

Interchange



Fostering Cooperation with Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Cuba

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Summer 2002

Lao-American Symposium

by Andrew Wells-Dang

The National Laotian-American Symposium on US-Laos Relations, held in Congress on May 22-24, 2002, was the first such event of its kind in Washington. The more than 120 participants included Laotian-Americans from around the US, calling for open dialogue on US-Laos relations and supporting normal trade relations between the two countries. Additional participants represented several dozen Congressional offices, as well as NGO representatives, American veterans, and media. The keynote speaker was US Ambassador to Laos Douglas Hartwick. Four members of Congress spoke at the Symposium: two sponsors, Reps. George Miller (D-CA) and Betty McCollum (D-MN), plus two additional members with an interest in Laos.

The Symposium was co-sponsored by five non-profit organizations in addition to FRD. National Laotian Americans for Cooperation and Development comprises an emerging network of ethnic Lao, Hmong, Khmu and other groups in the US that support increased dialogue with and assistance to their country of origin. The American Friends Service Committee and Menonite Central Committee are two of the American NGOs who have worked in Laos in the longest and most committed fashion. The Lao-American Exchange Institute works to develop educational exchange and trade with Laos. Finally, the San Francisco-based Jhai Foundation was begun by an American veteran to carry out self-help projects in Laos and the US with a focus on reconciliation.

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Forum Conference: One Year Later

by Susan Hammond

Meetings were held in June in Hanoi, Vientiane and Phnom Penh to evaluate last year's 10th conference of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and to get input on what types of conferences and meetings would be beneficial in the future.

Participants in these meetings generally told Conference Coordinator Susan Hammond and FRD Director John McAuliff that it was beneficial to hold regional conferences on development issues enabling dialogue with others working on similar issues. The common theme of each of the meetings was that the conference provided an excellent opportunity to network with other development experts, academics, host government officials and donors.

When asked if they had a chance to follow-up with the contacts that they made at the conference, most said that they had only been able to exchange a few emails. However there were several examples of more long-term cooperation that developed or were strengthened as a result of the contacts made at the Forum, including plans for future cooperation on developing vocational training between the Italian Don Bosco Foundation in Cambodia and the Vietnamese government and plans for future cooperation between the Institute of International Education and the Center of National Education and Development Policy of Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training.

There were mixed reviews about the quality of some of the panels, with a common critique that there were too many speakers and not enough time to go into detail about issues during the questions. Some noted that the format of the panels with both

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Growing House Majority Favors Freedom to Travel to Cuba

The House of Representatives voted on July 23 by a 61% majority (262 to 167) to end all restrictions on travel to Cuba. A similar vote is expected in the Senate. The victory faces a probable attempt by the House leadership to manipulate conference committee action and the threat of a Presidential veto. (see articles on page 27 and 30)

Forum Conference from cover

government and non-government speakers limited the ability of speakers and participants to speak freely on many issues. However, when asked if future conferences should be limited to non-governmental participants, most agreed that the conference should continue to have active participation by government officials. Government representatives, no matter what country they are from, have to express official positions on issues, but the fact that they are present at the conference and engaging with non-governmental participants is important in itself and should continue.

Most of those in the review meetings agreed that the smaller sectoral discussion groups provided an excellent opportunity to dialogue freely on specific issues and led to many interesting discussions and ideas for future action. A common comment was that very little follow-up was made on any of the discussions in the sectoral groups, other than a few exchanges of emails after the conference. One positive example of the effects of the discussions in the sectoral groups was that one of the participants in the Agent Orange - UXO and Landmines discussion group was able to encourage UNICEF in Vietnam to include the dangers of UXOs and Agent Orange in their child health and accident prevention program.

Though there was no consensus on what the future of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam should be, almost all participants in the follow-up discussions agreed that regional gatherings of some type should be held in the future. Suggestions for

future meetings included: smaller conferences or workshops on particular sectoral issues that are common to each of the three countries, such as the Legacies of War - Agent Orange Landmines and UXOs; or a meeting on the impact of Globalization and Multilateral and Bi-lateral Trade Agreements on the development work of NGOs. Some felt that Forum style multi-issue multi-constituency conferences should continue but with more emphasis on the sectoral discussion groups and less time for large panels and plenaries. Another suggestion was to use smaller panels with recognized international experts on various sectors.

No decision of the future of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam has been made. The staff of the Fund for Reconciliation and Development welcome further suggestions about what type of meetings or conferences would be helpful to further dialogue and cooperation in the Indochina region with the organizations working there. FRD hopes to have a regional staff person in place in Hanoi in the next several months who will pursue the possibility of holding a smaller conference or workshop on one or more of the sectoral issues of interest to all three nations and to further dialogue about what other types of meetings would be of use in the region.

Please send comments and suggestions to Susan Hammond: shammond@ffrd.org. Vientiane conference proceedings can be found in summary and complete versions at www.ffrd.org, or by ordering the previous two issues of *Interchange* (see p. 31).

Interchange

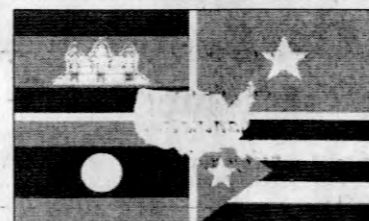
John McAuliff Editor-in-Chief
Zachary Berman Managing Editor
published quarterly by the

Fund for Reconciliation and Development
355 West 39th Street, New York, NY 10018
phone: (212)760-9903 fax: (212)760-9906
www.ffrd.org info@ffrd.org

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Fund for Reconciliation and Development

John McAuliff, Executive Director director@ffrd.org
Susan Hammond, Deputy Director indochina@ffrd.org
Andrew Wells-Dang, Washington Representative washington@ffrd.org
Interns: Hilary Sledge, Nicole Hertvik, Nam Le



Mission Statement:

The Fund for Reconciliation and Development (FRD) began in 1985 as the US-Indochina Reconciliation Project. It devolved from a program of the American Friends Service Committee established in 1972. FRD was the first American non-governmental organization (NGO) devoted solely to normal diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with Indochina and expanded its work to include Cuba in 1999. FRD carries out its own programs of cultural and educational exchange and humanitarian assistance. It also facilitates communication and cooperation between private business, NGOs, foundations and educational institutions interested in the region by publishing the quarterly newsletter *Interchange* and by organizing national and international meetings. FRD funding comes from foundations, US and European government agencies, international organizations, and private donations.

Honor

the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, Laos & Vietnam;

Celebrate

normal trade relations with Vietnam and Cambodia;

Support

FRD's work for normal trade relations with Laos & Cuba;

Meet

Ambassadors to the US & UN & other senior officials;

Enjoy

an evening of Cambodian, Lao & Vietnamese food & beverages with friends & colleagues from business, NGOs, universities & foundations.

Tuesday, September 17, 2002*
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom
Conde Nast Building
Four Times Square, New York City
Reception at 5:30 p.m.
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Mail to Fund for Reconciliation & Development, 355 West 39th Street, New York NY 10018 or fax to 212-760-9903. Payment may be by check or credit card. Receipt will be confirmed and tickets held at the door.

A portion of contribution is tax deductible. Contributions received by August 31 can be discounted 20%. Contributions from educational institutions and NGOs with programs in Indochina and Cuba can be discounted 50% of established level. Seating is limited. Early reservations are recommended.

Number of seats @ \$200 _____ "Cooperating Organization" tables @ \$1500 (7 seats + 1 senior official) _____
Contact person (please print) _____ Title _____
Business or organization _____
Preferred seating with representatives of _____ Cambodia _____ Laos _____ Vietnam _____ Cuba _____
Address _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Fax _____ e-mail _____
Card number for _____ AmEx _____ MC _____ Visa _____ exp. date _____

- Please list us in the program as "present in spirit." Enclosed is a contribution of \$100 (\$50 non-profit)
- We wish to make a special recognized contribution for scholarships or to the Agent Orange Victims Fund

*Subject to confirmation. Possible alternative: September 13.

Summer Washington Report

by Andrew Wells-Dang, FRD Washington Representative

Since FRD's mission calls for "normal diplomatic, educational, cultural and economic relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam," it is worthwhile to envision what "normal relations" look like, as well as identify and celebrate the steps taken towards realizing improvements in relationships that may not yet be fully normalized.

"Normal relations" do not require that the United States, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam agree on every issue, experience no problems and misunderstandings, or have the same form of government. All nations in the world are imperfect (need I add, including our own) and suffer to a greater or lesser degree from social problems, human rights violations, and underdevelopment. These issues, as well as the demands of security and law, rarely fit neatly inside national boundaries. The United States and its citizens are involved in international disputes with every nation on earth; indeed, it would be abnormal not to disagree on issues of importance.

What normal relations do mean is that when problems occur, the United States treats Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (and vice versa) according to the same rules and principles as other countries. Despite a history of conflict and mistrust, in other words, the two (or more) sides should be willing to engage in dialogue on all levels—people-to-people exchange, trade, tourism, academic research, and diplomatic negotiations. Blocking these natural processes of human and national interaction makes understanding, conflict resolution or mitigation, and change impossible. Eventually, it leads to hostility and war.

Advocating for normal relations, therefore, does not consist of supporting or opposing the policies of any one government, whether our own or another nation's. As private citizens and independent organizations, of course, we will take positions from time to time on policies that encourage or attempt to block normal relations. But our role is not to act as unofficial diplomats *in loco governmentis*. It is rather to facilitate governments, development organizations, education institutions and businesses to engage in normal dialogue and communication themselves, on many levels. This spring in Washington has been full of opportunities to further this role.

Trade with Laos

The largest single remaining gap towards full normalization in the region is the denial of normal trading relations (NTR) to Laos. With the granting of NTR to Afghanistan in June 2002, Laos is now one of only four countries still subject to 1930's-era Smoot-Hawley tariffs. (The other three are Cuba, North Korea and Yugoslavia.) NTR is not a special privilege, but a basic building block of foreign relations, the lack of which constitutes de facto sanctions.

As its neighbors have received NTR, U.S. trade with Laos has dropped over 80% from a high of \$19.7 million in 1996. Laos's 5 million people exported less than \$4 million of goods to the U.S. last year. They paid \$1.8 million more in tariffs, an effective rate of over 45%—the highest in the world.

In addition to advocating for NTR with Laos through Congressional meetings, media interviews, and commentaries, FRD joined five other organizations to co-sponsor the "National Laotian-American Symposium on US-Laos Relations" on May 22-24.

For additional information and documentation from the Symposium, please see articles at www.laotianlink.com.

Legacies of War

Both physical and psychological remnants of war continue to impede normal relations between the US and Indochina, as well. At the March conference in Hanoi on effects of Agent Orange and dioxin (see *Interchange* Spring 2002), US Ambassador to Vietnam **Raymond Burghardt** called Agent Orange "the last significant ghost" remaining from the war. The conference provided new grounds for research cooperation between scientists in the US, Vietnam and elsewhere. However, advocates on all sides agree that research alone is not enough. Dr. **Wayne Dwernychuk** of Hatfield Consultants Ltd. told a *Mother Jones* reporter that he foresees "a slow bureaucratic process that will not address the immediate humanitarian needs of a large segment of the Vietnamese population."

At a May reception and discussion hosted by FRD and the Institute for International Education in New York, Vietnam's Vice President **Nguyen Thi Binh** commended the steps taken at the Hanoi conference, but emphasized that with 150,000 Vietnamese "severely affected" by dioxin, a separate program to assist victims is essential. (See article, p. 17.) A spokesperson at the Vietnamese consulate in San Francisco said that "anyone with a conscience" would support both research and relief.

Less politically sensitive, but equally deserving of assistance and cooperation, is the issue of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remaining from the war. FRD joined the Mennonite Central Committee in organizing a Congressional showing of the Laos-focused documentary film, "Bombies," with the sponsorship of Reps. **Dennis Kucinich** (D-OH) and **Lane Evans** (D-IL). Post-film discussion ranged from the need to ban cluster bombs in future conflicts to the humanitarian imperative to assist victims of unexploded ordnance in Laos and other countries. Speakers **Titus Peachey**, **Narin Sihavong** and **Andrew Wells-Dang** called on the US to increase mine clearance and development aid to Laos as well as to pass the US-Laos Bilateral Trade Agreement.

Washington Report cont'd from previous page

An additional legacy of war are the deep divisions on many of the above issues that persist among Americans of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese descent, as well as other Americans who participated in or were affected by the wars in Indochina. Over the past several months, FRD has engaged and responded to the viewpoints and concerns of individuals and groups we would characterize as opponents of normal relations, including some (but by no means all) Hmong-Americans and ethnic highlanders from Vietnam. We recognize the suffering these groups and other Southeast Asian Americans have experienced as they seek to maintain their culture and identity, and we hold nothing personal against them. They are as entitled as anyone to express their opinions and to participate in the democratic process. They are not, however, entitled to block others from participation through threats, intimidation, or lies. We seek to counter these tactics where possible through an open airing of differences, while continuing to support the growing number of voices in Indochinese-American communities who favor cooperation and dialogue.

