

# Interchange

A Quarterly Newsletter for and about International Cooperation with Cambodia, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam

Volume 9, Issue 3

Summer 1999

## New Regulations on Cuba Travel

by Sandra Levinson

*[Editor's Note: The last few months have seen some positive developments in US-Cuba relations both in public opinion and in Congress. A recent Gallup poll found that 71% of Americans support re-establishment of US diplomatic relations with Cuba [see box, p21]. Humanitarian aid legislation favored by the Senate would allow food and medicine trade with Cuba, and the Treasury Department has issued new regulations that loosen travel restrictions. These regulations enable schools, religious groups, and humanitarian organizations to obtain institutional licenses which permit an organization to travel to and from Cuba for the duration of the license, without applying separately for each trip or individual participant. Eligible organizations are only just beginning to take advantage of the opening provided.]*

There is some good news for people who have always wanted to visit Cuba. Although you still cannot travel to Cuba legally either as a tourist or to do business there, in mid-May the Treasury Department issued new regulations that make travel to Cuba easier for those previously eligible for licenses. These regulations also open up a few new categories for legal travel.

If you are doing professional research in your field or attending an international professional conference, you no longer need a specific license from the Treasury Department. You can travel to Cuba under "general license," i.e., no specific piece of paper needs to be requested, you may affirm that you qualify, but should carry some official identification or document that demonstrates that you qualify.

The same applies to full-time journalists. If you are a free-lance journalist, you still need a specific license but that license is good for multiple trips to Cuba. Anyone may also travel to Cuba legally

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## US and Vietnam Approve Trade Agreement

by Tara McAuliff

After 3 years of arduous negotiations, the United States and Vietnam have agreed "in principal" on a bilateral trade agreement. This historic step comes at a time when Vietnam's economy continues to falter, and investment confidence is sorely needed. This important breakthrough will no doubt prove a boost to investment in Vietnam.

This bilateral trade agreement is the most comprehensive the U.S. has ever negotiated, and covers issues such as tariffs, quotas, banking and other key areas of interest to U.S. investors. This is also one of the last hurdles in U.S.-Vietnam relations before the two treat each other as they do other nations, helping to continue to heal the wounds of the ten-year conflict they fought against one another. As U.S. negotiator Richard Fisher put it "This agreement would, of course, represent an historical event, representing the final chapter in the transformation of our relationship from adversary to trading partners."

Once this agreement has been signed and ratified by the two legislative bodies, Vietnam will not only benefit from having access to the biggest market in the world but also become a much more attractive place for foreign investors from other countries hoping to manufacture goods for export to the U.S. Normal Trade Status (NTS) will likely follow in both countries, and Vietnam's bid to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be greatly enhanced.

*(continued on p. 10)*



The new Hilton Hotel (right) in Hanoi complements the Opera House.

## Kent Wiedemann Takes Post as New US Ambassador to Cambodia

Prior to entering the Foreign Service in 1974, Kent Wiedemann served two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Micronesia (Truk), and for three years directed management development and training with International Operations of Hewlett Packard Company. During his diplomatic career, Mr. Wiedemann has served as a consul in Poland, international relations officer in Latin American Affairs at the State Department, and was posted twice to the US embassy in Beijing, China and once to the US Consulate General in Shanghai. He has also been director of the Office of Chinese Affairs in the State Department as well as Deputy Chief of Mission at US Embassies in both Singapore and Israel. Recent appointments are as follows:

- 1993-94—Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council
- 1994-95—Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
- 1995-96—Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
- 1996-99—Charge d'Affaires, US Embassy in Rangoon, Burma
- June 1999—sworn in as Ambassador to Cambodia

Wiedemann was a Diplomat-in-Residence and Senior Fellow at the East-West Center, received the State Department's Meritorious Honor Award and Superior Honor Award and has been awarded the Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service by the Secretary of Defense.

A California native, Mr. Wiedemann has a BA in History from San Jose State University and a Masters in International Relations from the University of Oregon. He is married to the former Janice Lee Weddle, an educator. Together, they have a son, Conrad.

### Other State Department Staff Changes

The new State Department desk officers in the Office of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam Affairs, (BCLTV) can be reached at (202) 647-3132.

- Neil E. Silver, Office Director
- Shari Villarosa, Deputy Office Director
- Marie C. Damour, Cambodia Desk (202/647-3133)
- Sooky Park, Laos Desk
- Gregory Hicks, Vietnam Desk (202/647-0064)

Former Director Ravic Huso is now Director of Asian Affairs at the National Security Council.

### New York Event Honors Ministers of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

A reception and dinner in celebration for closer cooperation in business, education and development will be held on September 23rd at the Institute of International Education in New York.

Guests of honor are:

HE Nguyen Manh Cam, Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister of Vietnam  
HE Soubanh Srithirath, Minister in the Office of the President of Laos  
HE Hor Nam Hong, Foreign Minister of Cambodia

The dinner has been organized by the Institute of International Education, the Business Council for International Understanding and the Fund for Reconciliation and Development. Contact FRD for an invitation or information about sponsorship opportunities.

## News Updates

### Cambodia Gets EU Aid for ex-Khmer Rouge Zones

In late June, the European Union announced plans to give Cambodia 5.5 million euro (US\$5.7 million) to help finance aid projects in former Khmer Rouge guerrilla zones. Projects include health care and demining as well as assistance to improve water supplies and buy crop seeds and farm tools. Aid will be channelled through the European Community Humanitarian Office. Since 1992, Cambodia has received close to 265 million euro in grant aid.

### International Donors Say Cambodian Reforms on Track

International donors met with senior Cambodian government officials in mid July in a largely positive quarterly review of sweeping fiscal and administrative reforms. Diplomats and officials did however issue a strong warning against complacency at the meeting, attended by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, UN agencies and foreign diplomats.

International donors pledged US\$470 million of new aid to Cambodia in February. In return, Prime Minister Hun Sen pledged far-reaching reforms. They focused on strengthening fiscal discipline, demobilizing the military and reforming the civil service, devoting more resources to social needs and managing rapidly dwindling forest reserves.

### Vietnam-Canada Friendship Society

Ha Noi, Aug. 21 (VNA) — The Vietnam-Canada Friendship Society has been set up on the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (Aug. 21). A ceremony to inaugurate the society was held by the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO) and attended by the Ha Noi-based Canadian Embassy's charge d'affaires Peter Hoffman and representatives from relevant Vietnamese agencies.

The Vietnam-Canada Friendship Society, the 39th member of VUFO, will serve as a bridge of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. Its managing board includes 25 members, chaired by Prof. Dr. Nguyen Duy Quy, Director of the National Centre of Social Sciences and Humanities.

## Lao Updates

### Visas on Arrival

In conjunction with "Visit Laos Year 1999-2000," Laos has updated entry and exit regulations and authorized three of its ten immigration checkpoints to issue visas on arrival. Travellers arriving via Wattay International Airport (Vientiane), Luang Prabang International Airport or Mittaphab Bridge Check Point Vientiane - Nongkay (Kingdom of Thailand) will have to opportunity to apply for a visa upon arrival. Travellers arriving or returning to Laos via any other immigration checkpoints must already have a valid visa stamped in their passport.

### New Airport Terminal

Wattay Internatinal opened a new terminal building in June which will offer shops and a variety of services to travellers and is able to accomodate larger airplanes. In an effort to improve services at the new terminal, the government contracted the services of two Japanese corporations to manage operations for the first ten years. The Ministry of Comunication, Transport, Post and Construction holds a controlling share of the new terminal, while the two Japanese corporations, Japan Airlines Trading Inc (JAL) and Tomen Corporation combined hold a 49% stake.

## Interchange

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*This, our summer issue, goes to press as Labor Day approaches. The fall issue is planned for early November.*

## Touring Philadelphia Orchestra Receives Warm Welcome in Vietnam

The Philadelphia Orchestra performed in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City this May. They were the first US Symphony Orchestra to perform in Vietnam.



Music Director Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts a free children's concert at the Opera House in Hanoi

### Asian Development Bank Assistance to Laos

The Asian Development Bank will grant Laos US\$576 million a year and loan the nation US\$50-60 million. Money will go toward projects including rural development, primary health care, basic education, small town water supply and sanitation, rural power distribution, rural access roads and improving the financial sector. Additional technical assistance will be used to assist the government in capacity building and strengthening decentralization efforts.

Other grants announced in Laos include CA\$50,000 in financial support from Canada for the HIV/AIDS Trust for the Lao PDR, and the US Embassy in Vientiane presented mine detecting equipment worth US\$390,067 to UXO- Lao in July. Since 1996, the US has also provided military experts to train and equip UXO-Lao field personnel in de-mining techniques.

### Laos Works to Improve Rural Schools and Keep Girls in School

The Common Education Department of the Lao Ministry of Education has begun implementing its Basic Education for Girls Project (BEGP), after a course development and teacher trainin conference this summer. The target of the BEGP is to increase the average attendance levels and graduation levels at primary school with a primary focus on young girls and children of ethnic minorities. The project is being implemented in short phases, and has recieved funding form the ADB and the Australian Government as well as the government of Laos. The project will focus on rural areas where primary school enrollment and attendance is much lower.

The Ministry of Education will also use money from Save the Children, Norway to improve rural schools by upgrading teaching skills, introducing a multi-grade teaching system, cluster schools and early childhood development among others for improved standards in the Lao education system.

Above items excerpted from the Vientiane Times. Contact Interchange for a free sample copy.

## International Donors Praise Vietnam's Efforts to Accelerate Reform

**H**a Noi, June 16 (VNA)-The international donor community highly valued Vietnam's efforts in accelerating the country's reform process. The assessment was made at a Mid-Year Consultative Group Meeting in Hai Phong on June 15. The meeting, the second of its kind, was attended by over 120 delegates from donor countries and institutions and organized jointly by the Vietnamese Government, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank.

Donor representatives and Vietnamese senior officials during the one-day conference presented their assessments of the progress made since last year's Consultative Group Meeting in Paris and of development prospects for stimulating economic growth in Vietnam.

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## Last Summer Picnic?

**F**or the past twenty years, the American Friends Service Committee and the Fund for Reconciliation and Development have organized a special picnic in the Philadelphia area. Originally this was the only opportunity for members of the staff of the Vietnamese Mission to the UN to travel outside the twenty-five mile limit. In recent years, normalized relations swept away travel restrictions and the picnic broadened to include staff of the UN Missions and Embassies of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam as well as American friends. For the past sixteen years, the picnic has been hosted by Cathy and Bill Rieser at their home in Bucks County. The picnic has grown steadily over the years, and needs a new venue. We are seeking a location midway between Washington and New York with good kitchen facilities, swimming, volleyball and the possibility of people staying over Saturday night.



Vietnamese Ambassadors Ngo Quang Xuan (UN) and Le Van Bang (US) Bui Thi An, Cathy and Bill Rieser, Le Thi Hoa, John McAuliff, Lao Ambassadors Vang Rattanavong(US) and Alounkeo Kittikhoun (UN), Kongpadith Kittikhoun (The Cambodian participants had already left when this picture was taken.)

Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Manh Cam, head of the Vietnamese delegation, told the meeting: "I think that this is a good opportunity for representatives from important ministries of the Government of Vietnam, the donor community, and non-governmental organizations to bridge the gaps and to better understand difficulties facing Vietnam in its current development process."

He said: "The time is now ripe for us to develop an efficient and long-term cooperation so that we can go beyond the agenda and focus on solving problems in a way that satisfies the requirements of all parties." "Vietnam has no choice but to deepen the 'doi moi' (renovation) process," Cam said, adding that such a deepening was necessary to support economic growth and reinforce and build on past economic achievements.

He outlined a series of economic policies exercised by the Vietnamese Government toward its commitment as follows:

- The revised and amended Land Law;
  - Extension of agricultural land tenure for households and individuals from 20 to 50 years and giving farmers the entitlement to swap land;
  - State encouragement of all economic sectors to exploit uncultivated land for forestry and agriculture;
  - State encouragement of household and private farms to exploit barren land in the midlands, mountainous and coastal areas as well as the multiplication of household economic integration models, farming economy and modes of economic cooperation;
  - Increasing the State budget investment in agricultural development and the rural economy;
  - Continued Government reform of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) with 168 SOEs converted into joint-stock companies by May 1999;
  - Approval of the Enterprise Law by the National Assembly creating a more liberal business environment;
  - The Government's implementation of a demand stimulus plan to maximize mobilization investment, stimulate production of domestic resources and increase capital for development and raise consumption;
  - Implementation of the Value Added Tax and the Corporate Income Tax in the past five months with relative stability seen in business and production activities; and
  - The Government's efforts to intensify the implementation of the hunger elimination and poverty reduction program, focusing on 1,715 poorest communes;
- The Vietnamese leader also presented major economic indicators of Vietnam in the first five months of 1999, including year-on-year increases of 1.9 percent registered in the consumer price

index and 2.1 percent in export value, a 45 percent drop in foreign investment with about US\$ 719 million in 95 foreign-invested projects licensed in the first five months of this year.

