

EDITORIAL NOTE

Indochina Chronology is a quarterly publication devoted to historical and contemporary events in Việt Nam (including the Việt Nam War), Cambodia, and Laos: it is a bibliographic resource on book, monograph, periodical and journal literature and a source of news of the field. It was launched in 1982 at the University of California (Berkeley) and moved to Texas Tech University (Lubbock) in mid-1997. It is available, gratis, to academics, historians, writers, researchers, journalists, veterans, and government officials. Publication by Việt Nam Center, Texas Tech University, James R. Reckner, director. Editor is Douglas Pike. Editorial assistance is supplied by Alison Watkins, Nicol Rincon-Blanco, Ben Dubberly, Khanh Lê, and Myrna Pike. *Indochina Chronology* operates in conjunction with the Việt Nam Archive, also at Texas Tech University (Ronald Frankum, chief archivist).

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On the Cover: Not at the end of the Việt Nam War, but now after 25 years, the words of Lincoln on the U.S. Civil War seem presciently and timelessly appropriate. Drawn from the CD ROM *Portraits of Freedom*. Music by Aaron Copeland and Roy Harris; Seattle Symphony and Chorale; Narrated by James Earl Jones. (by Delos)

Việt Nam: First Quarter of the Year 2000 Overview

It was the best of times and the worst of times. It was a moment of sacred celebration (the fall of Sài Gòn). And once more the eternal Tết, the lunar new year. And it was Happy Birthday VCP. So the order went out early: Celebrated, it with pride and programs; fireworks, local exhibits and parades with balloons and military reunions. Officials pointed with pride, viewed with alarm (keep an eye on those Chinese). Above all, spread promises and more promises, of the Vietnam 10,000 times more beautiful promised so long ago by Hồ Chí Minh and so long delayed. A scene inundated by a gigantic mass of self-cancelling clichés.

It seemed to work. For the moment. True, no problems were solved, but it made people feel better, for a little while. It's the sort of thing Leninist systems do best.

Tết—the Lunar New Year—was for those Vietnamese beyond the clutch of the Party agit-props—a time for reflection on one's personal life, the progress or lack of it for their society, the direction history is taking us all. It is a firm tradition—this decennial examination in the Confucian culture, datings back centuries. Often Vietnamese, at age 40, 50, 60, 70, etc. will retire to an “island in the lake” to spend several days in meditation (Once in Sài Gòn, the author congratulated his best Vietnamese friend on reaching age 50, asked him how he spent the day; he replied: “I checked into a hotel in Chợ Lớn and for a weekend sat cross-legged on the bed, alone.”)

Here in the U.S. we saw a flurry of Tết-orientated self-examinations via the internet. They began with a mild essay on Việt Nam's economic malaise “The struggle to fill the void left by foreigners.” soon it spread to broader dimensions: Việt Nam struggling in general; the place today of foreigners in Vietnam affairs; philosophical, and political theorizing on what the future holds, should hold, won't hold. The exchanges were also an opportunity to dump on the VCP Politburo, along with pleas that the discussion move beyond such tired rhetoric (“we all know what is wrong there”).

Much mixed metaphor: “The system works like a black bag and never-ending rope (that) cover the people's eyes, ears, mouths, hands and feet...”

The big socio-political event for party politics this quarter was the Vietnamese Communist Party's Birthday Party. It is 70 and showing its age. “We changed history by defying the might of the Americans” said some. “Yes, others replied, “and now we face an identity crisis.”

Party membership stands at 2.5 million. A new recruitment record was set in 1999: 114,000. Half of the newcomers are young (defined as under 35); 32% are women; 19% military. Leaders, worried about the political apathy of urbanites and especially students, pointed to the figures as evidence of success in attracting young people, “these children of the revolution.”

The existing Politburo declared its leadership to be, “crucial, in operating the appropriate mechanisms for a market economy and for limiting the negative effects of the economic mechanism.” The Party also lined up retired restive old guards and other cadre notables to solicit renewed endorsement of the Party line. And it amnestied some 12,000 from Vietnamese jails, most of them small time criminals but a few dissidents and political prisoners. (Amnesty is a traditional Tet gesture. What is called the Central Advisory Council for Special Amnesties or CACSA each Tet assembles a list of “applicants”, sends it to the President who promulgates an Amnesty Decision. Five hundred of the 13,000 applicants did not make the cut. [Xinhua April 12])

However, Việt Nam's one-Party system remains unchanged, wannabe political challengers assert. Religion continues tightly monitored Huế Buddhists loudly proclaim. Tight censorship rules the media. Free expression is but a dream for artists, musicians, novelists, intellectuals.

A brave face put-up by the leaders. Behind the façade, most importantly, a grim realization that Việt Nam is being left far behind the rest of the region in recovering from the ravages of the Asian

economic crisis, that it must do more, and faster, to halt the downward spiral of *đổi mới* (renovation).

Said Lê Đăng Doanh, chief of the SRV Central Institute for Economic Institute at a Party Conference (April 5): “The gap between Việt Nam and its neighbors is large and threatens to widen. We must show higher competence, greater determination, with dedicated financing of education, greater research in science and technology and in addressing the two chief institutional problems of corruption and smuggling.” A German advisor told the conference Việt Nam must stimulate its underdeveloped service sector, noting that 80% of Việt Nam’s work force is still engaged in what should be in a sector-led recovery. Lê Văn Ái, vice director of the SRV Finance Science Institute said a major stifler of economic vitality is the “overzealous interference by State in the business finance market (needed) to create a favorable environment for development of a capital market by means of proper finance and monetary policies.”

But there was less cause for celebration if one listened to Party Secretary Lê Khả Phiêu at the Party’s Ninth Plenum (Sixth Congress). He did not seem joyous at all, rather like a leader beset mightily in ASEAN for national identity. Phiêu spoke of imperialists pursuing “absolute profits” at the expense of developing nations, of the need to remain ever vigilant in the face of “hostile forces” eager to “wipe out the remaining socialist countries.” His comments baffled even veteran observers. Most puzzling was his treatment of Việt Nam’s foot-dragging in trade negotiations with the U.S., something clearly in Việt Nam’s interest. Rationalized Phiêu: “When imperialism speeds up trade, services, liberalization and globalization of investment, the rich countries become richer, and the gap between the rich and poor countries widens.”

In the end a return to the plea for union: “For the Party, unity. Among the people, unity. Unity by the military (especially the military). *Nhân Dân* and *Đại Đoàn Kết*. (Feb. 28).

Celebrations.

The celebration in Đà Nẵng (March 27) provided something new: official recognition for the National Liberation Front (Việt Cộng) for its contributions in the war. Previously the Front has been written out of post-war Hà Nội history books. But in Đà Nẵng the red and blue NLF flag flew aside the red star flag carried by PAVN troops.

In the spirit of Stick-It-To-The-Chinese, Hà Nội officials ordered prominent observance of their “conquest of the Spratlys”, Vietnamese naval garrisons so Su Tay Island will begin “capture ceremonies” (April 14) which will continue on to Sông Cả, Nam Yết and Sinh Tồn Islands, and culminate with a gala parade on Su Tay, April 30. There is no civilian population on the islands, so celebrants, chiefly PAVN officials, will have to be imported from the mainland.

These islands are hotly contested because of their strategic position along the trade route between northeast Asia and Europe and because oil reserves are believed to lie beneath. The archipelago is claimed in whole or in part by China, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Việt Nam. They are a major bone of contention between China and ASEAN which has been pressing Beijing to sign a “code of conduct” to ensure peaceful resolution of the sovereignty issue; this is rejected by Beijing which calls for a “halt to any new occupation of reefs, shoals and islets in the disputed area to ensure peace and stability in the region.” (AP April 4, 2000)

Finis for the Celebration will be in HCMC: a dawn military parade; morning and evening speeches in Reunification Palace (former Independence Palace); evening “carnival convoy”; dancing by members of Vietnam’s 54 ethnic minorities, etc. U.S. Embassy cautions that sabotage efforts may seem to spoil the day.

Việt Nam State Television plans to launch satellite anniversary broadcasts directly into U.S. homes to mark the 25th anniversary beginning April 30. Director Phan Văn Khải said the first-time broadcasts will focus on cultural affairs, sports and politics, four hours a day and mainly targeted at the million-strong Vietnamese American community. Occasional 15 minute programs in English.

Vietnam Television now broadcasts to most of Australia, eastern Europe and North Africa. Hopes to launch program later to west Europe. (VET April 11)

The anniversary pronouncements, as well as much of the reportage by foreigners attending, was a surfeit of the simplistic, matching the flood of clichés by Hà Nội. Perhaps this is an historical inevitability. Views of the war in Vietnam fall into three categories: Those who were there. Those who were not. Those who came later. With each, perceptions vary, collective memoirs differ. Each looks across at the others and asks: how can they believe that?

Not to be outdone in the memory department the Đại Việts gathered at the Hoa Lư Citadel in northern Ninh Bình province (April 14) to celebrate the founding of Việt Nam Đại Cồ Việt and the enthronement of Emperor Tiên Hoàng, 1,032 years ago. Hong got off to a rocky start as ruler; he fled down river from his home, after killing his uncle's buffalo, aided by a golden dragon. And the Đại Việts are still with us. The SRV Ministry of Culture put \$70,000 into the observances. Hoa Lư is 60 miles south of Hà Nội and served as the nation's capital until 1010. (VNN April 14)

The Economy

While the Việt Nam economic scene, the economy after 25 years, can best be described as semi-bleak, not all the news is bad. A World Bank report (No. 2275) shows significant gain against poverty in the past eight years. Households which benefited most are well-educated, urban, white-collar households; agricultural workers, ethnic minorities, and those residing in poorer regions have progressed least.

Researchers also found: a) Returns to education have increased significantly, particularly for higher levels of education; b) Location significantly affects a household's probability of escaping poverty (urban households see greater reduction in poverty than rural households; those in the Red River Delta and the southeast are better able to take advantage of new opportunities); and c) White-collar households benefited most; agricultural laborers the least. However, Việt Nam

cannot afford to be complacent, the World Bank says, as nearly half its rural population lives below the poverty line, poverty rates among ethnic minorities remain very high, and natural calamities are a serious impediment to poverty reduction.

Other first quarter data from the SRV General Statistical Office: Gross domestic product (GDP) reached \$3.89 billion, a 5.6% increase. The industrial production value reached \$3.54 billion in the first quarter of the year, a year-on-year increase of 13.4%. To that figure, the non-State sector contributed \$738 million, a 17.75% increase; the foreign-owned sector, nearly \$1.28 billion, an increase of 12.8%; and the State-run sector, nearly \$1.428 billion, an increase of 11.8%. Major cities and provinces recording increases of more than 10% in industrial production in the first three months of this year included Hà Nội (11.6%), Hải Phòng (18%). Đà Nẵng (15.1%), Khánh Hòa province (17.3%), Hồ Chí Minh City (12.7%), and Đồng Nai province (18.3%).

A number of key industrial products showed high increases in output over the same period last year including cement (26.6%), electric engines (22.4%), automobiles (53.1%), and motorbikes (42.2%). Commodities experiencing decreases were crude oil (8.3%), coal (12.7%) and electric fans (50.9%).

Retail sales of goods and services in the quarter were valued at \$3.77 million, a year-on-year increase of 8.3%. The State spent \$857 million to raise salaries for public employees and retired public employees.

On the farm—where economic statistics have real meaning in boosting the economy—officials are more optimistic than those from the industrial sector. An overall picture was painted at a Hanoi conference by SRV Dep. PM Nguyễn Công Tấn. Việt Nam now has 113,000 farms (67,000 in the north, 46,000 in the south). Acreage size: 3-5; investment capital between 7,140-14,280; output 7,500 average per year, turning out 857 million in farm produce a year which creates jobs for 400,000 rural inhabitants. Việt Nam's national forest coverage increased from 9.3 million Hectares in 1995 to 11 million in 1999 (33.3% of the country's total acreage. Farmers will plant five

million hectares of forest this year vs. 215 million ha in 1999, the first year of the national programme to re-forest 5 million ha (by 2010). In addition, almost 1.6 million of forest were allocated to households and individuals for their protection and care.

To boost farm economy, Tấn urged better care for land zoning use and advanced science and technology in production and processing, and expansion of markets. He also reminded relevant authorities of the need to allocate land titles and grant land-use rights certificates to farmers and use of tax incentives and grant loans to encourage production and “to stabilize life.” (VNA April 7)

Businesses under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development scored an output value of 102 million in the first three months of 2000, a 4.2 % year-on-year increase. The agro-forestry processing industry sector contributed \$26.5 million; the sugar industry, \$59.9 million; the mechanical engineering industry, \$4 million; and the veterinary medicine industry, \$892,860. These businesses also registered an export turnover of \$450 million in the first quarter of the year, representing 71.2% of the same period last year.

The Việt Nam Garment and Textiles Corporation earned \$106.6 million in the first three months of the year, a year-on-year increase of 38.1%. During the reviewed period, the corporation’s textiles enterprises obtained increased of 10.8% in industrial production value and 27.2% in revenues. Meanwhile, garment enterprises gained increased of 51.3% in production output and 33.5% in revenues.

