



Indochina

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TRADE/INVESTMENT

Vietnam issues new investment rules

On 16 December, the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI) announced new investment guidelines on foreign investment in hotels and in the garment and shoe industries. Hotels with foreign investment must now be of at least three-star standard. New hotels in HCMC must have at least 150 rooms, with a minimum investment of US\$8 million. In Hanoi, hotels must have 100 rooms with US\$5 million in investment. Danang, Haiphong, Nha Trang, and Vung Tau have a 50-room minimum, and a US\$2.5 million minimum investment requirement. Vietnamese partners must have at least a 30% share in any hotel project.

In the garments and shoe industries, foreign joint ventures must export at least 80% of goods produced, while 100% foreign-owned companies must export at least 90% of their goods. Ngo van Diem, an SCCI director, said the new rules are aimed at protecting domestic producers.

Unexclusive beer deal

HCMC's Saigon Brewing Company signed "exclusive" contracts with three separate US firms to import "Saigon Export Ale," according to a recent issue of the *San Francisco Business Times*. San Francisco's New World Wines, with the assistance of Oakland lawyer Tom Miller, signed an exclusive contract to import 65,000 cases of the beer [see *Digest*, 22 Apr]. The same brewery then signed contracts with San Jose's M.E. Fox & Co., and with a third distributor in Denver. M.E. Fox offered a guarantee of US\$1 million in orders, an agreement larger than the other two companies could match. However, Miller had the foresight to register the Saigon label in the US, and therefore M.E. Fox can only import the beer under a different label. New World Wines is now negotiating with M.E. Fox to share distribution rights.

"I would like to emphasize that there are many honest and honorable businessmen in Vietnam and that the dishonesty of the Saigon Brewing Co. is the exception rather than the rule," Miller told the *Digest*.

Vietnam commodity updates

◆ **Sugar cane cut** - The Union of Sugar and Sugar Canes Enterprises 2 (VINASUGAR 2) has lowered the 1994/95 sugar cane production forecast from 6 million tons to 4.5 million tons due to flooding in the Mekong Delta. The groups estimate 35% of sugar cane output in the Delta has been lost to floods. Vietnam produced about 5 million tons of sugar cane in the 1993/94 growing season. Vietnam had to import 105,000 tons of raw and refined sugar in 1994, and the Ministry of Trade will reportedly allow the import of 70,000 tons of sugar between March 1995 and March 1996.

◆ **Agriculture investment** - The 18 December *Vietnam Investment Review (VIR)* reported that the Ministry of Agriculture's master plan to the year 2000 calls for over US\$2 billion in foreign investment. The plan calls for investment in processing agricultural products, including US\$500 million in sugar, US\$420 million in rubber, US\$350 million in sericulture, US\$350 million in fruits and vegetables, US\$250 million in food, and US\$224 million for tea, cotton, meat, milk and fodder. "The ministry sees the transformation of old depots and construction of new plants as the solution," the *VIR* said. "The processing industry lags far behind production potential given Vietnam's abundant supply of raw materials." Farm outputs in recent years have increased at an annual average of 9.9%, accounting for 34%-36% of Vietnam's total goods production.

◆ **Black pepper slump** - The price of Vietnam's exportable black pepper dropped to US\$2,050 per ton, the lowest price since September and down from US\$2,450 per ton at the end of October. Exports have fallen since October following a drop in prices in world markets [see *Digest*, 4 Nov]. Thus far in 1994, Vietnam has exported 8,500 tons of black pepper, compared to 18,000 tons exported in 1993.

◆ **Coffee retention plan pondered** - Vietnamese officials welcomed the Central American coffee retention plan, but will take its time before deciding whether to join. A commodities analyst said Vietnam needs time to consolidate coffee processing, set up an export organization, and increase quality management before it acts on the retention plan. The Ministry of Trade is processing a list of coffee export agents as the first step toward reorganizing the exporting system. Coffee price fluctuations caused Vietnamese coffee prices to drop to US\$2,100 per ton. However, prices rose to US\$2,400 per ton on 22 December, in line with the London futures market where prices were affected by news of the Central American retention plan.

◆ **Coffee surtax slashed** - On 1 September, Vietnam introduced a 20% surtax on coffee exports, based on the FOB price [see *Digest*, 2 Sep]. In early November, the surtax was changed to a flat rate of US\$300 per ton, reduced to US\$200 per ton on 25 November, and further reduced to US\$100 per ton on 16 December. The reduction in the surtax is in response to lower prices on world coffee markets.

