian foreign ministers and Hanoi officials. "It will probably be something of an embarrassment" for Powell if he arrives in Vietnam without the trade agreement approved by Congress, says Virginia Foote, president of the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council. Dog-in-the-manger Trade Representative Robert Zoellick earlier cast doubt on the administration's support for the trade accord, telling the House Ways and Means Committee he had concerns about U.S. market access for Vietnamese textiles.

Whatever else, Vietnam in the months ahead will play an important role in influencing US-China relations, which represents both opportunities and dangers for Hanoi leaders. So far all they have been done is to signal that they will not be drawn into any sort of alliance against China. At the same time, they appear to be working toward some sort of containment or balance-of-power arrangement in Asia, mostly in the name of nonalignment but without giving it any sort of containment spin.

The trade agreement at this writing appears to be the large dark cloud on the horizon. On US-Vietnam relations, the focus is on American businessmen in Vietnam who sharply criticize

Washington trade policy moves, designed carefully to address American domestic criticism. Zoellnick has put forth a plan, supposedly okayed by President Bush, to package the agreement with other trade legislation to be put before the Congress. Said one American businessman in Hanoi: "this is tantamount to reneging on the White House promise for early ratification." "Packaging" could lead to long delays in ratification, something Hanoi does not want but would serve some congressmen's domestic political interests. Delay in submitting this agreement to Congress would damage both the United States' nascent relationship with Vietnam and its influence in Southeast Asia. Peter Ryder, chairman of AMCHAM's Hanoi chapter, said it was a "mystery" how President George W. Bush could talk about benefits of trade and market access at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec while the Vietnam pact was allowed to gather dust. "This is an absolute no-brainer from any free-trade perspective," he said of the Vietnam pact. "(It) is critical for American business in the region."

The Spratlys. The "isles of dangerous places", as they were called by 14th century sailors, remain dangerous places for Sino - Vietnamese relations and troublesome for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Phillippines, Singapore).

China repeatedly reasserts what it calls its "indisputable sovereignty" over the Spratlys (Chinese call them the Nanhsa). Vietnam lays its claims to French-era maps and to archaeological proof. Digs on Big Spratly (Truong Son Lon) in the last five years turned up Vietnamese ceramics dating to the 13th century. Such excavations, said the Chinese, "constitute an infringement on China's sovereignty and are illegal and void." Partly the dispute is a matter of definition. There are 230 or more outcroppings -- some unoccupied; some under water at high tide. If there is any strategic importance, it is the oil underneath. But what is really important is the image these islands represent, as do flags and similar symbols. Vietnam already has a civilian and troop presence in the archipelago, but it is unclear how many islands it occupies. Relations with China have been improving steadily in the past decade since normalization of relations but are anything but conciliatory when it comes to

the Spratlys. The 9th Congress was presented with a ten-year development plan calling for "population settlement on crucial islands in conformity with national defense." Later FM Nguyen Duy Nien at a press conference refused to be drawn into whether the new policy applies to uninhabited islands, but said Vietnam maintains the right to develop the archipelago as it sees fit pending an agreement with claimants. He said Vietnam should also build logistics bases on some islands for "forward movement into open seas and closely combine economic development with maritime security protection," the aim of which is to "form a sea and island economic development strategy". The Chinese garrisons repeatedly have installed sophisticated communications on islands they hold. Beijing could be intent on transferring large areas of the South China Sea from a regime in which warships have immunity from its jurisdiction to one in which permission is required. China cannot enforce such a regime now. But when it is strong enough, it may try to do so, experts say.

Japan. President Taku Yamasaki led a Japanese delegation to Vietnam (October 2000) representing the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentarians' Friendship Alliance comprising representatives of six major Japanese parties to praise Vietnam's renovation process and its position, role and contributions to maintaining peace, stability, co-operation and development in the region, and to express his alliance's desire to make more contributions to further strengthening friendship and co-operation between the two legislatures and peoples. "Japan will continue assisting Vietnam with industrialization and modernization," he said. VCP General Secretary Le Kha Phieu replied: "The Party, State and people of Vietnam have always attached importance to developing friendship and co-operation with Japan and other countries in the region. Vietnam-Japan ties will fruitfully develop, contributing to peace, stability, co-operation and development in the region and the world as a whole."

General Tsueno Isoshima, in Hanoi for a five day visit (Oct 6-10, 2000), tells the press Japan is going to provide "technical military assistance" to PAVN (he did not define the term). He also said

Japan's National Defense Academy will accept more PAVN officers for study.

At a conference in Ho Chinh Minh City on Japanese tourism in Vietnam, Vinh Sinh (University of Alberta) lists four reasons for Vietnam's popularity among Japanese: 1) cheap cost of travel, "far less than to see North America or Europe"; 2) similarity in cultures, "both Japan and Vietnam have built their country from scratch"; 3) shopping is less expensive, especially for footwear, *ao dai* and pottery; 4) good Japanese food available "although more expensive than elsewhere in Southeast Asia." Sinh says young Japanese now experience problems in life, have lost confidence and energy which they can recover by visiting Vietnam.

India. Indian FM Jaswan Singh met with his counterpart, Nguyen Duy Nien (Nov. 2000), when he made Vietnam his first stop on a tour seeking ways to boost regional ties. "We are now finding ways to further strengthen relations," he said. Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes visited (March 2001) amid efforts by both governments to boost their defence ties. Their armed forces are overwhelmingly Russian-supplied. Vietnam is keen to purchase cast-off equipment from India as New Delhi buys new arms from Moscow. New Delhi is also going to expand its role as a center for military training in Asia. The two sides signed an agreement for jungle warfare training of Indian troops fighting ethnic insurgents. The governments are also keen to boost trade ties. In recent years bilateral trade has reached \$150 million a year.

To Be Continued

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Armitage to State

Richard L. Armitage, one of Sec. of State Colin Powell's closest, most trusted friends, has been named deputy secretary of State. Asia specialist, veteran of four tours in Vietnam and an asst. sec. of defense in the Reagan Administration, Armitage was thought to be a shoo-in for No. 2 at the Pentagon. If he was offered that post, associates suggested, he refused it, not wanting to jeopardize his relationship with Powell. Armitage is described as a "brilliant operations man who can get things done." (*New York Times*, 13 February.

Vietnam Traditional Diplomacy

Three works published in Hanoi address the history of Vietnamese foreign relations during the past 50 years: *Fifty Years of Vietnamese Diplomacy 1945-95* by Luu Van Loi (Hanoi intellectual). Introduces the subject with the Ly Dynasty (15th-17th c), a period that the author notes delicately was "a national history that always paid great attention to diplomacy with China". The subsequent 25 chapters fix Ho Chi Minh at the enter of the diplomatic universe, is fairly kind to Bao Dai, portrays Ngo Dien Diem as nothing more than a puppet, and not an effective one at that. In English. (The Gioi Publishers, 2000).

Fifty-Five Years of Ho Chi Minh Diplomacy: A Glorious Stage In History by Nguen Manh Cam (PB member, one time foreign minister). Official foreign policy statement for benefit of the Ninth Congress. Proud and verbose but short on clues of what to expect about future foreign policy decision-making. For example: "Our diplomacy will be based on the principle of equality and assistance...with special attention paid to minimizing our enemies and maximizing our friends."

President Ho Chi Minh: Image of the Nation by Pham Van Dong. Compares Ho with Christ, Sun Yat Sen, Ghandi, as opposed to Hitler the perfidious and Mussolini the clown. It is not true, Dong says, that Ho had two pupils in each eye because he was a genie; he simply had eyes that could see more clearly than others. Tack taken is that Ho was a leader within the Vietnamese culture and that foreign relations more or less took care of themselves. (*Nhan Dan*, April 14-15, 2001).

Negroponte to U.N.

John Negroponte is nominated as United Nations ambassador (14 May), replacing Richard Holbrooke. Some critics had charged that Pres. Bush's failure to submit the formal nomination contributed to loss of the U.S. seat on the UN's Human Rights Commission in a vote earlier in May. Negroponte, 61, is a career diplomat with wide experience in Asia, including Vietnam.

BIBLIOGRAPHY - BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

A Grand Delusion: America's Descent Into Vietnam by Robert Mann (former U.S. Senate aide). A voluminous work (822 pages). Author says it offers a political history of America in the Vietnam War. Essentially it's the view from Capitol Hill. Mechanism used is biography: oral histories, interviews, accounts of internecine struggle, who-flung-dung reportage not much policy analysis). What comes through is endless accounts of Hill debate and political maneuvering, most of it self-canceling as far as history is concerned. Great source on personalities. Look up your favorites -- Wayne Morse, J. William Fulbright, Earnest Gruening, Frank Church, George McGovern, and poor Hubert Humphrey. Personalize politics through out with wealth of detail-- recommended for that purpose. Basic Books \$35.00 (2001)

The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory and the Legacy of Vietnam by Jerry Lembke (Holy Cross). This is perhaps the worst book ever written on the Vietnam War, a distinction comparable to being the tallest mountain in the Himalayas. Not only wrong but also deceitfully in the most evil intellectual way possible. Three million GI's came home from Vietnam and, the author asserts, not one of them, contrary to public opinion, was ever spat upon. No one not once. All reports it happened are myth. So preposterous an assertion about a fact that only a left winger nestled in a left wing academy can get away with it. Evidence seems Jerry to rest huckle on a novel titled Beach Music, by someone named Pat Conroy. The spat-upon myth says the author, is only an alibi for a lost war and chiefly has to do with male fear of loss of body fluid, evil eyes, binary structure and other miscellaneous psycho babble. Properly used this book can serve as a case study in the big lie. As we were learned from Joseph Goebbels, the bigger the lie in propaganda, the easier it is to sell. Jerry seems to shore of the cause of the morale of the few still-active anti-war intellectual in our universities. New York University Press (1998)

Arriving in the Mail With The Above by coincidence was a clipping from the April 11, 2001 Pittsburgh Gazette -- a story about teacher Bob

Rodrigues who took his Chartiers Penn Valley high school class to visit the Wall in Washington: When I returned from Vietnam, at the San Francisco airport, I was harassed by a hippy who had a mustache and bad teeth. He called me a baby burner and locked his arms around my knees. Two airport police looked on. I said to him: "I'm only going to say this once. You don't know me, I don't know you. Let go! He refused, so I slugged him in the mouth. The two policemen came over and pulled him off. He said he wanted to be handcuffed; they refused and pushed him out of the airport. One of them came back and advised me to buy an overcoat to cover up my uniform. Which I did and went home". Anyone working on the Vietnam War has heard dozens of stories like this which we cannot prove to Jerry's satisfaction. But neither can he prove his negative.