The Việt Nam Chemicals Corporation gained a 17.1% year-on-year increase in production value. High-yield products included fertilizers, motorbike and auto tyres, and apatite ore. The corporation turned out 282,000 tonnes of phosphate fertilizer, 184,000 tonnes of NPK fertilizer, 750,000 motorbike tyres and 79,000 sets of auto tyres. (VNA)

Finally, in this roundup of evaluations and predictions about Vietnam’s economy, the annual

report from Moody’s Investors Service of New York:

“Outlook for the Socialist Republic of Việt Nam’s B1 rating is negative as a result of Việt Nam’s lack of progress in advancing structural reforms aimed at reinvigorating the financial sector, state enterprises, and external trade. Incomplete reforms heightens risks to the strength of its balance of payments, the medium-term performance of its economy, and the durability of past accomplishments in structural reform. Authorities seem to have concluded that a more rapid pace of liberalization is a recipe for instability; however, choosing short-term stasis and economic inefficiency likely will produce socioeconomic problems intended to prevent. Political considerations could distort economic policies. Talks with the U.S. regarding a bilateral trade agreement are stalled owing to a lack of political consensus in Hanoi. Internal disputes such as these slow the momentum of policy liberalization, will likely impede future economic growth. Over the past two years, exports have been the only strong source of support for Việt Nam’s balance of payments. Without continued export growth, balance of payments constraints will likely force a slowdown in economic growth, this will depend on which policies the government adopts in the coming year. (Thomas Byrne, Moody Vice President/Senior Analyst)

Hanoi reacted angrily to the Moody report: “lacks objectivity, does not reflect the facts”; licensing 275 joint ventures in 1999 “indicated the government is not hesitating in allowing further foreign participation in the economy.” (AFP April 11)

Erratum: Student Druggies. The item in ICXVIII, No. 4, 1999 page 4, on drug addiction among Vietnamese college students, included an erroneous statistic on the total number of student heroin addictions. It came from a local HCMC newspaper; we had no means of verification. The high figure was questioned by a number of our correspondents, including Robert Schiffer (senior advisor to the ambassador) at the U.S. Embassy, Hà Nội.

25th-Year Bibliographic Roundup:

A rich harvest of writings this quarter from journalists, pundits, historians, veterans, on the general subject of Việt Nam plus 25 years. Some of the best:

Ward Just (novelist, ex-foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post* In *New York Times* (March 19) extracts from the forward to Just's memoir, *To What End* forthcoming. By far the best of the long thoughts.

David Lamb. A series titled "25 Years After Việt Nam: Reflections on the Fall of Sài Gòn" in *Los Angeles Times* (staff writer stationed in Việt Nam) (April 9, 2000). The War changed the world forever, Lamb notes, but no one has the same interpretation of what happened. (April 9, 2000). Product of heavy reportorial effort.

Frank Ching (*FEER*) Alejandro Reyes in *Asiaweek* April 4. Somewhat grim look back: after years of reform, Việt Nam's potential remains unfulfilled. It deserves better. See also Robert Romulo "After the Fall" in *Asiaweek* April 7. Communist victories in Indochina set the course for its ASEAN neighbors for decades. Slowly the turn-around came, from ASEAN as mortal enemy to ASEAN as institution to be courted, (possible controlled). It turned out to be a good thing for both.

David Liebhold, "Flying Higher" in *Time Magazine* (April 17). "A quarter a century after the two halves of the country were reunited, now Việt Nam hopes to prove it won the peace as well as the war." Good overall evaluation of recent history. And in *Time-Asia* (April 17). John Stanmeyer: "Việt Nam is beginning to be measured by its statements, not by the war that ended 25 years ago since war's end" (check the Vietnamese farmer).

Dean Yates (Reuters, April 14): The now renamed Sài Gòn is still brash and sinful. Prostitutes cruise the French-era boulevards making offers that would turn a sailor crimson. Fashionable teenagers cruise past in brand-new motorbikes. Peddlers hustle postcards and Hué helicopters fashioned

from Coke cans. From a visiting London academic comes this pronouncement: Sài Gòn is one of the world's most vibrant civil societies, a sphere independent of the State and it will remain the country's economic engine whether the lid stays on political change. "This is a good place to make money" says a shirtless stevedore pushing a cart through the port area. For most in Hoville this means a few days off.

Richard Pyle (AP Bureau Chief 1970-73). The Associated Press in New York combed its files for materials on the Vietnam War. In this instance came up with Pyle's "Amid the Việt Nam War, News Media and the Military Fought Their Own Battle" (April 9). It was called the "living room war" and was the most important news story going there in Sài Gòn for journalists and would-be journalists with ambition and taste for adventure; also a war; and a battle for credibility. Journalism was revolutionized by technology which drastically changed battlefield reporting and left a legacy that affects, sometimes bitterly, the way American covers wars today."

Dennis Gray (another AP old timer): "American War Veteran Returns to Help Laos and Himself." (April 13) During the war Lee Thorn, now 36, loaded bombs into Navy warplanes headed for Laos. Since then he has had the same nightmare: straddling a bomb headed earthward toward a group of children and animals. In Phong Hong, Laos, Thorn sleeps until dawn, first time in 31 years.

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French Archive Sources. Chris Goscha, University of Washington reports that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive has made available (with index). French diplomatic files on Việt Nam, Cambodia and Laos, 1955-70. Website in Paris: <http://www.bnf.fr> (Bibliothèque Nationale); (Catalog site: <http://catalogue.bnf.fr>)

James R. Reckner Reflection on a "Lost War"

It is difficult to imagine that twenty-five years have passed since the fall of Saigon. We were young then, those of us who fought there. Young, but not the "n-n-nineteen" of the inaccurate, but emotional, song of that day. Today we are grandfathers.

Like many veterans of that distant conflict, I suspect, I often reflect on the war. It seems clear now, for example, that our political leadership was particularly ill-advised in the many decisions they made about our involvement there. I think we will all agree on that. But what is most disheartening to me is the continuing tendency of the media and Americans in general to associate the young men who fought in Vietnam with failure. I most firmly believe that the vast majority of the young men who served in Vietnam did so with honor and dignity.

As for the war itself, well, I will leave final judgments to a generation not so intimately involved. But I will observe that Vietnam was the final victory of the otherwise failed communist system. And for those Americans who gave support and comfort to our opponents during the war, it is worth noting that the American failure in Vietnam has condemned the Vietnamese people to at least a quarter- and probably a half-century of poverty. But, in reality, everyone lost in Vietnam. Americans lost a great measure of their idealism and 58,000 of their sons. They also lost their trust in government. The South Vietnamese lost their country and a far greater number of their sons. Perhaps the "victors" lost most: some 300,000 of their troops are still listed as missing in action. Further, a combination of communist mismanagement and rampaging corruption has ensured that the poor peasants of Vietnam continue to suffer even today.

These things I am powerless to change. But as I reflect on my life, like a select few

American men of my generation who are actual Vietnam veterans, I can say I served my country faithfully. I am confident that a future generation will render the same judgment of my many comrades-in-arms.

(Reckner is the Director of the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech Univ.; he served with the Vietnamese Navy's river forces in 1968-69 and 1971-72.)

The Sec. Def. And Vietnam

Secretary of Defense William Cohen on return (late March) to Washington from 3 days in Vietnam gave a briefing at a *Christian Science Monitor* breakfast for journalists. Some excerpts:

Once again as I face this group I say "who am I and why am I here?" (laughter) I was there (in Hanoi) in 1994 as a member of the Senate. I saw at least signs of great dynamism on the part of the economy, looking at the people, their work ethic, their openness. Their friendliness to the United States which struck me as really quite remarkable. I didn't see much in the way of positive economic development yet, but I could see the seeds of it. This time in Hanoi I did not see dramatic change in the economic condition of the people, but then again I was only there briefly. So it's hard to make any kind of judgement based on two days...

If you move from the North down to the South you see two very different countries. There has been, I would say only modest economic development up north. Down in the south in Ho Chi Minh City it was quite dramatic. And they have a mayor (I hope I don't get in trouble by saying this) but I said to him at

the time “you know, as a student of Ho Chin Minh, you appear to be a student of Milton Friedman, University of Chicago, because he is a true free enterpriser.” We got him to talking, me as a former mayor, and I empathized with his lament that the more he does to deal with homelessness and the hungry, the more people are attracted to his city. (however) About 35-40 percent of all the revenues of the country are generated in his city. (however) About 35-40 percent of all the revenues of the country are generated in this city. For that reason he has great latitude in terms of what he can say and do.

What struck me was the work ethic of the people. Their determination to get up at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, take their goods on bicycles over very poor roads to get into the city and start marketing, then come all the way back and get home by nighttime, feed the family, and start all over again. That work ethic is going to stand them very well. You see that in the South more certainly than in the North. I think they’re going to be great competitors for the other countries in the region when that is finally turned loose.

Question: Did you feel any awkwardness in your relationships with the leaders? What about attitudes you ran into? “The answer is there was no awkwardness at all. All of the people I met with talked only about the future. No one raised anything about the past although I raised (the issues) of accounting for our missing in action...”

My job in going there was to see if we could make an incremental approach to building better military cooperation between our two countries. From that perspective they were quite open. I think we’ll see some significant progress over a period of time. We want to take it slowly. They want to take it slowly. I suggested areas of military type contact which could build some confidence. So we talked

about demining and flood control and military medicine as other types of research into dioxin. They were quite willing to do this. In fact, I offered to send teams over to pursue that and they accepted it, so I think we’ll see a gradual warming of those relations at the military-to-military level. (Federal News Service March 24, 2000)

Separately Cohen had this to say about the war’s 25th anniversary: “No apologies for U.S. military action there. Both nations were scarred by this. The (Vietnamese) have their own scars from the war. We certainly have ours.” (April 13)

An American Businessman in Vietnam

Greg Rushford (newly arrived American businessman) I flew into Saigon (aka Ho Chi Minh City, in honor of its “liberator”) in late March. The place didn’t look very charming on first impression. As the plane taxied down the runway, you could see the remnants of military revetments used by U.S. Air Force F-4 Phantom jets. I didn’t see a pile of burnt-out U.S. military helicopters, but the *Washington Post* reported that when Def. Sec. William Cohen landed here last month, he saw them at the end of his runway.

Inside the air terminal, you are asked to declare newspapers. If you are a journalist, they want to know that. If you are a native-born Vietnamese now a naturalized U.S. citizen, you might want to tuck away a few dollars in your passport. Remember, the communists won the war.

If you bring an attitude—which, like many men of a certain age and military experience, I did—it isn’t likely to last long. The chip on my shoulder was knocked off about ten minutes after leaving the airport. That’s

how long it took for the driver to get into town, to Saigon's central market. What a wonderful, bustling market. You could see the intelligence, the vitality; the friendly, frenetic energy in the eyes of the entrepreneurs offering a dazzling array: vegetables, fruits, flowers, prawns, crabs, all sorts of fish. The bustle was more akin to Bangkok, Hong Kong, or Seoul, than Vietnam's immediate (low-energy) neighbors in Cambodia and sleepy little Laos. "It was like being in the midst of the Chicago commodities trading pit," recalls Peter Ryder, (American chamber of commerce chairman in HCMC) who first saw the Cholon-quarter market in 1992, "Any thought I had that I was in a communist society was immediately dismissed." Alas, this is par for the course for Marxist-Leninist economies. Look around: capitalist South Korea, also devastated by war, is rich today; communist North Korea is impoverished. Cubans in Miami are rich; Cubans in Cuba are miserably poor.

Vietnam's economy today has been cooked up according to the usual (socialist) recipe for ensuring poverty: high tariffs, high taxes, money-losing state-owned enterprises hogging scarce credit, banks saddles with bad loans, import licenses, export licenses, pervasive corruption, subsidies, export taxes. Don't think of opening a retail outlet, you will learn what locals call "pilferage" (Americans call it shoplifting). "They will come in wearing sandals and walk out wearing your shoes," says one local businessman. Every small business operator one sees has a piece of paper in his or her pocket giving permission to do business (such as a noodle shop). It is a criminal offense not to have that permission slip. Consumer credit? Hah. Instead of GE Capital, the Vietnamese have what we would call loansharking. If you are a foreigner, try to do project finance without being able to mortgage the land your building sits on. Again, hah. If you are a large manufacturer of consumer goods,

try getting permission to set up your own distribution network to get your widgets to the consuming public. You can't. There's a lot more. How many communists does it take to collect a toll? Three (if you take the toll road from the Hanoi airport downtown); one apparatchik to collect your money; another to stamp the ticket, and a third to supervise. The state has many mouths to feed.

Nobody is Vietnam's enemy anymore. The war really is over (three-fourths of Vietnams' 76 million people either were children or not even born in 1975).

The good news is that top Vietnamese authorities understand what they must do to unleash the talents of their people. Everyone talks market economics. The bad news is that the leadership here has little momentum. Last year, for business, was another year of wasted opportunity.

U.S. Ambassador Pete Peterson uses a basketball metaphor to describe Vietnamese government leaders. They have learned to dribble the ball, and how to shoot and pass, he says, "but they haven't gotten out on the floor yet." When Vietnam's leaders let their people get out on that floor, watch out.