Justice for the Khmer Rouge

The United Nations pullout in February from negotiations with the Cambodian government over a proposed tribunal for leaders of the Khmer Rouge led to yet another reconsideration of the role of the US and international community in Cambodia. Opinions among governments and non-governmental organizations are mixed, with some favoring reversal of the UN's decision, others for abandoning tribunal plans, and others for going ahead with some kind of tribunal without the UN, even if this risks lowering the standards and respectability of the process. Despite intense behind-the-scenes diplomatic activity, the US has yet to commit to any one particular outcome.

On April 22, FRD and the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies co-sponsored a public forum on "Prospects for Justice for the Khmer Rouge." Cambodia scholar **Craig Etcheson** presented background on the search for genocide justice, details on the failed negotiations with the United Nations, and proposals for where advocates for a tribunal might go next. Etcheson's conclusion that "a show trial is better than no trial at all" prompted questions and debate from participants on the differences between justice and reconciliation. Materials from the discussion can be found online, along with Etcheson's paper, at: http://www.sais-jhu.edu/depts/asia/index_events.htm#brownbag.

Delegations and Diplomacy

In addition to the above-mentioned visits and exchanges, the April-June period also saw visits to the US by leaders of the Lao National Front, Vietnam's deputy prime minister **Nguyen Manh Cam**, deputy trade minister **Luong Van Tu**, Buddhist and Christian religious leaders from Vietnam, a Vietnamese Ministry of Justice delegation, and members of Vietnam's National Assem-

bly. We were saddened to learn that one of the members of the religious delegation, Rev. **Pham Xuan Thieu** of the newly-recognized Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South), passed away on June 24 following a heart attack.

The number and scope of these official exchanges is testimony to the opportunities presented by more normal relations. On the US side, Ambassador Burghardt joined five other ambassadors to ASEAN countries in New York and Washington for a dialogue on improving economic relations in June. A US trade delegation had visited Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in May to evaluate the state of the economic relationship six months after normal trade status took effect.

Summer also brings several changes in the regional diplomatic corps. The former US Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, **Charles Ray**, was nominated in June to serve as US Ambassador to Cambodia, following the retirement of **Kent Wiedemann**. Ray, an Army veteran and career Foreign Service officer, currently awaits Senate confirmation.

At the Lao Embassy in Washington, **Phanthong Phommahaxay** arrived to begin service as ambassador in April and formally presented his credentials to President Bush on June 19. Amb. Phanthong replaces Amb. **Vang Rattanavong**, who returned to Vientiane to become director of the Americas and Europe division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Beneath the diplomatic activity and official delegations, finally, lies a wealth of cultural creativity and cross-pollination. Documentary films chronicling the American experience in Vietnam, the Hmong experience in America, and other topics have been showing nearly weekly at film festivals and on public television. **Catherine Filloux's** new play, "The Silence of God," gives a poignant look at life in Cambodia during and after the Pol Pot regime. And at one point in May, no fewer than four Vietnamese photography exhibitions were on display in Washington. Interest in the arts, as with cuisine or tourism, cuts across political boundaries and breaks through the barriers to understanding imposed by history and ideology. With fully normal relations, we will all benefit from these expanding horizons.

The Washington Indochina Update is written on a monthly basis by Andrew Wells-Dang, Washington Representative of the Fund for Reconciliation and Development. Andrew can be reached at washington@ffrd.org.

The Update is sent free by e-mail to not-for-profit organizations with programs in Indochina and to offices and individuals requesting it that contribute at least \$25 annually to FRD. For prior issues and further information, visit www.ffrd.org/indochina/washington or e-mail to update@ffrd.org. To be removed from this list or to suggest other recipients, e-mail to update@ffrd.org or call 212-760-9903.

Lao-American Symposium from cover

Complete texts of the majority of presentations at the Symposium may be accessed online at www.laotianlink.com. Additional documents relating to US-Laos relations and the establishment of normal trade relations can be found on FRD's website at www.ffrd.org/indochina/laos/index.html.

Diplomats and Members of Congress

Following an introduction by Rep. Miller, **Ambassador Hartwick** outlined his vision of greater US engagement with the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Despite some remaining differences, the US is cooperating well with the Laotian government on recovery of MIA remains, cleaning up unexploded ordnance (UXO), counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism efforts. The United States continues to place a high priority on monitoring the human rights situation in Laos, including religious tolerance. Despite the poverty facing Laos, the country is "struggling to correct its problems," he said. "It is in America's interest to encourage this effort."

In the MIA program, over 150 remains have been recovered out of over 500 missing Americans in Laos during the Indochina conflict. Opium and narcotics eradication includes helping poor hill tribes to find alternate sources of income and providing technical assistance to Lao officials dealing with a growing trafficking problem. On terrorism, the ambassador noted that the Lao people have suffered their own terrorist attacks in recent years and have expressed solidarity with the US since September 11.

Extending normal trade relations to Laos also forms a part of US engagement. Once in place, the provisions of the Bilateral Trade Agreement with Laos will oblige the Lao government to conform to acceptable international standards on the rule of law and private and foreign investment. Ambassador Hartwick also expressed American desire to build a bridge for understanding and cooperation between the two countries via the 500,000 overseas Laotians living in the United States.

[A complete text of Amb. Hartwick's speech is available at www.laotianlink.com/official/hartwick.htm.]

Rep. George Miller represents a district in the northeastern Bay Area of California and has been a long-time leader in promoting US-Vietnam relations. His interest in Laos was sparked by the 7,000 Lao-Americans residing in his district, including Sary Tatpaporn, whom Miller thanked for bringing the importance of closer US-Lao relations to his attention. During a brief visit to Vientiane in March 2002, Rep. Miller met Ambassador Hartwick and discussed ways to improve relations and expand trade between the United States and Laos. The absence of normal trading relations obviously puts Laos in a disadvantageous position compared to Vietnam and Cambodia, and Rep. Miller hopes to play a role in moving towards an improved trade rela-

tionship as he did in the case of Vietnam. In addition, the ongoing problem of UXO is a tragic legacy of war from three decades ago that continues to cause great grief and casualties today. The Bush Administration and Congress should expand financial support for cleaning up land mines.

The Symposium is "making history," Miller continued, "by bringing together the many voices of the Lao community throughout the United States... Your voices are essential to move forward on resolving these issues and I thank you for coming together today and for inviting me to be a part of it."

Rep. Betty McCollum, who represents one of the largest Hmong-American communities in the US (St. Paul, MN) noted the contributions of Hmong citizens to her district and to American life. Her district liaison, Chao Ly, attended the Symposium. Many Laotian-Americans contribute to Laos by visiting their country of origin and supporting family and friends there.

Rep. Anna Eshoo of California became interested in Laos when her son, Paul, moved there to work for an eco-tourism organization in Luang Namtha. In one year, the program brought in \$20,000 to local villagers, while respecting the culture and surrounding environment and also assisting people to become economically independent.

Rep. Ron Kind of Wisconsin expressed his pride in representing more than 10,000 Laotian-Americans, including many veterans of the war in Southeast Asia. In his view, US relations with Laos show both encouraging and discouraging signs. It is possible to move forward in relations with Laos, emphasize av-



Lao Ambassador Phanthong Phommahaxay, Symposium participant Seng Fo Chao (Portland, OR), and US Amb. Doug Hartwick

Lao Symposium cont'd

venues of mutual agreement, support constructive engagement where it is appropriate, and try to develop a relationship based on mutual trust and understanding. Along with this, the Lao government should change its policies to reflect international norms of human rights and democracy. Representatives of the United States, both in the State Department and Congress, should address these issues. Right now opportunities exist to build bridges between Laotian-Americans and Laos, as well as beneficial engagement on issues such as narcotics or combating international terrorism. On the issue of the disappearance of two Hmong-Americans near the Laos-Thailand border in 1999, the US should continue to seek for further cooperation in conducting the investigation and find answers in the case.

Seng Soukhathivong, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of the Lao PDR in Washington, was invited next to present his government's viewpoints. US-Lao bilateral relations have existed since 1955 and have never been seriously disrupted. In the Lao struggle for independence and liberation, the country and its people were subject to many hardships and were extremely poor. Laos is still dealing with multiple obstacles in rebuilding the country. Laos is a small tolerant and peace loving country, surrounded by larger neighboring countries. Hence the Lao government implements a foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation with all states around the world. In 1997, Laos became a full member of the ASEAN, and now has diplomatic relations with 111 countries around the world, that host its 29 Missions including the Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Relations with the US are based on that same foreign policy, and the Lao government and its people sincerely wish the existing friendly relations to be further developed and strengthened.

During the past 25 years, the US and Lao PDR have cooperated in many fields such as the excavation of MIA remains, cooperation in narcotics control, and clearing UXO. Promptly after terrorists attacked New York and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001, President Khamtay Siphandone sent a telegram to President Bush expressing his condolences to the American government and the victims' families and reaffirming his support to the United States in the fight against international terrorism. Both sides should do their best to eliminate obstacles to improved bilateral relations and should emphasize the interests of all the people of the two countries rather than individual interests.

Community Remarks

This section of the Symposium comprised statements by Laotian-American representatives from different ethnic backgrounds and regions of the US, as well as a presentation by FRD Deputy Director Susan Hammond. Many speakers were addressing members of Congress for the first time and showed great emotion as they spoke.

Symposium coordinator **Sary Tatpaporn** opened the discussion by describing the Laotian-American experience in the US since the end of war in 1975. Despite clear attachments to the US, Laotian-Americans still have relatives, friends, and birthplace memories that link us to Laotian people and Laos as a nation. They should use these special connections to contribute love, care, knowledge, and our involvement to better US-Laos relations.

Laos is a small country surrounded by larger and more powerful neighbors with different political ideologies and economic systems. The US has a critical role and humanitarian obligation to assist Laotian people to heal the wounds of war and to assist Laotian people in order to position themselves to meet the many challenges in the 21st century. More than 1.3 million Laotians are risking their life daily with the UXO that continues to contaminate more than 35 percent of the land of Laos after the conclusion of war 29 years ago. The US government should begin new programs to remove and destroy UXO. Both the House and Senate should also quickly ratify the Bilateral Trade Agreement with Laos. Normal US-Laos trade relations will not only stimulate the Lao economy and improve the living standards of Laotian people, but will significantly strengthen Laotian-Americans' economic base as well.

Capt. Kue Chaw, Advisor on Veterans Affairs to the Lao-Hmong Coalition in North Carolina, received a gracious introduction from **Lionel Rosenblatt** of Refugees International. Kue Chaw served for 15 years in the Royal Lao Army as a communications officer. After arriving in the US after the war, he realized the difficulty that he and fellow Laotian-Americans were having in coping with war trauma and adjusting to American ways of life. He spent twenty years as a family counselor before retiring two years ago. Kue Chaw's dream is that Laotian-Americans and Laotians inside Laos are able to work together toward building a stronger and more prosperous nation. As a means to that end, he recommended immediate granting of normal trading relations (NTR) to Laos, so that Laotian people have the opportunity to learn and participate in the global economy; clearance of UXO and filling of all bomb craters in order to guarantee the safety and security of Laotian citizens; and Lao and American veterans, including Laotian-Americans, coming together to develop a joint plan of action to heal the wounds of war. Veterans on both sides need professional help in order to cope with post war trauma such as depression, anger, anxiety, and other chronic diseases. The long war not only stopped economic growth in Laos, but also destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives and the environment as well. Despite having lost property during the war, Kue Chaw emphasized that he has no intention of reclaiming his house and land, but rather wishes to help those who suffered on all sides.

Phaeng Toommaly Andersen, a Khmu-American woman from California, linked her roots in Laos to developing normal relations with the US. Granting NTR to Laos is a fair and natural course of action for the US, as trade is one of the best ways to bring in resources to assist in building infrastructure and eco-

conomic development to the people of Laos. NTR status will bring more foreign investors into Laos. Investment in Laos will bring about economic growth and development as well as job opportunities. The demand for a quality work force will lead to investment in education, and education stimulates all kinds of transformation. NTR status is vital to the survival of the Laotian people and their country. Laos is crippled as a result of the secret war, in which the US was heavily involved; thus, it is our moral obligation to assist with economic growth and development.

As Laos looks forward towards economic transformation, changes in the life style of the Laotian people are inevitable. However, as a Lao-Khmu American, Andersen raised the question whether the benefit of these changes will extend to the remote corners of Laos where ethnic minorities reside. The issues of inequity and inequality that have traditionally been barriers to the social and economical well being and advancement of the ethnic minorities in Laos should come into the awareness of both governments. NTR with the US should bring opportunities for all Laotians.

Andersen also provided a brief background of the Khmu people. The indigenous Khmu are the largest ethnic minority group in Laos, making up 11% of the 6 million total population. They cultivate glutinous rice, the principal staple of Laos. During the war, their experience was devastating. Many Khmu-Americans, especially the elderly, are in the US in body, but their minds, spirits, and souls are still back in Laos, their beloved homeland. Not until Andersen traveled back to Laos did she understand the depth of this experience. The Khmu mountain village of her ancestors still lacks access to education, health care, and employment. Other issues prevalent among the young people in the village include drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and truancy. Like thousands of other Laotian-Americans, Andersen's family started sending money back to Laos, but soon realized that this would not help to sustain their social and economic well being in



Capt. Kue Chaw and Lee Thorn. at the Symposium

the long run. Therefore, she seeks better ways to bring resources into Laos.