◆ **British coffee plant** - On 19 December, British coffee trader ED&F Man signed a contract with the Dac Lac Commerce and Import-Export Company to set up Vietnam's first coffee grading and cleaning plant. The US\$10 million joint venture plant will be built in Buon Me Thuot. All coffee cleaned and graded at the plant will be exported. "With high technology and market expertise transferred by our foreign partner, we hope the joint venture will help improve the quality and the reputation of our coffee," Tran Tan Thuan, director of the Dac Lac company said.



US-Vietnam updates

◆ **Ford** - On 21 December, Wayne Booker, executive vice president of the Ford Motor Co., said Ford will apply for a license early next year to build vehicles in Vietnam with its local partner, the Song Cong Diesel Factory. A feasibility study for the project has nearly been completed. The planned factory, at Hai Duong, will assemble a range of vehicles, from cars to trucks, using imported kits [see *Digest*, 7 Oct]. Vietnam said it welcomes more investors in the automotive industry that increase the local content of their manufacturing operations [see *Digest*, 16 Dec]. Booker "confirmed Ford's willingness to support the development of a local components manufacturing industry."

◆ **Templeton dividend** - Templeton Vietnam Opportunities Inc., a US investment fund launched on 15 September [see *Digest*, 16 Sep], announced a year-end dividend from net investment income of \$0.055 per share. The 20 December announcement said the dividend is payable 12 January 1995.

Cambodia updates

◆ **Malaysian power plans** - On 20 December, *Bernama* news agency reported Malaysia's construction and power generation group YTL Corp. Bhd. is planning to launch several projects in Cambodia next year. YTL plans to build power plants in Sihanoukville and Siem Reap, and also a hotel in Siem Reap. YTL's managing director said the firm is still negotiating with the Cambodian authorities, and that he expects the projects to begin simultaneously.

◆ **Airlines again ordered to close** - On 23 December, *Reuters News Agency* reported that the Cambodian government has ordered the Thai-owned Cambodian International Airlines (CIA) to cease operations by 24 December. Another Thai-owned airline, Siam Kampuchea (SK Air) reportedly received the same order to close. A CIA official said the government's order was dated 19 December, one day after it received approval to operate a charter between Phnom Penh and Taipei. The two airlines received similar orders to cease operations earlier this year, to make way for the new national carrier, Royal Air Cambodge [see *Digests*, 18 & 5 Mar]. The airlines received a reprieve when Singapore Airlines suspended negotiations with the Cambodian government to launch the new airlines [see *Digest*, 8 Jul]. Royal Air Cambodge is now scheduled to begin operations on 1 January 1995, with the help of some Malaysian business interests.

VIETNAM

Army celebrates diamond jubilee

The Vietnam People's Army celebrated its 50th anniversary on 22 December. In a speech marking the anniversary on 21 December, Minister of Defense Doan Khue emphasized the need for the army to be strong enough to deter aggression. Khue said the army was necessary even in peacetime, and that it should form "a comprehensive strategy against peaceful evolution and subversion" together with diplomacy and "action to ensure security, order and social safety." Participants at the Wednesday evening gala event included General Vo Nguyen Giap, 83, who was one of the army's

founders, and led it to victory over the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and over the U.S.-backed Saigon government in 1975.

The International Institute of Strategic Studies in London estimates the Army to have 500,000 soldiers, which is less than half its size during the late 1980s. With Vietnam's withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989, the Army has turned to peaceful pursuits in the emerging market economy. The Army is a major business organization, which owns 300 companies and a bank.

ADB pledges 3-year assistance

On 16 December, Ricardo Tan, deputy of the program department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) confirmed the ADB pledge of loans worth from US\$1.2 to US\$1.4 billion to Vietnam over the next three years. Tan made the confirmation to Deputy Prime Minister Phan Van Khai in Hanoi. The ADB will also provide non-refundable technical assistance of US\$50 million. The pledge included loans of about US\$375 million and technical aid of US\$11.3 million for 1995.

Oil spill compensation

On 17 December, HCMC's *Tuoi Tre* newspaper reported that Singapore's Neptune Orient Lines (NOL) has agreed to compensate Vietnam US\$6.75 million for damage caused by an oil spill on 3 October [see *Digests*, 4 Nov & 7 Oct]. The spill occurred when an NOL tanker rammed a pier near HCMC. NOL will pay US\$4.2 million for environmental pollution and economic losses to individuals, and US\$2.55 million for the port's business and material losses.