Authorized excerpt from *The Rushford Report* (a monthly newsletter based in Washington, D.C.), 1718 M St., N.W., Suite 364, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Wanted. The flat-bottomed "one-eye" boat (*jonque* in French) used for centuries by Vietnamese for fishing and other less legal activities is being sought by one Jerome Poulain in the Reunion Islands (near Madagascar) for reasons not given. If you have one or know a boat builder, contact him at: jerome.poulain.wl@wanadoo.fr

Bibliography: Books and Monographs

Informal Politics in East Asia, Lowell Dittmer (UC Berkeley), Harohiro Fukui (Univ. of Tsukuba, Japan), and Peter N.S. Lee (Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong), (eds.). The hot new intellectual concept loose in political science circles these days is the “institution” termed *informal politics* located somewhere below or beyond formal, organized political activity. The idea has been around for some time but recently moved into prominence with the worldwide growth in importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This work studies informal politics in Confucian systems (China, Japan, the two Koreas and Việt Nam) and is offered as an aid to understanding the workings of these systems. The subject is not easy to get at because of incoherence and lack of transparency, especially in countries like Việt Nam. Much work remains to be done on informal politics but this work is a fine introduction about a subject you will be hearing more about. Cambridge Univ. Press, \$59.95 (hc), \$19.95 (paper). (2000)

Vietnamese Foreign Policy in Transition, Carlyle Thayer (Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu) and Ramses Amer (Uppsala Univ., Sweden), eds. Mounted here is a bold, one might say courageous, effort by eight academics to explain Hà Nội foreign policy in terms understandable to international relations majors and others. It deals with Vietnamese diplomacy in the period before and during the war (a time when only socialist world relations really counted) then moves into the presumed transitional postwar period of massive change, those intended and those otherwise. Like counting the spokes of a spinning wheel. One of the dangers endemic in writing about socialist system policies is the tendency of outsiders to take intra-political disputes more seriously than do the disputants themselves. (Is “peaceful evolution” benign and the best hope for political pluralism or is it a deadly threat to all that is good about Việt Nam? Is this a deadly matter for leaders or not?) In any event this is a fine addition to the

literature of the field and is recommended. Good bibliography. St. Martin’s Press, NY, \$55. (2000)

The Lao Kingdom of Lan Xang: Rise and Decline by Martin Stuart-Fox (Univ. of Queensland, Australia). A well done history of the great kingdom of the middle Mekong region of the 14th to 18th centuries. Not a happy story however; the unfortunate Lao were forever fending off the Burmese, the Siamese/Thai, the French, the Vietnamese and the Chinese. As one Lao has put it “we live in a bad neighborhood”; a shame because the Lao seem such easy going people compared to their neighbors. Opening chapter is a fine introduction to earlier Lao history. It, and the discussion of the Lan Xang, heritage help explain modern day Lao foreign entanglements. White Lotus Press, GPO Box 1141, Bangkok 10501 Thailand. (1998)

Economy and Environment: Case Studies in Việt Nam by Herminia Francisco (Univ. of Philippines). In the mid-1990s an organization called Economy and Environment for Southeast Asia (EEPSEA), with instructors from the Philippines, France, Canada and England, ran training courses in environmental economics in HCMC. This work is one of the follow-on products of that venture. It contains highly technical case studies of various sectors: forestry, shrimp farming, agrochemicals, tourism in national parks, etc. Extensive tables and figures. Francisco was a major figure, acting as principal advisor in many of these studies. EEPSEA, 30 Orange Grove Road, 7th RELC Bldg., Singapore 912404. (1999)

Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, The Americans, and Secret Wars by Jane Hamilton-Merritt (new in paperback). The doyenne of research on what transpired in the mountains of Laos during the Việt Nam War and afterwards here tells of the tragedy little noticed at the time, and since forgotten. Focus is on her first love, the

Hmong tribals whose only (and persistent) mistake has been to trust too much the foreigners who came to their mountains: the Chinese, the French, the Americans, the Thais. She has put years of meticulous research into her subject and produces an engrossing account of an important story that is not yet finished. Recommended. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana. (1993 & 1999)

Transforming Asian Socialism: China and Việt Nam Compared, Anita Chan (Australian Research Council), Benedict Kerkvleit and Jonathan Unger (Australian National University), eds. A tricky business this, comparing these two systems. Authors maintain that by studying similarities and differences valuable insights into the changes underway in each are gained. Paired off are specialists on agrarian transformation, economic modeling, youth, labor, wealth, power and poverty, plus a comparative chronology of transition. Many similarities exist in each case, but also many differences--leaving conclusions treacherous. Good teaching device. Problem is that while the Vietnamese privately do compare their system with the Chinese but don't like to acknowledge this, even to themselves, so they tend not to produce comparative data. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Maryland. \$55 (cloth), \$22.95 (paper). (1999)

International Perspectives on Việt Nam, Lloyd C. Gardner and Ted Gittinger, eds. A dozen academics from several countries reexamine the Việt Nam War in terms of global significance—intended as a contribution to understanding U.S. foreign relations in the context of the U.S. Presidency. In three sections: five essays on North Việt Nam and its allies; three on the U.S. and its allies; and three on the war and the world system. Begins with provocative essay by John Prados, “Was it All a Sideshow?” Talk about competing perceptions! A sound concept; would that some of the essays were not so thin. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX, \$39.95 (hardcover). (2000)

From the City Inside the Red River: A Cultural Memoir of Mid-Century Việt Nam by Nguyễn Đình Hòa. The grand old man of Vietnamese language scholarship and dictionary writing here captures the spirit of intellectual Việt Nam during his lifetime. Hòa is an aristocrat from a long line of aristocrats whose personal challenge has been to make it in egalitarian America. Captivating, gossipy, meandering stream-of-thought discourse. Charming. McFarland & Company, Inc., Jefferson, NC, \$29.95. (1999)

The Việt Nam War Almanac by Harry Summers. Revised edition of this fine piece of research work by the late Harry Summers. Particularly strong on biographical entries (see entry on McNamara, Robert Strange, and his wall). Presidio Press, Novato, CA. (1999)

The Secret War Against Hà Nội: Kennedy's and Johnson's Use of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Việt Nam by Richard Schultz. Scholarship on the covert war against Hà Nội slowly gets more informative, and this may be the best example yet. Trouble with revealing a top secret is the more that it is revealed, the more difficult it is to come to judgement. Is this the whole story? We still do not know whether the dispatch of wartime spies and saboteurs into North Việt Nam accomplished much or, in fact, was it even worth the effort. Wisely, Schultz limits himself to describing what was tried and in this performs a valuable service to historians and political scientists. Epilogue is a fine summation of lessons learned chiefly useful in case we have to fight the Việt Nam War again. Recommended. Harper Collins, New York, \$27.50. (1999)

The Greatest War: Americans in Combat 1941-1945 by Gerald Astor (military historian living in Scarsdale, NY). History of the “big one” told through the words of those who were there and fought. How different it all was from Việt Nam. A comprehensive study, 1034 pages. Presidio Press, Novato, CA, \$39.95. (1999)

The Soviet Partisan Movement 1941-1944 by Leonid Grenkevitch. Guerrilla wars have been with us since Biblical times. In every case, they arise out of the peculiar soil of local culture, terrain and usually, ethnicity. This book deals with a grand guerrilla war—here termed a partisan movement—part of the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War (1941-45) against Nazi Germany. Still unsettled is the question of how many guerrillas there were: 250,000 seems reasonable (some estimates ran as high as 550,000). Useful reading for those writing, teaching about Việt Cộng guerrillas. Frank Cass Publishers, London. (1999)

Vietnamese Perspectives on the War in Việt Nam: An Annotated Bibliography of Works in English by John Schafer (Humboldt (CA) State University). Eleven entries on the works of Vietnamese intellectuals, North, South and abroad: the colonial period (1867-1945); historical accounts and memoirs; literary history and criticism; autobiographical accounts; culture (religion, language, myth, legend); socialist realism (in the North and the "liberated" South); fiction from non-communist South; accounts of imprisonment and reeducation; Vietnamese exile narratives; contemporary literature; *đổi mới* (renovation); and bibliography. Useful as a reference work, or as a text for a Vietnamese literature course. Yale University Council on S.E. Asian Studies, New Haven, CT. (1997)

The Asia 2000 Yearbook by the *Far Eastern Economic Review* staff (41st annual edition). Once more comes this wide ranging, highly detailed report on the year that was in Asia's 36 countries and territories. Specific reviews of developments in energy, commodities, telecommunications, aviation, shipping, and in the region's currencies and stock markets. From Review Publishing Co., P.O. Box 160. GPO Hong Kong; US \$48 plus s/h. (2000)

Fire From Heaven: The Nature and Function of Rituals by Ruth-Inge Heinze (Univ. California, Berkeley). Experienced, well known anthropologist challenges the notion that traditional rituals have been obviated by modern industrial and

technological societies. Bergin and Garvy Publishers, \$75. (2000)

Sentence of French Colonization by Hồ Chí Minh. Revision of Hồ's 1925 work. Lauds Russian revolution, expresses hope its spirit will spread to Indochina and end French colonialism. (Noted in VNA, Hà Nội report, Jan. 9, 2000)

Field, Forest, and Family: Women's Work and Power in Rural Laos by Carol Ireson (Willamette Univ.). Product of ten years of postwar fieldwork on what has happened to the women of three major groups—lowland Lao, Khmu and Hmong—in light of socio-economic changes ordered up by Vientiane. Westview Press, \$75. (1996)

Looking Ahead: A United Nations Common Country Assessment of Vietnam. Covers: development, modernization and industrialization, poverty, governance, population, labor, health, nutrition, education, rural development and environment. With annexes. From UNDP Viet Nam, 25-29 Phan Bội Châu, Hà Nội.

Against the Việt Nam War: Writings by Activists, Mary Robbins (ed.). A panel at a Harvard 25th class reunion moved Robbins to collect essays from anti-warriors (19 men, five women) on what they thought, then and now. Famous here: Eugene McCarthy, Joan Baez, Daniel Berrigan, Marine Corps' George Swiers, etc. As any psychologist can tell you, hardly anyone ever changes his/her mind about the great social trauma of his/her lifetime. Syracuse Univ. Press, \$49.95 (hc), \$24.95 (paper). (1999)

Lao Economic Reform and WTO Accession by Kym Anderson (Univ. Adelaide, Australia). Laos moves toward the market economy, has progressed well in the past several years. Now it's on to WTO membership. This work outlines what is yet to be done. Focus must be on rural development. ISEAS, Singapore, \$19.90. (1999)

Adventures in Marxism by Marshall Berman (Marxist). For newcomers curious about what this late great ideology was all about this is a good read. Author found early Marx essays in: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) more influential than *Manifesto* or *Das Capital* in his “search for vision and energy for better times...to understand how suffering can be a source of growth and joy; and how radical thought helps one to escape the doldrums.” Berman remains convinced that Marxist humanism is the true progressive response to globalization. Oxford Press (1999)

Dawning of the Cold War: U.S. Quest for World Order, Randall Woods and Howard Jones (eds.). Well done primer on how, way back then, the cold war came about. It’s hard to remember that America’s purpose was not hegemonistic, but simply a quest for world order, that methods used may be questioned but intentions may not. Ivan Dee Publishers, \$12.95. (1999)

Dues: A Novel of War and After by Michael Cooper (Việt Nam veteran living in Oregon). Protagonist David Thorne is drafted out of a factory, sent to Vietnamese battlefield trauma, returns to become one of the homeless. Meant to be a metaphor for his generation. Curbstone Press, \$11.95. (1999)

The Orphan Game by Ann Darby. It is the mid-60s in Southern California. Maggie Harris, teenager, is in adolescent angst. Boyfriend goes to Việt Nam, has a rough tour of duty. Returns to find he is a father, promptly re-enlists and returns to Việt Nam. Morrow Books, \$24. (1999)

Bilateral Tensions in Post-Cold War ASEAN by N. Ganesan. The tensions between individual ASEAN states following the dissipation of bipolarity in international relations. Appraisal of issues that have the potential to disrupt intra-ASEAN relations. ISEAS, \$62.90. (1999)

An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in 20th Century Warfare by Joanna

Bourke (Birkbeck College, England). Here’s a book to drive your average Việt Nam War combat veteran straight up the wall (as it has already done to vets in England). Don’t mean to get off on a rant here, but this person who has never killed, nor fired a weapon in anger, nor even been on a battlefield, presumes to know what goes on in the minds of those with credentials. Working entirely from secondary sources, she mixes war mongering with peace activism appeals, carefully selects reportage on war crimes by the good guys while ignoring the crimes of their enemies. And she writes endless diatribe—600 pages of harangue and denunciation, in the name of “putting killing back into military history”. Her gender orientation gives short shrift to women warriors, ignoring Kipling’s observation that the female of the species is more deadly than the male. Bourke was born in New Zealand, raised as a medical missionary child in a Zambian leper colony and in Haiti. Granta Books, London; Basic Books, NY, \$30. (1999)

Hearts in Atlantis by Stephen King (novelist). Eminently successful fiction writer King turns his hand to the Việt Nam War. Treatment is surrealistic, stereotypical and entirely misleading. Those who were sent to serve returned mentally deranged; those who stayed home on the campus lived in delusion. But then King writes well and no one expects reality from him. Scribner, \$28. (1999)