Vietnam: Challenges and The Path to Development by Truong Quang (Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand) (ed.). Fifteen academics (Vietnamese, Thai, Dutch, etc offer eight essays on Vietnamese investments, business development, finance, technical training and education; with case histories. Good chapter on "Understanding the Host Country" (management style, public and private structure organization). Funded by Swiss. From AIT PO Box 4, Klong Luang, 12120 Pathum Thani A Thailand.

The Colonial Bastille: A History of Imprisonment in Vietnam 1862-1940 by Peter Zinoman (University California Berkeley) -An original and insightful study of the colonial prison system of French Indochina, and ways it fostered modern political consciousness among the Vietnamese. Using prison memoirs, newspaper articles, and extensive archival records, the author offers significant new information to document how colonial prisons, rather than quelling political dissent and maintaining order, became institutions promoting nationalism and supplying revolutionary education. University of California Press, \$48. (2001)

Our Vietnam: the War, 1954-1975 by J.A. Langguth (University Southern California, New

York Times. Vietnam War correspondent). Well-researched, highly readable history of the Vietnam War. Nothing much new but full of insights and some lost opinions of lesser figures (Vietnamese, journalists, military commanders, foreign service officers.) Langguth has a keen eye for the telling anecdote which, in many ways, is the most useful kind of Vietnam War History writing. Simon and Schuster. \$15.00 (2000)

Battle Notes: Music of the Vietnam War by Lee Andersen (Lake Superior College). Well-researched systematic examination of U.S. pop music to come out of the Vietnam War and later. Sprightly style. Targeted primarily at veterans. Chapters deal with music of protest, music of patriotism, African American music, etc. Useful in class as teaching tool. From Savage Press Box 115, Superior, WI 54880 \$14.95 (2000) E-mail: savpress@spacestar.com

Green Berets in the Vanguard: Inside the Special Forces, 1953-1963 by Chalmer Archer (Northern Virginia College). Life of a young medic in the Highlands early in War. Men of the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment got it from all sides. Nobody loved them, not even the conventional army. USNI Operations Center, 2062 Generals Highway, Annapolis, Maryland \$28.95 (2000)

Distorted Mirror: Southeast Asian Criminality in the U.S. by Jack Willoughby, Ken Sanz, Pete Francisco (eds.) A trio of retired police team up here to do a hands on study of Vietnamese crime in the U.S. Meant in part as a handbook for U.S. police intelligence teams dealing with youth gangs and tracking ethnic crime Southeast Asian criminality in general. But, because what is set down here is rooted proudly in Asian culture it is an invaluable text for such academics as sociologists. Highly authoritative and exceedingly interesting authors -- especially Willoughby late New Orleans police -- are legendary. Not sure a book like this should be loose in general circulation since it is full of suggestions on crime without punishment is possible, i.e. how to pick locks, counterfeit money, cheat Casinos, etc Published by SM&C Sciences, Inc. 13938 Egret Lane, Clearwater, Florida 33638. email: ksanz@aol.com.

America's War in Vietnam: A Short Narrative History by Larry Addington (The Citadel). Classic book on the Vietnam War being reissued by Indiana Press. Useful introduction and a concise reference work. \$29.95 hard copy, \$12.95 paper back (2000)

Reagan, In His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan That Reveal His Revolutionary Vision for America by Ronald Reagan. A top Ronald Reagan advisor said "he knows so little and accomplishes so much. But Reagan knew far more than some people have given him credit for. Here are his early writings, more than a thousand radio addresses on almost every national policy issue. Book will enthrall his devotees, enrage others. Amazon.com \$24.00 (2001)

House of Glass Culture, Modernity, and the State in Southeast Asia by Yao Souchou (editor) Argues for a new approach in writing about the society and cultural experiences of modern Southeast Asian states. The contributors current cultural transformation, globalization, rapid economic and political change. The conventional narratives of developmentalism and state-sponsored nation peace in Southeast Asia. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore \$36.90 (2001)

Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects by Gordon Chang (ed). Essays by historians political scientists and others on the changing role of Asian-Americans in American politics and society. Stanford University Press \$60 hard copy, \$22.95 paper back (2000)

The Leper Colony by Khan Ha A story teller recounts to the boy the tale of a beautiful daughter, sharp and cold, who manages her father's estate near Hue, ruling over the field laborers as a they were of cattle. She contracts leprosy, is banished from the estate, raped by legionnaires; French Moroccan dies, is cremated in her leper colony hut. Her dog lies beside her ashes, refusing food; dog eventually dies. The storyteller moves on. The boy grows into manhood. The story becomes a novel. Xlibris Corp./Random House \$25. (2000)

Elites After State Socialism: Theories and Analysis John Higley and Gyorgy Lengyel. (eds) Essays by American and European scholars on the

economic and political elites that have emerged in ten countries of the former East Bloc.

Rowman and Littlefield. \$64 hard cover, \$24.95 paper back (2001)

Architects of Intervention by Zachary Karabell. Subtitle "The U.S., the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946-62". Study of seven U.S. interventions including a rare look at Laos. Three-way analysis: Washington, Moscow and Vientiane. ISBN: 8 807-2341. \$16.95. (1999)

The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century by Francois Furet (late French historian) by Deborah Furet) Communism, drawing from the icon of the French Revolution bred a strange world of politics and economics in the human heart. It was an illusion challenged by the rise of fascism and led to the submission of the individual to the collective, then to the bitterness of futility and betrayed sacrifices. University of Chicago Press. \$35. (1999)

How We Got Here: The 70's That Brought You Modern Life (For Better or For Worse) by David Frum (*Weekly Standard* editor), Social and cultural influences in the 1960's created in the U.S. a revolution in beliefs and habits that turned a conformist, obedient, puritanical, self-confident people into a permissive, emotional, hedonistic, guilt-ridden mob. Basic Books \$25 (2000)

Blowback by Chalmers Johnson (Japan Research Institute) Book's title, in intelligence community slang, means unintentional and undesirable consequences of official policy like the Vietnam War (although that is not what Johnson primarily has in mind). Rather it deals with disasters in U.S., East Asia, some see Johnson as having joined the American left, or the neo-isolationists. He could do neither; he is the quintessential critic and iconoclast. Read this book as a case of bad luck timing: -- is written at the time when nothing good could be expected in the region, what with the two Koreas still at war after 50 years; the Taiwan Straits a scene of face-off defying resolution; Japan's inability to get its economy in order. All gloomy portends for the future. Then suddenly the sun comes out and the locals begin to deviate into truth. Book has triggered a firestorm among East Asian scholars, which probably pleases

Johnson. Henry Holt, Metropolitan Books. \$26.00 (2000)

The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolution by Arno Mayer. Useful thought-starter for those writing about or teaching the Vietnamese revolution. The three -- French, Russian and Vietnamese take some row: reform to rage to terror, revolutions linked with foreign war. All three were four-fifths rural when began. All three were fueled by fury and opposing ideas. As Clemenceau noted, "Revolution is all of one piece." Princeton University Press. \$35.00 (2000)

Foreign Relations, 1954-68, Vol. XIV Soviet Union From Office of Historian, U.S. Dept. of State, David Patterson (Gen. Ed.). The Johnson Administration policy toward the Soviet Union, begun with modest expectations, ultimately failed to achieve progress chiefly because of Vietnam. From U.S. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. \$59; foreign orders \$73.75 (2001)

Ten em La Hoa ky my Nane is America by Quynh Thi. Some 122 poems by author now living in Houston, Texas. Publishers: South Eastern University Publisher, Houston, Texas. \$8 (2000)

Quang Nam Trong Lich Su (Quang Nam in the History) by Tran Gia Phung (ed). History of Quang Nam province 1306-1997. Articles about prominent scholars and historical figures (Phan Chu Trinh Tran Quy Cap, Huynh Thuc Khang, Phan Chu Trinh, Phan Khoi, Cuu Dien, in Vietnamese from non Nuoc publisher: Toronto, Canada. \$20. (2000)

Vang, Manu va Nuoc Mat (Gold, Blood and Tears) by Pham Huu Trac (ed) by research of the Vietnamese Medical Doctors in re-education camps after the collapse of the South of Viet Nam. Part I: collected from the MDs who were detained had escaped to seek refuge. Part II: essays and articles on re-education camps. Part III: descriptions of terrible conditions, including personal experienced and photos. In Vietnamese. From International Vietnam Physicians Association Canada. (2000)

Patriots and Tyrants: Ten Asian Leaders Ross Marilyn (Arkansas State University) ed. Political lives of Ho Chi Minh, Ngo Dinh Diem,

Sihanouk, Pol Pot, others Comparative study. Rowan Littlefield \$69 hc, \$22.95 pb. (1999)

There to The Bitter End: Ted Serong in Vietnam by Anne Blair (author of Lodge in Vietnam) Legendary Aussie who served early in Vietnam as advisor to the CIA and as trainer of Australian jungle fighters. Always a critic of American military strategy, but to little avail. Biography based on serious diaries and recollections.