Cam said that Vietnam's major economic focus—agriculture—continued to grow despite severe natural disasters, and that encouraging results had been reported in education, health care and social welfare. He stressed the nationwide poverty rate dropped six percent to 14 percent in 1998.

With respect to ODA, the combined commitment made by the previous six Consultative Group Meetings amounted to US\$ 13 billion, Cam said. Vietnam and donors have signed ODA grant agreements worth over US\$ 9 billion with over US\$5 billion disbursed so far. Many ODA-funded projects have become operational, positively contributing to Vietnam's development process.

Minister of Planning and Investment Tran Xuan Gia told participants "A public administration reform strategy is one of the initiatives that will help curb corruption and alleviate poverty in Vietnam,"

The donors praised the reform efforts by Vietnam, particularly in reforming businesses, facilitating the development of the private sector, boosting rural development and poverty reduction, exercising effective and transparent financial policies, raising the efficiency of international financial assistance and improving its relationship with partners and donors. During the meeting, the participants discussed new approaches to the on-going administrative reform program in Vietnam.

The Vietnam World Bank Director, Andrew Steer, said: "Vietnam's economic slowdown threatens to undermine the impressive progress in reducing poverty in the past decade." He added that the on-going dialogue between the Government and the donor community was frank and very productive, however, the coming year will determine the level of success of reform.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Edouard Watez, noted: "The crucial element to reform at this stage is more productive partnerships led by the Government at all levels to ensure quality and 'strategic' development assistance. In order to establish sustainable investments there needs to be targeted training and institution-building beforehand."

Earlier, talks between domestic and foreign businesses in Vietnam were held. It was a forum for representatives from Vietnam's private sector and foreign business community doing business in Vietnam to discuss necessary reforms of policies and institutions to create a level ground for State and non-state businesses. The participants agreed to set up a joint working group to encourage the holding of dialogues to improve the efficiency of the banking sector and the legal environment, which are viewed as the domains that most urgently need to be reformed in Vietnam.

## Oxfam International Campaigns for Universal Primary Education

by Oxfam International and Ngan Nguyen

**E**ducation is the single most powerful catalyst for human development. It provides people with the skills and opportunities they need to escape the poverty trap. It gives people a voice and enables them to improve their own lives.

Ten years ago, the world's governments promised that all of the world's children would be getting a good quality education by the year 2000. That promise has been broken. Now a new target has been set: universal primary education by 2015. On current trends, even this revised target will be missed. At least 75 million children will still be out of school on that date. Governments are failing to treat the crisis in education with the urgency it merits, and they are failing to mobilize the resources needed to end it.

The Oxfam International campaign, Education Now, aims to ensure that the promises made to the world's children are not broken again, and that the basic human right of all children to an education is respected. The campaign is based on the proposition that the education crisis is an avoidable tragedy which is wasting human potential on a vast scale.

Ending this tragedy will require additional resources. The costs are estimated at about \$8bn a year - equivalent to just four days worth of military spending. This is a small price to pay for the enormous benefits which would be generated. But the crucial ingredient for success is political leadership and commitment on the part of the world's governments.

### The Problem

The facts tell their own story. At the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, 155 governments committed themselves to ensuring that no primary school aged child would be out of school by the year 2000. As we approach that date, there are at least 125 million primary school age children out of school.

This is only the tip of an iceberg. Another 150 million children start school but leave before gaining the literacy skills they need. Many millions more suffer an abysmal quality of education in under-resourced education systems.

In a world where education increasingly shapes living standards, the gulf in educational opportunity separating poor countries from rich is enormous. Today, a child in Mozambique can expect to go to school for three years, if they are lucky. In Europe, most children will spend fifteen years in classrooms. Developed countries account for one fifth of the world's population, but four-fifths of global education spending.

Within countries too, education inequalities in education are enormous. In the North East of Brazil, the highland areas of Vietnam, in the refugee camps of Sudan and the slums of Zambia's Copperbelt,

Oxfam is working with communities facing enormous disadvantages in education. These disadvantages will translate into poverty for the next generation

Young girls face some of the deepest inequalities. They account for two-thirds of the children not in school. And despite commitments to closing the gender gap, it is widening in many countries. While governments pay lip service to the principle of equal citizenship rights, one half of the world's children face what amounts to a system of gender apartheid in education, denied opportunity on the basis of their chromosome make-up.

### Why does education matter?

Above all, it matters because education is a basic and universal human right - albeit one that is systematically violated by governments. But education is also a means to other ends. It leads to improvements in health, to higher and more broad-based growth, and to a decline in poverty. It gives people a say in their future.

Women's education creates particularly strong benefits. The children of women who have been to school live longer and healthier lives. They are also more likely to go to school themselves. That is why universal education for girls is one of the most potent weapons for stopping the transmission of poverty across generations.

The economic gains associated with education are well established. Education acts as a spur to innovation and rising productivity. And because education enables poor people to participate in the growth process, it helps to ensure that the benefits of progress are shared. In short, universal primary education would help to enlarge the economic cake, divide it more equally, and improve the health of the bakers.

While the benefits of education are well established, the future costs of failing to provide high quality universal primary education are insufficiently appreciated. The 21st century will be dominated by the information revolution. Knowledge will be the key commodity. Changes in economic life - computerization, globalization, improved telecommunications - mean that living standards depend increasingly on access to the skills provided by education. In the global economy of the 21st century, countries and individuals lacking education will fall further and further behind. Inequalities in education will fuel deepening inequalities in income and life-chances.

### Solutions

The crisis in education can be resolved, if the international community provides the leadership and resources which are required; and if developing country governments start setting their own houses in order.

Some of Oxfam's recommendations are directed at national governments, among them:

- **Primary education should be free**, because poor families cannot afford to send their children to school. Incentives should be provided for girls education and at least 3% of GNP should be invested in primary education
- **Developing countries could - and should - do far more.**

• **The international community should take action.** Unless it acts to mobilize resources, the 2015 targets will be missed, making mockery of the cry for Education for All. Among the core recommendations for international action:

- **Remove the burden of debt.** Many of the world's poorest countries are spending more on debt than on education, often much more. Funding universal primary education in Africa would require an additional \$3bn per annum. The region currently spends over \$12bn on debt. The G7 should convert debt liabilities into investments for education.

- **Increase aid for education.** For years, the industrialized countries have been promising to increase aid spending. And for years they have been criticizing developing countries for not spending enough on basic education. While donors reaffirm their commitment to universal primary education, they cut aid budgets and spend five times more on universities (which benefit a minority) than on primary education (which benefits the majority). Donors should commit to spending at least 8 per cent of their aid budgets on basic education - a move that would mobilize \$4bn

- **Reform structural adjustment.** The IMF says that it is committed to universal primary education. Yet its programs often result in deep cuts in basic education budgets - cuts of 30 per cent in the case of countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe. We want IMF programs to be reformed so that education budgets are protected and public spending targets set by the IMF are consistent with achieving universal primary education.

- **Establish a Global Action Plan for basic education.** The aim of the GAP is to achieve the internationally agreed development target of high quality universal primary education by 2015. Building on existing processes, such as those taking place under the Education for All framework, the GAP would serve as a focal point for mobilizing the political energy and collective resources, capacities and skills of the major actors. The Global Action Plan (GAP) for basic education would channel resources - from aid and debt relief- to where they are needed and ensure international and national policies do not undermine access to basic education.

Several very poor countries - including Uganda - have shown that it is possible to progress rapidly towards universal primary education. Community-level initiatives have also achieved a great deal. These success stories underline that the 2015 goals are attainable. They are certainly affordable. The \$8bn a year in additional funding required represents less than American parents spend on toys, and much less than Europe spends subsidizing its farmers. The critical factors are leadership and political will. These are the ingredients needed to create an environment in which it becomes possible for all children to receive a good quality education.

The above was excerpted from Oxfam's description of their Education Now campaign. For more information, contact Ngan Nguyen, Program Officer for Southeast Asia, Oxfam America, 26 West Street, Boston, MA 02111. Tel: (617) 728-2515, fax: (617) 728-2595, e-mail: [nnguyen@oxfamamerica.org](mailto:nnguyen@oxfamamerica.org), <http://www.oxfamamerica.org>.

## Opinion ...

### Who Should Try the Khmer Rouge?

by Tony Kevin, Former Australian Ambassador to Cambodia

*[The issue of trial of Khmer Rouge leaders continues to generate controversy, the latest being over the balance between international and Cambodian judges. Further background can be found in Ambassador Kevin's presentation on recent Cambodian politics at the Distinguished Lecture Series of the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace in Phnom Penh on 22 July. A transcript is available online <http://www.camnet.com.kh/ngoforum/> or by mail from the Fund for Reconciliation and Development.]*

Hun Sen and the Cambodian government have maintained a consistent position since US Senator John Kerry visited in April 1999. They want a UN expert to help them draft a genocide law and have been waiting since February for that.

They agreed with Kerry that foreign judges and prosecutors may take part in the trial alongside Cambodians - a key concession. They want the trial brought on quickly but cannot do anything until they have the genocide law in place.

They do not understand why the UN is taking so long to provide the expert promised to Hun Sen by Hammarberg. Meanwhile they have extended the period for which Ta Mok can be held without trial for three years so they do not have to release him after 6 months.

The UN side is factionalized, unclear about what it wants, and is playing the usual intimidatory power games with Cambodia. The UN is heavily influenced on this by the international human rights lobbies with a presence in Washington. Those bodies are close to Sam Rainsy and heavily prejudiced against the CPP and Hun Sen.

Their starting point is that no Khmer Rouge trial managed by Cambodia can possibly be fair or be seen to be fair. Hence their insistence on a foreign majority on the judging panel which Hun Sen has rejected on grounds of national sovereignty. His coalition partner leader, Prince Ranariddh, has supported his position that Cambodia must have a majority of judges.

The UN position - identical to Sam Rainsy's position - is that the UN must control the trial. The United States has also come out in support of this view, but it is an unworkable position and Hun Sen must reject it for domestic political reasons.

The UN is also now reportedly pushing for lots of Khmer Rouge arrests and a guaranteed large number of accused which is politically unsound at this time in Cambodia. Hun Sen has to proceed step by step on this. He still has to keep Pailin and the large number of KR defectors in the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces on side.

If the UN demands too much too soon it will get nothing. If it trusts Hun Sen's political judgement, it will in time achieve results progressively. but the main objective of the critics is probably to wrongfoot Hun Sen and make it look internationally as if he is protecting the Khmer Rouge (echoing Rainsy's agenda again).

To compound the irony, the UN Center for Human Rights and the local human rights group LICADHO have criticized Hun Sen on human rights grounds for passing the law making it possible to keep Ta Mok in prison after six months! (This is the same UN that has kept Cambodia waiting since February for a foreign expert to help Cambodia draft the genocide law - and there is still no sign of the expert despite repeated pleas by Hun Sen to send him/her soon.)

These are all in reality intimidatory power games by the UN and US human rights lobbies against the government of Cambodia. It's not really primarily about Khmer Rouge trials. It is part of the continuing effort to make Hun Sen and the CPP look bad internationally.

It's all eminently predictable and is yet another example of an unproductive international mindset. When, I wonder, will American human rights organizations and the UN learn that the way to get results with Cambodia is to treat the Cambodian government with a normal degree of courtesy and respect and not just mindlessly to accept whatever Rainsy says as gospel?

## Opinion ...

### Foreign Aid for Whom?

In an August 16th speech to the Veteran's of Foreign Wars highlighting the importance of non-military foreign aid programs, President Clinton called on Congress to "invest only a tiny percentage of what we spend on defense in avoiding war." But he failed to note that this reasonable goal would be far more achievable if his own budget did not allocate nearly half of all US bilateral foreign aid for arms export subsidies.