Utter’s Battalion: 2/7 Marines in Việt Nam 1965-66 by Alex Lee (U.S. Marine Corps, ret.) Colonel Lee and his Marines were at Qui Nhơn, then Chu Lai--in the hills, the jungles, and the caves battling the Việt Cộng, malaria, the monsoons. Constant danger, mindless confusion, an endless marathon of effort, agony and sacrifice. But neither he nor his men ever faltered. Well written. Ballantine Books, \$6.99. (2000)

15 Months in SOG: A Warrior’s Tour by Thom Nicholson (Col., USA Special Forces, ret.). Special Operations Group (SOG) was an extraordinary outfit of troops and commanders. Nicholson working out of Da Nang commanded four 200-man platoons on “over the fence”

operations into Laos, ready reaction missions, extraction operations and various other top secret dirty tricks. He offers an intimate description of how SOG worked; and it was not all fun and games. Ballantine Books, \$6.99. (1999)

Maoist Insurgency Since Việt Nam by Thomas Marks (Academy of the Pacific, Honolulu). Author is billed on dust jacket as “world’s foremost authority on Maoist insurgency and revolution.” This is a comparative study: Việt Nam (where MAD strategy succeeded) and Thailand, Philippines, Peru, and Sri Lanka (where it failed). Marks has trouble explaining exactly what is and what is not meant by Maoism, although he seeks to address the matter forthrightly in his introduction. Frank Cass Publishers. (1996)

NLF and the Communist Movement in Việt Nam by Sudhir Kuman Singh (Arunachal Univ., Arunachal Pradesh, India). Weighing in on the old debate, were the NLF people nationalist or communist? The author says they were nationalists who allied themselves with the communists because of American intervention. (Why can’t they get the Việt Cộng straight in the subcontinent?) Singh’s scholarship is best on the NLF’s mobilization, motivation and organizational efforts. From DK Agencies, Ltd., New Delhi. (1999)

Baptism: A Vietnam Memoir by Larry Gwin (First Cavalry Division trooper, 1965). Battle of Ia Drang Valley was regarded by General Giáp as a first-encounter opportunity to test the tactics he had used to defeat the French. He found they no longer worked. His troops paid a costly price—units thrown against the Americans fire power simply to see what would happen. Giáp learned that Việt Minh style warfare had been outdated by a generation of technical development: the helicopter, vertical envelopment, the M-16 rifle, instant battlefield communication. Ia Drang was also costly for the Americans as Gwin makes clear. For those on the front slope, the strategic meaning of the battle was largely drowned in the agony of war, the stench of death and a 70% casualty rate. Ivy Books, New York, \$6.99. (1999)

Voices from S-21: Terror and History and Pol Pot’s Prison by David Chandler (emeritus, Monash Univ., Melbourne). The respected Cambodia historian searches meticulously through records kept by the Tuol Sleng prison jailers and the words of those few survivors (14,000 went in; 12 came out) to find the reasons for all this imprisonment and death. As with the Holocaust in Europe, he finds no single satisfactory explanation. Pol Pot sought to build a utopia, was willing to sacrifice all humanity in the name of this abstraction. True, but this neither explains nor satisfies. The question probably will forever hang there in the air. Recommended. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, \$17.95. (1999)

Opting for Partnership: Governance Innovations in Southeast Asia, Joaquin Gonzales, Kathleen Lauder, and Brenda Melles. Living in a rapidly changing, interconnected and unpredictable global society, ASEAN communities are forming cooperative partnerships to create stronger economies. Seven essays and a conclusion, including “The Việt Nam Business Council: Collaborative Policy-Making and Information Sharing, Hà Nội, Việt Nam,” private sector efforts by entrepreneurs to move the system towards market economy. ISEAS, Singapore, \$25.90. (2000)

Việt Nam: A Time of War & A Time of Peace by William Kimball (Việt Nam veteran). From accounts of distant battles, to emotional testimonies of veterans coming to terms with their pasts, to the ancient history of Việt Nam—this book offers a unique perspective on Việt Nam. Links the past and present to hope for the future. William Kimball Printed Publisher, P.O. Box 9112, South Lake Tahoe, California, \$25.90. (1991)

Beyond the Crisis: Development Strategies in Asia by Amartya Sen (Nobel Laureate for Economics, 1998). Monograph presented as a paper at the Second Asia and Pacific Lecture organized by ISEAS, Singapore, July 1999.

Cambodia: From Red to Blue by Ken Berry. Australian diplomats were key peace makers in Cambodia in the early 1990s. This is an account of their efforts by an insider who was not always in agreement with his seniors. Begins with the 1993 elections and runs through the four years of transition from DK red to UN blue. The Aussie team worked with enormous energy and dedication. Book is also useful for source material on what eventually became Act Two in the Cambodian peace drama. Paul & Company Publishers Consortium, Inc., Concord, MA, \$24.95. (1997)

The Contemporary History of Laos by Patit Paban Mishra (Sambalpur Univ. Orissa, India). History of Laos focuses on the struggle for national unity while ensnared in the web of regional rivalry between Thailand and Việt Nam. Simplistic judgements: the U.S. was the major interventionist power; its bombing record was unsurpassed; the North Vietnamese were there only because of the Americans; Thailand wanted only a friendly government on the other side of the Mekong; China acted out of threats to its security; the USSR had no vital interests; the Lao, objecting to U.S. military intervention, fought bravely under the Pathet Lao; etc. National Book Organization, New Delhi. Rs. 500. (1999)

Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire by Chalmers Johnson (Emeritus historian, Univ. of California, San Diego). A “blowback” is a terrorist act by those with a grievance against America and follows the old rule of revenge: get mad, then get even. In the past the U.S. built an empire, rightly or wrongly, but now no longer needs one. What it does need is to break the cycle of manufactured blowbacks. Johnson’s chief worry appears to be China which he says is no enemy of the U.S. unless we make it one. He may strike some as a neo-isolationist, but such is furthest from his mind. Thoughtful, provocative. Metropolitan Books. (2000)

In Vietnamese:

“*Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục*” (**Imperial Historical Mirror of Đại Việt**). A 53-volume history of Việt Nam by court historians of the reign of Emperor Tự Đức (1847-1883). (Preliminary section is five volumes: main section 47 volumes) Covers the period from the Hồng Bàng Dynasty (2897-258 B.C.) to the Emperor Lê Mẫn Đế (1787-1788). Written 1856-1859; edited in 1871-1884; printed in 1884.

“*Khâm Định Việt Sử Thông Giám Cương Mục*”. Compiled by Quốc Sử Quan Triều Nguyễn [The National Historic Mandarins]; edited by Nguyễn Như Ý, et al. Two-volume translation of a classic Chinese study on Vietnamese history.

“*Bảy Viễn Thủ Lĩnh Bình Xuyên*” [*Bảy Viễn Head of Bình Xuyên*] by Nguyễn Hùng, Biography of famed Bảy Viễn, Vietnamese historical figure. From NXB Văn Học [Publisher of Literature], Hà Nội. (1999)

“*Nữ Tướng Tây Sơn: Tiểu thuyết lịch sử*” [*Tây Sơn Heroines: historic fiction*] by Quỳnh Cư. Historical novel. From NXB Thanh Niên [Publisher of Youth] (1999).

“*Những chuyện ngắn lãng mạn*”. [**The romantic short stories**] Collection of short stories edited by Nguyễn Thị Anh Thư. Published by NXB Hội Nhà Văn [Association of the writers], Hà Nội (1999).

“*Đường Mòn Hồ Chí Minh-Một Sáng Tạo Chiến Lược của Đảng*”. [**Hồ Chí Minh Trail: A Strategic Initiative of the Party**] Writings on the Hồ Chí Minh Trail. NXB Quân Đội Nhân Dân Hà Nội [People’s Army] (1999).

“*Hồ Chí Minh về Xây Dựng Lực Lượng Vũ Trang Nhân Dân- Thư Mục Chuyên đề kỷ niệm 50 năm thành lập Quân Đội Nhân Dân*”, [**Hồ Chí Minh về Xây Dựng Lực Lượng Vũ Trang Nhân Dân- Thư Mục Chuyên đề kỷ niệm 50 năm thành lập Quân Đội Nhân Dân**]

Minh: About the People's Armed Forces Building-Bibliography of the 50th anniversary of People's Army] 1944-1994. Annotated bibliography of writings by Hồ and others on military science. From Phòng Tư Liệu Viện Lịch Sử Quân Sự Việt Nam and Phòng Thông Tin Thư Mục Máy Tính Thư Viện Quân Đội [Office of Document, Institute of VN Military History and Office of Computer Information] (1994).

"Lính Trường Sơn", [Trường Sơn Soldiers] Lê Hải Triều on the Hồ Chí Minh trail and the PAVN soldiers who traversed it. From NXB Quân Đội Nhân Dân [People's Army], Hà Nội (1999).

"Chuyện các bà trong Cung Nguyễn/ Stories of the Ladies in the Nguyen's Royal Palaces] (tập 3)" by Nguyễn Đắc Xuân (ed). Women of the Nguyễn dynasty. From Thuận Hóa, Huế (1997).

"Họa Sĩ Trịnh Phòng: Tác Phẩm và Kỹ Họa Tuyển Chọn". Painter Trinh Phòng: Selected Pictures and Sketches. Paintings, comment and biographical information on this painter. In Vietnamese, English and French. From SRV Culture Information Publishing House (1997).

"Lịch Sử Ngành Kỹ Thuật Quân Đội Nhân Dân Việt Nam", [History of the Technology in the PAVN] tập I (1945-1954). Nguyễn Duy Tường, et al (eds) Bộ Quốc Phòng, Tổng Cục Kỹ Thuật [Ministry of Defense, General Department of Technology] on the technical support branch of PAVN, 1945-54. From NXB Quân Đội Nhân Dân [People's Army], Hà Nội (1996).

"Hoa Râm Bụt", [Rose Mallow Flowers] Sơn Tùng (ed). Hồ Chí Minh Biography (1999).

"Viện Sử Học Việt Nam: Gương Mặt và Thành Tựu Khoa Học". [Institute of VN History]. Profiles of 224 historians with photos, biosketches and list of works. 614 pages. From NXB Thống Kê [Statistics] (1998).

"Đổi Mới Nâng Cao Chất Lượng Hoạt Động Bảo Tàng Trong Quân Đội " Viện Bảo Tàng Quân Đội [Renovation: of the military Museums in Vietnam]. Marked "Lưu hành nội bộ"[Internal Circulation] on title page. From NXB Quân Đội Nhân Dân [PA], Hà Nội (1998).

"Chiến Dịch Phản Công Đánh Bại Cuộc Càn [Counterattack Campaign to Defeat the Mopping Up Operations] . Junction City (tài liệu khoa học). The battle of Junction City (Tây Ninh province, Feb. 22-April 15, 1997). Đỗ Tất Thắng, (ed). From NXB Quân Đội Nhân Dân [PA] Hà Nội, (1997).

"Hồ Chí Minh: Từ Nhận Thức Lịch Sử Đến Hành Động Cách Mạng [Hồ Chí Minh from Historical Perception to Revolutionary Activities]," by Phan Ngọc Liên. Hồ Chí Minh's views on politics, society, and government, 1945-75. From NXB Chính Trị Quốc Gia [National Politics], Hà Nội (1999).

"Bác Hồ Trong Trái Tim Các Nhà Ngoại Giao [Uncle Ho in the Hearts of Diplomats]." Biography of Hồ Chí Minh focused on diplomacy. From NXB Chính Trị Quốc Gia [National Politics], Hà Nội (1999).

"Trung Đoàn Thủ Đô [Capital Regiment]" by Lê Huy Toàn (ed). Regimental history of the PAVN forces from 1945-75 (1992).

"Lược Khảo Tác Giả Văn Học Nam Định [Essay on Authors in Nam Định]" by Hoàng Chương Dương, et al. Profiles of Nam Định province writers (from 10th century to today). Biographical sketches and listing of works. From NXB Văn Học, Hà Nội, (1997).

"Tuyển Tập Thơ Văn Yêu Nước Văn Cách Mạng Thanh Hóa [Selected Patriotic Poems, Revolutionary Literature in Thanh Hoa Province]", Đào Phùng (ed). Poems and

biographical sketches of the Thanh Hóa Province writers dating back to the 8th century (1991).

“Văn Hóa Làng Xã Huyện Phú Thọ [Commune Literature of Phu Tho]”, (Lưu hành nội bộ [for internal circulation only]), Nguyễn Văn Trường, (ed). Profile of Phú Thọ district, Hà Tây Province, northern Việt Nam (1997).