Students must have foreign language

On 21 December, the *Vietnam News Agency* reported that the Ministry of Education will require that all students applying to enter Vietnamese universities will have to take a foreign language examination. The decision will take effect in 1997, with a two-year transition period before full implementation in 1999. The government is encouraging the study of English, French, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese.

Paint guns: 'off' to the races

On 17 December, *Vietnam News* reported traffic police will use a paint spray gun to help end illegal late night motorcycle races on the streets of Hanoi. "The spray guns will be used in marking the offenders for subsequent identification. The paint 'bullets' will leave unremovable stains on the persons hit and make it easier for the police to trace the culprits," the paper said. Six bikers have been killed and 10 injured in the races thus far in 1994.

Killer cop

On December, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence for police lieutenant Nguyen Tung Duong, 37, who was convicted of murder in October. Duong was convicted of killing Hanoi businessman Nguyen Viet Phuong, 20, after stopping him for a traffic violation on a bridge over the Red River. Phuong was carrying about US\$4,500 in *dong* for his company at the time he was stopped. After his October conviction, Duong appealed against the death penalty to the Supreme Court. He now has seven days to ask President Le Duc Anh for clemency, or he will face a firing squad.

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ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PROJECTS PIPELINE FOR INDOCHINA

LP = Loan Project; TAP = Technical Assistance: Project Preparation; TAA = Technical Assistance: Advisory