"It's time for President Clinton to put his money where his mouth is," argues William Hartung of the World Policy Institute. "There is plenty of money in the budget to fund conflict prevention efforts and address military readiness issues if the President is willing to slash unnecessary subsidies for weapons contractors."

From a press release announcing a new report "Corporate Welfare for Weapons Makers: The Hidden Costs of Spending on Defense and Foreign Aid" by William D. Hartung issued by the libertarian Cato Institute. The full text of the report is available on the web at <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-350es.html>. Or to get a hard copy contact Frida Berrigan at 212-229-5808, ext. 112 or [berrigaf@newschool.edu](mailto:berrigaf@newschool.edu).

# Into the Golden Triangle: Alleged Disappearances in Lao PDR

by Andrew Wells

*[Editor's Note: Although there has been much progress in reconciliation between the US and Laos since 1975, a segment of the Lao-American community remains vehemently opposed to the government in Vientiane and to improved American relations with it. The disappearance of Ly and Vang may be completely fabricated or a tragic consequence of illegal border crossing into an isolated region, whether ill-motivated or on a lark. In any case, it is being used as a weapon against granting Laos Normal Trade Status. In a private conversation in Vientiane in late May, a Minister told me his government could find no record of the entry or detention of the two.]*

On April 19, two American citizens of Hmong origin, Houa Ly and Michael Vang, are reported to have crossed the Mekong River illegally from Thailand into Laos. They have not been seen again, and their apparent disappearance has led to international investigations, recriminations, and a Congressional hearing.

The stretch of the Mekong forming the border between Chiang Khong, Thailand and Ban Huayxay, Bokeo province, Laos is narrow and easily navigable. Smuggling and drug trafficking are endemic in the area and speedboats ply both sides of the river (indeed, on a Lao speedboat that developed engine trouble, I briefly touched the Thai side of the river in April 1998).

Two traveling companions of Mssrs. Ly and Vang, presumably having crossed back over the river the way they came, reported to the US Consulate in Chiang Mai on May 4 that the two men were missing and possibly under arrest. In a letter to the US based Lao Human Rights Council, the companions further alleged that the Lao PDR government imprisoned and killed one of the missing men. US Embassy officials in Vientiane immediately contacted their Lao counterparts to determine the whereabouts of Ly and Vang. On May 14, the Lao PDR responded that it had no record of the two US citizens entering Laos.

As this information trickled through diplomatic channels and into public awareness, it set off a strong reaction among members of Congress. Sens. Feingold, Kohl, Boxer and Feinstein sent a letter to the State Department on May 13 calling for further investigation.

Reps. Gilman, Green, McKinney, Smith and Kind followed suit a week later. Repeated requests for information and meetings with the Lao Ambassador in Washington confirmed only that Ly and Vang did not request visas to enter Laos or pass through Lao immigration. There was no record of their arrest. Ambassador Vang Rattanavong pledged his cooperation, but had no new information to provide. The US Ambassador in Vientiane formally objected to the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 8 on their lack of a substantive response.

On Monday, June 14, Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), who represents an area with a high concentration of Hmong-Americans, called a briefing to shed light on the situation. Mary A. Ryan, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, reported in a letter that investigations had revealed little significant about Ly and Vang. While specifics were not made clear, one had been involved in human rights work, while the father of the second was a CIA operative during the US war in Indochina. The US found no evidence of any wrongdoing by Ly and Vang, though consular investigations in Chiang Khong confirmed that the two had entered Laos without the proper legal documents.

Several months of investigation have raised more questions than they answered. Why did Houa Ly and Michael Vang cross the Mekong illegally? What was the nature of their activity in Laos? Are they still there, or did they cross back into Thailand? Were they trading, investigating alleged human rights abuses, on a quixotic Hmong political mission, or refugees returning to live? Mr. Mai

Sayavongs at the Lao Embassy in Washington reports that at least two Hmong Americans have been arrested already this year attempting to smuggle opium out of Laos. If Ly and Vang were involved in criminal activity or detained for unlawful entry, why does the Lao government claim no knowledge of the men?

As long as the case remains open, inquiries continue. The Lao PDR has promised full cooperation, and the possibility of a joint Lao-American investigation has been discussed, though not yet formed. The amount of diplomatic and Congressional interest in the issue shows that more than the whereabouts of two Hmong-Americans are at stake. Returned refugee concerns and Lao exile politics both play a determining role. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 27,800 Lao, including 14,000 Hmong and other ethnic minority refugees, have returned to the Lao PDR since 1980. While social discrimination against mid- and upland-dwelling Lao Theung and Lao Soung persists, but returned refugees have not been singled out for special treatment. Nonetheless, stories of human rights abuses are endemic



The Mittaphab Lao-Australian Friendship Bridge near Vientiane where Lao entry visas can be obtained on arrival.

among sectors of the Lao- and Hmong-American community. Pressure from the US Lao and Hmong community among others resulted in language in the 1999 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 105-277, Section 2806) calling for the Secretary of State to investigate treatment of returned refugees. Of 23 stories collected in the State Department report, only two cases, both involving Lao People's Army soldiers, could be substantiated. Many of the remaining allegations verge on the bizarre: poisoning of refugees' food, government-sponsored assassination plots, chemical weapons, drownings, and even Khmer Rouge-style "killing fields." After reviewing these allegations, the State Department found "no evidence" of systemic violations of human rights among refugee returnees to Laos. "Individual instances of human rights abuse exist, as they do among the general Lao population," the report concluded, "but such violations of human rights do not appear to reflect a central government policy." The report was careful not to minimize the fact that Lao PDR does have work to do to improve democratic processes and human rights-

The disappearances of Mssrs. Ly and Vang, if genuine, appear to be individual instances, rather than evidence of systemic violations. The long trail of unsubstantiated rumors in the State Department report, however, suggests numerous other possible explanations for what might have happened. Though any attention paid to events in Laos by Washington policymakers is a welcome occurrence, the case of Ly and Vang may have been blown out of proportion by outsiders lost in their own Golden Triangles.

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## Settling in to Our New Office

The Fund for Reconciliation and Development held an office warming party on June 11th, in its new home at the Interchurch Center located near Columbia University on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Food for the occasion was provided by Nem, Cuisine of Vietnam.



Ambassador Ouch Barith (Cambodia)



Ambassador Ngo Quang Xuan (Vietnam) and Ambassador Alounkeo Kittikhoun (Lao PDR)

## Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge in Hanoi



Nguyen Trung Kien, Vice Minister of Culture and Information, with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge at the reception in Hanoi hosted by the Pennsylvania state government and business delegation, May 21, 1999.

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## *(Trade, continued from page 1 ...)*

The next steps before this agreement is signed by the two governments are as follows; agreement on language and technical details must be reached, the agreement must be signed by representatives of the two governments, and then the document must be approved by the Vietnamese National Assembly and the U.S. Congress (Congress has 60 legislative days). This is expected to happen "in a timely manner" according to negotiators on both sides.

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### **Trade Agreement will Require Approval by Congress.**

Normal Trade Status (NTS), formerly known as Most Favored Nation (MFN) for both Vietnam and Laos as well as the Vietnam trade agreement may be before the Congress this fall. It will help to have a letter of support signed by the heads of not-for-profit institutions working in the two countries, i.e. institutions that are disinterested in terms of their own benefit but concerned that for development reasons both countries receive equal treatment with others. If you would like to be involved in the drafting process of such a statement, which would also address the need for positive conditions for both investors and workers, please let me know.

—John McAuliff

## **Ambassador Peterson Speaks on the Trade Agreement and Bilateral Cooperation**

*[Excerpted from remarks at the International Economic – Cultural Exchange Club's workshop on "Cooperation and Investment Activities Between American and Vietnamese Enterprises" in Hanoi July 22, 1999]*

**O**ur biggest initiative is the bilateral trade agreement. The United States and Vietnam have been negotiating this agreement for the last two years. I believe that this agreement is the most important document our two countries will sign together during the lifetime of most of us here. It will yield significant economic benefits to both nations. For Vietnam, the most important benefit will be America's granting of Normal Trade Relations status. This will give Vietnamese exporters access to the biggest consumer market in the world. This access will in turn enhance Vietnam's attraction as a location for foreign firms to produce goods at competitive prices.

The World Bank estimates that this agreement could lead to increased value of Vietnamese exports to the US of almost \$800 million. Actually, I think this is a very conservative prediction, and it is likely to be much more than that, especially over time. I urge you all to think about the Trade Agreement as something of great value from which Vietnam will benefit for decades into the future.

The US market can seem immense and confusing to Vietnamese business people, just as the Vietnamese market looks uncertain to an American business person who views it from afar. Our Commercial Service offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City seek to help business people of each country to understand the market they are interested in entering, and introduce them to business partners they can trust and work with fruitfully.

The US Embassy is also assisting in the rural areas of Vietnam, through our Agricultural Service. This important component of the mission provides Vietnamese farmers with access to top quality US agricultural expertise in a variety of sub-sectors. US companies are leaders in the area of both food production and processing, and their experience will prove invaluable to the Vietnamese farmer and exporter as working relationships are strengthened.

Our Information Service office helps assist Vietnam's future growth and integration into the world economy through the International Visitor's Program and organizing other exchanges and educational programs. Every year, scores of Vietnamese government officials travel to the US to meet with business people who work in a variety of sectors to see if these industries might be established in Vietnam in the future. This also helps them to understand better how the US economy, government and society works, which in turn we hope enhances cooperation between the two governments on economic issues.

We are working diligently with the State Bank of Vietnam and other interested government offices to conclude an agreement with the US Export-Import Bank. EXIM financing will help Vietnamese companies purchase top-quality US products at more competitive prices. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation is up and running in Vietnam, and is currently providing financing for several projects in the country, in manufacturing and in the expansion of already existing US projects. The US Trade and Development Agency is funding a large number of feasibility studies in Vietnam; ranging from power to ports to weather forecasting. Its programs are bringing valuable American expertise to assist in Vietnam's development.

The US-Asia Environmental Partnership Program has just begun in Vietnam. This program funds activities related to the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies, which I know is a top priority of Vietnam's decision-makers. A bilateral Copyright Agreement has been ratified by both governments, and is being implemented. This important agreement will ensure that the transfer of technology to Vietnam will be a mutually beneficial exchange.

These are activities of the US Government, but the US non-governmental private sector makes many valuable contributions to Vietnam's growth. In fact, the non-governmental private sector is much more

important to Vietnam's economic development than is our government, as it is back home in the USA. US firms have won more than 30 investment licenses totaling approximately \$1.1 billion, and the US is ranked as the 9th biggest investor in your nation. Investment ranges from banking to hospitals to power projects. US investors are active in all parts of Vietnam, bringing benefits to regions that have not prospered as much as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. US companies support and even initiate many social programs through making donations of money and their expertise. Many US based non-governmental organizations are training Vietnamese entrepreneurs in both the cities and the countryside, and they implement a huge number of valuable projects in everything from micro-enterprise to health care, at the grassroots level.

**Pete Peterson: Assignment Hanoi**, produced by Sandy Northrop, aired on PBS September 7, 1999. In 1966, Air Force Captain Pete Peterson was shot down over North Vietnam where he would spend the next six years as a prisoner of war. Thirty-one years later he returned, as the first US Ambassador to Vietnam since the war and the first ever US Ambassador to Hanoi. Northrop tracked Peterson for four months to craft a portrait of Peterson and the Vietnamese and their mutual efforts to mold a lasting relationship. Peterson has found in Vietnam the promise for renewal, for both his country and himself and takes as his challenge convincing others that time has come for US-Vietnamese reconciliation. The film premiered in Hanoi May 31, 1999. (For more information contact producer Sandy Northrop, tel: (844) 825-9629, sandynorth@aol.com)

An increasing number of Vietnamese are studying in the US both in undergraduate and post-graduate programs. Last year, approximately 1,200 Vietnamese went to the US for study. They are in business, science, social work, and numerous other programs. The expertise they will repatriate to Vietnam is immeasurable, and as these numbers grow, so inevitably will our trade.

Watching Indonesia, Russia and Brazil suffer from the devastating

effects of the last two years has made Vietnamese officials more reluctant to implement the reforms that are needed if Vietnam is to move ahead and build on their country's strengths. It must be understood that if reforms are implemented within an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, Vietnam will be successful. Without economic reform, the country will lose its chance to become a prosperous nation.