Allen and Unwin, \$27.22 (2001)

Natural Resources and National Security: Sources of Conflict and the U.S. Interest Proceedings from a conference (8 May 2000) at U.S. Army War College. Papers and sessions on China, Russia, the Trans-Caucasus. Good geopolitical overview. Published by the co-sponsor, Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, 1717 K St., Washington, DC 20006.

Combat Chaplain: A Thirty-Year Vietnam Battle. Gritty Memoir by Baptist Chaplain James Johnson who offered his ministry not from a pulpit but from the battlefield. He served with a 350-man unit (ninth infantry) for nine months -- saw 96 KIA, 900 WIA; received the bronze star; says he learned "you've never really lived until you've almost died. Now serves in a North Carolina church, says his soul is "no longer in the lost and found department". From University North Carolina Press \$39.95 (2001)

Peace Now: American Society and the Ending of the Vietnam War by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones (University of Edinburgh. Author tracks what happened to social consensus on the Vietnam War among four American social entities: students, Afro-Americans, women and labor. Ascribes a mentality to each that is less neat than that described here. The author, being British, sees the U.S. as more a place of class struggle than do most American academics. Yale University Press (1999).

To Bear Any Burden by Al Santoli (25th Infantry Div trooper, author of numerous writings on the Vietnam War) Reprint of this classic work first published 1985, on the Vietnam war and its aftermath. The words of some of the actors, with the clarity supplied by time, have become pure irony: e.g., Le Duc Tho at the Paris talks (1972): "For the 5th time we have declared clearly the DRV

government and the PRG (Viet Cong) have never wished to force a Communist government on South Vietnam." In all about 60 biographical snippets. Holds up well. Indiana University. (1999)

The New Asian Renaissance; from Colonialism to the Post Cold War by Francois Godement (National Institute of Oriental Languages, Paris) History of today's East Asia which traces stages of growth in nine east and southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam. Compares forms of colonialism and religion in insular and peninsular Asia. Original in French; translated by Elizabeth Parcell. London, New York. \$90 hc, \$27.99pb (1997).

Colonialism Experienced: Vietnamese writings on Colonialism (1900-1931) by Truong Buu Lam, ed. Vietnamese perception of colonialism and its administrative reality. Brief bio statements of 20 best anti-colonial leaders: Phan Boi Chau, Pham Chau Trinh, Cuong De, VNQDD figures, etc. University Michigan Press. \$75 hc, \$19.95 pb (2000)

Just A Sailor: A Navy Diver's Story of Photography, Salvage and Combat by Steven Waterman (member of Navy Underwater Demolition Team in Vietnam). He was anything but just a sailor. His memoir, gruffly honest and humorous, is written with human details that pull no punches. Waterman is now a lobster fisherman in Maine. Ballentine Publishing. \$6.99 (2000)

Gone Native: An NCO's Story by Alan Cornett (Green Beret medic in mid-1960's in Vietnam). He spent seven years in Vietnam and this is his uncensored, unvarnished tale. His editor wanted the memoir titled: "Kids Don't Try This at Home". Cornett came to respect and admire the Vietnamese and their culture, and as part of the Phoenix Program saw the courage of the Vietnamese soldier. He is now working on a book, *The Gray Tiger* about his old sidekick, Phong. Ballentine Books. \$6.99. (2000)

Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social and Cultural Change in the Border Regions by Grant Evans et al., eds. Essays from 16 contributors on China and the barbarians on its rimland. Good treatment of Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Lao influences (but for some reason, nothing on Sino-Cambodian). From White Lotus, Bangkok

and ISEAS, Singapore. \$42 hard copy, \$28.90 paper (2001).

Mission to Siam: Memoir of Jessie MacKinnon Hartzell by Joan Acocella (*New Yorker* writer), ed. Charming description of life in northern Thailand/Laos region by a missionary wife arriving in 1912. It was a time of great cultural change; colonialism was beginning to shudder and die. But it was not all that bad. University Hawaii Press, \$47 hc, \$22.95 pb. (2001)

Directory of Southeast Asianists and Directory of East Asianists. Lists scholars in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Total 144 individuals with their academic training and published works. From National University of Singapore, Shaw Foundation Building, A57 Level 5, Arts Link Singapore 117570. Tel (65) 874 6133/874 3803 Web: www.fas.nus.edu.sg.

When Broken Glass Floats by Chanrithy. On growing up under the Khmer Rouge, W.W. Norton. \$23.95 (2001)

The Vietnamese Americans by Hien Duc Do (Viet kieu San Jose State University). Begins with introduction to Vietnamese culture and history – moves on to early Vietnamese resettlement problems (employment, education, social adjustment); trends; conclusions and prospects. Well done work; meant for those who would know more about these new arrivals. In series on new Americans (South Asians, Taiwanese, Korean, Jewish, etc.) From Greenwood Press. \$39.95 (1999)

The Line of Fire by William J. Crowe, Jr. (ex chairman, JCS), with David Chanoff (writer, biographer). Autobiography that traces events and lessons learned from youthful days in Oklahoma through wars, (hot and cold), and host of military and diplomatic events, especially those of the last decade (new to all incoming Clinton administration). Candid throughout: thinks nukes are least effective for defense; critical of Desert Storm strategy; was special friend of USSR chief of staff. Sections of Vietnam begin with Geneva Accords; touches on advisors' role, riverine force, mass media, command and control, Vietnamese culture, and Clinton (whom he found "refreshingly different"). Simon and Schuster, \$25. (1993)

To Hanoi and Back: The U.S. Air Force and North Vietnam, 1966-1973 by Wayne Thompson (air power historian, at U.S.A.F. History Support Office). In the beginning in the pre-1965 guerilla war of Vietnam there was not much of a place for air power, U.S. Air Force-style. Choppers of course, and Marine style close air support, but not bombing from five-mile miles up. And North Vietnam was off-limits. But then, over time, new technologies were introduced and the U.S. lost patience with Hanoi. That's the story -- the air war, North nothing new here exactly, but well recapitulated history and well written. Smithsonian Institution Press. (2000)

Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community by Nancy Smith-Hefner (Khmer-American), University of California Press (1999); ***Displaced Lives: Stories of Life and Culture from the Khmer in Site II, Thailand***, Lindsay French, Branabas Mam, Tith Wurby, eds., from International Rescue Committee and Craftsman Press, Ltd., Bangkok, (1990)

Asia 2001 Yearbook Michael Westlake (ed.) Once more, (for the 42nd time) comes this excellent wrap-up reference work on the year just past: Regional overview; sectors (trade, currencies, environment, population); and 33 country entries: including of course Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Feer, 18 Whitfield Road, Hong Cong. (2001)

Rumsfield to American Military: "President Bush has spoken about civility, courage, and character – qualities that make this nation special – and he reminded Americans that the strength that matters most is not the strength of arms, but the strength of character expressed in service to something larger than ourselves. This strength of character infuses you, our military men and women, and, as such, you are this nation's ultimate safeguard and blessing. On this Armed Force Day, the American people join me in expressing our deep gratitude to you – patriots who embody the noble spirit of service and sacrifice as you preserve the blessings of our freedom every day. We thank you, and we are enormously proud of your faithful and selfless service."

NEWS OF THE FIELD

Virtual Vietnam Archive. A federal government grant in December of \$461,000 will start the creation at Texas Tech University of all of the Vietnam Archive's non-copyrighted holdings in electronic format for use by anyone with an Internet connection. The grant, from Museum and Library Services in the Dept. of Education, will fund the first phase of this ambitious project to expand significantly access to the Archive's vast collection of Vietnam War and contemporary Vietnam materials. In this phase the project staff will design the necessary infrastructure to include hardware and software requirements, employ and train staff, and transfer the material into electronic format. The first collections should appear on the Archive's web site www.lib.ttu.edu/Vietnam by the end of summer 2001, said Ron Frankum, Archive director. The second phase will focus on the remaining collections, including non-English documents, and work with other institutions with Vietnam collections interested in becoming part of the virtual archive. The third phase will extend to public and private collections in the U.S. and elsewhere. The Vietnam Center will seek funding of some \$1.5 million to complete the second and third phases.

The Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., Collection. This important collection – Adm. Zumwalt's post war personal papers and correspondence, awards and certificates, documents and studies on Agent Orange, numerous photographs from the Vietnam War – was turned over to the Vietnam Center's Archive at Texas Tech Univ. in December 2000 by the Zumwalt family. An exhibit of memorabilia from the collection was opened at the Center's April 2001 conference on "The Advisory Effort and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Vietnam." Zumwalt was Commander, US Naval Forces Vietnam, and Chief of Naval Operations, 1970-74. Until his death in 2000, he was chairman of the Vietnam Center's National Advisory Council. The Vietnam Archive staff is producing a guide to the collection, which when completed will be posted on www.lib.ttu.edu/vietnam

Jay Veith. With the demise of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) printed Daily Reports and the loss of its sister service, JPRS (both U.S. government translation services dating back to WWII), academics, writers, journalists and others lost a valuable research tool. (The cutback was ordered by Congress and dimwitted Washington bureaucrats on the grounds of saving money. For Hanoi watchers at the time it was a grievous loss. U.S. news organizations were just getting established in Vietnam, and from BBC, AFP, and materials snail-mailed to us, there was scant interest, hence, little coverage, of POW/MIA issues. FBIS was scaled back and became World News Connection on the Web

Into this vacuum stepped Jay Veith of Aston, PA, author and self-appointed archivist/supplier of data on Americans who were prisoners of war and those who were or are missing. He has produced three finding aids: FBIS index on POW/MIAs; index of Congressional hearing transcripts; and other data.