“Tổng Cục Chính Trị: Quá Trình Hình Thành Tổ Chức và Chỉ Đạo Công Tác Đảng-Công Tác Chính Trị Trong Quân Đội (Biên Niên Sử Kiện và Tư Liệu) Tập 1 (1944-1954).[General Political Department; Formation of Organizations and Directing Party Political Works in the Army]

“*Sàigòn Trong Mắt Tôi*” (*Sàigòn in My Eyes*) by Phan Phụng Nghi. On Sàigòn’s 300 year history. Illustrated. From NXB Văn Nghệ Publishers, Westminster, CA, \$12. (1999)

“*Những Kỳ Án Trong Lịch Sử Việt Nam*” (*Scandals in the Vietnam History*) by Trần Gia Phụng. Discussion of 14 major scandals that shocked Vietnam through history” involved Trần Liễu, Trần Quốc Chân and Đặng Tất in Latter Lê dynasty, (Nguyễn Trãi, Nguyễn Nhạc and Nguyễn Huệ, Ngô Thời Nhậm & Đặng Trần Thường, Lê Văn Duyệt, Phan Bội Châu, Yên Bái). From NXB Non Nước Publishers, Toronto, Canada, \$15. (2000)

“*100 Phát Triển Tiếng Việt Nam (100 Years of the Vietnamese Language Development)*” by Phan Phụng Nghi. Formation and development of the Vietnamese language. For those who studying the Vietnamese language. From NXB Văn Nghệ, Stanton, CA, \$10. (1999)

“*Sóng Trôi*” (*Floating Waves*) by Ngự Thuyết (a pen-name of Mr. Tôn Thất Ngự). Twelve short stories from Văn Học Magazine (California) centered on the end of the Việt Nam War. From NXB Thanh Vân, California. (1996)

“*Sàigòn 300 Năm Cũ*” (*Sàigòn 300 Years Old*) by Nguyễn Hương Nguyễn Cúc. Sàigòn’s history with maps, photos, and several pages of Vietnamese Latin Dictionaries by Alexandre de Rhodes and Pigneaux de Behaine; Latin Vietnamese Dictionary by Auctore Talberd. From NXB Tiếng Sông Hương Publishing, Dallas, TX, \$20. (1999)

“*Thực Chất Giáo Hội La Mã*” (*Vol. I & II (Nature of the Roman Catholic Congregation)*) by Nguyễn Mạnh Quang. Anti-Papist tract, the Vatican seeks to use brutal power to conquer the world and enslave mankind, materially and spiritually. Self published, P.O. Box 7434, Tacoma, WA 98407, \$18. (1999)

“*Việt Nam Đệ Nhất Cộng Hòa Toàn Thư 1954-1963*” (*First Republic of Vietnam 1954-1963*) by Nguyễn Mạnh Quang (Việt kiều history teacher) Quang was a history high school teacher at Nguyễn Trung Trực High School, Kiên Giang Province; received a scholarship at Ohio University (graduated MA 1969) Returning to Việt Nam, to the Thủ Đức Exemplary High School; left Việt Nam April 1975 and worked at the Department of Education, Tacoma, WA. He currently teaches in Tacoma, Washington. This is a history of Diệm government. Self published, P.O. Box 7434, Tacoma, WA 98407, \$22. (1996)

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Erratum. Or as we used to say in Việt Nam, *sorry 'bout that*. The correct listing for the book is *Absolution, Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry (IC V. XVIII, No. 4, 1999)*. It was written by Charles J. Boyle and published by Sergeant Kirkland’s Press. It’s a good book. –(ED.)

Bibliography: Periodicals

“The Man Who Healed the Việt Nam Wound”. A “Lexington” editorial in *The Economist*, Feb. 26, 2000. The man is John McCain and he may have ruptured the Republican Party, but what is truly important, is that he has done more than anyone to help America recover its mental health from the self-inflicted pain of the Việt Nam War. McCain, say the editors, put patriotism and service at the heart of his campaign. He appealed to working class Democrats “whose fathers went to fight while their richer countrymen stayed home to burn flags and get degrees...(who) seethed with rage when Jane Fonda shrilled for the Việt Cộng and Hollywood movies turned Việt Nam vets into drug-hazed zombies.” The “normally liberal chattering classes” were actually enthusiastic “even as he touched the guilt of the privileged who avoided service;” perhaps all this was easier for them to accept because “McCain spent most of the war being tortured by psychopaths rather than blowing up innocent villagers.” This is one of the most thoughtful retrospectives available on the war and service. American pundits should be chagrined that this was written by Brits.

“The Việt Nam War and the End of Civilian-Scientist Advisors in Defense Policy” by Christopher Twomey (MIT Political Science). Relations between civilian scientist-advisors and the military and defense policy makers are better now than earlier, but still have not returned to the heydays of the 1950s. Chiefly things went on the rocks with Robert McNamara’s brainchild, the McNamara Line Project (30 km of manned fence, costing \$3 billion to wall off South Việt Nam from the North). In *Breakthroughs*, Spring 2000. From MIT Security Studies Program, 292 Main St. (E38-600). Cambridge, MA 02139.

“A Re-examination of America’s Indochina Policy During the French Presence: Arms Transfer for Diplomatic Leverage and the Role of Catholics” by Yu Insun (Seoul National Univ.) and Choi

Dong-Ju (Sookmyung Women’s Univ.). U.S. policy in Indochina during the Việt Minh War was driven neither by liberal capitalism nor consensual hegemony. In fact, neither politics, ideology, economics nor national security considerations played much of a role. Rather what counted was the Roman Catholic Church. In *Journal of International And Area Studies*, Seoul National University.

“Preparing the U.S. Army for the Wrong War: Educational and Doctrinal Failure 1865-91” by John Waghelstein (U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI). The cliché has always been that military planners consistently prepare, not for the next war, but for the last. Contributing to this repetition of error is the kind of education provided future military leaders. Waghelstein’s point with this case study of the Indian wars’ influence (last half of the 19th century) is that when dealing with an unconventional enemy one should not rely on conventional education, doctrine, force structure. Sound familiar, Vietnam vets? In *Small Wars and Insurgencies* V. 10, No 1, Spring 1999.

“A Concert of Asia?” by Anitav Acharya (Nanyang Technological Univ., Singapore). What is to be the future political construct in Asia? The U.S. maintains military presence and a set of bilateral security arrangements; The region’s great powers cooperate on an *ad hoc* basis. There is no developed security system. The “Asian Way” of consensus-based diplomacy has suffered from incoherence and loss of prestige. What the region needs is a limited, informal concert, based on the classical principles of 19th century European diplomacy. This would satisfy China’s quest for enhanced international status, help U.S. efforts to “engage” China; and address Japanese and Russian fears of being marginalized. In *Survival* (IISS, London) Autumn 1999.

“Phan Nhật Nam and the Battle of An Lộc” by John Schafer (Humboldt State Univ., Arcata,

CA). What the Americans in Vietnam called the 1972 Easter Offensive, ARVN historians labeled the Nguyễn Huệ Offensive (after the general who defeated the Chinese in 1789). Schafer bases much of his article on a translation of the book *Fiery Red Summer* by South Vietnam's most famous war correspondent, Phan Nhật Nam. An Lộc has never gotten the historical respect it deserves, in part because it was less a victory for ARVN and more one for the "Ruff-Puffs" (regional Force-Popular Force) who fought like tigers (in part because they had their families with them at An Lộc with no where to go, since they were surrounded). Recommended. In *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of SEA Studies* (Northern Illinois Univ.)

"The Political Economy of Taiwan's Relations with Việt Nam" by Samuel C.Y. Ku (Univ. New South Wales). Argues that the Taiwanese are using their economic resources in Việt Nam to buy political and diplomatic gains. But this puts both between a rock and mainland China. Only solution, Ku suggests, is three way negotiations. In *Contemporary SE Asia* (ISEAS, Singapore), Dec. 1999.

"It's the World Stupid" in *The Economist*, Feb. 19, 2000. Foreign policy plays a silent role in the current presidential election campaigns but it will loom large as problems for the next President. There is much to fix, some of it traceable to errors by President Clinton, who never has understood how American power should be employed (examples: how to treat allies; how to handle potential rivals in Moscow and Beijing; how to dampen down nuclear proliferation; how to cool the "rogue states". Above all, how to rescue free trade.)

"Asia's Transition Diplomacy: Hedging Against Futureshock" by Robert Manning (Council on Foreign Relations, Washington) and James Przystup (National Defence University, Washington). Trying to answer "whither Asia", security planners face three fateful decision points: Korean unification; the future of Taiwan; and U.S. deployment of its missile defense system. The

diplomats must recognize and operate ambiguously, ever seeking to reduce the risk that events will force premature choices or establish regional antagonistic geopolitical alignments. In *Survival* (IISS, London) Autumn 1999.

"Relics of a Creative Kingdom" by Bảo Giang. Report on a trip to the Cham Museum of Sculpture in Da Nang. Opened in 1915 as the Henry Parmentier Museum (famed French archaeologist), it contains 300 artifacts dating from the second to fifth centuries, most dedicated to Hindu gods and relics that were to protect the people of the Champa Kingdom (but obviously did not do a very good job of it). Few Cham remain. The stone exhibits are surprisingly well-preserved. *VIR Timeout*, Feb. 28, 2000.

"Đà Lạt Mon Amour" by Đỗ Huy Liêm. A visit to the "Paris of the Orient" where honeymooners and others can escape the heat, visit Prenn Waterfall, and hope to catch a glimpse of a tiger at Tiger Cave Falls. Liêm says Café Tùng is "a café truly lost in time" (local customers wear Bohemian beards and berets, read poetry). *VIR Timeout*, Feb. 28, 2000.

"Hà Nội and the American Way" by Andrew Durang (Samuels International, business consultant, Washington) in *FEER*, Sept. 23, 1999. The SRV National Assembly has approved legislation that will accord the private sector in Việt Nam equal standing with state-owned companies. It was a concession to the power of the market place. It will probably work, he says.

"Reforming China" by Elizabeth Economy (Council on Foreign Relations, New York). China's front line foreign policy problems are trade and human rights. Lesser considerations involve relations with Việt Nam, which are intricately bound up with the process of modernization and fundamental reform. China's political economy is being transformed. For Vietnam and the world, the outcome of this process will shape China's capacity to fulfill the full range of its international

obligations. In *Survival* (IISS, London) Autumn 1999.

“Sex Machine: Global Hypermasculinity and Images of the Asian Woman in Modernity,” by Lily H.M. Ling. Article examines the growing interdependence of the global economy from a critical feminist perspective. The structure of economics, the author contends, means patriarchal social patterns are strengthened and expanded. Western capitalism has infected economically marginalized societies with virulent masculine gender-proper traits. In *Positions*, vol. 7, no 2, Fall 1999.

“Soldier Gore” by Robert Zelnick. Author takes aim at presidential hopeful Al Gore, seeking to debunk the VP’s ostensibly selfless rationale for his stint in the armed forces. Gore, he says, has told anyone who would listen that he risked his life in Việt Nam so that some other poor soul, namely his father, might be spared. Zelnick’s attack reflects the resentment among those who endured the spit and epithets to serve their country, right or wrong. In *National Review*, March 6, 2000.

“Speaking Out: the U.S. Information Agency’s Terminal Myopia” by Nick Mele (FSO) in the December 1999 issue of *Foreign Service Journal*. Alas! Poor USIA! I knew it well, Horatio! It never was a central player in implementing American foreign policy (for example, in explaining the Việt Nam War). Despite the earlier examples we had before us, served up by counterparts in London, Paris, Moscow (really, Moscow); despite the inventive genius of American communicators in Hollywood, Madison Avenue, the pulpits (Martin Luther King, Billy Graham); despite the professionalism of our best newspaper and magazine editors; despite the technology of all-powerful radio and television—despite all this, our government could never harness our capacity to explain to the world what we were doing in Việt Nam. In part, this was due to USIA leadership failure (no one worth mentioning after Edward Murrow) but that was because no one in the Oval Office ever grasped the possibilities or saw the need. (As Goethe said: nothing is more frightening than ignorance in action.) But then there never was

much pressure from the electorate or by their representatives on the Hill. Mele’s comments deal chiefly with USIA and the post-cold war world and here he is on the money. But he falls short by failing to realize just what a complex intellectual activity is this business of trans-cultural communication, the passage of a set of ideas from one conflicting thought pattern into another with the many scratches on the mind. See also: “Decline and Fall of USIA”, *Foreign Service Journal* (Sept. 1999) by Amb. Peter Galbraith, who has a much better take on what USIA should have been, (although even with Galbraith there is more to the process than to “public diplomacy.”) D.P.

“Revealing the Intimacy of the Most Gruesome Part of War” by Jeff Sharlet in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Oct. 22, 1999. Interviews with Joanna Bourke of Birkbeck College, England, whose book, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in 20th Century Warfare*, has provoked military historians to ask “how can she know what it is like to kill?” Her answer: “think of your own most violent fantasies.” (As for the title: surely the killing in the good old days of sword to sword and bayonet to bayonet was more “intimate”.) Bourke says she is reviled by most military historians who ignore the central fact of war, which is killing. She was surprised by the book’s reception—150 interviews on two BBC series, able to redecorate her Bloomsbury apartment with royalties, saying “it was just supposed to be for a few historians.”

“The Feminization of the American Military” by Walter McDougall (editor of *Orbis*). On the efforts of much of the media and most feminist movements to purge Americans of benighted attitudes and establish a full sexually-integrated military, trained, fit and ready to engage in combat (and outraged that the pace is not rapid enough). Good citations of sources and comments: James Webb, Jane Austen, C.S. Lewis, and Bob Dylan’s tender love song of the 1970s: “Can you cook and sew and make the flowers grow; do you understand my pain?” (To the barrage of feminist criticism, Dylan stood firm. “When a man is looking for a good woman he isn’t looking for an

airline pilot.”) From *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 1528 Walnut Street, Suite 610, Philadelphia, PA 19102-3684.