In conclusion, although difficulties may lie ahead and the process of economic reform involves building a consensus on the strategy to follow, I have no doubt that Vietnam can emerge as an important player on the world's economic stage. Cooperation with American companies will help in this process, as they are important repositories of technology, financial resources, and managerial skills.

We, the American people, look forward to having an increasingly positive role in the history that will be written here at the beginning of the next century. This is just the beginning of our peaceful and prosperous relationship. Bilateral trade between our two countries will grow exponentially as the trade agreement comes into effect and our economy matures. This mutual reliance will help to heal old wounds, ease suspicions, and add to Vietnam's growing strength and importance on the global stage.

## NGO Self Profile

**International Development Enterprises** was established in 1981 to bring affordable technology to world populations most threatened by food insecurity. They aim to improve the social, economic, and environmental conditions of the world's poor by identifying and marketing very low-cost income-generating technologies that can be sold at a fair market price to small-scale farmers. Technologies that IDE helps develop and market are designed to pay for themselves within one year and are manufactured locally from available materials. Ultimately, a sustainable village-level supply network is created for the purchase of technology, with the spare parts and local service provided as well. IDE operates seven country programs in Asia and Africa, and in 1998 they started a manual irrigation program in Haiti. IDE's budget is over US\$4.5 million, with major funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Interchurch Organization for Cooperation and Development (ICCO), Misereor (Germany), Food Industry Crusade Against Hunger (FICAH) and USAID. IDE is currently involved in marketing/disseminating treadle pumps, low cost drip irrigation systems and low cost drinking water hand pumps. In Cambodia, IDE distributes a treadle pump called the "Rabbit Pump" and has a network of pump manufacturers, dealers and installation technicians. In Vietnam, IDE recently introduced low cost drip irrigation, which during trial tests in the last six months has proven immensely popular. In addition to drip irrigation, IDE Vietnam markets and helps disseminate low cost drinking water hand pumps that already provide clean drinking water to thousands of Vietnamese families. IDE seeks collaborating partners interested in adapting low cost drip and sprinkler irrigation systems to specific agro-climatic conditions in other countries, and implementing demonstration and rural dissemination programs through the local private sector without the use of subsidies.

For more information, contact International Development Enterprises; 10403 West Colfax, Ste 500; Lakewood, CO 80215. Tel: (303) 232-4336, fax: (303) 232-8346, <http://www.ideorg.org>.

Self profiles are provided by NGOs or adapted from their materials. We edit profiles only for style.

# Teaching Them To Fish

by Dr. Ernest Burgess

**V**ietnam, 1969. Angola, 1978. Lebanon, 1986. Iraq, 1991. Rwanda, 1995. Kosovo, 1999. The world at war has greatly changed in the years that span these conflicts. Leaders and regimes rise and pass away, political objectives shift, weapons of destruction become ever more efficient. There is some constancy that can always be relied upon, however: the anguish, loss of life and limb, and starvation that are the enduring legacy of warfare. Approximately two million land mines are laid globally every year. At the current rate of removal, it would take 1,100 years to clear the world of land mines, provided that no additional mines were planted.

While political controversy may reign over involvement in foreign conflicts, it should have no bearing on whether to address the human suffering that accompanies it. The world must act to stem the misery of its refugees and injured, no matter the origin of hostilities. It is not enough for foreign governments and charitable organizations to simply give money to impoverished countries. If they are able to make a meaningful, substantive contribution, they must offer aid that empowers those who receive it and leads them towards self-reliance. Once the immediate threat of death is past, the daunting task of rebuilding lives presents itself—a less dramatic need, but one that is just as acute.

Current events in Kosovo bring to mind another American peace-keeping effort that deeply affected the people of a foreign country. Twenty-five years after the end of the Vietnam War, approximately twenty percent of the Vietnamese population is disabled as a result of the war and its aftermath. Residual land mines continue to maim and kill the native population, many of whom are children. Political tensions between our two countries delayed foreign humanitarian efforts in Vietnam for 15 years, leaving a nation of amputees to cope as best they could, with little ability to make a living and survive in their ruined land.

In 1991, in partnership with the Vietnamese government, the Prosthetics Outreach Foundation (POF) of Seattle opened a medical clinic for amputees in Hanoi. Two years ago, a factory for artificial feet and legs was also created in Ba Vi, making use of POF's advanced prosthetic technology for treating injuries specific to land mines. The Vietnamese staff was trained to fabricate and fit artificial limbs using local materials and distribution systems, thereby enabling people to help themselves and contribute to their own economy. Nearly 10,000 lower limbs have been furnished by the POF Hanoi Clinic to amputees in the region, allowing them to resume normal lives that include work, marriage, families and most importantly, survival. It took money to set this in motion, but it was the technology and training imparted that made it a successful model of independence and recovery.

The ongoing genocide in the Balkans and Africa require an urgent response to its survivors. As the American people enjoy an unprecedented era of prosperity ourselves, we must stretch the parameters of our comfort to include those who have lost everything but their

lives. The principle of self-reliance is key to restoring stability to war torn nations and confidence to their people. Let us look forward to peace and stand ready to share our skills and knowledge, recognize that there is no greater humanitarian act than helping people save their own lives.

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Dr. Ernest Burgess founded the Prosthetics Outreach Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to helping victims of war through the creation and distribution of prosthetic limbs. This essay originally appeared as an opinion piece in the Seattle Times. Tel: (206) 726-1631, e-mail: pofsea2@aol.com, <http://www.pofsea.org>.

## Landmine Campaign Calls on United States to Not Use Mines in NATO Operations

**I**n August the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) called on President Clinton to prohibit the use of antipersonnel mines when fighting alongside military allies that have already banned the weapon. In a letter signed by 96 members of the coalition, the USCBL, a member of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines, asked the President, as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, to “institute a policy of no use of antipersonnel mines in joint military operations or exercises with ban treaty signatories.” This would include any NATO operations, as well as operations with non-NATO countries that have signed the treaty, such as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

This issue was brought to the fore during the NATO operation in Yugoslavia, when the United States publicly reserved the right to use antipersonnel landmines, even as it condemned Yugoslav forces for using them. Seventeen of NATO's nineteen members are signatories to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (except the United States and Turkey), and fourteen have already ratified. The USCBL letter demands that the United States “not block consensus on a NATO policy prohibiting any use of antipersonnel mines in alliance operations.”

While the United States did not use antipersonnel mines in Kosovo, the USCBL continues “to be alarmed as the United States presses its military allies, including signatories to the Mine Ban Treaty, to allow it to use antipersonnel mines in joint operations, to continue stockpiling U.S. antipersonnel mines on their territory, and to permit the United States military to transport mines through their territory—all of which are against the spirit, and perhaps the letter, of the Mine Ban Treaty.”

The USCBL continues its call for the United States to join the 135 signatories and 84 States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty and voiced regret to the President that the proposed and highly conditional date to sign of 2006 “is years too late for the world to wait for the United States to ban antipersonnel landmines.”

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For a copy of the USCBL letter or for more information please contact USCBL coordinator, Marissa A. Vitagliano at 202-483-9222 or e-mail [marissa@vi.org](mailto:marissa@vi.org).

# Conference Report II

[This is the second of the three segments of the report from the 9th Conference of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, this January. The fall Interchange will carry the final panel discussions.]

## Developing Curriculum to Meet New National Needs; Conflicting Advice and Competing Advisors

Moderator: Rachel Aiken

Panelists: Neth Barom

Vin McNamara

Tran Thi Bach Mai

Mythong Sanvanvixay

All three countries of Indochina are in the midst of a process of putting new curricula into place for both secondary and post-secondary education. The panelists from Cambodia and Vietnam focused primarily on the post-secondary curriculum, while Mythong Sanvanvixay focused his talk on recent changes in the Lao primary and secondary systems. Curriculum development and reform is necessary to meet new economic needs in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, but Neth Barom and Mythong Sanvanvixay both underscored the fact that curricula must also help students fully realize the intellectual resources available to enrich them as people.

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## Sectoral Group Conference Photos

The Spring issue contained a round up of the findings of the Sectoral Groups at the 9th Forum Conference in Phnom Penh. Sectoral Group meetings gave conference participants a chance to sit down with other people who are doing work in a field similar to their own and share experiences, discuss priorities and make plans to work together in the future.



AIDS/HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Sectoral Group.

## Cambodia: Neth Barom, Vice Rector, National University of Phnom Penh

Today there are more than 4000 students at the National University, which is in the process of transforming its curriculum, not least because the old curriculum was narrowly focussed and neglected the full scope of Khmer wisdom. Today the University is divided into three faculties, the Faculty of Science which offers 9 majors, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with 6 majors, and the Faculty of Foreign Languages, with programs in Spanish and English. The National University uses a broad-based credit system that was adopted two years ago.

On the subject of designing the actual curriculum Barom, observed that there will always be a philosophical difference between a broad based program and a narrowly defined one, so the first step in developing a curriculum is to agree on a single set of goals and objectives. Once that has been done, the process of designing a curriculum that meets those goals is much more streamlined.

The basic objectives outlined for Khmer undergraduates include self reliance, initiative and courage. Students should also learn to take humanity as a broad concept into consideration and learn to communicate with others, know one academic discipline and one foreign language solidly and be computer literate. In addition, students need to understand human rights and their personal responsibility to practice non-violence. This final point, he added, is particularly relevant in Cambodia where recent history has not taught young people to respect human rights. Cambodia has a unique challenge to repair the damage set by bad examples of past regimes.

With those basic objectives outlined, developing the actual curriculum is a process of gathering information, and developing course materials that meet the objectives outlined. The newly planned four year undergraduate curriculum includes a BA program and a BS. The course hour requirements are as follows:

- Bachelor of Arts: 36 semester hours of general education, 102-106 of requirements specific to the major and six semester hours of elective courses.
- Bachelor of Sciences: the same, but with 106 -110 semester hours of specific requirements.

Once the curriculum has been put in place, the third phase is that of evaluation. At the National University, the curriculum will be evaluated annually to assess its effectiveness and revise course outlines.

The Vice-Rector concluded with two observations. First, because of financial shortage and limited human resource capacity, the curriculum can only be partially implemented. Second, he stressed the importance of involving everyone in the process and the importance of students being involved in the community. Research and community service are both essential to identifying society's needs to students.

## Laos: Mythong Sanvanvixay, National Research Institute

Laos requires 12 years of compulsory education to prepare students for education at a higher level. The curriculum is designed to develop educational, intellectual and moral values, to instill a spirit of patriotism and to help students understand their role in a democratic society. The government's social, political, economic and cultural policy are reflected in the curriculum to give Lao students an understanding of their responsibility to preserve national traditions and take an active part in national construction and defense. The national curriculum policy was created to promote national unity, culture and diversity with an emphasis on solidarity between Lao ethnic groups. Elements of the curriculum include the origin of the Lao nation, its multiple ethnicities and minorities, the culture and history of Laos, and the national policy on cultural development. During the curriculum development process, a wide variety of ministries were invited to participate to ensure that the general education curriculum was a part of broader cultural and social policy in Laos.

To develop the Lao curriculum, basic skills and learning objectives were identified by committees. These included intellectual, moral, labor and aesthetic values. Competency requirements were established and the curriculum was designed to be implemented by teachers, giving teachers some room to modify the design at their discretion and implement the new curriculum creatively. Teachers are expected to work with supervisors to find creative ways to implement the curriculum requirements. Together the departments of General Education and Teacher Training along with the Teacher Development Center are responsible for implementation of the curriculum and writing of readers and textbooks.

One of the more prominent changes in the curriculum system is that subjects are now highly integrated. Population education, for instance, included in the new curriculum, combines civics, geography and biology. Other multidisciplinary fields include environmental education, international education, national cultural identity and ideological identity.

## Vietnam: Tran Thi Bach Mai, The National Research Institute for Educational Development in the Ministry of Education and Training

Vietnam is going through a process of socio-economic renovation, which includes and requires renovation of the education system, especially post-secondary education. Education is valued in Vietnam as evidenced by a 91% literacy rate in 1995, even while per capita income was very low. In 1986 the Communist Party of Viet-

nam decided to adopt an open market policy. This was a turning point for education in Vietnam. After 1987, institutions of higher education were supposed to prepare students for the needs of the international economy, of particular sectors and of different social groups. Since then education reform has been carried out in the context of the government's socio-economic renewal policies.