On the Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet Veith has indexed FBIS from 1979 to March 2001 (FBIS was scaled back and eventually World News Connection (WNC) came into being with access on the Web.) The spreadsheet has four tabs: (1) WNC material going back to the beginning for those who wish to subscribe to the service; (2) deals with Vietnam War articles; (3) an ongoing attempt to index all articles from English-language Vietnamese periodicals dealing with the war, and (4) entitled FBIS POW/MIA, includes both FBIS and WNC articles, with precedence given to the more public WNC in case of duplication. WNC on the Web offers a free one-week trial subscription after which a subscriber can access its material for \$50 a month.

Veith's other two aids are supplied by him as Word Docs, one an index of U.S. government publications in NTIS and the other an index of all congressional hearings dealing with POW/MIA accounting since 1917. This is a culmination of some six months work for which Veith is to be

commended. He can be reached at 707 Springston Circle, Aston, PA 1904.

Oberdorfer and Tet '68. The topic, *Tet* 1968 in Vietnam, has become a cultural entity in its own right. Books and countless articles on it have been published worldwide in a dozen languages. Sitting on top of the pile is the dean of this subdivision of Vietnam War history, Don Oberdorfer. At the time it was written, Oberdorfer's *Tet* went against the conventional wisdom of academia/media on what happened in 1968, but it has held up well and now prevails over earlier perceptions (including LBJ's). A Cold War International History (CWIH) forum at the Woodrow Wilson Center in March marked the 30th publication anniversary and release of the 4th edition of Oberdorfer's classic work. Johns Hopkins will publish it in the original text with only a new preface. Participants at the forum included Oberdorfer, now Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence at the Nitze School (Johns Hopkins); Harry McPherson, special counsel to President Lyndon Johnson; Amb. Bui Diem, former ambassador from South Vietnam to the U.S.; and John Prados, senior fellow at the National Security Archive who presented new archival findings on the *Tet* offensive.

The CWIHP (Cold War International History Project) is accepting applications from graduate and undergraduate students for summer internships at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC. Available to U.S. residents and foreign students with US student visas (3.0 GPA or higher), two types of internships are offered: Web and journal support and Research assistance. Applications can be sent to Richard Thomas (Web interns) and Nancy Meyers (Research interns) at Woodrow Wilson Center CWIHP, One Woodrow Wilson Plaza, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20004-3027; FAX: (202-691-4184). For information see project's website at <http://cwihip.si.edu>

Fulbright Scholarships. The U.S. embassy in Hanoi announces that 20 to 25 grants in the Fulbright Scholarship Program for 2002 will be available for study in the U.S. in the fields of social sciences, economics, economic development, health, etc. Requirements: university degrees, 4 to

5 years work experience, and good command of written and spoken English. Contact" Fulbright Office in Vietnam, tel: 8314580; e-mail: fulbrightvn@fpt.vn

VCP Web Site. Vietnam's Communist Party officially launched, after a trial run of one year, a 55,000-page web site in Vietnamese and English that includes: Vietnam history, leaders, the Party (policies and current events), and selections from Marx, Engels and Lenin. Find it at <http://www.cpv.org.vn>

CIEE. A good summary of The Council on International Student Exchange program in Vietnam is provided on the internet by Stephen Graw (smg7@cornell.edu). The Council's Study Center at Vietnam National Univ., Hanoi, emphasizes language studies (at several levels) and exposes students to Vietnamese history, contemporary issues, culture and the arts. Its program is suitable for undergraduate and graduate students, and for people wishing to work in Vietnam. Course work and field experience are combined with emphasis on language in the first half of the semester. Those wishing to stay for a second semester may take a "directed independent study" unit with the approval of the resident director and their home institution. For information: Thaveeporn Vasavakul, resident director, at ciee@netnam.org.vn for application material: Daniel Olds, program officer, at dols@ciee.org

Japan's anti-war movement actively campaigned against Japanese government involvement in the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1974. Now, Kyodo reports, Saitama Univ. in Tokyo has been granted access to a large number of documents on the "Peace for Vietnam" Committee, known by the acronym Beheiren. As well as opposing government involvement, the committee reportedly gave support to deserters fleeing SE Asia.

Book Sharing System. Chuck Theusch, who runs an insurance consulting business in Milwaukee, is putting \$25,000 into construction of a library in the Central Highland village of Duc Tho. As chair of the Library Project of Vietnam, he plans to build 10 more libraries and start a book-sharing system, AP reports. Theusch was an army specialist with a mortar platoon in the highlands in

1969-70. He went back two years ago, wanting to help in some way. He suggested rebuilding a washed-out bridge but local officials said a library would be more lasting and could grow. He is now collecting books for the project, which will emphasize sharing rather than every library jealously guarding its own, as is the custom. How-to-do-it books are most desired, he said. The local Library Services Board, representing five counties, has promised to help.

Nixon Tapes. Richard Nixon's heirs and the National Archives have agreed to release for sale to the public more than 1,000 hours of White House tapes. The batch, mainly from 1971-72 (prior to Watergate), is said to contain lengthy Cabinet room meetings and office and telephone conversations dealing with the Vietnam War, civil rights, economic problems and many other issues. John Taylor, director of the Nixon Library, said the family believes Nixon's presidency will be better understood when people learn how the pressures of the war affected him and when they focus on more than the scandal. For details or get an order form, go to the Archives' web site, www.nara.gov/nixon/tapes or phone (301) 713-6950. Price expected to be about \$18 for each 30-minute cassette.

Tan Thuan EPZ. Vietnam's 300-hectare Tan Thuan Export Processing Zone, opened in 1993, now has 152 tenants and 2,000 phone lines, *Asia-Inc* reports in April. It is located 4 km from HCM City center and close to the port. A residential area is 2 km away at the new Saigon South development. Financial incentives are offered for new ventures.

E-Mail and Web Groups. UNDP in Vietnam offers its compilation of e-mail list serves, distribution lists or bulletin boards on a number of topics related to Vietnam, the sub-region (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), and SE Asia as it pertains to the three countries. For a copy, contact UNDP Viet Nam Country Office, Tel. (84 4)825-7495 or e-mail webmanager@undp.org.vn the office also requests information on other useful regional or Vietnam-related lists.

Books to Vietnam. The Vietnamese magazine, *Nhipsong*, continues its book collection program for Vietnam, begun in 1997. Editor Thang

Tran says books on medicine, computer, banking; engineering and environmental studies are desperately needed. The Vietnam Students Assn. at Columbia Univ. has donated money to ship books to the warehouse and Vietnam Assistance to the Handicapped in Washington, DC, has help with shipments to HCMC. Books are destined for HCM General Science Library, Vietnam National Library (Hanoi) and Hanoi Univ. of Technology. Anyone or group wish to donate may send books (PO book rate or UPS) to Thang Tran, 31 Timothy Dr., West Hartford, CT 06110. For information: nhipsong@nhipsong.org

Job Hunting? The Department of African and Asian Languages and Literature, University of Florida, invites applications for a new position of Instructor of Vietnamese language beginning August, 2001. Primary teaching duties are instruction of beginning, intermediate, and advanced level language courses; ability to teach courses on Vietnamese culture desirable. Candidates are required to have an M.A., in linguistics, second language acquisition, or a related field; native or near-native fluency in Vietnamese and English, familiarity with both northern and southern dialects, and previous experience teaching in an English-speaking setting. We seek candidates with some training in new technologies and language areas. Send letter of applications, CV, and three letters of recommendation to Chair, Vietnamese Search Committee, Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures, P.O. Box 115565, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-5565. Deadline for applications is June 4th, 2001. The University of Florida is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

Spies in Asia. "China spies over Asia. China is considered East Asia's No. 1 eavesdropper mounting electronic intelligence-gathering equipment on everything from aircraft to rocky reefs, warships to fishing travelers. It uses such platforms to target a swath from Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam to Japan and South Korea, as well as across US operations in the region."

Conferences

The Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam will hold its 10th conference June 19-21 in Vientiane. Organized by the Fund for Reconciliation and Development (John McAuliff, exec. director), the Forum brings together representatives from various NGOs (academic institutions, foundations, aid and human rights organizations). Numerous panels are scheduled on development and educational programs in each of the three countries. The conference also is open to groups with no current programs but wishing to explore opportunities for cooperative relationships. For more, contact McAuliff at (212) 367-4278 or jmcauliff@igc.org or conference coordinator Susan Hammond in Vientiane at frdev@msn.com

The Second Annual Graduate Student Conference on East Asia, hosted by the Dept. of East Asian Studies, Univ. of Toronto, will be held Oct. 19-20, 2001, on the theme "Asia Interacts." The conference provides a forum for graduate students to meet, interact and present their research in any discipline in the humanities and social sciences relevant to East Asia. Participants are encouraged to form panels of three if possible, with presentations no longer than 15 minutes each. Abstracts of 200 words or less are to be submitted by June 1, 2001. Additional information on the conference website: www.chass.utoronto.ca/easgsc/

The Vietnam IT Forum 2001, held May 17 at Stanford Univ., focused on Vietnam's potential for IT (information technology) development, including cooperative efforts between Vietnam and the U.S. in the IT industry. Co-hosted by Connect Vietnam Network, Stanford, and Sun Microsystems, the forum addressed such issues as software development, outsourcing, telecommunications, and foreign direct investment and financing. Vietnamese officials from the ministries of Science, Technology and Telecommunications Corporation, as well as American officials and representatives of leading IT companies in Silicon Valley are expected to attend.

According to *Saigon Times Daily* the IT market in Vietnam is growing rapidly. The market was valued at US \$191 million in 1998 and US

\$287 million in 2000, a 45.2% increase in two years.

It is projected to grow to US \$699 million in 2003. The bilateral trade agreement signed with the U.S. last year (but still to be approved) is considered likely to boost American investment in Vietnam. Although the IT industry in Vietnam is in its infancy, Vietnam has been dubbed "the second India."

The Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) held a conference in February in Philadelphia on "The Question of Humanitarian Intervention." Keynote speaker was Gen. Alexander Haig. The conference discussed four broad categories: (1) political (Congress-President relations) and the CNN effect; (2) diplomatic; (3) military, and (4) legal. FPRI attempted to assess the most effective means of dealing with the humanitarian crises that are sure to develop in the years ahead, crises on which the U.S. ultimately will have to take a position. On availability of published papers, contact Michael Noonan at (215) 732-3774 or e-mail to fpri@fpri.org

A Vietnam symposium was held April 20-22 at the Johnson Presidential Library, Univ. of Texas, Austin, on the theme "Vietnam: The Search for Peace in the Johnson Years." Keynote address, "Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace," was by Robert Divine (UT), and panels in six sessions considered: (1) What the United States Confronted; (2-3) Allies and Neutrals; (4) Dissenters at Home; (5) Government and the Possibilities for Settlement, and (6) Evaluations. For information on papers, contact Ted Gittinger at (512) 916-5137 ext.265.

"Political Reform and Democratization in East and SE Asia in Light of New Processes of Regional Community Building" is the title of a conference set for May 2002 organized by the Institute for East Asian Studies, Gerhard-Mercator University, Duisburg, Germany (Prof. Dr. Thomas Heberer in charge). Conference will analyze cases of two authoritarian states (China, Vietnam), a multi-ethnic, formerly democratic state with strong authoritarian features (Malaysia), and a democratic state with significant parochial structures and patterns of behavior (Japan).

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Pete Peterson. Ambassador to Vietnam announces (May 23) he has submitted his resignation, effective July 15. His statement says "I hope the administration will soon send the bilateral trade agreement to Congress for ratification which will cap the full normalization of U.S. Vietnam relations." Peterson served in Hanoi for about four years. During the Vietnam War, he was a U.S. Navy pilot, shot down and held as a POW for six years. FM spokesperson Pham Thuy Thanh said that as ambassador he had "actively contributed" to normalizing relations between Vietnam and the U.S., including signing of the BTA.

Nong Duc Manh. The new VCP secretary-general will keep his job as chairman of the National Assembly, at least through the upcoming month-long session. The Assembly works on five-year terms of office, and election for the full leadership will not be held until 2002. An acting chairman is likely to be named to replace Manh at the end of the June meeting. (Reuters, 19 May 01).

Viet Dinh. A true Viet *Kieu* success story. His is a remarkable journey, from a 10-year old fleeing Vietnam in 1978 to a 33-year old law professor (Georgetown) to nominee for US asst. attorney general for policy development. "A spectacular American story," said Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM) as he introduced Dinh to the Senate Judiciary Committee. If confirmed -- and this is expected -- Dinh will be the highest ranking Vietnamese-American legal official in the US. Formerly from Orange County, CA, Dinh is profiled in the *Orange County Register*, 10 May 01.

Henry Kissinger. America's Vietnam wartime secretary of state is the subject of a savage biography by journalist Christopher Hitchens in a *Harper's Magazine* article (Feb. 2001) and a book titled *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* (Verso, formerly traded as New Left Books). Hitchens writes that Kissinger is a deceitful and humorless toad of gross manners who pursued a murderous, unwinnable war. His bill of indictment is a polemical and

relentless assault on all of Kissinger's attributes and his character. One observer notes that Hitchens passes on "any odor he thinks he has sniffed," and is reminded of Ralph Waldo Emerson who, "after reading a less than convincing attack on Plato by an adolescent Oliver Wendell Holmes, advised the youth: 'When you strike at a king you must kill him.'" In this book, Hitchens has "barely grazed a formidable target." (*Economist*, 21 April). A lengthy review by George Jones (Canadian journalist) is in the *Daily Telegraph* (London), 4 May. Kissinger, 77, was hospitalized briefly in October 2000 after suffering a "limited" heart attack.

Vice Adm. Joseph Mobley, the last U.S. POW still on active duty, retired May 1 after a 35-year career in the Navy. He relinquished his command of the Atlantic Fleet's Naval Air Force in April. Mobley was shot down over North Vietnam, captured and held in Hanoi from 1968 to 1973. At his transfer-of-command ceremony, he spoke briefly of his "great time in the Navy" but did not mention his years of captivity. He refused all interview requests. (Sonja Barisic, AP, 12 April)

Hun Sen announces his intention to stay on as prime minister for another 10 years, believing he is the only one who can keep Cambodia at peace. Should he be defeated in the 2003 elections, he said he would become an opposition MP. (AFP, 14 May) Considering the former Khmer Rouge commander's past success in holding onto power, even when his party loses an election, he may well be around for another 10 years. Without a powerful rival creating unrest in the country, Hun Sen has been able to settle Cambodia down to more normal life after decades of civil war and upheaval. This in itself may be enough to insure his tenure. (See *FEER*, 17 May, for Hun Sen on the golf course).

James Kelly, asst. secretary of state, attends the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) meeting in Hanoi to discuss the proposed U.S. missile defense plan with SE Asian leaders. He was enroute from

China where he met with that country's top arms control official and top officials in the Foreign Ministry. Reportedly, Kelly's assurances on the purposes of missile defense did not impress the Chinese. However, a Beijing Univ. specialist on US affairs said President Bush's more open approach on this matter is better than Clinton's. Bush, Zhu Feng said, needs time and experience to deal with China issues. (Channel NewsAsia, 16 May).

Robert F. Drinan, S.J. receives the first Distinguished Service Award of the American Bar Assn. (ABA) Section of Individual Rights and Responsibilities Feb. 16 in San Diego. A priest, a congressman (Mass.), law school dean (Boston College), author, human rights advocate and currently professor at Georgetown Law Center, Drinan has been a major figure in US human rights activities in many countries, including Vietnam. The ABA award recognizes "sustained and extraordinary commitment" that has advanced the mission of "providing leadership to the legal profession in protecting and advancing human rights, civil liberties, and social justice."

Dinh Duc Lap, ideology chief of the Party's youth wing, was reprimanded for a scam,

discovered last September, in which he got a fraudulent degree to use in demanding a pay raise. Lap has written a "self-criticism" for his colleagues, but the trade union daily *Lao Dong*, which revealed the incident in March, demanded more severe punishment. This is one in a series of incidents reported recently in official media on the increasing use of fake degrees and certificates, including by officials such as Lap. A corruption driven by poor pay. (AFP, 29 March).

Pham Gia Kiem The SRV deputy PM calls for barring young people (under 18) from the 27 dance halls in HCM City. Youth must not be exposed to social evils in Vietnam, he says, such as drinking, drugs and prostitution. Some 500 applications have been filed to open karaoke clubs in the city. (*Saigon Daily Times*, 7 May).

Berrigan Brothers. After eight decades, the Berrigan brothers, Philip and Daniel are still up to fervid ways of getting arrested in protests against American military policies, such as development of new weapons systems. Daniel, 80, was arrested in New York in May. Profiled by Francis Clines in *New York Times*, 17 May.

Obituaries

Michael Leifer. One of Britain's finest scholars of the politics and international relations of Southeast Asia, died in London March 23rd after a two year assault by a prostate cancer that spread to his spine. He was 67. Leifer's intimate knowledge of Southeast Asia was internationally respected by academics and by policy makers in the British Foreign Office as well as in the region. His academic career (England, Australia, Singapore) spanned the area's post-colonial developments marked by wars, (especially in Indochina) and dictatorships of the worst kind (Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia). He brought to his studies a deep understanding of how various cultures perceive their own history, social structure and their vulnerabilities. His works include *Cambodia: Search for Security* (1967); *The Foreign Relations*

of the New States (SEAsia) (1974); *ASEAN and the Security of SE Asia* (1989); and most recently, *Singapore's Foreign Policy* (2000) and *Dictionary of Modern Politics of Southeast Asia* (1995).

Trinh Cong Son. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets of HCMC April 4th to pay their respects to the pop singer known as Vietnam's Bob Dylan. He died at Cho Ray Hospital April 1st at age 62, of complications related to diabetes. His funeral cortege wound 20 miles out of the city to the Quang Binh Pagoda where his songs were sung and messages read from around the world. Son, ran afoul of the South Vietnam government for opposing the war. The victorious communists sent him to a re-education camp on the Lao border for four years. Upon his death, the regime gave grudging approval for a high posture funeral.

Official media tried to portray Son as one of the Party's making own, no reference to time spent in reeducation. Son repeatedly said he was merely an opponent all war. A museum as a permanent memorial is to be opened in Binh Quoi. Binh Phuoc Province, next month after this year.

George T. McKahin. Cornell academic, early scholar of Indonesia (*Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*), SE Asia, and critic of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, died January 29, 2001 at age 82. His activism began in 1948 over US involvement in the Indonesia's revolution for which he said Western academics carried a moral responsibility. Works on Vietnam: *The United States in Vietnam* (1967) and *Intervention: How America Became Involved in Vietnam* (1987).

James Rhodes. Ohio governor, whose political career was blighted by the shooting of anti-war activists at Kent State University, died at age 91. On May 2, 1970, National Guardsmen used tear gas and rifle fire against some 700 student demonstrators, killing four and wounding nine. Rhodes was defeated the day after the shootings in his Senate primary election bid; he retired from politics for some years, then returned to run and be elected to a third term as governor. The Kent State Student Senate this year refused to allocate students \$20,000 to observe the killing incident as it has done each year since 1970, saying it was time to move on.

Aleen Minton, who directed an Indochina refugee program in Georgia, died April 9th in Atlanta. She was 80. Her work began, she said, when she wore out her truck hauling mattresses and furniture for Indochina refugees in the 1970s. This grew into the coordination of English classes for hundreds of refugees and the establishment of a 500-member international program at her church. For more than a decade, Minton served as a "social services consultant" for refugees from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam who settled in south Fulton County. She often visited apartment complexes, handing out business cards and referring to a bulging notebook filled with information to help immigrants.