“Focus on the Foreign Service as a Career”. Series of articles by FSOs in the *Foreign Service Journal*, Dec. 1999. Editor Bob Guldin. David Jones asks: “You call this a career? Is the Foreign Service still an organization worth joining?” His answer: “a very qualified ‘yes’.” Phyllis Oakley says despite hardships the Foreign Service is still a dream job for foreign affairs junkies. Cresencio Arcos writes that “for Hispanic and other minority FSOs, simply navigating State’s corporate culture is a serious challenge.” Two junior officers explain “Why We Got Out” (“kiss up, kick down” is the motto of the Foreign Service). Hecktor Mackenzie, a Canadian, reports on Canada’s Foreign Service: “history different, dilemmas awfully familiar.”

“Cambodia’s City Temples Is a Timeless Survivor” by Saisann McLane in *New York Times*, March 5, 2000. A Frugal Traveler report on Siem Reap/Angkor Wat: how to get there, where to stay, what to eat (best meal is the sumptuous buffet at Grand Hotel d’Angkor). Travel from Phnom Penh is now relatively safe; or you can fly from Bangkok (\$217 RT). Cambodia beggar children are impossibly cute --“if we don’t pay the teacher she won’t teach.”

“VC Assault on the U.S. Embassy: Firsthand Account” by Don North (ABC and NBC correspondent, *Việt Nam* 1968-73). A fairly lengthy remembrance of the 1968 battle for the American embassy in Sài Gòn, as North remembers. His conclusion: “the war was lost by poor strategy not by disloyal journalists.” Much of his recall is about what North *really* remembers, about the press and the military. Well illustrated. *Vietnam*, April 2000.

“Victor’s Final Strategy” by Rod Paschall (editor of *MHQ, Quarterly Journal of Military History*). Reexamination of the final battle in the *Việt Nam* War (the one that began in January 1975) with a sophisticated discussion of still unresolved historical problem of allocating credit for victory:

whether to the NLF (VC) or PAVN; and whether to armed struggle or political struggle. Paschall comes down on the side of the NLF and political struggle and in this he is probably correct. Hanoi historians’ opinion has been all over the map on the matter. (Giap in a book immediately after the war credited the NLF and political struggle; a year later in a second book he said no, it was PAVN and armed struggle.) He switched back after Cambodian incursion, and once more when the Chinese came over the mountains.) This argument continues unabated in Hanoi, but today has less to do with history than with being militarily correct. *Việt Nam*, April 2000. Also in the same issue, a tribute to the late, great Harry Summers, *Việt Nam* editor, who died Nov. 14, 1999.

“Conduct Unbecoming” in *The Economist*, Feb. 19, 2000. Southeast Asian countries with claims in the Spratlys (China, Taiwan and four ASEAN members, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and *Việt Nam*) plan to establish a “code of conduct” to rule over the disputation. “China and Vietnam likewise dispute ownership of the Paracel islands farther north which China pinched from South Vietnam towards the end of the Vietnam War. To complicate matters, there are two rival codes of conduct: ASEAN’s and China’s. Meanwhile, ASEAN is falling out over what constitutes “unbecoming conduct.”

“Socioeconomic Background and War Mortality During the *Việt Nam* War” by M. Giovanna Meli (U.S. Census Bureau) in *Demography*, V. 37, Feb. 2000. Comparison of data on kin survival, U.S. statistics vs. the SRV (1995 Longitudinal Survey). Found that “in *Việt Nam*, sons of better-educated fathers bore the burden of war disproportionately in relationship to sons of American fathers with less education, both in proportion to serving in the military and in diminished survival chances in combat. The Vietnamese experience testifies to the ability of a nation to persuade higher-status groups to contribute fully to the war effort...(This) is critical for understanding the war, *Việt Nam*, and that country’s political outlook.”

Names in the News:

Salvaine Pasquier (April 14) reporter for the Paris magazine, L'Express is arrested while trying to interview some religious dissidents in HCMC, then put aboard a plane for Bangkok. Report comes from French ambassador Serge Degallaix who tries to intervene with Vietnamese officials but no avail. Another French journalist, Phạm Thế Hùng was expelled last December for "activities that went beyond the exercise of his profession" as officials put it.

Trần Xuân Bách, disgraced VCP Politburo member (presumably for chairing a study group on why communism collapsed in East Europe and the USSR) has turned poet, whose poetry is being circulated abroad.

Sample from "Untitled Composition": For a long time we were used to beaten paths/ crossing passes, fording streams and climbing mountains/ Now a brand new highway opens up, straight ahead/ What a contrast...But they are still not quite awake to the truth..." Bách's group spent a year study, studied the world, shocked the Politburo with its three conclusions: 1) there is an information revolution going on out there; 2) with good ideas you can turn out good products, quickly; and 3) freedom of movement is very appealing to the people, especially to the young." Said the Politburo, "simply shocking."

Trịnh Công Sơn. The Bob Dylan of Việt Nam whom authorities on both sides of the war managed to silence is interviewed by AFP (April 2). The GVN banned his music in the early 1970s, the conquering North Vietnamese sent him to a New Economic Zone along the Lao border for four years. "It was very hard, but I got out in one piece," he said, "now the worst time of persecution is over." The government leaves him alone, allows him to travel abroad. He has relatives in Southern California but says he has enemies there among the Việt kiều. Sơn says there is no censorship in Việt

Nam but these artists, writers and composer are warned "they must be responsible for their works" leaving them in the perplexity of self-censorship. Sơn does not want to revive his wartime songs, although some are still popular ("You're Still the One" and "Fearless Flower"). He tried composing "but nothing came out and I didn't publish," adding, "every song has its time".

John McCain. The senator will retrace his footsteps as a Vietnam war POW in return trip to Việt Nam in May. An aide said he will meet with top SRV officials; hold a town meeting in HCMC; be a broadcaster on the MSNBC "Hard Ball With Chris Matthews Show"; and address an NBC "Today Show" April 28th. The trip is being paid for by NBC. (AP April 6)

Lt. Gen. Lê Văn Dzũng. PAVN Chief of General Staff ends (March 29th) an eight day official friendship visit to France, hosted by France's Chief of General Staff Kelche. Dzũng, who is also SRV Dep. Min. of Defense met with French Secretary of State on National Defense, Jean-Pierre Maseret. (BBC April 4)

Nguyễn Văn Huy. Director of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hà Nội (March 29) receives the John D. Rockefeller III Award given annually to the person who has made a distinguished contribution to international appreciation of Asian art and culture. The Asian Cultural Council in New York which voted the award said it "recognizes Huy's effort and accomplishment in establishing the Việt Nam Museum of Ethnology that has quickly proven itself to be one of the most impressive exhibition and research facilities of its kind in Asia (and) particularly noted the success of (his) efforts to nurture strong professional ties between scholars and institutions in Việt Nam and those in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Hồ Chí Minh. The question according to Web traffic this quarter, was did Hồ in December 1946 discuss with State Department FSO Lou Moffat (or someone else) the idea of Cam Ranh Bay becoming an American naval base. Archival records are being searched without results to date. Anyone with information contact Nguyễn Bá Chung, University of Washington at vsg@u.washington.edu

Nguyễn Tài Thu, Chief of the Việt Nam Acupuncture Institute in Hà Nội, awarded the Hero of Labor medal for his “remarkable success in combining traditional and modern medicine in caring for people’s health.” Thu specializes in acupuncture anesthesiology, has a success rate of 80% during the past 40 years. Acupuncture is a medical procedure that treats illness or provides local anesthesia by insertion of needles at special sites of the body.

Andre de Phú Yên. Roman Catholic martyr was honored at the Vatican in ceremony (March 6) called beatification, the last formal step before the process of sainthood begins. He was Việt Nam’s first martyr, born in 1626, baptized at age 15, beheaded three years later when he refused to renounce Christianity. Said Pope John Paul, “May all the disciples of Christ find in him strength and support in times of trial.” (AP March 6, 2000)

Lê Đại Hành. Early Vietnamese military figure profiled by *Nhân Dân* March 18. Born in 941 AD during the “rebellion of the 12 warlords” period, he soon was orphaned, raised by a mandarin family and began a military career under Prince Đinh Liên. At age 30 he became commander-in-chief of the Đạ Cồ Việt army, fought numerous battles against the Chinese and rival dynasties. *Nhân Dân* left out that Hành as Chief of State was the very model leadership against territorial division, warlordism, and localism, standing for the building of political and economic infrastructure and always flexible but resolved in foreign relations.

Bùi Tín: Vietnam’s homeless ideologue who correctly or not will probably go into the history book as the man who accepted the South’s surrender in the Việt Nam War, spun out events of his myth-filled life to an AFP reporter, Paris (April 11). Tín fled to France in 1990 thinking the end was near for the existing regime in Hà Nội. That failing he attempted to link up with revanchut Việt kiều in the U.S. who rejected him. Now he writes and reminisces with puzzling memoirs of the past (I was outraged at the humiliation inflicted on Gen. Võ Nguyên Giáp after Hồ Chí Minh’s death), occasional chats with fellow expatriate Dương Văn Minh—Big Minh—the large momentary GVN President (1975).

Võ Nguyên Giáp. Profile in *Toronto Star* (April 10): “General Rubs American Face in Việt Nam Defeat.” The lead: “In Việt Nam old soldiers never die, and they don’t just fade away.” Giáp holds a Việt Nam-styled conference (Hà Nội, April 10), a two-hour monologue (not counting bathroom breaks). Classic Giáp: “We vanquished the French colonizers, then the American imperialists, not to mention the Mongol, Japanese and Chinese enemies. How was this done? With our unique military philosophy, the small against the big, semi-backward weapons against modern weapons...As I told Robert McNamara, “You forgot the most important factor, the strength of Vietnamese people.” End of press conference: “Sorry, no questions.”

Official Biographical Sketch: Lê Khả Phiêu (General secretary of the Việt Nam Communist Party). Lê Khả Phiêu was born December 27, 1931 at Đông Khê Commune, Đông Sơn District, Thanh Hóa Province. He joined the Communist Party of Việt Nam (June 1949). He graduated from the Military College and subsequently got a diploma on advanced studies in political science. He made his career from the grassroots and military splits, directly involved in combats and served as commander at different levels at the battle fields during the nations

resistance wars in the North, Central and South of Việt Nam. He also undertook international services overseas. Between 1964 and 1993, he assumed the following posts: Regiment's Political Commissar and Concurrently Commander of the Regiment, Deputy Chief of the Army's Political Department of the Trị Thiên Military Zone; Chief of the Political Department of the Second Army Corps; Deputy Political Commissar and concurrently Chief of the Political Department of the Ninth Military Zone; Major General, Chief of the Political Department and Concurrently Deputy Political—Commander of the 719 Front; Lieutenant-General Deputy Chief and then Senior Lt. General and Chief of the General Political Department of the Vietnamese People's Army. He was elected to the Central Committee of Việt Nam's Communist Party at its VII and VIII National Congresses, at the 3rd Plenum of the Party's VII Central Committee (in June 1999) he was elected to the Secretariat of the Central Committee and then assigned to serve as Standing Member of the Secretariat. At the Plenum of the Communist Party's VII Central Committee (January 1994) he was elected to the Political Bureau. Since the VIII Congress, he has served as Member of the Steering Board of the Political Bureau and concurrently its Standing Member. He has been a deputy to the IX and X Legislatures of the National Assembly. At the 4th Plenum of the Communist Party's VIII Central Committee, (December 96, 1997), he was elected General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

Poo Bah Meet. Key U.S. and Vietnamese officials meet with American NGO representatives at the Mott House in Washington April 2nd to discuss current and future relations here between officialdom and 100 or so NGO which grow increasingly important in US-VN relations.

To attend are: **Lê Văn Bàng**, Việt Nam's Ambassador to the U.S.; **Stanley Roth**, U.S. assistant secretary of state, East Asian and Pacific Affairs; **Allan Goodman**, president, Institute of International Education; **David Elder**, American Friends Service Committee; **Ed Miles**, Vietnam Veterans of America; **Khoa Xuân Lê**, president

emeritus, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, Washington; **Virginia Foote**, US-Việt Nam Trade Council, Washington; **John McAuliff**, Fund the Reconciliation & Development, New York. (A similar briefing will be held on April 19th at the Institute of International Education, UN Plaza, New York.)