After the opening of the Vietnamese market, college graduates had to look for jobs themselves and adjust to changes in the job market. The State is no longer the sole source of funding for universities nor the sole employer of graduates. With the open market, the changing contexts of education and the economy mean that there are new opportunities as well as new challenges for Vietnamese students. Some of the other implications of the transition in Vietnam are that higher education must satisfy new sectors and universities must expand their funding base to improve the quality of education. In addition, universities must incorporate the principles of the market mechanism in their operations, and must be accountable for their

own effectiveness. The purposes of the modern university include training, research, and community service as well as retraining and continuing education.

Education is considered a first national priority policy as a driving force behind modernization and an inherent part of the Vietnamese industrialization and modernization policies. Education provides both manpower and new ideas, and Vietnam's

priorities include increasing the number of scientists and technologists five-fold, with a shift in quality and focus to meet new needs. In addition, universities should be establishing lasting relationships with universities outside of Vietnam in the spirit of respect and mutual interest, especially within Asia.

With dynamic changes in the job market, universities have to identify the future needs of employees, especially as training for a planned economy is very different from training for a market economy. To satisfy diverse needs, the forms of education should also be more diverse than they have been. The government needs to develop community colleges and short term courses for undergraduates as well as improved post-graduate training. In addition, universities also have to begin to develop customized training programs to meet very specific needs as they arise. Beyond these needs, universities must renovate curricula in the humanities and teacher education to improve the skills of those who are preparing the next generations for higher education.

Echoing a constraint noted by other speakers as well, Mai noted that limited resources mean it is necessary to identify priorities and



Speakers at the panel on curriculum development. R-L, Neth Barom, Rachel Aiken, Vin McNamara, Mythong Souvanvixay, Tran Thi Bach Mai.

institute changes in pieces and to look to international experience to make changes efficiently.

**Cambodia: Vincent McNamara, Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports**

Cambodia has a substantially larger donor presence than Vietnam and Laos, especially after the destruction of human resources that happened here. In Cambodia, donors come from a range of backgrounds and philosophies, from highly centralized European school systems to very decentralized American schools, and they combine with general fragmentation and insufficient coordination to stymie themselves and one another. Simple things like workshops that conflict should be preventable with better coordination.

Low rates of remuneration in Cambodian public service means that often when the donor pulls out at the end of four or five year staff development exercise, the employees take their new skills to the private sector where they will get substantially more money.

Fundamental language barriers also impact the efficacy of donor programs. English and French proficiency are insufficient. The Khmer language needs modernization as well. [In the Q/A session following the talks, McNamara explained language modernization at the request of a participant. Skills development and human resource development, he explained, are processes that should be conducted in Khmer, but there are two few texts on the language and two many variances in the way it is written and expressed, he explained. The government established a Khmer Language Institute at the University of Phnom Penh, but the Institute does not get enough donor support to be effective.]

Q: How do you identify the labor market that you want to gear curriculum towards? Especially considering that studies find students often wind up doing work in fields that have little relation to their training. In Vietnam they try to undertake some systematic communication with employers to help pin down the labor market and labor needs. In Cambodia, the speaker observed that academic staff seek feedback and participate in research and community ser-



Sectoral Group on Women's Organizations and Priorities.

## Tapes available of the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

Videotapes of the conference proceedings are available. The tapes are 6 hours each and cost \$10.00 (including shipping). Tapes of only one of the plenary or panel discussions (2 hours each) listed below are also available for \$10.00.

### Tape One: Cambodia Laos and Vietnam Country Plenaries

#### Tape Two: Non Country Plenaries

Opening Plenary, Lessons for transitional economies from the Asian economic crisis,

Plenary: Cooperation between international non-profit organizations and host government.

Closing plenary: Headlines from sectoral groups and closing comments by the H.E. Lu Lay Sreng Minister of Information - Cambodia and H.E. Sok An Minister Council of Ministers- Cambodia, Executive Vice President Vu Xuan Hong - Vietnam and Vice Minister Khempheng Pholsena - Laos.

#### Tape Three: Day One Panel Discussions

- a) Integrating Multilateral and bilateral development agencies, foundations, non-profit organizations and grass roots organizations into national plans.
- b) International private business as a motor for development, source of philanthropic funds, and setter or subverter of labor standards
- c) Grassroots organizations and their role in meeting development needs.

#### Tape Four: Day Two Panel Discussions

- a) Addressing social evils at the grassroots: prostitution, trafficking of women and children, and drug addiction
- b) Water resources development: economic environmental and resettlement issues
- c) The challenge of maintaining a system of primary and preventative health care in the provinces

#### Tape Five: Day Three Panel Discussions

- a) Developing curriculum to meet new national needs
- b) Food security and growth, modernizing agriculture and overcoming poverty
- c) Grass roots efforts to address legacies of the war: landmines, UXO, birth defects and weapons proliferation.

vice projects that keep them in touch with the economy outside of the university, and allow them to see better solutions.

One Vietnamese professor made an observation that was met with agreement in the room: Universities are vital. Looking only to labor markets means you run the risk of catering to multinational corporations instead of thinking more deeply about what our needs really are. Students who run after computer science and English courses wind up handicapped. Modernization and industrialization have social consequences (for example, prostitution and drug abuse) that we are not prepared to respond to. We need to think seriously about what kind of modern Laotian, Cambodian and Vietnamese people we want to see and reach.

### **International Private Business as a Motor for Development, Source of Philanthropic Funds and Setter or Subverter of Labor Standards**

Moderated by Andrew McNaughton

Nguyen Ba Cuong

Cham Prasidh

Viravanh Khamtanh

Bretton Sciaroni

Gerald Herman

### **Cambodia: Cham Prasidh, Minister of Commerce**

Cambodia's economy is still in a rehabilitation stage. The currency crisis came just as Cambodia was starting to stabilize. In 1997 GDP growth was 1%. In 1998 it was 0%. The tourism sector was particularly affected by the military and political crisis, but the garment industry is booming and saw only 13 garment factories close during the crisis. In the two to three years since Cambodia negotiated MFN status with the United States, the garment industry has grown substantially.

New quotas ironed out during the most recent round of talks with the United States Trade Representative put Cambodia among the US's top 20 sources of textile imports. With MFN status, Prasidh said, Cambodia has been able to develop a real private sector. He characterized MFN status as a magic wand for the private sector. Still, substantial challenges remain, such as military demobilization that will leave former soldiers jobless unless the government steps in to mitigate the effects and provide jobs. The Cambodian Government, he added, is committed to meeting this challenge.

Cambodia must now address issues like deforestation, human rights, and worker rights not only to appease donor countries but because it is in Cambodia's interest. Addressing these issues cannot happen overnight, though, as building a democracy that works does not happen overnight. The government wants to see human rights met, but educating people takes time, and donor nations should for their part recognize that making lasting change does happen quickly. Furthermore, Cambodia adheres to most important international standards on workers rights.

In recent negotiations with the US trade delegation, Prasidh set a precedent by including adherence to workers rights into the trade agreement such that if garment factories observe labor laws, Cambodia gets a forty percent increase in quotas for exports to the United States.

Prasidh also noted that one of the strengths of Cambodia's economy is that it was build slowly from the experience and particular needs of the Cambodian situation, not from Western books or doctrine.

**Questions:** 1) On the trade balance: Cambodia had a positive trade balance with the US in 1998 — \$318 million in exports to the US and only \$10 million in import, but overall, Cambodia's imports from all countries are larger than exports. Cambodia also enjoys GSP treatment from the US and 26 other countries.

2) On under the table taxation: Such costs are problems that occur everywhere. Cambodia is trying to respond to such corruption by recognizing that at least part of the problem is that officials need money/an increase in salaries. Changes in office practice can also increase transparency and eliminate some of the opportunity for bribery. For example, within the Commerce Ministry, Prasidh now



Dr. Le Cao Dai speaking in the Landmines, UXO and Agent Orange Sectoral Group.

guarantees that all permit applicants will receive a response to their request within forty eight hours. The department must process all requests promptly, not just those accompanied by bribes.

3) On the predominance of young women working in the garment sector and the dangers of relying too heavily on mobile industry: Prasad made two points, first that the sector is very mobile and has to be encouraged to lay down roots and that make factories less mobile. Building complex networks of products available within Cambodia makes it harder for garment factories to move away from their suppliers. The second point was that there are many reasons why young women often do not finish school. Often it is too far to travel alone to go to secondary schools, and families need the income that daughters can generate if they go to work. This is an issue that the government has to respond to.

### **Laos: Viravanh Khamtanh, Chief of Division, Foreign Investment Management Department, Committee for Investment and Foreign Cooperation**

In Lao PDR, the Foreign Investment Management Committee is responsible for formulating foreign investment policy and strategy as well as for evaluating, screening and approving investors. Over the last decade, since Laos opened its doors to investors, investment has grown substantially. FDI projects of close to \$7 billion have been approved by the Lao government. However, though the country remains abundant in untapped resources, both natural and mineral, Laos is still primarily a subsistence economy. New reforms aim to create a positive atmosphere for investors. This includes a management framework to meet private business needs and make rules and regulations more clear.

As articulated in the government's five year plan, government should supply necessary materials and information to bring investors into Laos, especially in a select group of highlighted industries which includes hydropower (electricity for export), mining, agriculture and forestry, light manufacturing, and service industries. These are the primary untapped sectors where the government particularly encourages foreign direct investment. Lao PDR law on investment requires attention to environment, and stipulates that foreign investment can take two forms, either cooperative joint projects or wholly foreign owned projects. In either case, firms must employ Lao citizens wherever possible and may only employ skilled foreign personnel when absolutely necessary. The government is working to improve the business skills of Lao people to help firms meet this requirement. In addition, the government guarantees that property of investors is protected and cannot be nationalized. Some of the incentives to investing in Lao PDR include stability, security and hospitality.

Laos is currently in the process of negotiating MFN status with the US, and is surrounded by emerging markets. That combined with ASEAN membership, the ASEAN Investment Area Agreement, low cost energy, low cost land for lease and investment treaties with some 20 countries mean that Laos should be able to attract quality foreign investment.

### **Vietnam: Nguyen Ba Cuong, Expert in Department of Foreign Direct Investment, Ministry of Planning and Investment**

In Vietnam, more than half of the foreign investment comes from the immediate region, and almost a quarter comes from G7 countries. In recent years, the quality and quantity of FDI in Vietnam has improved substantially. The structure of FDI has changed with socio-economic development plans and demands in Vietnam. FDI Projects were once concentrated in the south and in cities. Northern provinces only accounted for 20-25% of FDI. Projects were especially concentrated in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Today, though there is still some urban concentration, projects overall are better dispersed. By sector, the service sector accounts for 46.5% of total capital. Agriculture, forestry and fishery projects receive just 4% of total capital. Hotels and tourism attract 34.74% of total capital or 12.3% in terms of the number of projects.

Foreign direct investment is necessary to the Vietnamese economy. It provides capital that stabilizes the economy, encourages both co-operation and competition, and increases the country's productive capacity. It also employs a substantial number of Vietnamese. Charitable gifts by corporations are useful to the economy as well, which is why the government has undertaken a number of efforts to increase charitable giving. Money used by companies for charity is deducted from their profit for taxation purposes.

Today, working relationships between foreign investors and employees are improving and investors should and do take an interest in the long term working and living conditions of workers. FDI requires a new class of workers who can meet modern demands. Workers need at least secondary education and foreign language skills among other things. In addition, investors need infrastructure. Part of the reason that FDI is concentrated in urban areas is that people are better educated in cities and the infrastructure is more rooted.

### **Gerald Herman, Lotus Communications**

**On behavior of foreign companies toward Governments in Indochina**  
Described a major US multinational company that no longer gives donations or charitable contributions in Southeast Asia because they had not done well in Southeast Asia last year. Responsible capitalism can be profitable, but failure to thrive in a market should not mean you abandon philanthropy in that market. Large Companies can afford to be generous when the richest 225 people in the world have a combined wealth equal to that of the poorest 47% of the world. Four percent of that would provide enormously for the remaining world.

Herman suggested four useful principles for Foreign Companies and Governments:

- 1) Partnership (but it is up to the government to ensure fair partnerships)
- 2) Friendship
- 3) Reinvestment (don't be greedy with profits; governments then have a responsibility to set up a taxation system that encourages reinvestment.)
- 4) Social Responsibility

His final observation was that one sticking point in current US-Vietnam talks is repatriation of profits. The Vietnamese are necessarily wary of being used as a sweatshop. The US wants American businesses to share a playing field with Vietnamese businesses rather than being forced into partnerships.