Chhea Song, Cambodia's Minister of Agriculture, 60, died of liver disease in a Phnom Penh hospital April 8th. He previously had

received medical treatment for some months in Vietnam and France. Born in Cambodia's eastern province of Svay Rieng, Chhea Song was named minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries in 1968 (Kyodo News Service).

L. Dean Brown. Career U.S. diplomat who set up and ran the State Department's interagency task force on refugees (1975) died May 2, 2001, of renal failure related to heart and lung disease. He was 80. Most of Brown's career was spent on Mideast diplomacy. He was a rough-riding diplomat who traveled with a pistol at his side (in Jordan during the civil war there in 1970 and in Cyprus in 1975), saying he was determined never to be taken hostage.

Le Dung. Vietnam's famed opera diva died suddenly (30 Jan 2001) of a brain hemorrhage at age 45, only a few days after returning from a three-week tour of the Czech Republic and Poland. Dung was born in Quang Ninh province in 1956, was popular with both opera fans and ordinary people through her TV and radio performances.

MIA Search Mission. Seven American military and nine Vietnamese civilians died April 7 when their Russian-built MI-17 transport helicopter crashed in Central Vietnam. The Americans were identified as Army Lt. Col. Rennie Cory, commander, Detachment 2, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting; Air Force Maj. Charles Lewis, deputy commander; Army Sgt. Tommy Murphy, mortuary affairs team sergeant, Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii; Navy Chief Petty Officer Pedro Gonzales, corpsman; Air Force Sgt. Steven Moser and Sgt. Robert Flynn, linguists. The Vietnamese dead include the three-member crew and four aircraft technicians. Also killed were two members of the Vietnamese agency that assists the U. S. in its investigation and recovery efforts.

John Oakes. Member of the clan that founded the *New York Times* and longtime editorial page editor, died April 5, 2001, at age 87. Under his guidance, the *Times* took an early stand against the Vietnam War. Colleagues described him as a "passionate journalistic voice."

The Ninth Party Congress

Current plans call for Vietnam to have in place by the Year 2010 “a socialist-oriented market economic structure” to be characterized by “different forms of ownership co-existing under State management”. This expression is the essence of the concept to be presented at the Congress in the Party Draft Political Report. It is being prepared by a committee headed by Nguyen Phu Trong (PB member and permanent member of the Ninth Party Congress Documentation Committee). The report stresses that the State-owned sector will control State-owned companies and business cooperatives, which form the two fundamental economic sectors in the country. Trong says the draft report sees the State as “provider of incentive policies for all economic sectors: State-owned, collective, individual, small entrepreneurs, private capitalist, State-capitalist, and foreign-funded. It places sectors under conditions of healthy competition and cooperation for mutual growth.”

The Plan makes these points:

* It envisages restructuring the economy and labor force so that the national gross domestic product (GDP) will double in the coming decade; and will cut the agricultural work force by 50%.

* The development plan takes steps to build a socialist-oriented market economy, modernize and industrialize the country; it puts special focus on agriculture)

* Priority will be given to regions with the potential for high growth, large scale capital mobilization and sustainable infrastructure development. Attention will be given to border areas, which are among the poorest in the country, on the premise that their development will safeguard national territorial sovereignty.

* Special focus is on development of education, training, science and technology, of fundamental importance in promoting the modernization and industrialization process.

* Develop different forms of socialist-oriented markets like the stock market, the real estate market, the scientific and technological market and the labour market. In the next five years the State

will devise a compatible regulatory network over these markets and continue to renew its macro-management tools.

* Education is seen as the process to improve knowledge and intelligence, develop one’s personality and ethics, and promote a socialist outlook on life that places a high value on virtue and kindness.

* The draft also looks at ways to promote community-based unity and social equity while proposing solutions for unemployment, hunger and poverty. Also ways to deal with population and family planning, child care and protection; social security; and wages, salaries and fringe benefits.

* Viet Nam pledges to expand relations with all countries towards becoming a reliable partner, and making worthy contributions to maintaining world peace, national independence and development. The plan encourages overseas Vietnamese (Viet *kieu*) to participate in and contribute to national economic development.

As has been the case with economic policy pronouncements out of Hanoi for the past ten years – some would say the past 40 years -- the tone is both promising and ambiguous.

Leadership Plans:

Ninth Congress leadership planning was central to all but little that was specific was said, as is usually the case. Further, what was said was in context of the Party, not individual careers. Attention was on the link between reforms and efforts to improve the State apparatus, build and rectify the Party. Specific tasks to be undertaken to continue reform of the State apparatus: strengthen the legal system, firmly implement laws, reduce bureaucratic red tape and corruption, and build a pure and strong State under leadership of the Party. The report calls for strengthening the Party politically and ideologically; ensuring consensus; improving leadership; and instilling revolutionary ethics into Party officials and members. It lays great importance on maintaining internal unity, restructuring the Party organization and educating the younger generation of members towards building up a new generation of Party and State leaders, particularly for key, strategic positions; and improving governance by the Party and the State.

Commentary on Vietnamese Leadership

The Ninth Congress clarified some aspects about the direction the Politburo in Hanoi is headed. In the run up it was made clear that the question of leadership was central to all but little specific was said, which usually has been the case with past congresses and plenums. Further, what was said was not in the context of individual careers, but rather the Party. Focus was on the link between reforms and efforts to improve the State leadership. Specific efforts undertaken to continue reform of the State apparatus include strengthening the legal system, firm implementation of laws, reducing bureaucratic red tape and corruption, and "building a pure and strong State of the people and for the people under the leadership of the Party." This calls for "strengthening the Party politically and ideologically; ensuring consensus; improving leadership; and instilling revolutionary ethics into Party officials and members." It lays great importance on "maintaining internal unity, restructuring the Party organization, educating the younger generation of members towards building up a new generation of Party and State leaders, particularly for key, strategic positions; and improving governance by the Party and State." Throughout -- before, during and after the Congress -- top officials have reiterated that they have assigned two major priorities to leaders' duties. One is to "deepen economic reform" and the other is to "open up to the outside world". They also insist that this can be done "without outside interference." From a study of the programs being put forward it is clear the change is to be accomplished by reforming the admittedly dense Vietnamese economic bureaucracy. Le Kha Phieu: "We are going through a lot of difficulties. We have to reform the cadres who grew up during the war. We need technological assistance; we are going to deepen the renewal economic reforms announced in 1986 -- the opening up of the country and our relations with outsiders. That is our project for the new century. Communists don't eat people. Can a dictator walk freely, like I do, through the villages of his people?" (Hugh Scholfield, AFP, 5/22/2000)

The men of the Politburo have never reconciled themselves to the fact that Vietnam is no longer of international importance, that it has been manifesting the universal law of history, the law of change. Leadership's chief task is forever to anticipate change and adapt to it. Vietnam at the end of the Vietnam War stood at the gates of a brave new world, leaders believed. And indeed, in a way, they were right. Then everything changed. PAVN got bogged down in Cambodia after invading in late 1978. Ties with China went into a deep freeze. The economy sank from bad to worse. Vietnam's patron, the Soviet Union, fell, taking with it a defunct ideology.

Today when markets, technology and military might matter, Vietnam comes up short. Foreign investment approvals and disbursements are at their lowest levels since the early 1990s. The most regular official visitors to Hanoi are from Cuba and Laos. Ministers from ASEAN, a club of 10 nations that Vietnam joined in 1995, rarely make bilateral trips. All about Hanoi is change: Asia-wide economic change; North-South Korea change; Taipei-Beijing change. For the Politburo the question is what to make of this? How to handle it? If the first law of history is the Law of Change, the second law is that there is no such thing as Risk Free Change.

Conservative thinking in Hanoi leadership circles still believes that Washington, Beijing, Tokyo and some of the ASEAN capitals have their ambitions directed against Vietnam. In fact-at least in the case of the U.S. and China-Vietnam is of little interest to either. Said one senior diplomat in Hanoi: "There is Cloud Nine paranoia among some in the defense area who really believe that under some circumstances the (two) would attack Vietnam -- admittedly, China has a 2,000 year history of invading Vietnam, but these days Beijing is focused on Taiwan and on seeing that China economic growth does not falter."

Official Statements

Passport and Visa Fees. New fee schedule (MOF Circular 303). Vietnamese and foreign individuals and organizations providing services through Vietnamese representative offices, working in foreign relations or foreign consulates under State management will have no pay fees as follows:

-- Vietnamese with Vietnamese passports: fees for passports include four levels (US \$100, \$50, \$20 and \$10); fees for pass-cards include three levels (US \$30, \$20 and \$10) and fees for repatriation pass-cards include two levels (US \$100 and US \$120).

-- Fees for visas for Vietnamese or foreigners with foreign passports include four levels (US \$25, \$40, \$70 and \$100). Other fees will range from \$5 to \$50.

-- Vietnamese people who reside in China, Laos and Thailand will pay only 50% of stipulated fees and those residing in Cambodia will pay only 20% of stipulated fees, (*Nhan Dan*, 10 July 2000) Vietnamese and Thai carrying ordinary passport are exempted from entry visas. This implements the agreement between Vietnam and Thailand signed on May 9. Duration of stay is up to 30 days from entry, provided that passports remain valid until then. (*Nhan Dan*, 11 July, 2000)

Bureaucratic Reform, P.M. Phan Van Khai (Jan 22) signed an order on reform in the SRV local administration. It details duties of ministries and departments, sorts out discrepancies and eliminates inappropriate regulations, (BBC Jan 21, 2001).