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	AMT	CONSULTANTS	IMP AGENCY
CAMBODIA					
Skills development LP	Build human resource capacity through priority skills, technical and vocational tng and health personnel development	Fact finding mission completed	20m	To be determined	Ministry of Health, Youth and sports
Power rehabilitation LP	Install a 5 MW and a 1 MW diesel generators, power system distribution and rehab	Loan negotiations completed	30m	Req'd: distribution rehab	Electricite du Cambodge
Basic health services TAP	Help gov't design investment project to improve basic health services in 5 provinces	Review meeting to be scheduled	300,000	Req'd: health plan & mgmt, epidemiology, health econ	Ministry of Health
Airports improvement TAP	Identify priority areas for development of 2 airports and prepare a project suitable for Bank's assistance	Approved	500,000	Req'd: planning, eng, comm/nav aids, econ and finance, envr	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Urban water supply & sanitation TAP	Rehabilitate and construct water supply and sanitation systems in Phnom Penh & Sihanoukville	Fact finding mission completed	500,000	Req'd: water, wastewater eng, finance, econ & envr analysis	Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy
Transport network improvement TAP	Prepare project to restore road and rail in isolated areas; help develop infrastructure improvement and maintenance operations	Fact finding mission sched for early '95	100,000	Req'd: industry studies, domestic civil works procurement	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Financial sector review TAP	Review financial sector and assist gov't develop financial system	Reconnaissance mission completed	300,000	To be determined	National Bank of Cambodia
Institutional and legal framework TAP	Strengthen energy planning through evaluation and negotiation of investment proposals, improve legal framework	Preparation stage	595,000	Req'd: energy economist; mineral & hydrocarbon specialists	Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy
Public sector procurement TAP	Prepare regulations and procedures for goods and works procurement; establish bidding procedures and central office	Fact finding mission completed	600,000	Req'd: procurement, legislation, civil engineering	Council for Development of Cambodia
Statistical system development II TAP	Continue project TA1694, provide technical and material assistance to reorganize statistical system and train personnel	Technical assistance report being revised	1,200,000	Req'd: general, social and econ statistics; survey methods	ADB
Urban development strategy TAP	Assess urban development needs, establish program of urban dev investment, build institutional capacity for infrastructure dvlpmnt	Fact finding mission completed	500,000	Req'd: urban planning, econ, infrastructure; municipal finance	Nat'l Comm for Regional Planning & Construction
Develop planning capability TAP	Assist MPWT develop transport planning unit; develop work procedures, data bases, functions applications, training, planning	Fact finding mission to be scheduled	1m	Req'd: full-time advisor; transport econ; highway eng; etc.	Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)
EdC Institutional strengthening TAP	Examine tng facilities and recommend tng in areas of distribution engineering and generation at Electricite du Cambodge	Staff meeting completed	500,000	Req'd: human resources and training	Electricite du Cambodge
Private sector development TAP	Develop policy framework, institutional structure and financing system to improve private sector growth, attract foreign investment	Fact finding mission to be scheduled	600,000	To be determined	Cambodia Investment Board
LAOS					
Primary health care LP	Improve basic health services and strengthen capacity in provinces; support tng and mfg in essential drugs program; tng of health workers	Loan negotiations to be scheduled	5m	Req'd: to develop tng programs; assist w/ project implementation;	Ministry of Public Health
Theun Hinboun hydropower LP	Development of a 210MW/1645 GWH per annum hydropower project for export of electricity.	Loan approved	60m	Procurement of goods: civil works and hydraulic steelworks	Electricity du Laos
Integrated urban development LP	Assist gov't provide urban infrastructure svcs: roads, drainage, solid waste mgmt; improve mgmt institutions and resource mobilization	Fact finding mission completed	19m	Req'd: project mgmt, engineering and construction supervision	Min. of Comm, Transport, Post, Construct (MCTPC)
Postsecondary education LP	Convert teacher college to university status; provide academic & admin structure, including regional campuses; design curriculum & course schedule; strengthen mgmt of system	Fact finding mission sched for Jan '95	12m	To be determined	Ministry of Education
Eighth road improvement TAP	Feasibility study of road improvement project of 573 km of national roads and feeder roads	Project documents under preparation	530,000	No action has been taken to recruit consultants	MCTPC
Basic job (vocational) training TAP	Assist in preparation of vocational tng project to improve quality of human resources	Fact finding mission is in the field	400,000	To be determined	To be determined
Increase bank links with small firms TAA	Increase interaction between small and medium-scale enterprises and commercial banks to effectively channel financial resources	Approved	500,000	Req'd: institutional/ banking specialist needed	Bank of Lao PDR
Banking supervision TAA	Strengthen central bank's ability to supervise banks operating in Laos; develop tng program	Fact finding mission completed	450,000	Req'd: bank examination, audit, & tng	Bank of Lao PDR
Institutional strengthening TAA	Assist in implementation of project for Ministry of Public Health in 2 provinces; ensure tng & competency of workers	Awaiting approval	800,000	Req'd: health project mgmt; in-service tng specialists	Ministry of Public Health
School of Comm & Transport TAA	Help the School of Communication & Transport to enhance teaching methods, curricula and education programs	Fact finding mission completed	300,000	Req'd: tech curricula, library aspects, lab testing, equipment calibration	MCTPC
Establish municipal admin systems TAA	Define roles, responsibilities, structures, admin, legal and financial powers; develop tng programs; install Geographic Info System (GIS) for land use planning and mgmt	Fact finding mission completed	640,000	Req'd: areas of municipal gov't, finance and law; staff tng; GIS development	MCTPC
Education sector mgmt tng TAA	Assist Ministry of Education in reorganization and reorient Higher, Technical and Vocational Education Dept	Fact finding mission to be sched	350,000	To be determined	Ministry of Education