Seng Fo Chao, co-founder of the Iu-Mien American National Coalition in Portland, OR, gave a personal testimony of seeing his father killed as a young boy, which haunted him for decades until it became "a monkey that jumped off my back." With the options of choosing violence or peace, he chose peace. Since then, Seng Fo has become a link with Yao (Iu) and Mien minorities in China. When he returned to Laos for the first time in 2000, he found that Laotian people were "as friendly and as kind as Americans and Chinese" and saw progress and positive development all the way from the Chinese border area to Vientiane, along with experiencing the challenges of official corruption. He hopes on future trips to "eliminate the differences, bridge the gap, and build on the common interests and common goals for all." The Symposium could become the foundation for peace.

Susan Hammond described FRD's work in promoting reconciliation in Laos, particularly through coordinating the 10th Conference of the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam which took place in Vientiane in June 2001. This was the first international open-registration conference of this scope and focus to be held in Laos and its huge success was thanks in part to the hard work of the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of International Organizations, and the commitment of the Lao government to engage in open dialogue on a variety of development issues with their neighbors and the international development community. Going into the preparations for the conference in the spring of 1999 there was a great deal of doubt expressed by many in the international development community in Laos as well as in Cambodia and Vietnam that the Lao government would agree to host the conference, but they readily agreed. The Lao government is willing to actively engage with the American and international community to work together to address the social and economic needs of its citizens.

American NGOs are very much engaged in development programs throughout the country, some receiving US AID funds for their programs. NGOs are reaching into underserved communities in very remote areas of the country, they are in dialogue with their Lao government partners and the donor community on ways to address the social - economic needs of Laos, including many human rights issues. Congress appropriated \$2 million last year for humanitarian and development aid to Laos in addition to the funds allocated for MIA, drug eradication and demining. This funding should increase. Passing NTR is also a low-cost way to assist Laos and improve US-Lao relations.

Please contribute at least \$10 annually to receive every issue of *Interchange* (see page 31). Those on our inactive list missed the Spring issue.

Lao Symposium cont'd

Questions and Answers

The centerpiece of the Symposium was an extended period of open discussion with Ambassador Hartwick on a wide range of topics in US-Lao relations. Questioners addressed topics including increasing the budget for humanitarian demining in Laos, how US funding is spent, guarantees for foreign investment, the status of human rights, and possibilities for cultural and educational exchange. Unlike a typical Congressional hearing or the secretive sessions that opponents of normal relations have held in Washington in the past, the Symposium drew participants from a variety of political backgrounds and styles.

Ambassador Hartwick responded to questions by highlighting the chances that the Symposium offered to hear many different views, not only from supporters of his actions but also some opponents, all of which he characterized as helpful feedback. In particular, the ambassador said that he hopes to work with the Laotian-American community in a broad way to raise concerns with the Lao government, learn about the situation in Laos, and hear the views of the government and the people on a range of issues. The US Embassy hopes to host groups who visit Laos to engage in dialogue with the Lao government in a systematic way.

One questioner, Laura Xiong of the Hmong International Human Rights Watch, said that since Ambassador Hartwick's nomination, "the problems for the minority Hmong and Lao freedom fighters continue to get worse," and asked what steps the ambassador was taking about this. Hartwick answered that "with all due respect, madam, I've never met a Hmong freedom fighter," but that he remains concerned about the conditions faced by not only Hmong but also other ethnic groups in Laos. Since the embassy does raise human rights issues with the Lao government, he urged anyone possessing specific, timely information to communicate it to the embassy. As ambassador, he hopes to travel all around Laos, even to the most remote areas, and so far the Lao government has been cooperative in granting these requests. Finally, Amb. Hartwick cited progress regarding religious freedom, which he said is extremely important to the United States, as an example of how persistence and respectful dialogue can produce results that benefit all concerned.

Afternoon Panels: Trade, Development and War Legacy

The Symposium continued with three panel discussions on key topics in US-Lao relations. For the panel on **Trade and Economic Issues in Laos**, Ambassador Hartwick described his embassy's efforts to foster economic and social development in Laos through USAID-backed assistance in silk production and the health sector, among other areas. **Edward Gresser**, director of the Trade and Global Markets Project at the Progressive Policy Institute, presented the economic case for NTR with Laos, comparing import and export growth in neighboring countries with

the decline in US trade with Laos since 1997. Gresser noted that the average tariff rate for Laotian goods exported to the US is 45.3%, the highest in the world. Last year, he pointed out, Lao and Hmong businesses paid \$1.8 million to the U.S. Customs Services in order to sell \$3.9 million worth of goods. He concluded that Laos's exclusion from NTR is "highly anomalous," since no hostility or security concerns exist between Laos and the US, and that Laos stands to gain from NTR in terms of greater exposure to the world, higher living standards, and more exchange with Laotian-American communities in the US. **Phaeng Toommaly Andersen**, who spoke during the morning session, also joined this panel, which was moderated by **Sary Tatpaporn**.

The panel on **Sustainable Development in the Lao Context** featured presentations by **Seng Soukhativong**, **Seng Fo Chao**, and **Todd Sigaty**. Sigaty, executive director of Village Focus International, works in upland villages in Taoi district, Salavan Province, one of the most remote areas of Laos. His short video on the educational and health challenges facing indigenous residents of that region set the scene and provided context for an extended discussion on development needs, challenges and successes from the viewpoints of NGOs, government and Laotian-Americans. One concern raised by some Laotian-American participants is to ensure equal access for all citizens of Laos to development. Minister-Counselor Seng acknowledged that some inequities remain, but said that his government was doing its best to correct these problems and that all Laotians were treated according to the same legal status. The panel was moderated by **Susan Hammond**.

The **War Legacy** panel began by showing clips from the documentary film, "Bombies," produced by Jack Silberman and Independent Television Services (ITVS). **Lee Thorn** of the Jhai Foundation, who is himself featured in "Bombies," described his experiences serving on a Navy aircraft carrier engaged in secret bombing missions over Laos. **Saeng Kue**, representing the Hmong American Network in Fresno, CA, **Peter Sihavong** of the Lao-American Exchange Institute, and **David Elder** of the American Friends Service Committee also spoke on this final panel of a remarkable day in Congress.



Participants at the Conference

Remembering Frank Tan

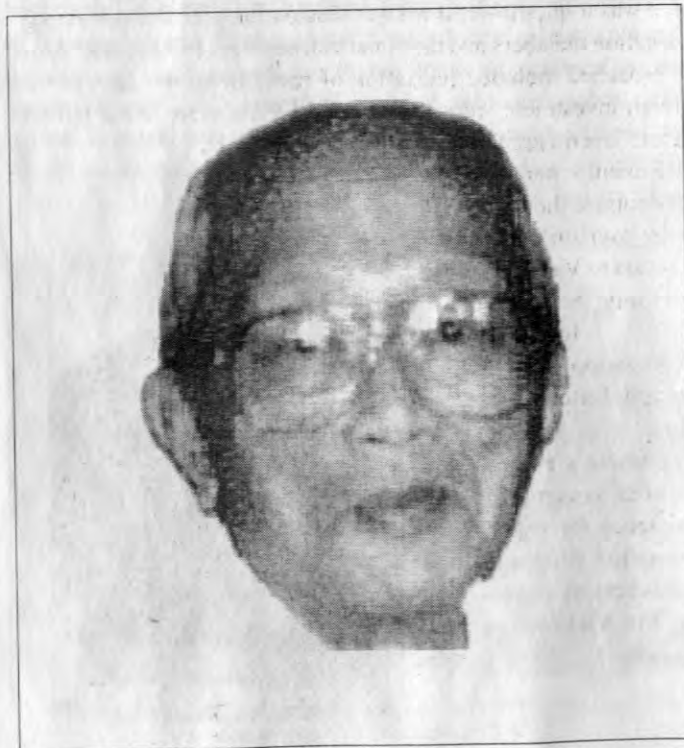
The close cooperation of the US Office of Strategic Services and the Viet Minh in 1945 seldom merits more than a footnote in history. FRD, with the support of a grant from the Ford Foundation, has sought to recuperate this history as a symbol of the underlying character and values of both countries and a reminder that the tragedy of the next thirty years might have been averted by paying greater attention to the perspective of the Vietnamese. In the course of this project it has been our pleasure to come to know Charles Fenn and his former comrade in arms Frank Tan who passed away last year.

by Charles Fenn

Charles Fenn was the first member of the U.S. military to officially work with Ho Chi Minh in 1945. He recruited Ho to provide intelligence information to the Allied troops in their fight against the Japanese. Mr. Fenn then went on to become a renowned playwright in England, and wrote a biography of Ho Chi Minh. He currently is retired in Ireland.

Prior to the end of World War II, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia formed a French colony known as Indo-China. Immediately following the collapse of France in 1940, this colony was occupied by the Japanese without resistance by the French colonists; and shortly, indeed, with their co-operation. The native population had long since been mostly hammered into servitude.

The Japanese having earlier inflicted disaster on the Americans at Pearl Harbor, and additionally having invaded China, now overran all East Asia, defeating and enslaving the colonists of the various European powers who had previously seized all this area and themselves enslaved the natives.



For a long period there was no effective retaliation to this Japanese take-over. America was fully engaged with Japan in the Pacific; and the Allied Nations (now for a good long period limited to Britain!) were equally busy combating Hitler. In any event, the distances were vast, and air-travel was still almost primitive.

But as the war progressed, the Allied resources expanded and improved largely in America, which was of course free from enemy attack, as well as having wide recourse to resources in the entire American continent. Air travel in particular rapidly improved so that after a year or two a few planes actually reached the Allied bases in China. These helped to stem the further Japanese advance; and finally a few could even be spared to operate against the Japanese in French Indo-China (FIC).

I myself at this time was operating as an American military-intelligence officer covering south China. For this job I employed Chinese agents, most of whom I'd met during my time in China as a news-reporter, and were trusted friends, as well as acquainted with the areas worked in.

But where could I find anyone acquainted with French Indo-China and also hopefully trustworthy? One possible source now occurred to me. I had recently met, and much liked, a trio of civilians: Lauren Gordon, a Canadian, Harry Bernard, an American, and Frank Tan, a Chinese-American. They had been working at various jobs in FIC when the Japanese invaded, and had promptly fled into China. They had here set up an Intelligence unit. Gordon having friends in Delhi had solicited a couple of portable radio units, one of which he kept in China, and had sent to the other a French friend in northern FIC. With this primitive equipment he and his two partners had set up an intelligence unit, known generally as GBT. Such information as they did get, Gordon gave to the British, Bernard gave to the Americans, and Tan to the Chinese: a really splendid example of international co-operation.

I put it to Gordon that if he would like my co-operation I could increase both their funds and their equipment; and although I wanted the Intelligence obtained, he might continue to offer it to the British and the Chinese, who were, after all, our allies. So we got working together, soon expanded our network, and were thus able to introduce, and then expand, American air attacks over FIC.

The expanded FIC network was, of course composed of GBT's former friends, nearly all French. Suddenly, without warning, the Japanese, now officially alarmed, had identified and arrested the lot of them and the net went dead!

It so happened that shortly before this catastrophe, an FIC native had, with the aid of several compatriots, rescued an American airman shot down over FIC after a prodigious journey, always harassed by pursuing Japanese who would have butchered the lot, brought him safely back to the US airbase in China. He

subsequently refused a reward, declaring he was happy to have served the Americans. It has to be remembered that at this period, of course, America was the most popular nation amongst colonized peoples, having won her own freedom from colonization, and subsequently having established no colonies of her own.

I was intrigued by this Indo-China 'native,' not only because he spoke excellent French and quite good English, but because of his impressive personality. Although of middle age (and indeed looking much worn), he had a remarkably vivacious personality, and the brightest eyes I'd ever come across; and I'd read that was a sure sign of genius! As most of us were then in our twenties and thirties this old man seemed quite impressive, and it struck me that he might partly replace our lost French network with a native hook-up. While asserting his ready compliance, he admitted total ignorance of the requirements. So over the next few days, I taught him the rudiments of military Intelligence. In this I was helped by Frank Tan, who got on particularly well with our new recruit, and ultimately offered to accompany him on his return to FIC and help set up a network. Despite constant dangers and difficulties, Tan did achieve this objective. But he never ceased to pay tribute to the overwhelming genius, energy and magic personality of his companion — whose name was Ho Chi Minh.

Charles Fenn was the first member of the U.S. military to officially work with Ho Chi Minh in 1945. He recruited Ho to provide intelligence information to the Allied troops in their fight against the Japanese. Mr. Fenn then went on to become a renowned playwright in England, and wrote a biography of Ho Chi Minh. He currently is retired in Ireland.

Frank Tan & Ho Chi Minh

In a roundtable meeting held by FRD in Hampton Bays, New York in 1997, Frank discussed the closeness he and Ho Chi Minh felt due to similar experiences with racial discrimination; Ho's due to the French, and Frank's due to "a society [the U.S.] that at that period looked upon the Chinese as cheap labor and often referred to as the yellow peril". Frank saw Ho as "a man who dedicated his life to win freedom for his people. He was a man whom I felt was a lonely person, bereft and denied all the normal comforts and happiness of life. Such a sacrifice left him nothing but to think and act for one thing only."