Decision No. 432/2000/QD-NHNNI, Oct 2, 2000. Regulations applicable to institutions use of gold to raise capital and to regulate the Vietnamese dong when value is secured by price of gold. Eleven articles. Applies to gold in all forms, i.e. bars, gold leaf, jewelry. Appears designed to get gold out of Vietnamese mattresses and into the market.

Presidential Determination 2001-15

Subject: Cooperation by Vietnam in Accounting for United States Prisoners of War and Missing in Action: "As provided under section 610 of the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Other Independent Agencies

Appropriations Act, 2001, as contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2001, available to the United States Government, that the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is fully cooperating in good faith with the United States in the following four areas related to achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War:

- 1) resolving discrepancy cases, live sightings, and field activities;
- 2) recovering and repatriating American remains;
- 3) accelerating efforts to provide documents that will help lead to the fullest possible accounting of POW/MIAs; and
- 4) providing further assistance in implementing trilateral investigations with Laos. "I further determine that the appropriate laboratories associated with POW/MIA accounting are thoroughly analyzing remains, material, and other information and fulfilling their responsibilities as set forth in subsection (B) of section 610, and information pertaining to this accounting is being made available to immediate family members in compliance with 50 U.S.C. 435 note. "I have been advised and believe that section 610 is unconstitutional because it purports to use a condition on appropriations as a means to direct my execution of responsibilities that the Constitution commits exclusively to the President. I am providing this determination, as a matter of comity, while reserving the position that the condition enacted in section 610 is unconstitutional. In making this determination, I have taken into account all information available to the United States Government as reported to me the full unilateral Vietnamese efforts, and the concrete results we have attained as a result. Finally, in making this determination, I wish to reaffirm my

continuing personal commitment to the entire POW/MIA community, especially to the immediate families, relatives, friends, and supporters of these brave individuals, and to reconfirm that the central, guiding principle of my Vietnam policy is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action. You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to publish it in the Federal Register (s) George W. Bush (White House Press Office, 202-456-2580) May 11, 2001.

“The Struggle for Mastery in Asia” by James Webb (Marine in Vietnam, Sec of U.S. Navy, author next book Lost Soldiers due out in (September) Asian Wall Street Journal April 13, 2000. A thoughtful essay from one of our best strategic thinkers at work today. (Anything this guy writes, read it heed it). Essay has to do with how to deal with China; Reverse the momentum carried over from the cold war; treat China with caution; send firm clear signals; fix relations with Japan; to U.S. businessmen in China understand it is neither in your interest nor U.S. national interest to advance the ambitions of a hostile, arrogant leadership that seems bent on driving us out of Asia. As for tactics, Webb quotes Sun Tzu’s The Art of War: “Draw them in with the prospect of gain. Take them by confusion. Use anger to throw them into disarray.”

Vietnam Prison Life:

* Conditions are grim, the best to be hoped for is a hard-labor camp; 12-16 hour days confinement at night in crowded, unventilated concrete cells with open toilets and no bedding. Usual prison fare is two bowls of rice per day, sometimes with some fish sauce or a few pieces of rotten fish or vegetables.

* Most prisoners are not let out of their cells regularly. Communal cells are overcrowded; Christian prisoners are thrown in with common criminals. Some prisoners are shackled or chained to the walls. Other prisoners must clean the human waste off of these shackled men. Toilets are simple

open troughs or holes that are “flushed” when buckets of water are provided. The stench can be unbearable.

* Prisoners must deal with insects. Mosquitoes, often bearing malaria or other diseases, are a constant distraction at night; roaches and flies swarm through the cells. During one infestation of black flies, each prisoner had to meet their daily quota of killing 300 flies; despite this, 200 inmates died of disease borne by these flies in a prison of 2000 people.

* Women are treated with similar harshness, with the added torment of being stripped and humiliated by male guards. In one case, a Christian woman in a village was stripped naked, and then paraded before the village children for amusement.

* Family visits are rarely permitted. Families are allowed to bring food to the prisons for family members. Food is often confiscated in the interrogation room before the starving prisoner to induce him or her to give information. If they refuse to cooperate, the food is eaten by the guards.

* For those prisoners who will not cooperate by providing information about church activities or who persist in sharing their faith with other prisoners, there is solitary confinement, being placed in a very small cell with only a small slit in the door or ceiling for light. Reading is not possible, and no bedding is provided and prisoners must sleep on the concrete floors, which can be very cold in the mountain areas or unbearably hot in the tropical lowlands. In the worst cases, inmates are shackled to the floor and must lie in their own waste for days.

Drawn from a report on a World Evangelical Fellowship Religious Conference (Mark Albrecht, conference manager) (May, 2000) Forwarded by E. Phillip Lim, wexity@cyberway.com.sg through SEASIA-L@LIST.MSU.EDU

History Redux

VCP From Congress to Congress. The revised official chronological history of the Vietnamese Communist Party as published for the Ninth Congress:

Founding Congress. Held February 3-7, 1930, in Kowloon (Hong Kong) to merge the Indochina Communist Party and the Annam Communist Party into the Communist Party of Vietnam. On February 24, 1930 the Indochina Communist League was admitted to the Party. The Conference adopted a Political Platform that summarized tactics, programs and statutes; outlined statutes of mass organizations. All drafted by Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh). The Conference elected a Provisional Central Committee of seven members. February 3, 1930 thus became the Foundation Day of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The first Plenum of the Party Central Committee (October, 1930) adopted the Political Platform; renamed the Party the Indochina Communist Party; elected a Central Committee and Tran Phu as General Secretary.

First Congress. March 27 to 31, 1935 in Macau, thirteen delegations representing 600 Party members. It mapped out the three main tasks: to consolidate and develop the Party; to step up mobilization of the masses; and to expand anti-imperialist and anti-war activities. It adopted a Political Resolution, Party Statutes, and resolutions concerning mass mobilization. It elected a 13-member Central Committee with Ha Huy Tap as General Secretary, and appointed Nguyen Ai Quoc Party representative at the Communist International (Comintern). At a Central Committee plenum in March 1938, Nguyen Van Cu was elected Party General Secretary. At the May 1991 plenum Truong-Chinh was elected General Secretary.

Second Congress. Held in Tuyen Quang province Vietnam February 11 to 19, 1951, attended by 211 delegates representing 761,000 Party members. The Congress outlined the tasks of the Vietnamese revolution to do away with colonialism

and imperialism; to win back national independence, freedom, unity; and to defend world peace. It decided to found the Vietnam Worker's Party (VWP) inheriting the traditions of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Indochina Communist Party and adopted the new Political Platform and Party Statutes. The Congress elected a Central Committee consisting of 29 members (19 full members and 10 alternate members). The Central Committee elected the Politburo with eight members (seven full members and 1 alternate member) and the Party Secretariat. Ho Chi Minh was elected President and Truong Chinh was re-elected General Secretary of the Party.

Third Congress. Held in Hanoi September 5 to 10, 1960, with 576 delegates representing 550,000 Party members, 20 foreign delegations attended. The Congress defined the tasks of the Vietnamese revolution as "building socialism in the North and struggling for peaceful national reunification." It adopted the new Party Statute as well as the orientations and tasks of the First Five-Year Plan. It elected a Central Committee of 78 members (47 full members 31 alternates). The Central Committee elected a Politburo consisting of 13 members (11 full members and two alternate members) and a Secretariat of seven members. Ho Chi Minh was re-elected President and Le Duan was elected First Secretary of the Party.

Fourth Congress. Held December 14 to 20, 1976 in Hanoi, 1,008 delegations representing 1.5 million Party members; 29 foreign delegations attended. The Congress marked the complete victory of the struggle for national liberation and reunification, summed-up the great lessons of the protracted war of resistance against US aggression. It was a congress of national unity and nationwide advance towards socialism. It adopted the Party Statutes (revised) and decided to rename the Party the Communist Party of Vietnam. It elected a Central Committee consisting of 133 members (101 full members 32 alternate). The Central Committee

elected a Politburo with 17 members (14 full members and three alternate members) and the Secretariat with nine members. Le Duan was elected Party General Secretary.

Fifth Congress. Held March 27 to 31, 1982 in Hanoi participation 1,033 delegates representing 1.7 million Party members; with 47 foreign delegations. The Congress mapped out the main orientations, tasks and objectives of Vietnam socio-economic development for 1981-1985 period and defined the two strategic tasks of the Party: to build socialism and to defend the socialist Vietnamese homeland. It elected a Central Committee of 152 members (116 full members and 36 alternate members). The Central Committee elected the Politburo with 15 members (13 full members and two alternates) and a Secretariat with 10 members. On July 14, 1986 the Central Committee held a plenum to elect Truong Chinh Party General Secretary, replacing Le Duan who died July 10, 1986.

Sixth Congress. Held in Hanoi December 15 to 18, 1986 attended by 1,129 delegates (two million Party members) with 32 foreign delegations. Worked out all-round renovation (known as *doi moi*) to define the main orientations and objectives of socio-economic development for 1986-1990 period; adopted three major economic programs for the production of food, consumer goods and exports. It elected a Central Committee of 173 members (124 full members and 49 alternate members). The Central Committee elected Politburo composed of 14 members (13 full members and one alternate member) and Secretariat of 13 members. Nguyen Van Linh was elected Party General Secretary. Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong and Le Duc Tho were appointed Central Committee advisors.