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Project Name	Description	Status	Amount	Requirements	Responsible Agency
Red River Delta water resources sector LP	Help gov't finance rehab and upgrade water resources control infrastructure in Delta for irrigation, drainage and agriculture	Loan negotiations completed	60m	Req'd: env'r exams, social assessments, BME procedures	Ministry of Water Resources
Saigon Port LP	Repair/rehab quay structure, aprons, paved areas, warehouses, container stacking areas; provision of new cargo handling equipment, tugs and engines; add'l buoy berths; workshop and tools; computers	Review meeting completed	30m	Req'd: to assist in implementation of project. Equipment procurement	Saigon Port Authority
Power distribution rehab LP	Construction of 8 110/20 kV substations; 620km of 20 kV lines and cables; 600km of low voltage lines; distribution substations	Appraisal mission completed	80m	Req'd: for project design and implementation	Power Co. No.1 Hanoi
Agriculture sector program LP	Continue agricultural reform and diversification in areas of land tenure, fiscal measures, rural finance, trade and investment, farmers organization and institutional support	Loan negotiations completed	80m	Procurement of goods only: fuel, fertilizer, agriculture equipment, vehicles and parts	Ministry of Finance
Fisheries infrastructure improvement LP	Improve 9 fishing ports; establish marine env'r and resource mgmt system; provide credit to fishermen and ice-making and cold storage entrepreneurs	Review meeting to be sched	50m	Req'd: construction of breakwaters, piers, jetties, seawalls, dredging, site dvlpmt	Ministry of Fisheries
Provincial towns water supply & sanitation LP	Rehabilitate and upgrade water supply and sanitation systems in 7 towns	Fact finding mission completed	80m	Req'd: for project design and documentation; supervision tng	Ministry of Construction
Power transmission and distribution TAP	Prepare transmission/distribution expansion proj, consisting of load forecast, plan to meet forecast load, prepare project for Bank financing	Fact finding mission to be sched	600,000	To be determined	Power Co. No. 3
Master plan for Saigon Port TAP	Feasibility study of expanding container facilities and prepare master plan to define strategies for growth to meet short and long term needs	Review meeting completed	630,000	Req'd: transport econ; financial analysis; port planning & eng; mgmt, institutional and env'r	Saigon Port Authority
Financial sector review TAP	Review segments of financial sector; identify constraints on dvlpmt of sector and propose remedial measures	Fact finding mission completed	340,000	Req'd: macroeconomics, public finance, accounting, law	State Bank of Vietnam
Aquaculture development TAP	Assist gov't in formulating framework for dvlpmt of aquaculture sub-sector	Fact finding mission completed	600,000	Req'd: aquaculture; social, env'r and institution strengthen	Ministry of Finance
Rural finance TAP	Provide credit lines to diversify Bank for Agriculture to include microcredit to poor, medium term lending, savings, mobilization	Fact finding mission completed	600,000	To be determined	To be determined
Capacity building in water resources sector TAA	Objective is to provide rapid technology transfer to the Ministry of Water Resources and relevant provincial administrations in order to successfully rehab and expand irrigation and flood control facilities	Loan and technical assistance meetings completed	1.35m	Req'd: irrig & drainage tng, ops; env'r; planning; hydraulic structures; sediment mgmt	Ministry of Water Resources
Mgmt info system for Saigon Port TAA	Computerize mgmt and financial info and instill commercial orientation in the ops and planning for the future of the port	Review meeting completed	500,000	Req'd: port mgmt, ops, acctg, finance; computer systems;	Saigon Port Authority
Improve finance & accounting systems of power co's TAA	Review current accounting and financial systems, mgmt info systems and auditing systems and procedures of the power co's and propose and help implement changes and improvements	Fact finding mission completed	773,000	Req'd: utility mgmt accounting; auditing and commercial operation	Ministry of Energy
Training in distribution planning TAA	Review existing distribution planning techniques used by power sector agencies and propose and conduct tng in computer-based planning techniques including pilot master plans	Fact finding mission completed	247,000	Req'd: power distribution planning and design	Ministry of Energy
National tariff study TAA	Develop appropriate tariff policy for power sector, review existing tariff levels, financial and other objectives, billing and collection procedures and propose a suitable tariff structure	Fact finding mission completed	428,000	Req'd: utility mgmt; operation; accounting and billing	Ministry of Energy
Capacity building for the Ministry of Fisheries TAA	Assist to upgrade and develop technical and managerial capabilities for dvlpmt of fisheries sector; strengthen staff; develop policy guidelines for use of port and market facilities; env'r and resources mgmt and quality control	Fact finding mission completed	1.35m	Req'd: port mgmt/stock assessment resource mgmt; env'r, mgmt info systems; monitoring and evaluation	Ministry of Fisheries
Strengthening of procurement system TAA	Prepare nat'l procurement of goods, works and svcs consistent with int'l procedures; prepare model documents for bidding and evaluation of reports and contracts; assist establishment of procurement office; tng	Report being prepared	460,000	Req'd: procurement legislation and regs; Vietnamese laws and legislation; civil engineering	State Planning Committee
Energy planning and institutional strengthening TAA	Establish capacity for coordination, policy analysis, planning and mgmt for dvlpmt of power sector; develop skills through OJT; study energy pricing and rural energy options	Report being prepared	580,000	Req'd: dvlpmt econ; energy plan, policy; analysis, pricing, resources; database dvlpmt	State Planning Committee
Rice market monitoring and marketing policy options study TAA	Develop database on key rice market indicators; investigate rice marketing, processing, storage, trade, export; analyze incentives structure; assess impact of reforms; prepare medium term policy options; provide statistical, econ, methods tng	Review meeting completed	832,000	Req'd: int'l expertise in rice marketing, statistics, survey design, food policy	Ministry of Food and Industries - Dep't of Policy and Mgmt
Review of agricultural strategy, planning & programming TAA	Assist gov't prepare background documentation for an Agriculture Sector Aid Coordination Meeting to be held in March '95; facilitate preparation of statements of 3 ministries; synthesize sector reviews	Fact finding mission completed	100,000	Req'd: agriculture dev planning, policy analysis, administration	State Planning Committee
Land Info System and agricultural taxation study TAA	Support Agricultural Sector Program Loan: monitor allocation of land, trade and land transactions, accumulation of land use rights; review agricultural taxation system	Review meeting completed	646,000	Req'd: Land Info System; agricultural taxation, rural socioeconomist	General Dep't of Land Admin; Ministry of Finance
Project planning & appraisal TAA	Improve capacity of project appraisal and public investment planning; improve utilization of ODA funds	Fact finding mission to be sched	350,000	Req'd: project appraisal methodology; tng	State Planning Committee
External debt management TAA	Establish computer-based debt recording and mgmt system; provide tng to staff	Fact finding mission completed	300,000	To be determined	Ministry of Finance
Training seminar on project cycle for officials TAA	Provide training assistance for key gov't officials from various ministries and agencies in ADB policies and procedures covering project cycle and implementing Bank projects	Approved	95,000	Req'd: Must be familiar with Bank operational policies and procedures	ADB