When Frank left the Viet Minh camp to return to China, Ho Chi Minh gave him a letter for President Truman, which invited the U.S. to send an observer of the continuing conflict with the French to provide a counterbalance to French reports. At the roundtable, Frank expressed his regret that he had simply passed on the letter to his superiors, and not done more to ensure its wider distribution. He thought the letter perhaps could have made a huge difference in the future history of the two countries' involvement with each other.

In later years, Frank again worked with Vietnam, this time on agricultural projects in South Vietnam during the war.

Meeting between Vietnamese DPM Nguyen Manh Cam and the New York Business Community

During the second half of June, a high level delegation from Vietnam traveled to the U.S. to promote trade and investment. The group was headed by Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Manh Cam, and included Deputy Ministers of Planning and Investment, Industry and Fishery, as well as representatives of the Office of the Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and the Hoa Lac Hi-Tech Park. A number of Vietnamese business leaders were also part of the delegation.

On June 21, a meeting co-sponsored by Proskauer Rose and the U.S. — Asia Business Group was held between the delegation and a diverse cross-section of the New York tri-State business community. DPM Cam spoke briefly, giving a broad overview of Vietnam's economic achievements since 1991. He mentioned the ratings by Standard and Poor's and Moody's that Vietnam has recently received (see related article, pg. 20). The Deputy Prime Minister also spoke of Vietnam's goals for the future, which include a GDP growth rate between 2000 and 2010 of greater than 7%, which will enable the country to become an industrialized nation by 2020. The government plans to achieve this by continuing with reforms under the *doi moi* process, improving and liberalizing the business environment and infrastructure, and joining the WTO as soon as possible. DPM Cam stressed the importance of education in achieving these goals.

After the Deputy Prime Minister left for another appointment, there was a question and answer session between the remaining delegation members and the American business community. Topics broached included relaxation of restrictions; top sectors for foreign investment; educational needs; investment in the public sector; incentives for investment — particularly outside the main cities; tourism's contribution to Vietnam's economy; access to the Internet; privatization of State Owned Enterprises and foreign investment's role in this area; government assistance for export promotion programs and access to financing for Vietnamese businesses.



DPM Nguyen Manh Cam

Agent Orange in Laos and Cambodia: Documentary Evidence

by Andrew Wells-Dang

The Spring 2002 Interchange featured a summary on the use of Agent Orange and other herbicides in Laos and Cambodia, co-written by Roger Rumpf, Jacquelyn Chagnon and FRD Washington representative Andrew Wells-Dang. As most of the records of herbicide spraying remain classified and inaccessible, the researchers have attempted to collect what is known and identify gaps for future research. The following data are preliminary findings from declassified US military and State Department documents held at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD, as well as from limited secondary sources. Detailed references and copies of records are available on request from washington@ffrd.org.

Laos

The 1962 Geneva Accords proclaimed Laos a neutral country and forbade outside military involvement there. As the war in Vietnam escalated, however, neither the US nor North Vietnam was able to resist intervening. As local Laotian revolutionaries and their Vietnamese allies built a network of paths along the border, later termed the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," covert US operations used every means available to try to stop them. Among these methods was defoliation by herbicides, especially Agent Orange.

Already being sprayed in South Vietnam, herbicides had a military purpose of clearing land around roads and trails so that enemy movements could be detected and stopped. The environmental and human consequences never entered the calculation; nor, with few exceptions, did the international legality of spraying ever trouble American leaders. By far the greater concern was preservation of secrecy, in case evidence of chemical use might be turned to Communist propaganda advantage.

The primary tactic in the "secret war," however, was bombing, which caused immense damage in almost every province of Laos. The use of herbicides, a sideshow to a sideshow, was reported on during the conflict but officially denied until 1982, when Air Force historian William Buckingham's draft of the Operation Ranch Hand study was made public under a Freedom of Information Act request by the National Veterans Task Force on Agent Orange. In a subsequent *New York Times* interview, former US Ambassador William Sullivan said that "secret" was not the right word to describe the herbicide program: "Rather, it was not admitted or confirmed."

According to Buckingham, the US Air Force conducted herbicide operations in Laos from December 1965 to September 1969. Former chief Air Force historian Richard Kohn claims that this spraying took place "with the permission of the Laotian government" headed by then-President Souvanna Phouma, but archi-

val documents make it clear that Ambassador Sullivan and other officials provided very little specific information to the Lao, who may have preferred to remain uninformed of the details of covert US operations carried out in their country.

The "experimental" use of herbicides outside of South Vietnam was first considered by the Department of Defense as early as October 1962 to "clear off jungle access routes" in a broad, undefined area around "the Cambodian-Laotian-North Vietnam border—a difficult task given that Cambodia and North Vietnam had no common border, with several southern Laotian provinces in between. This excessive plan was never implemented in full, but it gives a sense of what was to follow.

Ambassador Sullivan expressed nervous opposition at first, citing "allegations concerning earlier [US] uses of chemical weapons in Laos." Exactly what those allegations were is unclear, but they presumably refer to chemicals other than herbicides. The increasing sense of alarm over the movements of personnel and materials along the "Ho Chi Minh Trail," however, soon removed his scruples over the program. Sullivan recognized that interdiction would require "massive amounts of defoliants," along with "Washington discussion at high levels," since herbicide use "would involve the overt violation of the 1962 agreements on Laos."

In November 1965, soon before the Air Force spraying program was to begin, Sullivan wrote in a memo to Washington, "I am convinced that our efforts in Laos, particularly along infiltration route, are critical to US forces engaged in South Vietnam... We can carry on these efforts only if we do not, repeat do not, talk about them, and when necessary, if we deny that they are taking place."

Not everyone followed the ambassador's suggestions. The first stories in the US press broke in December 1965. In February 1966, the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* ran front-page stories on defoliation operations in Laos. To the State Department's consternation, the *Times* quoted one American official in Saigon saying, "We're going to turn the Ho Chi Minh Trail brown. We're mounting a maximum effort over there every day." A telegram from Gen. William Westmoreland later that year put the same message in more formal language: "During all phases, there will be an intensification of psychological warfare and herbicide operations... through the Laotian Panhandle... We must use all assets at our disposal to block, deny, spoil and disrupt this infiltration."

In response to a November 1969 Congressional query, the Military Assistance Command-Vietnam provided a summary of 434 sorties in Laos from flight records beginning on December 3, 1965 and ending September 7, 1969. Air Force spraying was heaviest during the first half of 1966, with more than 200 sor-

ties spraying approximately 200,000 gallons of Agent Orange. Spraying continued at a relatively rapid rate until February 1967, when with the exception of one mission listed in May 1967 it ceased until November 1968.

Buckingham's Ranch Hand study lists a condensed version of spraying over the same period, totaling 419,850 gallons over 163,066 acres. (These totals, from a classified Air Force study, are around 20% higher than what MACV reported to Congress.) Agent Orange was the primary herbicide used (about 75%), followed by Agents Blue (15%) and White (10%).

No complete list of targets and locations has been found; detailed records from some periods have been handed over to the demining agency, UXO Lao, while others may be scattered in military archives. The limited number of maps and coordinates found at the National Archives suggest that the greatest concentration of spraying occurred north and south of the Demilitarized Zone near the Vietnamese border in Savannakhet and Attapeu provinces.

Declassified documents do record the aircraft used for Air Force operations: mostly C-123s from the Ranch Hand operations in South Vietnam, as well as a limited number of F-4s. Both types were flown from Bien Hoa air base as well as off ships in the South China Sea. At one point, military authorities proposed establishing a Thailand-based spray capability; whether this ever occurred is unknown, although herbicide tests were conducted at Thai air bases as early as 1964-65.

As with bombing runs on North Vietnam, Laos was also a secondary target: on at least one occasion in October 1966, when adverse weather conditions hampered spraying near the DMZ in South Vietnam, Operation Ranch Hand's planes sprayed Laos instead. A January 1969 memo from the Chemical Operations Division at MACV headquarters in Saigon notes that "the legality of these out-of-country operations is uncertain" and cites increasing risks from ground fire near the DMZ. The author, Maj. Gen. Elias Townsend, recommends that herbicides be used only in "high risk" areas and in conjunction with "suppressive fighter attacks." As the bombing of Laos increased dramatically after the "bombing pause" on North Vietnam starting in late 1968, the role of herbicides in Laos declined, as they fell short of the total war the US was beginning to wage.

The use of herbicides was quickly expanded to the destruction of enemy crops. Citing effective use in South Vietnam, Gen. William Westmoreland first proposed crop destruction in Laos in May 1966. Records from the US Embassy in Vientiane list 64 crop destruction missions from September 1966-September 1969, targeting a total of 20,485 acres. Agent Blue was the most frequently used chemical on these flights. US Admiral McCain later attributed part of Gen. Vang Pao's short-lived 1969 capture of the Plain of Jars to crop destruction missions there. And after the Lao government banned opium cultivation in 1971, herbicides were used to destroy hilltribe poppy crops as late as

1974. One mission report from 1969 describes "a highly successful attack on enemy rice crops in North Laos... almost four thousand acres destroyed just before harvest."

All of the above data refers only to spraying carried out by the US Air Force using fixed-wing aircraft. It may not be a complete record even of these operations, although the start and end date can be confirmed by multiple sources in the declassified record. What is not included here is any spraying conducted by helicopter or directly from the ground. Both the Air Force as well as other units had this capability. Also unconfirmed is herbicide use by Air America or the CIA, whose records are still closed. The 1971-3 opium destruction missions were probably carried out on this basis, and secondary sources report that the CIA also had spray capability, possibly operating out of Thailand.

Cambodia

In contrast to the covert spraying in Laos over a long period, one incident of herbicide use in Cambodia resulted in a major international incident. This attack took place on French- and Cambodian-owned rubber plantations in Kompong Cham province during April-May 1969, at a time when the US had no diplomatic relations with the government of then-Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Following official complaints from the Cambodians to the US, through Australian intermediaries, the State Department agreed to send a team of appointed experts to investigate the damage, hoping that the story would go away. Memos and telegrams from the period appear confused as to what actually happened, who did the spraying, and what if any responsibility the US should take for the incident. Initial theories ranged from drift from spraying in neighboring Tay Ninh province, Vietnam, to an elaborate Viet Cong provocation. No one outside of the embassies appeared to believe these ideas.

The State Department inspection team of Drs. C.E. Minarik, Fred Tschirley, and two others confirmed the extent of the damage to 173,000 acres (7% of Kompong Cham province), 24,700 of them seriously affected. The rubber plantations totaled approximately one-third of Cambodia's total and represented a loss of 12% on the country's export earnings. They reported that the defoliation probably took place at a higher than normal altitude and occurred at night. Minarik and Tschirley were under strict orders not to divulge their findings, however, and were also warned not to look at evidence of "alleged US-caused damage outside these terms of reference."

An independent monitoring team followed in December 1969 led by scientists E.W. Pfeiffer and Arthur Westing. Their international delegation visited the site as well as interviewed Cambodian and foreign government officials, and concluded that the United States was responsible but that the Air Force was not involved. Although they found no concrete evidence, Pfeiffer

and Westing conclude that the CIA "or some similar United States agency active in southeast Asia" carried out the attack in order to destabilize the Cambodian government. They cited evidence of a CIA spray capability and suggest that helicopters may have been used, rather than fixed-wing aircraft.

Available documentation tends to support this hypothesis. William Sullivan, promoted to undersecretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in Washington, confirmed in November 1969 that "the rubber plantations were not defoliated inadvertently," but the idea that it was an enemy provocation "has some problems."

In November 1969, the Cambodian government filed a claim of \$12.2 million in damages. The US never admitted guilt, but amazingly enough made preparations to pay the claim amount as a way to promote "broader interests." Then-National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger attempted, however, to put off payment until fiscal year 1972, writing that "Every effort should be made to avoid the necessity for a special budgetary request to provide funds to pay this claim." In other words, Kissinger wished to keep the payment secret. Or perhaps he already was making plans for the coup against Sihanouk and covert US-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia that began the following year, rendering any question of payment irrelevant.

In addition to the Kompong Cham attack, what additional incidents of herbicide use took place in Cambodia? There is no evidence to suggest that spraying of any kind took place before 1969. The only covert US operation from 1967-69, Operation Daniel Boone, involved Special Forces and Montagnard reconnaissance teams on the ground in Rattanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces—not an operation likely to be supported by aerial spraying. On the other hand, the State Department's instructions to Minarik and Tschirley suggest that there may have been additional instances of covert chemical use in the same period. And there exists at least one confirmation that herbicide spraying was taking place in Mondulakiri exactly at the time that Drs. Pfeiffer and Westing were investigating the Kompong Cham incident. A February 23, 1970 telegram from the US Embassy, Saigon, referencing "Cambodian Complaints of Herbicide Damage," states: "There were no, repeat no, C-123 herbicide missions opposite Mondulakiri on December 18. Missions were flown opposite Mondulakiri...on other dates in December, including December 17 and 19...Past experience shows [Cambodian] protests are not always accurate."