**Bretton Sciaroni, Partner, Tilleke & Gibbins and Associates, Ltd.**

Since Cambodia opened up there were many bad investments and investors who came without a long-term vested interest in the development of the country—they rushed in with UNTAC and left quickly with little trickle down. International agreements moved Cambodia into the international sphere and helped defeat the Khmer Rouge. Without dry season offensives and upheaval for the international media to grasp onto there is less to deter serious investment.

The Cambodian legal system is weak and complex and the current government is working on bringing laws and code up to modern standards, which is vital to creating an environment where investment can happen but the Pol Pot years left Cambodia without lawyers and judges, so substantial reconstruction still remains to be done.

**Integrating Multilateral and Bilateral Development Agencies, Foundations, Non-Profit Organizations and Grass Roots Priorities into National Plans**

Moderated by Charles Bailey

Svay Sitha

Bountheuang Mounlasy

Don Tuan Phong

Gerry Carrenjesa

**Cambodia: Gerry Carrenjesa, Deputy Chief and Technical Advisor, UNDP Cambodia**

On getting people who may not like each other to work together:

The UNDP's role in Cambodia emerged from ICORC, the International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia, which was a donor forum. This meant that aid was donor coordinated and donor driven. It took the Cambodian government some time to take charge of coordinating donors. Even today, the government's five-year plan is somewhat donor driven. The biggest challenge for the CDC is getting donors to move in a single direction.

\*note that this talk took place as the Cambodian government was preparing for the Consultative Group meeting in February.

In Country Aid Coordination in Cambodia has operates via several mechanisms. Ministers and Secretaries of State (Vice Ministers) come together as a group and meet in groups by sectoral designations, and the Committee for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) meets with donors and heads of missions to review project imple-

mentation and coordinate aid. Donor agencies and the government basically want the same things, but building a relationship that allows them to work together requires trust, which can only be developed through communication and constant give and take.

Carrenjesa also outlined several economic planning and development mechanisms used in Cambodia, where macroeconomic management had to be build from scratch. Each agency within the government has its own set of strategic plans, but the overall mechanism in place is designed to facilitate feedback and monitoring. Agencies and ministers find it difficult to work within the constraints of a coordinating mechanism, but the feedback and monitoring is key to eventual self-determination for those agencies, and is an ongoing process.

Over the last five years, Cambodia has received over \$1.8 billion in donor money, but the private sector in Cambodia has not kicked in to begin providing for the country, so there is still work to be done in that regard.

Three years ago, the CDC began trying to coordinate NGO activities in Cambodia by bringing them into sectoral program discussions, but since July 1997, everyone's attention has turned away from sectoral programs.

**Laos: Dr. Bountheung Mounlasy, Deputy Director General of the Committee for Investment and Foreign Economic Cooperation, Prime Ministers Office**

Laos is a small country with immense budget constraints that depends on external sources for programs. Their experience is similar to Cambodia's: they, too, meet with a consultative group, but have the added mechanism of round-table meetings, as an additional vehicle for mobilizing resources. Thus far Laos has had six such meetings. In addition, to help NGOs, donors and the government work towards the same goals and priorities, the government is working to improve cooperation. The Committee for Investment and Foreign Economic Cooperation deals with aid coordinatio. Its ultimate aim is for all donors to be coordinated through this one department so national plans and priority programs can be implemented with international assistance.

One primary government focus is expansion of cooperation among external donors, especially for larger programs implemented by international financial institutions and bilateral agencies.

Laos is also presently planning for a seventh round table meeting in 1999 in Laos that would bring donors into the country and might help them see better the country they are discussing.

**Vietnam: Don Tuan Phong, People's Aid Coordinating Committee**

Vietnam has needed external assistance at every stage of development. The country constructs and has constructed long term and medium term strategies and plans, which include seven national plans for the country, called targeted programs. The National Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction is one primary tar-

geted program. Other programs include programs against epidemics and diseases. The government has also identified seven key areas where they particularly seek foreign assistance. These include administrative reform, reform of state owned enterprises, and agricultural and rural development.

Agricultural and rural development are central to Vietnam's national plans and programs. Nearly 80% of Vietnamese live in rural areas or remote areas, as do 90% of the poor, so government priorities must be aimed at meeting the needs of the poor.

From 1993 to 1998, the volume of overseas development assistance (ODA) reached several billion dollars, much of it in substantial projects addressing larger issues. NGO assistance tends to act more directly at the grass roots and is generally small-scale projects.

The People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) is responsible for coordinating aid from non-governmental organizations. Foreign NGOs working in Vietnam must go through an approval process and adhere to national regulations governing NGO activity. The approval process and PACCOM serve to coordinate NGO activities with the needs of different localities in the country.

During the regional financial crisis, Vietnam needed more foreign exchange to meet development needs. Money assistance, thus, was necessary. At the same time, the work of NGOs at the grass roots is especially vital now.

During the Q & A, one question directed at Mr. Phom was on the presence of local NGOs in Vietnam and rules governing them. Phom observed that the Law on Associations dates back several decades, and that Vietnam has a broad network of People's Organizations and Mass Organizations that are not conventionally described as NGOs but that do NGO work. These include groups such as the Women's Union and the Vietnamese Youth Organization. These also include 170 national peoples organizations, many broken into groups by sector. He suggested that these groups act on local grass roots projects in ways similar to local NGOs in Cambodia.

**Questions:** For the UNDP: is there perhaps a law of diminishing returns on coordination. How far down and how small of an organization do you coordinate before it becomes counter productive? Do you lose some of the benefits of innovation by micromanaging too many projects when administrative resources are stretched thin to begin with? What are the difficulties in dealing with donors?

Carrenjesa responded that it has taken time in Cambodia to identify the agencies that

work well in certain areas. Part of the function of coordination meetings is to take a "slow by slow" approach to understanding what different ministries are doing. Ministries are deluged with advice and reports but have a hard time actually working together to get things done. He added that one important function of the UNDPs work in Cambodia was to encourage large donors to streamline their paperwork requirements so that Cambodian administrators don't get bogged down meeting requirements that don't make sense or that duplicate parallel requirements.

Mounlasy added that in Laos, naturally, people want to be free to do what ever they want. The aim of coordination is the make the best use of a scarce resource, external assistance. Donors expect Laos to be capable of mobilizing and absorbing aid, which requires coordination. Phom added his agreement that coordination is most necessary for larger donors and that it is a means of ensuring that resources are used efficiently.

The speakers all agreed that the real challenge is not reconciling the priorities of grass roots organizations but reconciling those of large donors who often undo one another's work, and that one of the most valuable and necessary functions of coordination is reconciling differences between donor priorities

One participant said that in Laos, the government wants to be given the opportunity to select NGO country directors from a variety of candidates and asked for elaboration on the logic behind this policy. Mounlasy responded that he didn't have the data to comment directly but that in general, the essence of the government's goal in coordination is to make sure that NGOs and the government can work together.



Services for and with People with Disabilities Sectoral Group

## Cuba, continued from page 1 ...

on a religious or humanitarian trip; a specific license is still required, but no special qualification is required.

University and secondary school students, as well as professors and colleagues may travel to Cuba if their university or school has applied for a specific license. Such a license is good for two years and covers any person the institution chooses to include in the license. We urge any professor, student or alumnus to request that his or her university apply for such a license from Treasury.

“Hosted” travel is also legal: this means you have been invited as the guest of a Cuban government institution or that someone in a third country is paying all of your Cuba-related expenses. If you are a hosted traveler, you may not travel on Cubana Airlines (which means that you cannot travel from Nassau, for example, as only Cubana flies between Nassau and Havana), and you may not travel on any direct flight between the United States and Cuba.

In addition, the Treasury Department regulations limit your spending in Cuba to \$183 a day for accommodations, food, and transportation. Money spent on informational materials – books, music, art and the like – does not count against this daily allowance; nor does it count against the \$100 worth of goods you’re allowed to bring back from Cuba. In other words, you can still spend thousands of dollars on books, music, art, etc.

Sandra Levinson is director of The Center for Cuban Studies. Founded in 1972, the Center is the longest standing United States organization which facilitates travel to Cuba.

## Americans Want New Policy on Cuba

*The Clinton Administration appears to be far behind US public opinion in only liberalizing travel restrictions rather than dropping them altogether. While the following Gallup polls do not address travel directly, it seems logical to conclude that freedom to travel would be approved by the 71% of Americans who favor re-establishing relations.*

### Is your overall opinion of Cuba very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?

	Very favorable	Mostly favorable	Mostly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	No opinion
May 1999	4%	20%	45%	24%	7%
March 1999	4	28	48	13	7
March 1996*	2	8	40	41	9

\*Based on half sample

### Suppose that on election day this year you could vote on key issues as well as candidates—would you vote for or against the following propositions:

#### A. For or against re-establishing US diplomatic relations with Cuba

	For	Against	No opinion
May 1999	71	25	4
March 1999	67	27	6
April 1996	40	49	11
1977	53	32	15
1974	63	37	0

#### B. For or against ending the US trade embargo with Cuba

May 1999	51	42	7
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## Alice Walker on the Embargo ...

*The following is a selection from a letter novelist Alice Walker wrote to President Clinton on March 13, 1996. Having declined his invitation to visit the White House in January, 1996, Walker took the opportunity to challenge Clinton's Cuba policy, and criticize the Helms-Burton bill he had signed the day before. The full text of Alice Walker's eloquent statement can be found at <<http://www.igc.org/cubasoli/awalker.html>>.*

I have seen how the embargo hurts everyone in Cuba, but especially Cuban children, infants in particular. I spend some nights in utter sleeplessness worrying about them. Someone has said that when you give birth to a child—and perhaps I read this in Hillary's book, which I recently bought—you are really making a commitment to the agony of having your heart walking around outside your body. That is how I feel about Cuba: I am quite unable to think of it as separate from myself. I have taken seriously the beliefs and values I learned from my Georgia parents, the most sincere and humble Christians I have ever known: Do unto others...Love thy neighbor...All of it. I feel the suffering of each child in Cuba as if it were my own. ...

[T]he embargo is wrong, because it punishes people, some of them unborn, for being who they are. Cubans cannot help being who they are. Given their long struggle for freedom, particularly from Spain and the United States, they cannot help taking understandable pride in who they are. They have chosen a way of life different from ours, and I must say that from my limited exposure to that different way of life, it has brought them, fundamentally, a deep inner certainty about the meaning of existence (to develop one's self and to help others) and an equally deep psychic peace. One endearing quality I've found in the Cubans I have met is that they can listen with as much heart as they speak. ...

The world, I believe, is easier to change than we think. And harder. Because the change begins with each one of us saying to ourselves, and meaning it: I will not harm anyone or anything in this moment. Until, like recovering alcoholics, we can look back on an hour, a day, a week, a year, of comparative harmlessness.

## NGO Self Profile

The **Center For Cuban Studies** is committed to providing US citizens with information about Cuba. Their **Cuban Resource Center** organizes trips to Cuba for both groups and individuals that fall within the legal exemptions to the US ban on travel to Cuba, i.e., professional research, news-gathering and educational study. The Center can organize custom trips to meet a variety of needs for groups or individuals, and they can help with guidelines and suggestions on carrying donations to Cuba. For travellers who have planned a trip but need help with contacts, the Center can provide a list of contacts in Cuba related to a specific area of interest for a fee of \$150 to \$500, depending on the complexity of the request.

CCS considers the US embargo against Cuba to be illegal by all rules of international law, and immoral; and feels that the prohibition on travel is unconstitutional, disguised though it is as a prohibition on the spending of money in Cuba. That said, within the limits they are forced to work, they will do their best to help you travel to Cuba! The Center arranges comprehensive custom-planned trips to Cuba for individuals, groups and organizations wishing to engage in legal travel. The cost of any trip depends on the length of stay, the hotel, the amount of travel within Cuba, but in general, a week in Havana would run about \$1,300 per person on a group trip, including round-trip airfare between Cancun, Nassau, or Jamaica and Havana, Cuban visa, hotel accommodation with breakfast and a few special meals, and all seminar-related travel.