Obituaries:

Lucian King Truscott III, Commander of the First Mechanized Infantry Battalion in Vietnam died in Redmont Washington Hospital at age 78. His daughter said the cause of death was cancer. (AP April 4, 2000)

Robert Komer, legendary figure among the many American legends of the Việt Nam War, died in an Arlington hospital after a stroke. He was 78. Blowtorch Bob, as he was known (usually not to his face) was sent to Việt Nam out of U.S. Army and CIA background, to run the pacification program. He had been a special assistant at the White House under Lyndon Johnson who saw the "other war" program in Việt Nam as necessary to run parallel to the strictly military U.S. effort. Komer's superior in Saigon, William Colby, wrote of him: "He was brash, abrasive, statistically-crazy, and aggressively optimistic, (and) about the best thing that had happened to Việt Nam at the date. He was quick and intelligent, above parochial interests, fearless and tireless in seeing that the military and civilian bureaucracies did what was needed." Komer was forever pushing Việt Nam experts to provide measurable goals for standards of achievement, rather than philosophical theories about the war aims (he has little success). He left Việt Nam as ambassador to Turkey, ended his career and Rand Corporation. Komer's great weakness was his faith in the idea that the progress in the war could be statistically quantified (Robert McNamara's mole of nature also). This in a system where everything is relative, in a society where little is certifiable. (*Washington Post* April 10; *New York Times* April 2; AP, Richmond, VA April 12)

History Redux:

“Bibliography necessarily falls into the category of narrative, and thus participates in the subjectivity of all narrative. In the old days when people believed in general truths, biographies were seen as handy illustrations of timeless verities...Now the general truths have been forsworn and the biographer is left with little more than a collection of random incidents and then the only truth being told is the truth of contingency, of events succeeding one another in a universe of accident and chance. Actual lives are messy, often boring and always plotless. The only “True” biography would be a minute-by-minute chronicle...A good biographer must find mythos or story that will help to tame the myriad facts of a subject’s life...” Jay Parini, “Biographers Can Escape the Tyranny of Facts” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb, 4, 2000.

The Indochina Chronology Spirit. I have some rights of memory in this kingdom, Which now to claim, my advantage doth invite me, So let me speak to the yet unknowing world, How these things came about; so shall ye hear, Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts, Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters, Or deaths put on by cunning or forc’d cause, And, in this upshot, purposes mistook, Fall’n on the inventors’ heads; all this can I Truly deliver, The soldiers’ music and the rites of war Speak loudly. Go, bid the soldiers to shoot. And the rest is silence...(Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, as if you didn’t know)

AAS Papers. At the Association of Asian Studies Annual meeting in San Diego (March 9-19) these were the panels and papers on Việt Nam (courtesy of Hy Văn Lương, Univ. of Toronto):

A. “America in the Hearts”: Post-colonial Hybridities in the Construction of Vietnamese and Filipino American Identities, organized and chaired by Judith Henchy (Univ. of Washington), presented two papers on Việt Nam: “Unifying Việt

Nam from Abroad: Vietnamese Students in America during the War” by Vũ Hồng Phạm (History, Cornell) and “Vietnamese Literature in the Out of the Way Place” by Dan Duffy (Univ. of North Carolina), discussant: Vince Rafeal (Univ. of California, San Diego).

B. Minority Perspectives on Vietnamese History, chaired by Huệ-Tâm Hồ Tài (Harvard): “A Historiographical Inquiry into Muong and Việt” by Keith Taylor (History, Cornell), “Colliding Peoples: Tài/Việt Interaction in the 14th and 15th century” by John Whitmore (Univ. of Michigan), “Region and Ethnicity in the Tây Sơn Wars” by Nguyễn Quốc Vinh (Harvard), “Neither Cambodian nor Chinese: Vietnamizing the History of Saigon” by Maureen Feeney (Anthropology, Univ. of Michigan); discussant: Tony Reid (Univ. of California, Los Angeles).

C. “Apprehensions of Modernity in Colonial Việt Nam” chaired by Peter Zinoman (Univ. of California, Berkeley): “Vũ Trọng Phụng: the Adventures of a Literary Reputation” by Peter Zinoman, Univ. of California, Berkeley; “Vietnamese Railroad Workers and the French Technocratic Vision” by David Del Testa (Univ. of California, Davis), “Nguyễn Văn Vinh: Brokering Culture Across Colonial Divides” by Christopher Goscha (Ecoles des Hautes Etudes), “The Development of Sports in Colonial Việt Nam: A Modern Discovery of the Body and the Affirmation of National Strength (1918-1940)” by Agathe Larcher-Goscha (Univ. de Paris VII); discussant: Christopher Giebel (History, Univ. of Washington).

- D. "Constructing Identity, Negotiating Authority: Comparative Perspective on Public Discourse and Practice in Việt Nam from Colonial to Contemporary Times" chaired Sinh Vinh (Univ. of Alberta): "The Creation of a Public Realm: Colonial and Postcolonial Developments in Modern Việt Nam" by Shawn McHale (George Washington Univ.), "Reverberations of Freedom in the Philippines and Việt Nam" by Ben Kerkvliet (Australian National Univ.), "The Discourse of Charity in French Colonial Việt Nam" by Văn Nguyễn-Marshall (Univ. of British Columbia) and "The Dynamics of Agrarian Transformation in Northern Việt Nam" by Hy V. Lương, Univ. of Toronto; discussant: Helen Chauncy (Univ. of Victoria).
- E. Dislocated Việt Nam: Artists in Exile by Nora Taylor, (Arizona State Univ) chair: "The Franco-Vietnamese Nouvelle Vogue: Lâm Lê's Poussiere d'Empire or Towards a Transnational Cinema" by Panivong Norindr (Univ. of Southern California); "Between the Global and the Local: The Scent of Green Papaya and Pastoral Imaginings of Home in Vietnamese and Vietnamese Diasporic Film" by Mark Bradley (Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee); "Raindrops on Red Flags: Trần Trọng Vũ and the Roots of Vietnamese Arts Abroad" by Nora Taylor (Arizona State Univ.); "Linda Le's Literary Project in France" by Jack Yeager (Univ. of New Hampshire). Discussant: Gisele Bousquet (anthropology, Calif. State Univ., Fresno).
- F. Other Việt Nam papers: "The Economic and Commercial Roles of the Việt Nam People's Army" by Carlyle Thayer (Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies); "Culture, Infertility and Affective Content of Marriage in

Northern Việt Nam" by Melissa Pashigian, UCLA.

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Phở Crisis. Việt Nam's great national fast food dish, *phở* (noodle soup) came under assault in Hà Nội this quarter. Health authorities closed seven of the city's ten noodle factories which serve the city's 43 *phở* shops. Formaldehyde (preservative used in embalming) was found in their product. As a result, *phở* shops stood empty while emergency meets were convened at the ministerial level to hear from noodle makers. One chemist told officials that there was no danger because the formaldehyde was used in such low quantities (less than 1/2000th of an ounce for every pound of noodles). One reporter termed the matter "a stomach turning discovery." It was hardly that. But it did recall for old hands an incident during the Vietnam War when La Rue beer was banned from American military clubs because of its formaldehyde content despite the protestations of the French Ambassador who called the American Embassy to say La Rue's formula was the same one in use in Europe for a century. GIs continued to drink La Rue beer at local bars, with no discernable effects, saying it tasted better than its rival, 33 beer. No report yet received on the fate of *phở* noodles in HCMC. (AFP Jan. 9; AP/Tini Trần, Jan. 10)

Human Rights Report for Year 1999.

Presented at press conference in Washington (Dec. 9) by Human Rights Watch (Kenneth Roth executive director). Covers 68 countries; 517 pages. Concludes that national security is now a less important obstacle to curbing serious human rights crimes than in previous years. Human Rights Watch is an international monitoring organization based in New York, funded by contributions from private individuals and foundations; no financial support from any government. The text titled Human Rights Watch World Report 2000 is available on the web at www.htw.org. or call Skye Donald at: (212) 216-1832.

Conferences:

The Historian's Association held its Fourth Congress in Hà Nội on January 24, 2000. Deputy Prime Minister Phạm Gia Khiêm, a contingent of Politburo members and 180 attendees developed a consensus as to the "historical achievements of the past century." Central Committee representative Nguyễn Đức Bình then instructed Association members to educate the entire people and make scientific recommendations to the Party and the State. Dr. Phan Huy Lê will Chair the Association's new Executive Committee. Hà Văn Tấn and Hồ Sỹ Khoách will serve as Vice Chairmen, with historian Dương Trung Quốc filling the position of General Secretary.

The UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People met in Hanoi on the Question of Palestine March 1-3, 2000. The Committee focused the conference on stabilizing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations through international consensus. U.N. officials, Palestinian and Israeli representatives, and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyễn Dy Niên addressed plenary sessions, discussing the state of the process; statehood; the UN; and individual parliamentary roles.

The Việt Nam Center at Texas Tech University held "**The Overseas Vietnamese Experience**" conference, March 31--April 1. Fifty-six participants delivered papers on topics ranging from acculturation and assimilation to demographics and political behaviors among the *Người Việt Hải Ngoại*. Abstracts and directory pending at vietnam.center@ttu.edu. The Year 2001 conference at Texas Tech will be titled, "The Advisory Effort and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Việt Nam."

The U.S. Army War College 11th Annual Strategy Conference will assemble at Carlisle

Barracks on April 11-13, 2000 to evaluate whether the Armed Forces are meeting their constitutional charge to "... insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense." A half-day, optional workshop on "Teaching Strategy" follows the conference on April 14. Purpose is to "discuss the issues surrounding homeland defense" and the most effective strategies thereon. Contact Lt. Col. Larry Papini at (717) 245-4125 or email Lawrence.Papini@carlisle.army.mil

Việt Nam Lessons. The Center for National Security Law and the University of Virginia Law School of Law will sponsor a two-day conference April 29-30 on "The Real Lessons of the Việt Nam War: Reflections 25 Years After the Fall of Saàgòn". Organizers are John Norton Moore and Robert Turner of the law school faculty. Contact is Donna Ganoë at the Center. Tel: (804) 924-4080; fax: (804) 924-7362.

NAFEA. The annual conference of the National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese American will meet May 19-30, in Anaheim, California. Special honors will be paid to American school teachers who taught English to refugees at Camp Pendleton and others in camps 25 years ago. Coordinator is Peter Nguyễn, California State University, Long Beach. Tel: (714) 652-3898.

The Centre for Advanced Studies at the National University of Singapore will hold the **Southeast Asian Urban Futures** conference July 21-22, 2000 in Singapore. Themes include conceptions of modernity, identity, urban cultures, managing urban inequalities and tensions, migration and urban transnational issues. Registration \$95. Contact Dr. Lisa Drummond at mailto:casdlbw@nus.edu.sg or Ho Kong Chong at mailto:cashokc@nus.edu.sg.

The Tebtebba Foundation (Indigenous Peoples International Centre for Policy Research and Conflict Resolution) meets September 21-23, 2000 in Manila. Papers will focus on conflict resolution involving specific ethnic minority groups, and/or indigenous peoples and states; will identify, describe and evaluate peace processes, and recommend solutions to current conflicts. Deadline for papers is August 15, 2000. Contact Ms. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Exec. Director, at telefax (+63) 74-443-9459, or email at tebtebba@skynet.net

The **Second International Conference on Prosperity for the People of Việt Nam** will be held in Washington DC on September 29-October 1, 2000. Submit 250-word abstract by April 30; final version by August 15 to vpausa@ibm.net or on the web: www.vpa-inc.org.

The tenth conference of **The Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Việt Nam** will convene November 7-10, 2000, in Vientiane, Laos. Contact Ivan R. Small, www.usirp.org/annotate.html

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Etymology of "Gook". Traceable as far back as at least the Philippine Insurgency (c. 1890s) as *goo-goo*s (those who fled the battlefield); later as anyone who spoke Spanish, especially a Filipino. Appeared in Korean War: "Koreans that the U.S. GIs don't like are called gooks." (*New York Herald Tribune*, April 28, 1947) (*Migook* in Korean means I'm an American.) Appeared in Japan 1951 in D. Cusak novel *Say No to Death*: "Her fur coat must have cost her husband thousands. He had seen them in Tokyo where gooks were selling them." *New Yorker* fiction (March 7, 1953): "you notice it is not a gook car." Norman Mailer *Advertisements for Myself*: "Miguel said a lot but I just can't follow that gook talk." (1961)

Early Việt Nam: good was said to be a corruption of the Vietnamese word *cut* (rhymes with *gook*) meaning *excrement* or *shit*. John McCain's definition "those Vietnamese jailers in Hà Nội Hilton who tortured us." Later: "I did not

intend to apply *gook* to all Asians. Out of respect for Vietnamese I will no longer use the term which has caused such discomfort. I apologize and renounce all language that is bigoted and offensive." (*Washington Post*, Feb. 28, 2000)

Comparable to other military slang with racist overtones: chink, slope-head, slant eyes, dink, noggie, munchkin, big nose and round eye (Japan), WOG (Worthy Oriental Gentleman).

Naming Names (cont.). The SRV Foreign Ministry is a personal announcement (March 21) on the appointment of Nguyễn Đình Bình (ck) as chairman of the National Committee of Vietnamese Living Abroad used the term "Việt kiều" and defined it thus:

"The National Committee for the Việt kiều was formed in 1994 under the authority of the Minister of Foreign Affairs with responsibilities for encouraging overseas Vietnamese to invest in Việt Nam and use their skills acquired abroad to help development in the country, adding 112.5 million Việt kiều left Việt Nam after the war if independence in 1954 and the end of the Việt Nam War in 1975 to live in the United States, Canada, France and Australia." Bình, Party CC member, replaces Nguyễn Dỵ Niê, SRV Foreign Minister.