As a result of the Kompong Cham incident and similar pressures in South Vietnam, restrictions began to be placed on herbicide use in 1970. In March 1971, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird requested that he personally approve any herbicide operations in "Laos, Cambodia, or Thailand." The scope of such additional spraying also remains unclear.

Further Research

The above findings are clearly only a partial record of herbicide use in Laos and Cambodia. Many additional sources remain to be examined, many of them classified. Among these are any and all CIA records. The full extent of US use of herbicides in these covert conflicts will require much more research both in the US and on site.

In today's atmosphere of security concerns over terrorism and increasing government secrecy, even previously declassified records are now being re-classified and "screened" by the National Archives and other government repositories. This includes, for instance, the Project CHECO reports on which Buckingham based much of his data. It is ironic that the US Government goes out of its way to avoid referring to Agent Orange as a "chemical weapon" for public relations and liability reasons, except when a researcher attempts to access sensitive records. In this case, the researcher is denied access to chemical subject matter that, according to an Archives notice, "might aid terrorists or their supporters." This policy has a chilling effect on independent research and access to information, and it perpetuates exactly the sort of secrecy in which the US carried out herbicide spraying against Southeast Asia.

NGO Profile: Cambodia Outreach Program

The Cambodia Outreach program provides funding for micro-level projects in Battambang, Pailin and Rattanak Mondol. The programs work to provide Khmer youth with marketable skills for the future. Projects are administered through Saboras, a local NGO.

The project in Battambang provides funding and tools to a local carpenter to train three orphaned boys woodworking skills. This benefits both the boys and the carpenter, who will be able to expand his business with the new apprentices. In Pailin, the Cambodia Outreach Program funds the supplies and salary of a local school. The organization is hoping the community will soon be providing the support as their economic condition improves, and that the provincial government will also give financial support. Finally, the Cambodia Outreach Program is supporting a literacy program in Rattanak Mondol Province.

Contact Information: Lance A. Rasbridge, PhD, Refugee Services of North Texas, Inc., 4113 Junius Street, Dallas, TX 75246, Tel: 214-266-1127, Email: lrasbr@aol.com, Website: <http://home.flash.net/~rsntda>.

Agent Orange Victims Fund

In order to meet the needs of affected people and their families, the Agent Orange Victims Fund was established in July 1998 under the leadership of the Vietnam Red Cross. The Fund's mandate is to seek humanitarian assistance from domestic and international sources. Contributions and support can be financial, material, or spiritual, as well as volunteering to help those affected.

Objectives of the Fund:

1. Disseminate knowledge of the effects of toxic chemicals on human health and how people can protect themselves.
2. Provide guidance to the government authorities on effective ways of helping and providing relief to victims.
3. Cooperate with other involved organizations at all levels in assisting the victims together.
4. Join and cooperate with related agencies and organizations in terms of scientific research on the long-term effects of chemical contamination.

The Fund so far has implemented successful activities in assisting Agent Orange victims and their families. Multiple types of support have been provided in a practical and flexible way in order to help the victims effectively. Furthermore, several international relationships have been consolidated and enlarged, playing an important role in heightening the awareness of the effects of Agent Orange and mobilizing more contributions from individuals and organizations domestically and internationally.

To date, 53 local funds are active nationwide with a well-organized network throughout the country.

Since its establishment in 1998 through the end of 2001, the Central and Local Funds have raised VND 40 billion (USD 2.5 million) which has been used to help over 200,000 affected individuals and their families. Assistance includes providing free health examinations, orthopedic operations, functional rehabilitation, mobility aids (including wheelchairs and hearing aids), basic education, vocational training and financial assistance for income generation.



Donations may be made directly to:
The Agent Orange Victims Fund
82 Nguyen Du, Hanoi VIETNAM
Tel: 8224-030-9420-860, fax: 844-9424283
Bank Account Name: AGORAVIF, Number 001.-037.0217596
VIETCOMBANK, 23 Phan Chu Trinh, Ha Noi, VIETNAM

Tax deductible contributions can be made in the US by check payable to the Fund for Reconciliation and Development, noting "AOVF" on the memo line, or by credit card.

Name _____
Address _____
_____ zip _____
e-mail or phone _____
Amount enclosed \$ _____ or to be charged to
____ AmEx ____ MC ____ Visa exp. Date ____
Card number _____
Signature _____

AOVF c/o Fund for Reconciliation and Development,
355 West 39th Street, New York, NY 10018
fax 212-760-9906; e-mail agentorange@ffrd.org

Le Cao Dai: Doctor, Humanitarian

by Arnold Schecter

This March in Hanoi I met for perhaps the thirtieth time with my friend and colleague of some 18 years Prof. Le Cao Dai, Vietnam's premier Agent Orange and dioxin researcher and humanitarian. Despite illness on his part, he enthusiastically planned our next few years of Agent Orange research, to take us both to our twentieth year of collaborative public health work in Vietnam.

A few weeks later, I learned of his unexpected death, after a short hospitalization for pancreatic problems.

Who was this very remarkable man? He was a soldier who served in the army of his country, leaving his surgery and teaching in Hanoi to free his country of colonialism, from France first, then the US. He served for many years in the south of Vietnam as director of an underground surgical hospital, visiting his family in Hanoi only infrequently.

When he and I first met in 1984, he was the Secretary General of the 10/80 Committee, set up to study the consequences of chemicals used during wartime: American Chemical Warfare. He guided French, Japanese, American, Canadian, and Vietnamese researchers to learn more about where Agent Orange and its toxic dioxin contaminant got into Vietnamese people, and where and how it caused their illness. We all learned from Dr. Dai about Vietnam, the Vietnamese, and the in-the-trenches public health aspects of Agent Orange and the US-Vietnam war.

We brought our scientific and public health expertise from America, France, Canada, Japan and elsewhere, yet we learned from Dr. Dai much more than we taught. His wonderful intelligence, optimism, drive and adaptability produced discovery after discovery of dioxin contamination in Vietnam. Sometimes, as in Bien Hoa, of extremely high levels of dioxins in people, over 200 fold elevation, and in some soil there, over 1 million fold elevation.



Le Cao Dai and Arnold Schecter at the 8th annual Forum Conference in 1997

Whatever the health consequence, this work documented people at higher risk than would otherwise have been the case, victims of Agent Orange of one kind.

Dr. Dai believed from his impressions and some early Vietnamese studies that there were malformations seen at birth which were from Agent Orange. He knew that more and better research needed to be conducted to prove or disprove these beliefs. He insisted on healthcare for those victims of Agent Orange; he later moved to head the Agent Orange Victims' Fund of the Vietnam Red Cross.

He permitted and encouraged free and open collaboration between foreign and Vietnamese researchers, whatever the outcome of their studies.

When in the presence of others, whether his former students from Hanoi Medical School who were by then senior physicians, his family, or the Vice President of Vietnam, his warm and sparkling personality and convincing arguments were always present.

He communicated to the press in Vietnam and in the USA, Europe, Japan and elsewhere with great skill about Agent Orange.

Yet he was like a tiger, with passion for his beliefs and for his desire to help his people and his country, Vietnam.

He adapted readily to customs in other countries when scientific meetings took him out of Vietnam. He was seemingly as comfortable with our children when he stayed at our home as he was with his family in Hanoi, and he became like one of ours. His large biological family can be found in many places, including Hanoi, California and Paris. All of us interested in Agent Orange in Vietnam are in a sense the heirs of Prof. Le Cao Dai: humanitarian, surgeon, researcher, and spokesperson for Vietnam. The world will be much emptier now that he is no longer with us.

Arnold Schecter, MD, MPH, is Professor of Environmental Sciences, University of Texas School of Public Health at Dallas and formerly Professor of Preventive Medicine, State University of New York, Binghamton, NY.

If this is the first issue of *Interchange* you've received since December, you are on our inactive list. To receive every issue, and to help support our efforts, please contribute at least \$10 a year.

See page 31.

Review: *An American In Hanoi: America's Reconciliation With Vietnam*

reviewed by Andrew-Wells-Dang

Joy Desaix Anderson. *EastBridge*, March 2002; ISBN 1-891936-03-4. Paperback, \$24.95.

Diplomatic history, like other historical change, is often made by men and women working behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight. In this context, a new memoir by Desaix Anderson, who served as charge d'affaires at the US Embassy in Hanoi from 1995-97, contributes significantly to understanding how the United States normalized relations with Vietnam. Anderson maintains a remarkable and commendable spirit of hope for the future of Vietnam and US-Vietnamese relations, which he emphasizes are based on a fundamental convergence of strategic interests.

The value of *An American in Hanoi* is limited by the fact that most of the direct source material dates from Anderson's tour in Hanoi, with revisions and updates added in a somewhat uneven fashion. A section in the middle of the book on the pre-normalization period from 1975-91 offers little new material not already covered in previous histories. The title could also be more precise, as Anderson was clearly not just any "American in Hanoi" but a representative of the US Government. The tension between Anderson's personal observations and his role as an official spokesperson make this memoir both fascinating and occasionally frustrating.

An American in Hanoi is relentlessly upbeat, providing a welcome antidote to grouchy journalists and political scientists who still describe one of the fastest-changing societies on earth as "stagnant" and "sclerotic." Anderson was clearly thrilled by his assignment: having spent the beginning of his Foreign Service career in Vietnam, he found his return experience both personally and professionally satisfying, even "intoxicating." When Anderson enthuses that he is "enchanted by the exotic people called Vietnamese," he might be over-romanticizing, but he is not alone—many Americans who have lived and worked in Vietnam since the 1990s discover to our surprise that we are welcomed. Like his successor in Hanoi, Ambassador Douglas P. "Pete" Peterson, Anderson responds with a nearly boundless optimism about the potential of *doi moi* economic reforms and the "revolutionary" changes underway in Vietnamese society.

Anderson is not unaware of reform's weaknesses—he notes the despair of youth and rising costs of rapid social and economic change in passing—but he ultimately believes that an open economy and greater contacts with the outside world will bring Vietnam through. The bilateral trade agreement with the US, he argues, offers "a sure path to liberalization...bring[ing] Vietnam into line with its neighbors and radically chang[ing] Vietnam's economy in a few years." This may be overstating the case, but Anderson refers back to US interests to defend his point. Normal trade will not only benefit the Vietnamese, but also "ensure the kinds of changes the United States seeks in Vietnam.

Without it, American influence will be sharply curtailed..." The US should improve relations with Vietnam, he emphasizes, because it is in both countries' national interests. Yet he walks a fine line in defining US interests as promoting change in Vietnam, while concurrently denying that forcing change is part of official policy:

...[T]he confrontation with China on the issue of human rights has devolved into an unwinnable catch-22 conundrum, and should not be repeated with Hanoi if we hope to build a constructive relationship with Vietnam. I therefore adopted a two-pronged approach. We would work quietly with the government of Vietnam on immediate, specific cases to test their willingness to respond on a basis that did not violate their own sense of propriety...At the same time, we should realize that the environment for human rights, religious freedom, freedom of speech and the like would take time to develop...

The United States cannot force such change. It must come from within the society itself. By trying to force internal change in another society, we can limit...the framework for debate from a pure human rights issue to a nationalist/sovereignty tension. This plays into the hands of repressive elements in national governments. (p. 203)

Individual diplomats' goodwill notwithstanding, however, it is difficult to conclude that overall the US has handled human rights diplomacy towards Vietnam with much better success than in China or elsewhere. With Congress leading the charge on human rights, current US policy is at best confusing and at worst exactly the conundrum that Anderson hoped to avoid. (Anderson describes his Congressional visits in detail, and emphasizes that most offices were supportive of his efforts. A few, however, were not; perhaps because of this, he flagrantly misstates the names of one opponent, Christopher Smith of New Jersey, "Congressman Steve Smith," and his then-chief aide, Joseph Rees, "James Reis".)

While no book can cover every topic in a subject as complex as US-Vietnam relations, it is unfortunate that Anderson's forward looking spirit causes him to omit important war legacy issues such as landmines and Agent Orange. He also shows little recognition of the role of American NGOs and religious organizations in supporting normalization and Vietnam's development. The only NGO that is mentioned, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, is misidentified as "the Vietnam Vets." And while the book returns several times to the experiences of the OSS-Viet Minh reunion in 1995, soon after Anderson's arrival, he neglects to say that this was a FRD project with funding from the Ford Foundation. Hopefully these omissions will be corrected in a revised edition later on—but even in its existing form, *An American in Hanoi* is highly recommended reading.

Nguyen Thi Binh Stresses Education, Calls for Cooperation on Trade and Agent Orange

On May 7, 2002, the Fund for Reconciliation and Development and Institute for International Education (IIE) hosted a discussion and reception in New York for Vietnam's Vice President, Nguyen Thi Binh. Madame Binh came to the U.S. to lead Vietnam's delegation to the United Nations Special Session on the Rights of Children; she was accompanied by distinguished delegates including Mme. Tran Thi Thanh Thanh, chair of the Committee for the Protection and Care of Children (CPCC), Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Chu Tuan Cap, Vice-chair of the Office of the President Nguyen Van Binh, and CPCC vice-chair Doan Ngoc Hung.