War and the Pope

Between 1965 and 1968 the White House sought help from the Vatican to mediate the Vietnam conflict. Lyndon Johnson met twice with Pope Paul VI; sent him at least three personal letters; dispatched numerous emissaries, including his Vice President, to encourage the pontiff's active participation in ending the war. Letters, diplomatic cables and memoranda were released (April 21, 2001) by the U.S. State Department. They paint a portrait of a government desperate to enlist the moral authority of the pope in

its struggle with the deepening conflict. Johnson requested papal declarations critical of North Vietnam, Vatican intervention with Hanoi over the treatment of American prisoners of war and lobbying by Catholic officials in Saigon to open a dialogue with communist sympathizers in South Vietnam. Pope Paul appeared eager to do whatever he could to help secure an end to the conflict but preserving his impartial image, however, and a desire not to be perceived as supporting war, the documents show. The pontiff indicated his support of US goals in Vietnam while stressing his need to remain neutral, but warned Johnson his policies risked failure. I must differentiate my position from yours although I very clearly understand your good intentions and your good hopes. I want to further the solidarity of my agreement with your intentions but you must understand I can never agree to war. He could tell Hanoi's Soviet sponsors Washington truly wanted peace. His hope to visit both North and South Vietnam in December 1968 were dashed by Hanoi's refusal to grant his request thereby forcing a cancellation of the entire papal visit in the interest of neutrality. In late August, (1968) Johnson's aides decided to drop the Vatican as a Vietnam mediator fearing it might undercut the ongoing peace talks in Paris. (AFP, April 21, 2001)

North Vietnam Social Structure and PAVN Casualty Rate

"I explore the path leading (North) Vietnamese men into battle. I consider the relationship between socio-economic status and war mortality. I use data obtained from retrospective information on kin survival and other socioeconomic characteristics given by respondents in the 1995 Vietnam Longitudinal Survey conducted in Vietnam's Red River Delta.

"My findings are opposite to those often cited to describe the experience of young Americans who fought in the Vietnam war. In Vietnam, sons of better-educated fathers bore the burden of war disproportionately in relationship to sons of fathers with less education, both in proportion to serving in the military, and in diminished survival chances in combat. The Vietnamese experience during the American war testifies to the ability of a nation to reorder society temporarily and to persuade higher-

status groups to contribute fully to the war effort. An appreciation of the meaning of this social reshuffling during the American war is critical for understanding the war, Vietnam, and that country's political outlook. (M. Giovanns Merli in Demography, Vol 36, 1-51 February 2000)

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Sad State of Vietnam's Libraries

It's a grand old institution and to lovers of literature and other dedicated bookworms the saving grace of the national library system. Built in 1917 in Hanoi by French colonials as the Indochina Library, it has not escaped the decay which lack of funding has allowed to eat into the country's library network. Up and down Vietnam, most tables in libraries are nowadays taken by students searching for a quiet place to burrow into their textbooks rather than those eager for the myriad outputs of the world of publishing. Stock is often so rundown, and the facilities so decrepit, that seeking out the necessary texts of wisdom can often be a lost, or at least a very trying cause. Tired librarians nationwide are hoping for announcements that Hanoi is going to fix the problem and maybe turn things around.

Vietnam's Young Intellectuals

Question: The older generation was armed to the teeth with ideals. What of the current generation?
 Answer: "It's sad that today's generation will do anything to get more tickets, that's what they call American hundred dollar bills. They denounce the Party one-day and cajole it the next for same purpose. The rule is, in order to be nominated to a management position or buy your way into a lucrative position; you must first be a member of the Party. Therefore, some even in their 50's raise their hands and swear, "I love the Party very much". The truth is they despise the Party, but join it to advance to the next rung and receive some benefit. They can raise their hands solemnly taking the oath of allegiance to the Party and right afterward at a nearby café tell others the real reasons of their affiliation. As for the younger generation, the most ethical think only of learning a foreign language to work for a foreign company. That is their highest ideal. As for the less ethical, the children of the high-ranking officials, they open their own companies to convert their parents' political

power into real money and themselves into big bosses. Such phenomenon is common. The lowly people try to send their children to school in hope of future jobs that can bring them a few tickets. "As a result, people of my generation are considered insane. Those of current generation want to live only for the present. They eat, sleep, dance, and so on, to seek physical comfort first and foremost. That has become the rule with very few exceptions in our society today." (Doug Thu Huong, Radio Free Asia interview July 4, 2000)

Trimming the Labor Force

The SRV government has ordered major reductions in the size of the public sector work force. Plans call for a 15% decrease by the end of 2001. This is to be accomplished by freeze on hiring, implementing early retirement and contracting out some economic activity to the private sector. The order affects five million workers, some 30 percent whom are deemed unqualified for their present positions. To cushion the blow new policies on retirement allowances, unemployment insurance and pension policies will be introduced. At the present time some two million workers draw pension allowances (75% of their original, pre-retirement salary).

The dense quarter of the labor force in Vietnam's state run enterprises takes the form of overstaffing and general inefficiency, hold over from the years in which no private business was allowed and all planning was centralized. Foreign aid donors have long urged Hanoi to tackle such administrative reforms, although Vietnam embarked on market-orientated reforms in the mid-1980s, the labour sector remains bloated and grindingly inefficient.

Vietnam Eateries Too cute for words are some the names of some of the new restaurants and watering holes in Hanoi:

- Pizza Schmizza
- World Is My Oyster
- The Hue Forward (too,too cute)
- You Can Canton US (Sounds like Win Ben Stein's Money)
- Malay Your Cuisine on Me (don't get it)

Robert Kerrey

This much seems clear: one midnight in February, 32 years ago, Lt. Robert Kerrey led a U.S. Navy Seal team into a Mekong Delta village on a Phoenix operation. Its mission: to assassinate the NLF (Viet Cong) guerrilla leaders believed assembled there for a battle plan meeting. Shots were fired. The team departed, leaving (Hanoi says today) 13 dead Vietnamese women and children.

That is as much as we know for certain, about all we will ever know for certain. Later there was disagreement among the Americans as to what transpired. The incident then, as today, is a puzzle in many parts, and probably will so remain.

Rationale. The action was part of what was called the Phoenix Program, which in turn was part of the Census Grievance Program (which critics have always labeled a euphemism but was not). It was a precise program, modeled after the British action in Malaya during the Emergency there, designed to separate the CT guerrilla leaders from their followers one way or another (bribes, assassinations, etc.). The program in Vietnam had a long and complicated history, and is poorly understood by most who write on the war in general.

The Order came from a committee in Saigon composed mostly of Vietnamese, one of hundreds of such decisions made during the war, and was based on evaluation of available "intelligence plots": i.e., aerial surveillance, combat night patrols, people sniffers, penetration agents, information sold by travelers, peddlers, bus drivers. For the committee, the information seemed reliable.

The Story. Mass media in the U.S. got wind of the story at the time of the event, and again, in renewed attention, in 1998. Mainline newspapers were timid. Kerrey, after all, was a Medal of Honor winner, a respected U.S. senator. Even as the *New York Times Magazine* got into the story (by Gregory Vistica), there was editorial doubt and disputation. Most of the story of deliberate shooting of civilians had to be hung on one team member who had psychological problems (German-born, guilt-ridden over the holocaust record, alcoholic) and whose account was challenged by Kerrey and other team

members. They said the civilians were casualties of the firefight that started after the team was fired on. Nevertheless, the magazine eventually decided to run the story, treating it in more or less typical style: "Kerrey's hands trembled in a 1998 meeting when he was handed documents . . . the event prompted fleeting thoughts of suicide", etc. CBS's "Sixty Minutes" version was characterized chiefly by its dogmatism (knowing things it could not possibly have known).

The *Times Magazine* story did include one report, what writer James Webb called probably the "most objective account available". It was an Army radio transmission made two days after the patrol, reporting that an old man from the village came to district headquarters with claims for retribution for "alleged atrocities" on the night in question. "So far it appears 24 people were killed. 13 were women and children and one old man. 11 were unidentified and assumed to be VC." This seems to support Kerrey's account of taking and returning fire as well as the number of women and children killed.

Coming to Judgment. In objective terms, it is virtually impossible, particularly at this late date and given the dearth of objective data, to arrive at the truth. What we have is a proliferation of subjective judgments, which can be made by anyone, anywhere, whatever basis is chosen. These examples:

"In any battle situation, you can have two people or a dozen people involved and you will get different stories. This was a war in which there were no boundaries between the good guys and the bad guys. Once you left the confines of your security base, you didn't know who the enemy were. They could be farmers during the day and soldiers at night." (Richard Jackson, Atlanta banker, who commanded a Marine rifle company in Vietnam, author of *Yesterdays Are Forever*.)

"In a good war the righteousness of the cause sanctifies the experience of all who fought. In a bad war everyone lies. Innocents are slaughtered. Villages are destroyed to save them. Combatants are corrupted. Casualties in a good war are martyrs. In a bad war they are the wages of sin. But this notion, as a veteran of any war can attest, is simplistic and completely wrong." (John McCain)

“Who stands with me in being amazed once again by this public discourse, this soul searching over Bob Kerrey. . .hounded wherever he goes by allegations ...? Politicians are supposed to be scrutinized by their opponents, various public interest organizations, and the press. Why now when one accuser comes forward to lodge grisly and extraordinary charges against an American war hero, charges refuted by six other soldiers who were with the accuser and supported only by our enemies still living in a totalitarian state, are the television program “60 Minutes” and the *New York Times Magazine* lending these charges such heft? Why are so many hitherto friends of Mr. Kerrey now viewing him as suspicious? Why are so many of the faculty at the New University where he was raised to the presidency now in an emotional boil?”

“We have had decades to scrutinize Mr. Kerrey. He fought in Vietnam with distinction and returned intoning the fashionable skepticism about the war. He was much admired by the keepers of the national conscience; the intellectual giants who pump a mixture of partisan politics and bogus religion into our culture, transforming it into a kind of smog, a Kultursmog. Mr. Kerrey had a convenient sense for the Kultursmog’s many extravagances. He was always fashionably offbeat in his public life. The participants in the smog loved it. Now he is being destroyed for having played one of the Kultursmog’s approved roles, the hero with the haunted conscience.” (R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.)

(Recommend: “Judging History: the Consequence of War” by James Webb in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 2 May 2001)

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