The Center is organizing several professional seminars to take place over the New Year 2000 in Cuba, including a seminar on US-Cuba relations. Other seminars will include: art and architecture, performing arts, health care, socialist legality, interfaith delegation, and a Jewish delegation. Most trips will take place between December 26-29 and January 3-7. To reserve space, send a \$250 deposit and you will receive a complete packet of information. Trips are also planned for fall and spring.

*For further information, contact the Center for Cuban Studies; 124 West 23rd Street; New York, NY 10011; telephone (212)242-0559; fax (212) 242-1937; e-mail: cubanctr@igc.apc.org. A full description of the Center and current trips can be found at their website, <http://www.cubaupdate.org>.*

### Travel to Cuba, October 1999 — April 2000

Costs given are approximate and calculated via Nassau, Montego Bay, Cancún or Miami, unless otherwise stated. More information and a full description of each trip is available from the Center for Cuban Studies' website.

#### RELIGIOUS TRIPS

October 21-November 1: Interfaith Trip, Havana/Santiago, \$1700

November 21-December 4: Judaism in Cuba, Havana/Santiago (includes the first night of Hanukkah), \$1900

December 27-January 4: Millennium Trips

March 18-27: Interfaith Trip, Havana/Matanzas/Pinar del Rio, \$1500

April 17-27: Passover in Cuba, Havana/Santiago, \$1600

#### CUBAN CULTURAL LIFE

December 1-13: Havana Film Festival. Prices range from \$900 to \$2200, depending on the hotel. Shorter stays also available.

December 27-January 4: Millennium Arts trips

February 12-26: The Performing Arts, Havana/Santiago/Camagüey/Cienfuegos/Matanzas, \$2100

February 13-27: Art and Architecture, Havana/Santiago/Camagüey/Cienfuegos/Trinidad.

April 8-17: Visual Arts, Havana/Pinar del Rio, \$1600

#### HEALTH, MEDICINE, SCIENCE

November 6-16: Saving the Public Health Care System, Havana/Santiago, \$1600

December 27-January 4: Millennium Health Care trip

March 4-14: Public Health and Medical Research, Havana/Matanzas, \$1400

#### EDUCATION

January 15-24: Political and Social Issues for Latin Americanists, Havana/Pinar del Rio, \$1500

Spring Break (can vary for different schools): Education in Cuba, for educators and students, Havana/Pinar del Rio, \$1500

#### THE CUBAN LEGAL SYSTEM

November 6-13: Socialist Legality, Havana/Pinar del Rio, \$1200

December 27-January 4: Millennium Law Trip

Self profiles are provided by NGOs or adapted from their materials. We edit profiles only for style.

# Amendment Puts Senate on Record re Freedom of Travel

On June 30, the Senate voted to set aside an amendment that would have lifted all travel restriction on Cuba, enabling US citizens to visit the island freely. Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn) and Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-Calif.) proposed the legislation as an addition to S.1234, the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000. Arguing that there was no longer any grounds for limiting travel to Cuba, Leahy urged his colleagues "Let's have the courage to admit the Cold War's over."

Ultimately, the Senate passed a motion to table the Amendment by a vote of 55 to 43 with two members absent. The amendment may be reintroduced in the upcoming year. Advocates of ending travel restrictions were heartened by the vote, believing that with serious constituent work, several senators who voted to table would reconsider. A partial text of the amendment, as well as the voting list, follows. For further information on the vote and the senate debate, along with the complete text, view the legislative record at:

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/vote1061/vote\\_00189.html#summary](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/vote1061/vote_00189.html#summary).

In the list at right, asterisks indicate Senators who voted to table the Ashcroft amendment, Food and Medicine for the World Act of 1999, effectively a vote to uphold the present terms of the embargo. (Senators Domenici and Kennedy did not vote on the Ashcroft amendment, as indicated by double asterisks.)

The Senators on the upper right without an asterisk voted to table the Dodd-Leahy amendment but did not vote to table Ashcroft, and may be open to reconsidering their support of travel restrictions.



The Cuban shoreline remains off limits to American tourists.

## To table the Dodd-Leahy Amendment, therefore upholding current travel restrictions: 55

Abraham (MI)	Edwards (NC)	McConnell (KY) *
Allard (CO)	Fitzgerald (IL)	Murkowski (AK) *
Ashcroft (MO)	Frist (TN)	Nickles (OK)
Bayh (IN)	Gorton (WA)	Reid (NV) *
Bennett (UT)	Graham (FL) *	Robb (VA) *
Breaux (LA)	Gramm (TX) *	Roth (DE)
Brownback (KS)	Grassley (IA)	Santorum (PA) *
Bryan (NV) *	Gregg (NH) *	Sessions (AL)
Bunning (KY) *	Hatch (UT)	Shelby (AL)
Burns (MT)	Helms (NC) *	Smith (NH) *
Byrd (WV) *	Hollings (SC)	Smith (OR)
Campbell (CO)	Hutchinson (AR)	Snowe (ME) *
Cochran (MS)	Hutchison (TX)	Stevens (AK) *
Collins (ME)	Inhofe (OK)	Thomas (WY)
Coverdell (GA) *	Kohl (WI) *	Thompson (TN) *
Craig (ID)	Kyl (AZ) *	Thurmond (SC) *
Crapo (ID)	Lieberman (CT) *	Torricelli (NJ) *
DeWine (OH) *	Lott (MS) *	
Domenici (NM) **	McCain (AZ) *	

## To approve the Dodd-Leahy Amendment favoring freedom of travel: 43

Akaka (HI)	Grams (MN)	Lugar (IN)
Baucus (MT)	Hagel (NE)	Mikulski (MD)
Biden (DE)	Harkin (IA)	Moynihan (NY)
Bingaman (NM)	Inouye (HI)	Murray (WA)
Bond (MO)	Jeffords (VT)	Reed (RI)
Boxer (CA)	Johnson (SD)	Roberts (KS)
Chafee (RI)	Kennedy (MA)	Rockefeller (WV)
Cleland (GA)	**	Sarbanes (MD) *
Conrad (ND)	Kerrey (NE)	Schumer (NY)
Daschle (SD)	Kerry (MA)	Specter (PA)
Dodd (CT)	Landrieu (LA)	Warner (VA)
Dorgan (ND)	Lautenberg (NJ)	Wellstone (MN)
Durbin (IL)	*	Wyden (OR)
Enzi (WY)	Leahy (VT)	<b>Not Voting 2</b>
Feingold (WI)	Levin (MI)	
Feinstein (CA)	Lincoln (AR)	Mack (FL) *
		Voinovich (OH)

### TERMINATION OF PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO CUBA

#### (a) Travel to Cuba:

(1) Freedom of travel for United States citizens and legal residents: Subject to subsection (b), the President shall not regulate or prohibit, directly or indirectly, travel to or from Cuba by United States citizens or legal residents, or any of the transactions incident to such travel that are set forth in paragraph (2).

# News Updates

## Direct flights from JFK, LAX

On August 3, the Clinton administration announced that direct charter flights to Cuba will now be available from New York and Los Angeles for the first time since the onset of the embargo in 1962. Previously, such flights were only allowed from the Miami airport, though even these were suspended for two years after the 1996 downing of two Brothers to the Rescue planes by the Cuban airforce. As with the Miami charters, only travelers licensed by the Treasury Department will be allowed on the flights. Administration spokesman James Rubin said that the department “has decided that New York and Los Angeles will be gateway cities for charter flights to Cuba. The selection was based on current demand, demographics, and the availability of Customs and INS personnel to process flights. Hub cities were given priority in order to facilitate travel.” Newark Airport was initially considered in place of Kennedy, but was ruled out due to complaints by Senator Robert Torricelli (D-NY) and Representative Bob Menendez (D-NY). The Treasury Department is contemplating allowing air carrier flights as well as charter planes. The flights will most likely begin sometime after October, but the starting date and frequency of the trips is to be determined by the airline providers.

## Meningitis B vaccine Available

The Carlos Finlay Institute of Havana reached an agreement with SmithKline Beecham over sales of a meningitis B vaccine developed by Finlay. SmithKline obtained worldwide rights to market the vaccine outside Cuba. The vaccine, already distributed in South America by Finlay, may now become available in the United States and Europe. SmithKline, a British company with a US branch headquartered in Philadelphia received permission from the Clinton administration to test the vaccine in a Belgium laboratory owned by their US subsidiary. Cuban researchers report the vaccine to be 83 percent effective. Currently 1,000 to 2,000 people in the United States contract the potentially fatal strain every year.

## Legislative Update

### Senate votes to allow humanitarian trade with Cuba

On August 3, 1999, **The Food and Medicine for the World Act of 1999**, sponsored by Senator John Ashcroft (R-MO) passed vote 70-28 as an amendment to the Senate Agriculture Appropriations bill. Ashcroft hailed it as “a major shift in national policy and an important gain for farmers in Missouri and the rest of the country.”

Americans for Humanitarian Trade with Cuba—a coalition of business, religious and legal groups who lobbied extensively on the issue of food and medicine trade with Cuba—considers the vote “a milestone victory.”

The non-Cuba specific bill requires the approval of Congress for the imposition of any new unilateral agricultural sanction, or any new unilateral sanction with respect to medicine, medical supplies, or medical equipment, against a foreign country. It also excludes



Reconstruction work in Old Havana, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site

agriculture and medicine from unilateral US sanctions. The addition of restricting provisions expected from Senator Torricelli (D-NJ) could disallow private financing or require specific licensing. If the plan does become law, there will be a 180-day review period to decide whether to maintain broad sanctions against those countries classified as authoritarian nations, which includes, among others, Cuba, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan and North Korea.

Despite all these contingencies, the outlook appears hopeful as the Clinton Administration has expressed interest in allowing trade of

food and medicine with Cuba. A spokesman for the White House National Security Council stated that Clinton appeared interested in hearing “credible ideas” about that possibility as advanced by Senator Tom Daschle (D-SD) and other members of Congress.

## Pending bills

The following three bills are also all currently pending in Congress. To find out their current status check out Cuba Hill Watch provided by the Center for International Policy at <http://www.ciponline.org/hill.htm>, or go directly to <http://thomas.loc.gov>, the official webpage of the US Congress. Enter the number of a bill, and you can find the full text, as well as current status, and voting lists if it has already gone to a vote.

**The Cuban Food and Medicine Security Act of 1999**, *to provide the people of Cuba with access to food and medicines from the United States, and for other purposes*. Introduced by Senator Chris Dodd (D-Conn) on April 29, 1999, S.926 exempts from the trade embargo with Cuba the export of food and other agricultural products (including fertilizer), medicines, medical supplies, instruments, or equipment, or any travel incident to the delivery of such items. The amendment also declares that such exemption shall not apply to certain restrictions imposed under the Export Administration Act of 1979 or the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. It amends the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to study and report to specified congressional committees on existing US agricultural export promotion and credit programs to determine how such programs can be carried out to promote the consumption of US agricultural commodities in Cuba.

## AVAILABLE FROM THE US-CUBA RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE

**HR230: The Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act of 1999**, *To make an exception to the United States embargo on trade with Cuba for the export of food, medicines, medical supplies, medical instruments, or medical equipment, and for other purposes.* Introduced by Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) on January 6, 1999, HR230 amends the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to exempt from the embargo on trade with Cuba the export of food, medicines, or medical supplies, instruments, or equipment, or any travel incident to delivery of such items. It exempts the same items from the President's authority to restrict exports to Cuba under the Export Administration Act of 1979 or the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. The bill directs the President to report to the Congress with respect to the uses, and end users, of the permitted exports to Cuba.

**The Food and Medicine Sanctions Relief Act of 1999**, *A bill to exempt agricultural products, medicines, and medical products from US economic sanctions.* Introduced by Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) on January 28, 1999, S327 prohibits the President from restricting or prohibiting exports (including financing) of food, other agricultural products (including fertilizer), medicines or medical equipment as part of any policy of existing or future unilateral economic sanctions imposed against a foreign government, with specified exceptions.