Mme. Binh is familiar to Americans of the Vietnam War generation as the determined and photogenic chief negotiator of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam during the 1972-3 Paris peace talks. Following the reunification of Vietnam, she became Minister of Education and was tasked with the difficult job of integrating two vastly different school systems in the north and south. She has served as Vice President since 1992 and also holds many other positions, including acting as chair of the Agent Orange Victims Fund of the Vietnam Red Cross. This was Mme. Binh's second visit to the United States; the first was to attend a conference at Stony Point, NY in the 1980's of what became the Forum on Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

In introducing Mme. Binh to an audience of close to 100 at IIE, FRD Executive Director John McAuliff pointed out the major contributions of educational exchange towards normalization of relations between the US and Vietnam. At the same time, he emphasized the "old business that we need to wrestle through



Nguyen Thi Binh, translator and John McAuliff

in terms of Agent Orange, unexploded ordnance, and other effects of the war." With normal relations, the US and Vietnam now have the opportunity to work collaboratively on these and other issues.

In his introductory remarks, IIE President Allen Goodman said that Mme. Binh's visit and example shows that "it is possible for Americans to understand Vietnam not at war and not as a poor country. The potential for development of Vietnam is unlimited." Following the discussion with Mme. Binh, one participant who was active in the national antiwar mobilizations of the 1960's and 70's, Barbara Webster, presented Mme. Binh with posters of herself that were used in demonstrations and, as she put it, "gave daily inspiration to thousands of people."

Madame Binh's wide-ranging remarks reflected on the past and present in US-Vietnam relations, while also showing hope and challenges for the future. Excerpts follow.

Excerpts from Remarks by Vice President Nguyen Thi Binh May 7, 2002

As you know, I and Ms. Tran Thi Thanh Thanh are heading the delegation of Vietnam to the Special Session on the Rights of Children at the United Nations. It is a great pleasure for our delegation to meet many people here. We have six children here representing the children of Vietnam.

Over the last ten years, the education and protection of children in Vietnam have made great achievements. We have established universal primary education for all children as of the year 2000. In some localities, this has extended to universalizing junior high school education through the 9th grade as well. Our objective is to complete the universalization of secondary education for all children by 2010.

To American friends, this objective may seem modest. But for a poor country like Vietnam, this is a great task. Our children normally go to school in two shifts—one in the morning, one in the afternoon. In some schools there have to be three shifts in order to accommodate everyone. The conditions for learning are still very difficult, especially in mountainous areas.

On one hand, we take care of general education; on the other, we also pay great attention to higher education and vocational training. During the past ten years, the number of university

Remarks from Mme. Binh continued

students in Vietnam doubled. In comparison to neighboring countries, however, the ratio of university students to the general population is still low.

We need not only funds for education but also well-trained teachers to teach them. So we are trying to increase the number of teachers in Vietnam. We are also trying to increase the number of Vietnamese sent abroad to study who then come back and teach students in Vietnam. We still have some weaknesses, however, in training teachers for vocational and professional schools.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all our friends here, and especially to the Institute for International Education, who are assisting Vietnamese students to study in the United States. I hope that you will continue your assistance to Vietnam in this field. Your support will continue to help us to escape from backwardness and poverty and advance towards modernization, so that we no longer lag behind other countries in the region. You can see that the Vietnamese people and Vietnamese children are not short on character and innovation. But due to the long war and the short time we have had to recover, we have not yet been able to fulfill our potential.

The signing of the bilateral trade agreement between Vietnam and the United States has opened the way for the normalization of relations between the people of our two countries. Even before the signing of this agreement, we have already undertaken many activities towards economic cooperation. US companies already have 130 projects in Vietnam, and the US ranked twelfth among countries with investments in Vietnam. Vietnamese exports to the United States now total around \$1 billion per year. We are confident that the economic and trade relations between our two countries will develop strongly.

We are now paying great attention to the legal system in Vietnam. Mme. Thanh Thanh and I are both members of the National Assembly. We have tried very hard to reform our laws and create a legal framework for foreign investment in Vietnam. For our part, we wish to improve and expand our economic relations with all countries, including the United States. Since regaining our independence, we have no other hope than to rebuild the country and bring happiness to the people. That is our ultimate goal. If there is no happiness for the people and no improvements in our daily lives, independence is worth nothing.

After the House of Representatives, the Senate and President George Bush approved the Bilateral Trade Agreement, we considered that a victory for our two peoples. But we were very much surprised that the House also approved a bill on human rights at that time. You can see that these two issues are in opposition to each other. I don't know why the US government wishes to put political conditions on cooperation between our

countries. Since the provisions of this bill violate the principle in international law of non-interference in the affairs of other countries, we conclude that the House of Representatives is also violating human rights.

The trade agreement is for the benefit of our two countries and two peoples. It will only work when both sides respect the mutual interests of the other. In so doing, our cooperation will be sustainable.

During the war against US aggression in Vietnam, many Americans took to the streets to protest against the war. Those who participated in the antiwar movement showed great sympathy to the Vietnamese people, but also were keeping the traditional values of the American people. Many of those friends also contributed to the normalization of relations between our countries. That goal has now been achieved. So today, on behalf of the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese state, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you.

I hope that you will join my effort to facilitate and improve relations between Vietnam and the United States. With economic and diplomatic normalization taken care of, we hope that you will pay more attention to the humanitarian aspects. One of the deepest consequences of the war concerns the victims of toxic chemicals used during the war, especially Agent Orange. The Vietnamese government has done its utmost to reduce the suffering of these people and their children. But we think that the US Government should also help assume responsibility for this.

In March this year was the second round of the meetings between US and Vietnamese scientists concerning the study of Agent Orange in Vietnam. I highly appreciate the results of the meeting, especially the cooperative research between the two sides. But in my opinion, scientific research cannot be done in a vacuum. We need to be concerned about the urgent humanitarian issues as well. Besides the scientific research program, we should have a program to support and assist the victims of Agent Orange, to which the US Government could contribute.

You know that the American GIs who were exposed to Agent Orange during the war have been compensated by the US Government. Based on our evaluation, there were about one million Vietnamese who were also affected. Some of them have died, since the war ended 27 years ago. But many are still alive and are dealing with various diseases.

There are also many places where toxic chemicals still lie in the soil. We need to clean those areas in order to protect the health of people in the surroundings. And we need the technology to clean these areas. I think the US Government should support Vietnam in this field as well, and I hope that you will join us in requesting this government support.

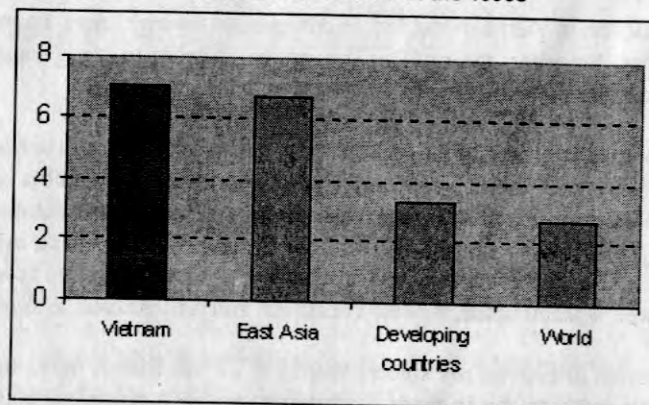
Standard and Poor's Credit Rating for Vietnam

MOFA Press Briefing, 5/30/02: Recently, the Vietnamese Ministry of Finance invited some international credit agencies to provide sovereign ratings. Standard and Poor's awarded Vietnam's foreign currency long-term debt rating of BB- and local currency long-term debt rating of BB. The long-term outlook was deemed stable.

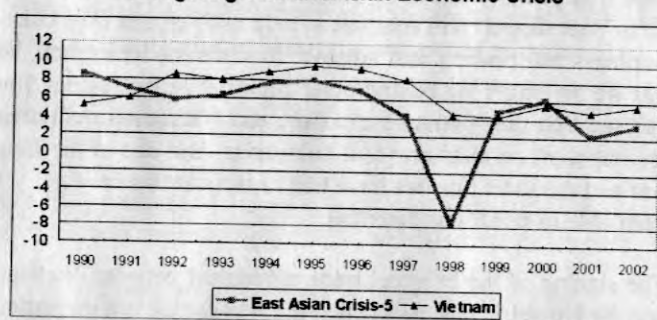
In April, Moody's gave Vietnam a rating of B1, which is one notch lower. In addition, they changed their long-term outlook from negative to stable.

According to the Ministry of Finance, "the S&P rating is a major accomplishment for Vietnam and represents a significant step towards Vietnam's commitment to becoming more open, transparent and fully integrated into the global financial community. S&P was impressed by Vietnam's prudent policy management and strong commitment to reform, excellent export-led growth prospects, modest external debt position and moderate debt stock."

Annual GDP Growth in the 1990s



Navigating the East Asian Economic Crisis



Share of Credit Growth to State-Owned Enterprises, in percent
[source: International Monetary Fund]



Charts from *Vietnam: Entering the 21st Century; Investing for the Future*, by Dr. Andrew Steer, Vietnam Country Director for the World Bank.

More information is available at the World Bank Vietnam website: www.worldbank.org.vn

Douglas Pike

taken from an obituary by Steve Denney

Douglas Pike, Vietnam Scholar, author, and respected government expert, died this year of a stroke. He was 77 years old.

Mr. Pike first became known for his book *Viet Cong: The Strategies and Tactics of the National Liberation Front*, published in 1966 by MIT Press. He went on to author five more books, plus countless articles for various journals and books and many speaking engagements. From 1982 until this year, he edited the *Indochina Chronology*, a journal which chronicled events in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and reviewed books, articles, con-

ferences and other items of interest to scholars and people with a serious interest in that part of the world.

Mr. Pike was also known to many for the unique and large collection he founded and developed, which he began while a U.S. Foreign Service Officer in Saigon and continued after the war ended in 1975. He brought the collection with him to U.C. Berkeley when he retired from government in 1981. In 1997, because of serious funding problems at U.C. Berkeley, Mr. Pike moved much of the collection to the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech where he took the position of Associate Director. He continued editing the *Indochina Chronology* from Texas Tech.

Commune Democracy in Vietnam

In the late 1990s, the Vietnamese government passed Decree 29/CP on the *Regulation of the Exercise of Democracy in Communes*, in response to unrest due to corruption in Thai Binh and other areas of the country. Recently, the Nguyen Ai Quoc Academy published a report looking at the impact of this decree so far, and recommendations for the future. A number of case studies are included in the study.

Recommendations include:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of the decree
- Enhancing local level participation in the implementation of the decree
- Improving the capacity of local authorities
- Enhancing the leading role of the local party organization for implementation of the decree
- Enhancing transparency and improving legal dissemination at the grassroots level
- Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for implementation of the decree, including measures to apply to officials who violate the decree provisions

On March 28, 2002 The Secretariat of the Party Central Committee issued Directive 10-CT/TW on continuing to enhance the formulation and implementation of the grassroots democracy regulations. The directive stipulates:

- Enhance the leadership, instructions and coordination of action among Party organizations, administrations, the Fatherland Front and mass organizations for promoting the development and implementation of grassroots democracy regulations.
- Fulfill the adopted mechanisms; promulgate and instruct regarding the practice of the regulations on democracy at other layers of grassroots establishments.

The full text of decree 10-CT/TW is available at http://www.cpv.org.vn/studies/towards/theopracissrenovation/docs/9_partycent.

The full text of decree 29/CP is available at <http://www.un.org.vn/donor/civil/index.htm>.

If you haven't seen the *Interchange* since December, you are on our inactive list. Please contribute at least \$10 per year to receive every issue.

Corporate Citizenship and Ethical Performance

Corporate citizenship is a term growing in use to describe the relationship between business and society, including stockholder and societal accountability, social, ethical and environmental performance, and human rights, globalization and sustainable development issues. Started in 2001, the *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* is a quarterly academic journal comprised of papers from leading business schools from a variety of English-speaking countries concerning the philosophy and theory of corporate citizenship. Published in the UK, the Journal has an editorial board made up business school professors in six countries.

Ethical performance is a term similar in scope to both corporate citizenship and corporate social responsibility. The monthly newsletter entitled *Ethical Performance* was launched in 1999 and consists of articles on related current trends and events in the business world. Edited and published in London, the newsletter has a European focus, but reports substantially on events in the US and globally. It has an immediate focus, relating stories of specific corporations, and while shorter in length than the *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *Ethical Performance* contains many more facts, figures and references.

The Journal of Corporate Citizenship (ISSN 1470-5001) is generally \$250/year for organizations and \$125/year for individuals, though readers of *Interchange* are offered a 15% discount on one year and a 30% discount for two years. Contact Samantha Self at Greenleaf Publishing, Aizlewood Business Centre, Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK, tel: +44-114-282-3475, fax: +44-114-282-3476, E-mail: info@greenleaf-publishing.com, Website: www.greenleaf-publishing.com.

Ethical Performance is available for \$489/year (less in Europe), from Dunstons Publishing, PO Box 590, 7 Dane John, Canterbury CT12 WN, UK, tel: +44(0)1227-472-610, fax: +44(0)1227-787-658, publisher@ethicalperformance.com, www.ethicalperformance.com.