* Project Pipeline provides status of ADB projects in Indochina. Amount is in US dollars

* Consultants column indicates the need for participation of external consultants

* Parties interested in providing consulting services for TAA and TAP projects should contact the Consulting Services Division of ADB

* Parties interested in providing consulting services for Loan Projects should contact the implementing agency



CAMBODIA

Thai foreign minister visits

Recently-appointed Thai Foreign Minister Thaksin Shinawatra visited Phnom Penh on 21 December to discuss border problems and bilateral issues. Shinawatra met with Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, and with Foreign Minister Ung Huot. The topics of the talks reportedly included alleged aid to the Khmer Rouge by Thai army units, and Cambodian soldiers' banditry against Thai border villages. Hun Sen said the government supports the idea of setting up a joint Cambodia-Thailand committee to solve problems on their common border. Hun Sen also gave assurances that the Royal Cambodian Government would recognize all contracts signed by Thai companies and businessmen.

Thais nix border Xs

On 22 December, *Reuters News Agency* reported that the Thai military is refusing an order by Thailand's Ministry of Interior to open 13 border crossings to facilitate the import of logs from areas of Cambodia under Khmer Rouge control. A Thai army officer told *Reuters*: "The interior ministry last month issued an order to open 13 checkpoints at Khmer Rouge controlled areas which totally contradicts the policy of distancing ourselves from the guerrillas. The army does not care who makes the huge profits from opening the border crossings." An interior ministry spokesman said: "The Minister of Interior is empowered to issue the order to open checkpoints according to the immigration law. The respective army commanders in the field are empowered to halt, delay or suspend Interior Ministry orders depending on the security situation."

International aid sought

On 19 December, Minister of Finance Keat Chhon addressed a meeting of ambassadors from donor countries and international aid organizations in preparation for the next meeting of the International Committee on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC), scheduled for March in Paris. Chhon called for a continuation of ICORC for at least one more year. At the last ICORC meeting in Tokyo, delegates from 32 countries, the EU and 12 international aid organizations pledged US\$490 million in assistance for 1994 and an additional US\$275 million for 1995.

Supreme court debated

On 20 December, the Cambodian National Assembly began debate on a law establishing a council of magistrates to ensure the independence of the judiciary branch. The national assembly has rejected earlier drafts of the bill twice in the past year. Opponents of the law object to the inclusion of the minister of justice on the Supreme Council of Magistrates, which would hinder its impartiality. Minister of Justice Chem Snguon said: "The Supreme Council of Magistrates needs the participation of the Justice Ministry. The presence of the minister on the council would be to offer advice."

Cyclists: ride shotgun, ride sidesaddle

On 19 December, the Phnom Penh mayor's office issued an order requiring all motorcycle passengers to ride sidesaddle. The goal of the order is to stop motorcycle-riding bandits, as riding sidesaddle will make it more difficult to wield a gun. The order also bans riding with more than two people on a motorcycle at the same time.