Air Travel to Việt Nam. Delta Airlines hopes to begin commercial service to Việt Nam next quarter providing it gets approval from governments involved. It will offer codeshare service from the U.S. to Vietnam on flights operated from Paris by its global alliance partner, Air France: four weekly round-trip flights, Paris-HCMC via Singapore (B-777 aircraft) and three weekly round-trip flights Paris-Hanoi (via Bangkok) (B747-400 aircraft) Delta-Air France will operate daily non-stops to U.S.-Paris from eight gateways: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Washington (Dulles).

CAMBODIA: ACCOUTREMENTS OF DEMOCRACY IN PLACE

After a year of experimentation, trial and error and the occasional stumble, the political elites of Cambodia – those ten percent who make things happen or not happen – have cobbled together in promising compromise, a working coalition government.

It was imperative that this happen. The thousand-year history of the kingdom mandates that only when the elites achieve consensus can there be successful governance and a harmonious society. When the elite groups fall out – especially when one or more of them become allies with outsiders – the kingdom is in for a time of troubles, usually bloody troubles.

This rule of elite unity of course applies to all political systems, but it would seem, more is the case with Cambodia. This is not to say that the Khmer have achieved anything approaching the level of ideal unity, only that they are now moving in the proper direction. The two rival political factions – the Cambodia People's Party (CPP) and the National United Front for an Independent, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEK) are now well ensconced in the National Assembly, both Senate and Lower House. The accoutrements of parliamentary democracy are in place. Agreed, being in place is not the same as being out of the woods and away from the wolves of anarchy. However clearly a workable legislature is the necessary first step, one of which all else is built.

The public -- Cambodia's other 90% -- seems satisfied that the new parliamentary arrangements are legitimate, promise stability, and they will settle for that.

Political elite infighting can go on, and will. Prime Minister Hun Sen continues to consolidate his control of the government bureaucracy and his CPP cadres tighten management of political activities outside Phnom Penh. Hun Sen's rival, Prince Ranariddh (as Speaker of the House) and his FUNCINPEK followers seem willing to accept – perhaps the word is resigned – to playing second fiddle, at least for the moment. Speculation has it that the prince is in anticipation of ascension to the

throne. King Sihanouk says he has serious health problems but his mortality is unfathomable; clearly, he is now taking a less substantive role in the political arena.

The dog in the manger remains in Sam Rainsy, leader of the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), largely frozen out of the game by the Hun Sen-Ranariddh deal. Rainsy now largely operates in the streets with rallies, protest demonstrations and open letters to foreign journalists in Phnom Penh. The SRP appears to be a diminishing force.

Chief item on the nation's agenda: What to do about the remains of the Khmer Rouge, especially what to do with its still living leaders? By its very nature this is an issue guaranteed to divide the elites. Attendant calls for justice/punishment further exacerbate if not indict (treat every elite in Cambodia as he deserves and who will escape hanging?)

The rule of elite unity would suggest that Cambodians file and forget the killing field years. This may eventuate. But, as of the moment, it seems unlikely, given demands for revenge by survivors of Pol Pot madness; the insistence of the world community, whipped on by a well organized human rights lobby; and civilization's common sense history lesson, that the Cambodians must settle with their grievous past. Many observers fear that in the end, Hun Sen and company will decide to let the dead past bury its dead --like the dog who chased the rabbit for miles, up and down the hills, without success, who finally concluded he really didn't want to catch the rabbit. This would mean a Cambodian kangaroo court which the world would denounce as fraud.

Street Scenes and Illuminating Vignettes

At Wat Chak Angre Lew Temple outside Phnom Penh (late March) 500 Buddhist monks and college students – held back by armed police – shout “Yuon, go home” and demand that the government expel hundred squatters (most of them Vietnamese) from the temple grounds. Said a temple spokesman: “The (Vietnamese) do bad things, get drunk, beat up monks, things against the

Buddha's teaching. If the government does not solve the problem in one month, I will pour gasoline on my robes and burn myself" (March 28th, *South China Morning Post*).

This is the way Doc Phum got his land: crawled on his belly through a mine field, poking into the ground with a knife to hit something hard, then throw rocks at it until it exploded. "It wasn't my land" he said, "but I demined it and got good farmland." Three years later armed men with bulldozers arrive, tell Duc Phum that local general is going to build a casino on his land. "File your complaints" said the general, "the guys at the top are my friends." Now Phum camps under the tamarind trees outside the Cambodian Parliament building and chews on the trees' sour leaves. Waiting (Seth Mydans *New York Times* April 6.

A Cambodian patrol boat from Ream Naval Base overtakes and boards a junk, arrests two Vietnamese and confiscate 94 bales of marijuana grown in Kampot Province bound for Việt Nam. Boat and suspects go to Sihanoukville and trial (*Reaksmei Kampuchea Daily* March 25th)

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 Plans are announced for construction of a \$6 million housing complex in Phnom Penh to consist of a six-story apartment building; 26 three-story houses, and a park – the largest overseas investment in Cambodia by a Vietnamese firm.

Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem poses a national dilemma in microcosm for Cambodia. Owners of the memorial's site object strongly. "It's a bad idea if we lose our businesses and houses says one 65 year old resident. Reply the defenders: "One cannot live without a memory and one cannot walk without a shadow. We need this so people here can remember their history" Yad Vashem will be styled; after the Jewish memorial in Jerusalem.

Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge have been written out of the text books in Cambodian classrooms. Says Minister of Education official Eng Kimly: "We are reducing the Khmer Rouge to as little as possible. Now we focus on reconciliation, solidarity and peace without conflict.

We can mention names DK leaders, students can find out the rest from their parents. We don't even describe Pol Pot torture. There are museums for that." This is a "culture of impunity", says Khek Galabru. If we don't let our children know what happened, it is like eliminating our history. Children will learn about it anyway and then turn on us for covering up our own history of Khmer killing Khmer." Some children can merely recite a few Khmer Rouge names, while others dismiss their history as "fairy tales." "How could mankind be so cruel to each other?" said a disbelieving 11-year old. "My teachers haven't taught me much about (the Khmer Rouge) and my parents are too busy with their jobs. It's hard to believe." (AFT April 11, 2000).

An unrepentant Khmer Rouge speaks: "We lost an enormous number of Khmer Rouge soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their beliefs. We had been so strong that we lost to no one. But now there is nothing left. I felt nothing, when Pol Pot died. I did not even feel angry toward him. Pol Pot was a great strategist, he had a reason to have confidence because the movement he led was able to defeat Lon Nol. However, the longer he was in power, the more he distrusted his comrades, he was soft-spoken man, but cold-blooded. He could order a comrade to be killed with a smile on his face, "(Jeng Vuth now dep. Gov Pailing Prov., son of Ieng Sary, the DK's foreign minister) (*The Nation*, Bangkok April 11th)

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 A Cambodian villager remembers the war: because of U.S. bombs, a foreign invasion, a corrupt feudal political system and appeals from Prince Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge won the hearts and minds of the people. U.S. bombs killed people, their livestock and destroyed village bridges. We could never sleep properly. I heard on the radio, the Prince (Sihanouk) called on us to stand up in order to fight the foreign aggressor. The Khmer Rouge used this as strong propaganda to educate the people in the countryside to hate the Americans, the South Vietnamese and the country's chief Lon Nol and his soldiers. "We stayed in the bunkers – days and nights. (Ek Im, 63, from village of Doan Sar, retired Buddhist abbot) (AFP April 13 2000)

LAOS: HOPE FOR THE NEW DECADE

Amid New Year celebrations, Lao authorities put the best face possible on the year just gone but they clearly were happy to see the last of 1999. And in the months ahead lie three important anniversary observances, always calculated to produce renewed effort and unity: the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), the 25th anniversary of establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), and the 80th birth date of the late party and state leader Kaysone Phomvihane.

The economic hardship of the past few years finally brought stirrings of discontent to the surface in 1999 among a people noted for their good-natured, easy-going ways. Security was tightened after the currency crisis caused upheaval in other SE Asian countries, and the word went out to watch for trouble. A small demonstration in Vientiane in October was quickly broken up by security police and AP reports that around 10 people are still believed detained. Christians have been harassed, arrested, meetings broken up, materials confiscated (See IC XVIII:4). There has been increased fighting between Lao forces and elements of the Hmong ethnic minority, although this is limited to mountain regions. Rumor has it that Hmong emigres in the United States are providing funds to insurgents.

The investigation into the disappearance in April 1999 of two Hmong Americans (IC XVIII:4) who were reported to have crossed the border into Laos from Thailand and never returned has produced no results, but it has created a problem in U.S.-Lao relations. Asst. Sec. Of State Stanley Roth told reporters in Bangkok it would be "virtually impossible to envision Congress extending MFN status" to Laos until the disappearances are resolved. Hmong groups believe the two men were arrested, possibly killed, and have gained some congressional support. Roth said if it became apparent that Lao authorities are

not cooperating, or are impeding the investigation, this could have a "spillover effect on other aspects of the relationship" (Kyodo, March 24). Vientiane says the investigation (U.S. and Lao teams) has revealed nothing about the men's whereabouts and blames the controversy on a vocal Hmong minority who do not want MFN trade status approved.

In a new year's article summarizing the year past and outlining the government's development targets for 2000 and beyond, the *Vientiane Times* deplored "a smearing campaign carried from abroad" and spread by some media, who "ignore the reality and build on groundless rumors." The paper also reflected the government's frustration, perhaps understandable in light of the year's trials, over the media "obliterating" the efforts made to overcome the difficulties the country faced in 1999.

The government's main objective is to get the economy back on track. Slow but steady progress was being made before the regional crisis struck Laos, causing skyrocketing inflation that slowed growth and hurt the poorest segment of the population. The kip stabilized in the final quarter of the year and is holding at about 7600 to the dollar, still vastly below the pre-crisis rate of 1080 to \$1. The good news is there was growth in 1999; GDP rose 5.2% (but below target) and all sectors showed modest increases.

Efforts were made to increase production in general but especially of dry season rice, *nasaeng*, which reached 354,000 MT on a record 87,000 hectares, 64% over 1998. Ag and Forestry Minister Dr. Siene Saphangthong said supplies to farmers (seed, fertilizer, veterinary services) and technical support for intensive cultivation, two-season cropping, etc., significantly boosted agricultural production in 1999. Overall rice production totaled 2.1 million MT, 26% above 1998, he reported. Target for food and foodstuffs for this year is 2.5 million MT, which if reached will provide a surplus for export. Expansion of the irrigation network is

expected to increase the *nasaeng* area to 110,000 ha.

On the down side, a Vientiane Municipality Commerce Service report said the FY 1998-99 trade deficit was more than 75% due to weak domestic production. Exports totaled US\$28 million, down 54% from the previous year; imports, although down 10%, were valued at US\$115 million. For the whole nation, exports totaled US\$217 million; no import figures were given. Government revenue in 1999 was equivalent to 9.2% of GDP while expenditure was 20%, an 11% deficit that needs to be maintained at 9.7%. And news that would bring despair to any development planner came in the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) report in late September 1999, which said Laos's population of 5.3 million will double by 2025 if the current 2.6% growth rate is left unchecked.

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Vientiane's usual calm was broken on the evening of March 30 when a grenade was thrown from a motorbike into a popular restaurant. One Lao was critically injured and two Germans and a Briton suffered shrapnel wounds and were taken to a hospital in Thailand. Nine others, mostly European tourists, were less seriously injured. Government authorities call the incident a terrorist attack but give no details other than to say the police are investigating. Whether there was a specific political motive, frustration with economic hardship, anger at human rights abuses, or at corruption and the income disparities that came with economic opening, or simply crime, the attack suggests that the country's aging leaders will encounter new problems in the future, including challenges to authority (AP, Vientiane, 10 April; Radio Australia, 5 April).

Dân Sinh Market. A journalist reports on the "military market" of Hồ Chí Minh City. Here one finds the detritus of war: sun helmets, combat boots, foot powder, mosquito repellent, ammo clips, Vietnamese medals, black and white photographs, Zippo lighters with unit insignia. Collectors

come from abroad to search, haggle, and ship home where items are listed in mail order catalogs or put up for auction. Not all genuine—much of the olive-drab GI clothing was recently manufactured in Thailand, smuggled in and put on sale. Deutsche Press Agentur March 4, 2000.

Dodger Diaspora. Some 25,000 draft dodgers and deserters still live in Canada. Standing opposite are another 25,000 Canadian national who volunteered to fight in Vietnam. Deep fissures still divide the two. Those Americans who stayed and climbed into the establishment—lawyers, business executives, doctors—are more even handed in their views on the war; those less well off remain more hostile. When the Canadian volunteers returned home they were greeted like mercenaries said Tracey Arial, author of *I Volunteered*, "the only time (we) get called by the media is on the anniversary of My Lai...the draft dodgers get all the coverage."

Abstracts of the papers presented at the 2000 **AAS Annual** meeting March 9-12, 2000 in San Diego are now available at the Association for Asian Studies website <http://aasiant.org/annmtg.htm>. Site contents include Border-crossing sessions; China and inner Asia; Asia, Japan; South Asia; Southeast Asia; Korea; Interarea; and a directory of participants. The program for the March 3-4, 2000 conference on **Paradigms in World History** held at Binghamton University is now on line at <http://history.binghamton.edu/conference>.

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