Deforestation Article

"Deforestation in Myanmar and Indochina" from the Third Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow; Cross-Sectoral Partnerships in Enhancing Human Security, Bangkok, June 2000.

This piece provides a broad overview of the issues surrounding deforestation in the Mekong region. It discusses the role of the military in the logging industry and possibilities for cooperation among the countries in ASEAN on environmental issues.

Japan Center for International Exchange, 1251 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10020, tel: 212-921-4260.

NGO Profile: East Meets West

Home Office:
P.O. Box 29292
Oakland, CA 94604
Phone: (510) 763-7045
Fax: (510) 763-6545
Email: Info@eastmeetswest.org
Website: www.eastmeetswest.org



Field Office:
56 Pasteur Street
Da Nang, Vietnam
Phone: 84-511-829110
Fax: 84-511-821850
Email: emwfvn@dng.vnn.vn

Mission Statement and History of the Organization:

East Meets West Foundation is a charitable, non-profit 501 (C) (3) organization, with a successful working history in Central Vietnam since 1988. Due to natural disasters and decades of war, Vietnam remains one of the poorest nations in the world. To improve this situation, East Meets West's mission is to partner with the people of Vietnam to improve their health, education, and economic conditions in an effort to eradicate poverty and help them achieve self-sufficiency. To achieve this goal, East Meets West endeavors to develop relationships with funding sources (such as Rotary International, Veterans groups, family foundations, charitable foundations and generous individuals from throughout the world) and then to implement a broad variety of innovative, ambitious, and effective projects and programs throughout Central Vietnam.



child being bathed

Recent Activities:

The following 6 programs represent East Meets West's current areas of focus:

1. Operation Healthy Heart: The East Meets West Foundation collaborates with Hue Medical School and the Carpentier Heart Institute in Saigon to provide life-saving heart operations. In 2001, 80 children received free heart surgeries to correct their congenital or acquired heart defects, and can now look forward to happy productive adult lives.
2. Clean Water Projects: Water sources in Vietnam are often not reliable or clean, resulting in illness, severe malnutrition, and loss of income. East Meets West Foundation has provided clean water for thousands of families in rural villages through the construction of small community wells, large water delivery systems, and irrigation projects. In 2001, over 10,000 people gained access to clean water for the first time in their lives!
3. East Meets West Dental Clinic: The clinic, which was established in 1996, is the first permanent American-funded dental facility in Central Vietnam. The clinic, which conforms to international standards, provides free dental care to approximately 3,500 underprivileged children annually, at a cost to the clinic of as little as \$5.00 per child. Our Vietnamese dental staff has cared for over 12,000 children since 1996.
4. Compassion Homes: Since 1990, East Meets West Foundation has built over 250 homes for families who were living in poorly constructed shacks. Each brick home that East Meets West builds costs only \$1,000, and includes an elevated concrete foundation, tile roof, bathroom facilities, clean water supply and electrification.
5. School Construction: Tens of thousands of children are deprived of a fundamental education due to a severe shortage of safe and modern schools. Since 1994, East Meets West Foundation has built or renovated over 100 kindergarten and elementary schools in Central Vietnam. These schools, and those we plan to build, will empower thousands of children and be of lasting benefit for generations to come.
6. Medical Programs: East Meets West Foundation has built or renovated numerous rural medical clinics and city hospitals. East Meets West's Family Emergency Relief Fund (FERF) provides free life-changing operations for burn victims, youngsters with cleft lips and cleft palates, and children with orthopedic deformities.



a recent heart patient



CUBA



Terrorism Apologist Named to Florida Supreme Court

by Jane Franklin

Governor Jeb Bush made history on July 10 when he appointed the first open supporter of terrorism to the Florida Supreme Court. Raoul Cantero III rose to this exalted position from his humble beginnings as the grandson of dictator Fulgencio Batista and son of an intelligence officer in Batista's Bureau for the Repression of Communist Activities (BRAC), notorious for torture and assassination. Of course, one can't just assume that Cantero shares the politics of his Grandfather Batista and his father, but his own record shows that he has continued the family tradition of supporting terrorism against the Cuban people.

Back in 1989, when Orlando Bosch was in prison in Florida for parole violation, the U.S. Justice Department had ruled that he should be deported because of his terrorist activities. The deportation order cited FBI and CIA reports that Bosch "has repeatedly expressed and demonstrated a willingness to cause indiscriminate injury and death," including 30 acts of sabotage in the United States, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Panama from 1961 through 1968. Moreover, according to FBI and CIA documents, CORU (Commando of United Revolutionary Organizations), co-founded by Bosch in 1976, had been involved in more than 50 bombings and, quite likely, assassinations. Bosch himself was charged with the bombing of a Cuban passenger jet that exploded in midair, killing 73 people. Acting Associate Attorney General Joe Whitley wrote in his decision to deport Bosch: "The October 6, 1976, Cuban airline bombing was a CORU operation under the direction of Bosch." Interestingly, that bombing occurred while the director of the CIA was George Bush Sr.; Bosch had been an agent of the CIA.

By 1989 Bush Sr. had become president. A campaign to get the White House to reverse the decision to deport Bosch succeeded. Bosch walks free today in Miami, still promoting violence against Cuba. Among the leaders who turned a convicted terrorist into a hero were Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, then running for Congress, and her campaign manager—Jeb Bush. A prominent spokesman for Bosch was one of his lawyers, Raoul Cantero III. Cantero informed the media that Bosch had never engaged in "indiscriminate" violence, suggesting perhaps there was some discrimination in choosing his civilian victims. On July 2, before Governor Bush promoted Cantero to the Supreme Court, the St. Petersburg Times reported that 1989 radio tapes prove Cantero called Bosch a "Cuban patriot" and "rationalized a 1968 crime for which a Miami federal court had convicted Bosch—the firing of a bazooka at a Polish ship docked at Miami—as 'a political statement' that 'didn't hurt anybody and it didn't cause any damage.'"

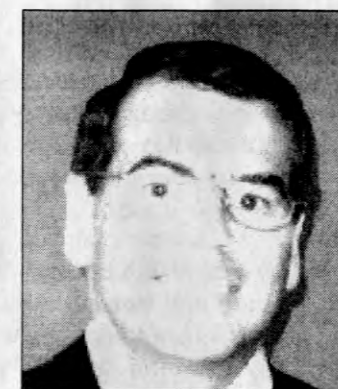
Is Cantero in 2002 willing to enforce the law even against Cuban-American terrorists? This is a matter of major importance because terrorism against Cuba appears before the Florida Court with astonishing frequency. In Florida, the prevailing jurisprudence is that those who commit violent acts against Cuba are not terrorists but freedom fighters. According to Florida courts, the desirability of overthrowing the Cuban government evidently overrides the Neutrality Act, which forbids launching military actions from U.S. territory against any nation with which the United States is at peace.

Even as he announced Cantero's appointment, Jeb Bush defended his choice by stating, "Everybody has a right to an attorney." But nobody is arguing that an attorney should be held accountable for his client's actions. The issue is whether a person who publicly justifies terror against civilians (including blowing up an airliner) as part of a "heroic fight" against the Cuban government should be a Florida Supreme Court justice.

Jeb Bush wants to get credit for putting the first Hispanic on the Court. But as Cuban-American Alvaro Fernandez, Florida director of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, points out, "All over the state, we have Hispanic judges who would be better qualified and who have no ties to terrorism." Cantero is a corporate lawyer with no experience as a judge.

Now the controversy extends to the November gubernatorial contest in which Jeb Bush is up for re-election. With Jeb's brother George waging a "War on Terror," will the Democratic candidate dare to ask why Jeb Bush helped free Orlando Bosch, who had been declared a terrorist by the Justice Department, the CIA and the FBI?

Jane Franklin is the author of "Cuba and the United States: A Chronological History." A description of her work is at <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jbfranklins>.



Cantero and Bosch (left and right respectively)

International Relations Students Bridge Embargo

by Hilary Sledge, Barnard College student, FRD intern, and trip participant

In May 2002, a group of 27 Columbia University students, alumni, Deans and FRD staff traveled to Havana on a trip organized by Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) and FRD. The seven-day trip consisted of a variety of political, economic and social meetings. Students attended conferences at the University of Havana on the Cuban education system and US-Cuba relations. Visits were made to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), US Interests Section, a Polyclinic and a community social work program. Throughout the encounters, a balance was emphasized between the failures and successes of the Cuban Revolution.

A discussion of the Cuban economy and Cuban investment process was held at the Ministry of Foreign Investment and Cooperation (MINVEC). This meeting provided a thorough explanation of the focus and models of Cuban economic policy and development since 1991. Pedro Monreal, economist, and Roberto Yebra Muñoz, MINVEC specialist, also discussed opportunities and sectors for foreign investment and enterprise. Additionally, investment techniques and the benefits and possible risks of investment in Cuba were discussed.

One highlight of the trip was meeting with students at the University and the International Relations Institute (ISRI). ISRI is a foreign service institute, training future diplomats, with curricula that includes aspects of international affairs such as students would find at SIPA. There were hopeful statements made between students to respect countries' sovereignties in choosing their form of government. The visit to ISRI was beneficial not only because ideas were exchanged, but it was recognized that, as a group, we will be involved in the future with international policy bodies that can and should make a positive difference in relations between the two countries.

While the schedule was almost completely full of political and academic visits and conferences, there were also many opportunities to participate in the social life of Havana. The group also took a one-day trip to the countryside, Piñar del Rio, and visited "Las Terrazas," a national park/biosphere and artists colony. There were also visits to a Mercado Agropecuario (agriculture market), museums of the Revolution and Bellas Artes, and one evening many attended a baseball game.

One of the shortcomings of the trip was the time constraint of only seven days in the beautiful city of Havana. Many desired to have more time for leisure activities or to travel more extensively outside of Havana. The trip was educational, enjoyable and inspiring, and was hopefully one small step in the process of the improvement of relations between the United States and Cuba. [see photo right]

FRD & WOLA Sponsor Congressional Visit to Cuba

by Geoff Thayne

From April 1st to April 4th, the Fund for Reconciliation and Development, along with the Washington Office on Latin America, sponsored a Congressional staff visit to Cuba. The delegation included staff who work for Members of Congress from the farm states of Kansas and Nebraska, as well as from California. Both Democratic and Republican offices were included, and Senate as well as House offices. The delegation explored Cuban interest in trade with the United States, Cuban interest in expanded US travel to Cuba, as well as the political and human rights situation in Cuba today.

The group met with Cuban government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and the Ministry of Tourism. It also had an exchange with officials of Cuba's National Assembly, and with National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon. In addition to these official meetings, the group met with the director of the semi-official Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy, spoke with a US journalist based in Cuba, met with a Protestant minister active in community affairs outside Havana, and talked with ordinary Cuban citizens on the streets.

The delegation traveled to the town of Cardenas, famous as the home of Elian Gonzalez. There, it met with the Reverend Raimundo Garcia Franco, director of the private ecumenical Center for Reflection and Dialogue. Reverend Garcia Franco is a Presbyterian minister, who has been active in religious affairs since before the Cuban Revolution. He talked with the delegation about church-state issues, noting the significant improvements in church-state relations over the last decade, as well as highlighting some continuing problems. The Center, which Rev. Franco founded, offers workshops and seminars about a range of issues in Cuban life, including discussions of topics not often publicly debated in Cuba. These include the state of religious affairs, the role of women in Cuban society, and human rights

continued next page



SIPA/FRD Cuba trip participants

FRD & WOLA trip cont'd

issues. The Center also offers a range of social service programs to the Cardenas community.

While in Cardenas, the delegation visited a cooperative farming project started by the Center. There we saw interesting experiments in organic gardening (the farm uses no artificial fertilizers) and in alternative energy production (electricity is provided by methane gas generated from animal waste.) The farm produced honey, vegetables, and grains for the local market, and for the social service projects of the Center in Cardenas.

Several delegation participants wrote private briefing papers for Members of Congress as a result of the delegation. One of those papers helped brief a Senator who visited Cuba shortly thereafter. Another was presented to President Carter as he prepared for his trip to Cuba. The delegation afforded Congressional offices the opportunity to form their own opinions about Cuba

Overall, the delegation came away convinced that the Cuban government is actively seeking to improve relations with the United States. It is eager to expand trade, and preparing to receive more US tourists if the travel embargo is loosened. The delegation was also convinced that improved US-Cuban relations would, in the long run, have a constructive impact on the political situation within Cuba itself.

Research on Cuban NGOs

by Alex Gray

Cuban civil society offers an alternative approach to Western perceptions of social development. The Revolutionary Socialist State is intimately involved in shaping civil society. It appears that there is no clear line in Cuba between civil society and the State. Mass organisations, such as the Committees in Defense of the Revolution, have been the traditional actors in Cuban civil society and are closely aligned with the State. However, with the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and Cuba's resultant economic strife, international donor agencies and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) entered Cuba, altering the makeup of civil society. These interventions have brought about a social context where the communist view of civil society comes into close contact with a more capitalist conception. Cuba's emerging NGO community is an interesting case, and the extent to which NGOs conform to, and conflict with, the State's conception of civil society will be of continual interest in coming years.