LAOS

Thai border issues discussed

On 22 December, Thai Foreign Minister Thaksin Shinawatra made a six-hour visit to Vientiane after visiting Cambodia earlier in the day, and met with Lao Deputy Prime Minister Khamphoui Keoboulapha and Foreign Minister Somsavath Lengsavad. The two countries agreed to hold discussions on the Ban Romklao border dispute as a way to begin to settle lingering problems and concentrate on increasing cooperation. "We will try to speed up demarcation work in areas where conflict first arose, notably at Ban Romklao," Shinawatra said. Thai and Lao troops battled in the Ban Romklao area in 1987 and 1988.

Bengali relations

On 21 December, Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas praised Laos for its reform policies. Speaking on the occasion of accepting the credentials of the new Lao ambassador to Bangladesh, Amnone Singhavongin Dhaka, the president said, "We have been following with admiration the significant development taking place in Laos." Bangladesh has been making efforts to increase economic cooperation with Southeast Asian nations, and observers regard Laos as one of the potential markets for Bangladeshi manpower.

Burmese relations

On 22 December, Burma's Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement presented a gift of 500,000 tons of rice and 50 tons of salt to Lao Minister of Labor and Social Welfare Thongloun-Sisoulith. The gift was from Tachilek township in eastern Burma. Since 1976, Burma has presented gifts such as rice, seed paddy, and farm equipment on 8 occasions.

REFUGEES

US restricts ODP criteria

Following two days of technical talks in Bangkok between US and Vietnamese officials working on the Orderly Departure Program (ODP), a US official said the US would no longer accept unmarried sons and daughters over 21 years of age as accompanying relatives of military officers and others who were detained in re-education camps after 1975. Since the 1980s, about 112,000 former re-education camp detainees and accompanying family members have been resettled in the US. An additional 69,000 are awaiting processing in Vietnam. The US plans to finish interviews of these persons by the end of 1995.



More Hong Kong repatriations

A chartered Cathay Pacific Boeing 747 carried 369 Vietnamese boat people back to Vietnam from Hong Kong on 20 December. In 1994, there were a total of 38 repatriation flights from Hong Kong, at a cost to UN officials of US\$1.6 million. The group brought the total returning since March 1989 to 44,194, leaving about 22,586 still in Hong Kong.

FYI

Stocking stuffers for late shoppers

♦ **East-West Center** - The East-West Center has released Occasional Papers, Environment Series, No. 17: *Urban Harvest: Recycling as a Peasant Industry in Northern Vietnam* by Michael D. DiGregorio. This 212-page book provides a socioeconomic analysis of scavenging and junk buying in Hanoi during a one-year period between 1992 and 1993, and includes numerous case studies. The book is available for US\$7.00 plus shipping from the Distribution Office, East-West Center, 1777 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848; phone: 808-944-7145; fax: 808-944-7376.

♦ **McFarland & Co.** - *Oral Histories of Vietnamese Amerasians and Their Mothers* is due to be published in January 1995 by McFarland & Company. The author, Steven DeBonis, explores the Amerasian phenomena through 38 interviews with children and mothers, in refugee camps, in

Vietnam and abroad. The book is available for \$36.50, plus \$2.00 for postage and handling. To order, write to McFarland & Co., Inc, Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640. For more information call 910-246-4460 or fax 910-246-5018.

♦ **Yale University** - Yale University has published its 14th issue of *The Viet Nam Forum: a review of Vietnamese culture and society*. The 358-page book includes works by Nguyen Huy Thiep and other contemporary fiction writers, academic studies and personal essays and fiction from overseas Vietnamese of all ages. The book is available for \$15.00, plus \$1.75 postage and handling from the Yale University Council on Southeast Asian Studies, P.O. Box 208206, New Haven, CT 06520-8206.

♦ **Fielding Worldwide** - Fielding Worldwide International (FWI) recently published *Fielding's Vietnam*, written by Wink Dulles. The 474-page guidebook offers tips to businessmen, backpackers and adventure tourists and includes 685 in-depth listings, 113 tours put together by FWI, an "Insider Tips" section, a Vietnamese language glossary and maps. *Fielding's Vietnam* is available for \$16.95 at bookstores worldwide, or in the US by calling 800-FW-2-GUIDE.

♦ **Travel magazine** - Global Directions Inc. has begun publication of *Destination: Vietnam*, a 48 page, full color magazine for the travelers heading to Vietnam. The magazine contains travel information on Vietnam, travel essays, photographs and stories of local culture, art and history. A one year subscription costs \$20.00 from Global Directions, 58 Genebern Way, San Francisco, CA 94147. For more information, call 415-333-3800 or fax 415-333-6888.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

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