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

**The Licensing Division of the Treasury Department** provides detailed requirements for travel licenses. *Licensing Division, Office of Foreign Assets Control, US Department of the Treasury, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Treasury Annex, Washington, DC 20220. Tel: (202)622-2480, fax: (202)622-1657 or (202)622-0077, <http://www.ustreas.gov/treasury/services/fac/fac.html>.*

**Marazul Tours** sponsors research tour packages on such topics as film, health care and Latin American studies, and books travel on charters for licensed travelers. *250 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10107. Tel: (800) 223-5334 or (212)582-9570.*

**Cuba Travel** arranges flight reservations, hotel reservations, scuba diving, private tour guides, trip planning, conferences and group travel. Cubatravel works in conjunction with Havanatur, the largest tour provider in of Cuba. Their web site contains general visitor information and group tours, as well as a summary of US law and travel restrictions. *Central Office, Tijuana: 011 (526)686-5298 or US voicemail: (310)842-4148, <http://www.cubatravel.com.mx>*

**A. Nash Travel** is a Canadian agency which can handle all aspects of travel for Americans who want to go to Cuba, with or without a license. Unlicensed visitors may feel their travel is morally and constitutionally legitimate but they are currently still vulnerable to grave US legal sanctions at worst and hassles from US immigration and customs officials at least. *Extensive information on air schedules, hotels, sightseeing tours and tourist visas may be found at [www.nashtravel.com](http://www.nashtravel.com).*

**Republic of Cuba, Foreign Investment Law**, Ministry for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation. Editora Política, 1995, 27 pp. Copy available for the photocopying cost of \$3.

**Cuban Assets Control Regulations: Sales of Food and Agrivultueal Inputs; Remittances; Educational, Religious, and Other Activities; Travel-Related Transactions; US Intellectual Property.** Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury. May 10, 1999, 37 pp. Copy available for the photocopying cost of \$4.

## CONFERENCES

### 6<sup>th</sup> International Workshop Cuba-Japan: A Framework for Direct Communication

Havana, Cuba

September 8-10, 1999

Sponsored by the Japanese Studies Division (DEJ) of the Center for Studies on Asia and Oceania of Cuba (CEAO), the agenda will address the following topics: economy and international policy, Japan/Latin America relationships, Cuba/Japan relationships: realities and perspectives, Japanese immigration to Cuba, culture and traditions, as well as the Japanese language.

*For more information, contact Mrs. Freya Matos, International Relations Chief (CEAO), Calle 20 No. 512 entre 5ta y 7ma, Miramar, Havana City, Cuba; PC: 11 300. Tel: (537) 22-8392, 22-8393, fax: (537)24-0591, e-mail: [asia@infomed.sld.cu](mailto:asia@infomed.sld.cu).*

### Fernando Ortiz Symposium on Cuban Society and History

April 2000

Sponsored by the Cuba Project of Queens University, City University of New York, the symposium explores Ortiz's legacy and the scholarship it continues to inspire. Themes are as follows: Ortiz's life and legacy, including the current significance of his work and approach; interdisciplinary interpretations of Cuban history and society; assessment of specific theses or hypotheses derived from Ortiz's work (e.g., about the role of sugar and tobacco in the making of Cuban society, Cuban cultural identity, Cuba music); cultural continuity and change throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Papers will be published in book form.

*For more information, contact the Cuba Project/Ortiz Symposium, Queens College, Kissena Hall 217, 65-30 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, New York, 11367. Tel: (537)22-8392, 22-8393, fax: (537)24-0591, e-mail: [asia@infomed.sld.cu](mailto:asia@infomed.sld.cu). Send title, abstract, and professional affiliation by September 1, 1999. Final response by October 15. Accepted papers are due December 15, 1999. Full description of symposium and other materials will be available online, at <http://www.soc.qc.edu/procuba/ortiz/ortiz.htm>.*

## RESOURCES

**NACLA Report on the Americas: Inside Cuba** 1999. Produced by the North American Congress on Latin America, this issue of their **Report on the Americas** focuses on contemporary issues in Cuba. In particular, the content addresses "how critical, self-reflective Cubans within the revolution are thinking and talking about the massive changes the country is undergoing." Articles such as "Thinking about Socialism: the New Cuban Social Sciences" and "The Cuban Revolution: Resilience and Uncertainty" attempt to explain the changes and intellectual debates occurring in Cuba through the eyes of those in the midst of this period of transition. NACLA Volume XXXII No 5, March/April 1999, \$4.95. (NACLA; 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 454; New York, NY 10115; telephone: (212)870-3146; fax: (212)870-3305; e-mail: [nacla@nacla.org](mailto:nacla@nacla.org); <http://www.nacla.org>)

**The Greening of the Revolution: Cuba's Experiment with Organic Agriculture.** Edited by Peter Rosset and Medea Benjamin, 1994. First-rate scientific and social examination of Cuba's agriculture. Cuba's social and economic systems have been in crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The prime concern of the country is how to feed its citizens so that every member has an adequate and nutritious diet. Rosset and Benjamin's scientific delegation to Cuba examined the history leading up to the current crisis, and the social, political and economic factors which maintain the food shortage up to this day. A fascinating account of the development of organic agriculture, with detailed looks at the relationship between economics and agriculture in Cuba; organic management of pests, diseases & weeds; soil management; labor mobilization; the politics and generation of agricultural knowledge and more. 85 pages paperback, 88 pp., \$11.95. (Food First, 398 60th Street, Oakland, CA 94618. Tel: (510)654-4400, fax: (510)654-4551, e-mail: [foodfirst@foodfirst.org](mailto:foodfirst@foodfirst.org), <http://www.foodfirst.org/pubsorder.htm>)

**The Greening of Cuba (Verde Que te Quiero Verde): A Food First Video** directed by Jaime Kibben, 1996. In their quest for self sufficiency, Cubans combine time-tested traditional methods with cutting edge bio-technology. Told in the voices of Cuba's campesinos, researchers, and organic gardeners who are leading the organic agriculture movement, The Greening of Cuba reminds us that First and Third World nations alike can choose a healthier life and still feed their people. color 38 minutes VHS, \$29.95. (Food First, 398 60th Street, Oakland, CA 94618. Tel: (510)654-4400, fax: (510)654-4551, e-mail: [foodfirst@foodfirst.org](mailto:foodfirst@foodfirst.org), <http://www.foodfirst.org/pubsorder.htm#>)

**Cultivating Havana: Urban Agriculture and Food Security in the Years of Crisis** by Catherine Murphy, 1999. The break up of the Soviet Bloc in 1989 plunged Cuba into the worst economic crisis of its history. The conventional system of agriculture was highly dependent on imported pesticides, fertilizers, and farming equipment, and without these inputs, domestic production fell. Cuba responded to the crisis with a national call to increase food production by restructuring agriculture. Cuba now has one of the most successful urban agriculture programs in the world and continues expanding urban production with the goal of putting 100 percent of arable land under cultivation, increasing irrigation potential with new wells and water tanks, and maintaining high standards of quality in all aspects of production. Murphy chronicles this process of transformation towards or-

ganic and urban farming in modern Cuba. \$6.00. (Food First, 398 60th Street, Oakland, CA 94618. Tel: (510)654-4400, fax: (510)654-4551, e-mail: [foodfirst@foodfirst.org](mailto:foodfirst@foodfirst.org), <http://www.foodfirst.org/pubsorder.htm#>)

**Cuba: Confronting the US Embargo** by Peter Schwab, 1999. Peter Schwab attempts to describe contemporary life in Cuba with an explanation of how economic sanctions impact the average Cuban. "Confronting the US Embargo" tells the citizens of the United States what the direct effects of the embargo are on the average Cuban citizen and explains how they continue to survive, as well as providing a detailed look at United States foreign policy. ISBN: 0312216203 224 pages \$29.95 (St Martin's Press)

## INTERNET

**USA Exchange**, titling itself "A Broad Coalition Speaking Out for US Engagement Overseas," is composed of several hundred firms and trade associations to work against trade sanctions. Their website lists recent news articles on sanctions, with links to the full text, along with other legislative information, like a Congressional report card, a Federal sanctions watch, and Dear Colleague letters.

<http://usaengage.org>

The **Cuba Solidarity Web Site**, sponsored by The Institute for Global Communication, is the website for the USA/Cuba InfoMed. In addition, it serves as an information center, with links to other solidarity organizations, news bulletins, and legislation updates. It also provides reports and various writings on the situation in Cuba from sources as diverse as the American Journal of Public Health to Woody Harrelson.

<http://www.igc.org/cubasoli>

**Cuba Web** is the official web site for the Republic of Cuba, available in both English and Spanish versions. The elaborate database contains sections on News & Media, Tourism & Travel, Government & Politics, Business & Trade, Internet & Technology, Health & Science, Culture & Arts, Fairs & Events, along with extensive tourist information.

[http://www.cubaweb.cu/Cub\\_ing/index.shtml](http://www.cubaweb.cu/Cub_ing/index.shtml)

The web site of **The Lonely Planet** contains a brief survey of the country, especially useful for getting a feel before you commit to buying an actual guide book. It includes a historic overview and recommended reading as well as assorted slides from the island. The traveler's reports contained particularly helpful tips. Copies of the Lonely Planet's *Cuba*, by David Stanley can be obtained on line for \$17.95.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au/dest/car/cub.htm>

ticular point of view, though in a few cases, known factual errors are corrected (always with explanation in brackets) and transliteration of Khmer words is standardized. The first Resource Files cover the Sihanoukville toxic waste dumping incident and HIV/AIDS. More files are in preparation and should be posted soon. Also available, "Impunity in Cambodia: How Human Rights Offenders Escape Justice," a new report by Adhoc, Licadho and Human Rights Watch.

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[www.laoembassy.com](http://www.laoembassy.com)

The Vientiane Times website can be reached via the Lao Embassy website. Note that according to the Vientiane Times, "www.vientianetimes.com" is not the official website for VT and they take no responsibility for the content of that site.

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[www.undp.org.vn](http://www.undp.org.vn)

in the [partners] page. The Reference Unit of UNDP annually edits this directory of contact information for government agencies, universities, research institutions and ongoing UNDP projects. This year the UNDP posted the directory on its website.

#### International Directory of Vietnam Research (provisional)

[www.lib.washington.edu/Southeastasia/vsg/org.html](http://www.lib.washington.edu/Southeastasia/vsg/org.html)

The Vietnam Studies Group (VSG) is a subcommittee of the Southeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies. The provisional directory is in an MS Access database, which they hope to make searchable soon. For the time being, you can search using the keyword search on your browser to locate students and faculty in the Vietnam Studies Group.

#### Vietnam Media Watch

is a daily bulletin of concise summaries of the banking and finance sectors in Vietnam. It specifically caters to the professional requirements of those who need to regularly keep a close watch on Vietnam as an emerging market. E-mail: [vnmw@hn.vnn.vn](mailto:vnmw@hn.vnn.vn) for full details on how to subscribe.

**Detection and Prevention of Genocide**, Fall 1999 Yale University Genocide Seminar Series. September 23 – November 18, 1999: Thursdays 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. September 23 speaker will be Prof. Henry Huttenbach, editor of the *Journal of Genocide Research* on "Philosophical and Practical Limitations of Genocide Detection and Prevention." Meetings held in Room 203 Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut. (For more information, contact the Genocide Studies Program, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, PO Box 208206, New Haven, CT 06520-8206. Tel: (203) 432-5596, e-mail: [Barbara.Papaoda@yale.edu](mailto:Barbara.Papaoda@yale.edu), <http://www.yale.edu/gsp>)

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**Paths to Conflagration: Fifty Years of Diplomacy and Warfare in Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, 1778-1828** by Mayoury Ngaosyvathn and Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn. 1998. (Southeast Asia Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY)

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Cambodia

**Sbek Thom: Khmer Shadow Theater** by Pech Tum Kravel. 1995 Khmer version available, edited by Thavro Phim and Sos Kem, English translation by Sos Kem, abridged, adapted and edited by Martin Hatch. Sbek Thom or "Large [leather] Hide" is a complex of shadow plays that draw their characters and stories from the Khmer version of the Indian Ramayana. Performance of this oral musical theater was common in parts of Cambodia before the recent wars. The unprecedented manuscript is described by its editors as "impressive and essential" though somewhat preliminary. It contains story, narratives, songs and chants, all in Khmer. The work and the English version are offered as a stimulus to work on the Khmer arts in Khmer and other languages, especially by young Khmer scholars. Published jointly by SEAP, Cornell University and UNESCO, the book can be ordered from a variety of sources including the Dalley Book Service. 162 pp. (Dalley Book Service, Inc, 90 Kimball Lane, Christiansburg, VA 24073. Tel: (540) 382-8949, fax: (540) 382-1728, e-mail: dalleybk@swva.net)

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