Alexander Gray is a scholar of contemporary Cuban society currently finishing work on Cuban NGOs. He can be reached at Alex.gray@ul.ie, or by mail at the Centre for Peace and Development Studies, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland.

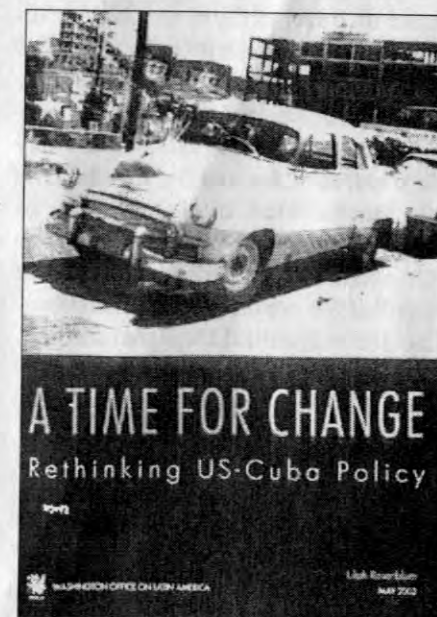
A Time for Change New Booklet on US-Cuba Policy

The Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) recently published an educational booklet and citizens' guide on U.S.-Cuba policy entitled "A Time for Change: Rethinking U.S.-Cuba Policy." The booklet critiques current U.S.-Cuba policy and suggests policy alternatives, and dispels misconceptions about realities within Cuba today. This publication is for community groups, students, and all those interested in U.S.-Cuba policy today. WOLA hopes it is useful to activists as they prepare to educate colleagues, students, policy-makers, friends and family about changing U.S.-Cuba policy.

This publication comes at a moment when there are two divergent trends in U.S.-Cuban relations. On one side, there have been clear signs of interest in better relations with Cuba from a majority of Members of the U.S. Congress, and from U.S. business and agricultural interests, and reciprocal signs from the Cuban government. On the other side, the Bush Administration has taken an increasingly entrenched stance on Cuba and a small group of hardliners in the House of Representatives have continued to thwart the will of the majority in Congress who want to change the policy. In a time when U.S.-Cuba policy seems trapped within these conflicting dynamics, it is important to build broad public support for changing U.S. policy toward Cuba. Through this educational booklet, WOLA hopes to provide the background information and intellectual arguments and facts necessary to make the case for a normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba.

"A Time for Change" is available in English and can be obtained for \$5.00 plus \$1.75 shipping and handling for the first copy and \$3.00 plus \$.50 for shipping and handling for each additional copy. For bulk orders (10 or more copies), please

contact WOLA at 202.797.2171. To order this publication, please send a check payable to WOLA to Cuba Education Booklet Request, Washington Office on Latin America, 1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20009, or call 202.797.2171 to use a credit card.



FRD Cuba Travel Policy Paper

FRD Intern and Columbia School for International and Public Affairs student Nicole Hertvik has compiled a detailed paper analyzing the US travel ban to Cuba and the potential effects of discontinuing the ban. Excerpts from that paper are below. Paper copies are available from FRD for \$5 (see resources, inside back cover). The paper will be posted at www.ffrd.org shortly.

For forty-two years, the United States has maintained a policy towards Cuba with the central aim of isolating and ultimately eliminating Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Although the policy has shown variations throughout its four-decade tenure, its main tenets have consistently rested on a policy of isolation. Central to the aim of isolating Castro have been restrictions on travel by US citizens to Cuba. This policy has only hurt the Cuban and American people and frustrated rather than fostered mutual understanding and a reconciliation of differences between the two countries. The paper is a summary of recent investigations into US travel restrictions to Cuba and an explanation of the conclusion that lifting the restrictions would be mutually beneficial to both American and Cuban societies. This argument rests on the assumption that travel restrictions are objectionable on legal, policy and economic grounds.

Legal

Restricting the right to travel conflicts with several areas of the US constitution. Limiting the freedom of movement encroaches on the "liberty" which the Fifth Amendment states citizens cannot be deprived of without the due process of law. Second, the restrictions limit rights guaranteed under the First Amendment to express our views, hear the speech of others, gather information and associate with others – rights essential to a democratic society. With freedom of movement restricted, First Amendment rights undoubtedly suffer.

Political

In refusing to alter its stance on travel to Cuba, the current Administration is allowing the will of the majority to be subsumed by the political clout of a small, empowered minority. A survey conducted by the Cuba Policy Foundation determined that two-thirds (66.8%) of Americans believe that citizens of this country should be allowed to travel to Cuba and 38.9% said they would consider going if the ban was lifted. In addition, a Florida International University survey of Cuban Americans in Miami reveals a community with increasingly diverse opinions on the issue. Over 52% of those polled believe unrestricted travel from the US to Cuba should be allowed while 51% signal that they "would support a dialogue with the Cuban government." 45% feel that politicians are not listening to the views of Cuban-Americans supporting more open relations with Cuba.

In its attempts to isolate Cuba from the international community, the United States has clearly emerged as the isolated nation. The international community has repeatedly voiced opposition to US policy towards Cuba. The United Nations General Assembly has voted to condemn the US embargo of Cuba, of

which the travel restrictions are a central aspect, for the past years. In the most recent vote in November 2001, 167 states voted against the embargo while four voted in favor of it and four abstained.

The geopolitical landscape has changed drastically since the end of the Cold War, while the travel ban, rationalized by Cold War security needs, has become only stronger. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s marked the end of Soviet subsidies to Cuba. In the decade since then, the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State and the National Security Agency have each issued reports finding that Cuba does not pose a security threat to the US or the Western Hemisphere.

Economic

Those supporting continued travel restrictions argue that allowing US citizens to travel to Cuba would generate income for the Cuban government. It should be clear after forty years however, that the Cuban regime is capable of survival without American assistance and even in the face of great adversity. Ambassador Sally Cowal described those members of Congress still supporting travel restrictions as "believing somehow that what hasn't worked for forty years will magically work now."

As more and more American business and political leaders are realizing, business in the US stands to make significant financial profit from decreased restrictions with Cuba. Allowing Americans to travel to Cuba would provide an immediate boon to the American travel industry. In economic terms, lifting travel restrictions could serve as a useful starting point for increased commercial relations between the two countries. Americans currently make up the largest group of Caribbean vacationers, and Americans visiting Cuba will demand amenities similar to those offered throughout the region.

With estimates of as many as one million US travelers within the first year of legal travel, it is doubtful that Cuba would have the necessary infrastructure to handle such an influx. For this reason many tourists would have to stay in private homes, fueling the country's limited private establishments and providing more equitably distributed source of dollars to the average Cuban. This could have the positive effect of lessening the growing divide between Cubans that receive remittances from relatives in the US and those who do not.

The above argument should serve to illustrate that current US policy on travel to Cuba lacks a logical or defensible framework in legal, political and economic terms. A majority of US citizens from all backgrounds clearly support a lifting of restrictions as do powerful elements of the business community. Increasingly, members of the political community are leaving behind the four decades of ideological baggage the issue has attained through the years. It is now up to the US Congress to decide if and when the travel restrictions will end.

House Endorses Change in Embargo

From a press release by the Latin American Working Group. Details, including records of votes are available at www.lawg.org.

On July 23, for the third year in a row, the House of Representatives voted to end the travel ban to Cuba and to allow for private financing of agricultural sales to Cuba by US farmers. These amendments have repeatedly passed the Congress and the vote counts showed strong bipartisan support for changing US policy. Amended to the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill, the travel provision, offered by Congressmen Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Jim McGovern (D-MA), passed by a vote of 262-167. An amendment, introduced by Jerry Moran (R-KS) to allow financing of food and medicine sales won with a voice vote. The House also approved an amendment to allow Cuban-Americans to send money to their relatives in Cuba without restrictions. This amendment, offered by Representatives Flake and Delahunt (D-MA) passed easily by a vote of 251-177.

The travel, financing and remittances amendments cut funding for the enforcement of these aspects of the embargo against Cuba, a move that sends a strong signal to the Administration that Congress wants to change a failed policy.

The Rules Committee gave preference to an ostensible anti-terrorism amendment introduced by Rep. Porter Goss designed to undermine the Flake amendment. Goss' provision was defeated by a vote of 182-247, despite intense pressure from the Bush Administration, including a letter to House Members from Secretary of State Colin Powell and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, and a last-minute statement from Under Secretary for Arms Control, John Bolton.

In recent years, bipartisan votes to ease the embargo have been stripped out of bills in conference committees because of pressure from House Republican leadership and the White House.

The House of Representatives also voted on a measure to cut funding for the enforcement of the embargo against Cuba, sending a strong signal to the Administration that Congress wants even greater change. In a 204-226 vote, the House fell just short of the majority needed to pass an amendment offered by Congressmen Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Jose Serrano (D-NY).

The Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill will now be considered in conference with the Senate, which will act on Cuba amendments in the coming weeks. It is anticipated that similar Cuba amendments will also pass the Senate. The House leadership has previously vigorously opposed the Cuba provisions, and Cuba-policy watchers anticipate repeated maneuvering to attempt to frustrate the will of Congress and of the American people. If the bill goes to the President with the Cuba provisions intact, a veto has already been threatened.

Pastors for Peace Delivers Aid to Both Sides of the Embargo

Through its 13th Friendship of aid, Pastors for Peace has brought across the US border into Mexico millions of dollars of medicine, computers and medical equipment destined for Cuba. IFCO/Pastors for Peace acts without the permission of the US Treasury in order to protest the existence of the Cuba embargo. Such Friendship caravans to Cuba began in 1992 and more than 2200 tons of assistance have been delivered.

Minutes before crossing the border into Mexico on July 18, the IFCO office received notice from the US Treasury Department that though they had no permission, they would not be stopped. In an effort to maintain control over the situation, the Treasury requested a list of the 15 people they would allow to accompany the aid. The list they received in response included Che Guevara, Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Jesus and Frederick Douglass. All of the 13 vehicles and close to 100 caravanistas crossed safely.

As part of what they call a "reverse challenge," the caravan will attempt to carry back health related products made and developed in Cuba, in order to draw attention to the ill effects that the embargo has on the US. "We are especially excited about this new aspect of this people-to-people challenge," said group leader Rev. Lucius Walker. "By bringing much needed humanitarian aid manufactured in Cuba, but not available in the US, we will be able to alleviate some of the ill effects that the US embargo has on the people of the United States."

For more information about the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization and the Pastors for Peace Friendship Caravan, contact them at 402 W 145th Street, New York, NY 10031, tel: 212-926-5757; fax: 212-926-5842; www.ifconews.org.

Selling Clean Water to the Enemy

Two Pennsylvania brothers were put on trial in March for selling water purification equipment through foreign intermediaries to Cuba. The trial has put Canadian sovereignty in question, as the firm's marketing director is a Canadian citizen, who lived in Canada for much of the time in question. Current Canadian law forbids compliance with the US embargo against Cuba. James Sabzali, 42, was found guilty in April by a Philadelphia jury on 20 counts of violating the US Trading with the Enemy Act, and one count of conspiracy. He is believed to be the only foreign national ever prosecuted for violating the longstanding US embargo against Communist Cuba.

After working from his home in Canada, Sabzali moved to the company's Philadelphia office, where he was arrested on 77 counts of trading with the enemy and with conspiracy. John Godfrey, a Liberal member of Canadian Parliament, was prompted to ask, "How would Americans feel if we convicted an American for violating Canadian law while living in the United States?"

Resources

Yale Symposium

Yale University School of Nursing will host the Ecological and Health Effects of the Vietnam War Symposium on September 13-15, 2002.

Information is available at <http://www.nursing.yale.edu/news/vwsymposium.html>, or contact Ilya Sverdlov, (203)737-1376, 100 Church St South, Box 9740, New Haven, CT 06536.

Stockholm AO Conference Website

The conference entitled, International Conference on the Long-Term Environmental Consequences of the Vietnam War, is taking place in Stockholm, Sweden, 26-28 July 2002.

Information about the conference is available at: <http://www.nnn.se/vietnam/envirom.htm>

Civil Society Working Group Website

Soren Davidsen, Programme Officer at UNDP and actual coordinator of the Civil Society Working Group, has established a web page with civil society readings. The page contains both conceptual articles on civil society and specific Vietnam material. You can enter the page through: <http://www.un.org.vn/donor/civil/index.htm>

More Flights to Cuba

Sam Blythe Travel, a leader in US-Cuba travel, is announcing new Cuba flights in both Nassau and Havana. Their website www.havanaflyingclub.com has all the details. Fares Miami-Havana-Miami start at \$99.

New NGO for Literacy

Room to Read, a San Francisco based NGO is beginning work building schools, providing scholarships and establishing libraries with the goal to increase literacy. The organization currently works in Vietnam and Nepal and is looking to expand into Cambodia this year.

For more information, contact Erin Keown at Room to Read, P.O. Box 29127, San Francisco, CA 94129, phone: 415-561-3331, fax: 415-561-4428 info@roomtoread.org, www.roomtoread.org.

Gallery Viet Nam Moves to NYC

Gallery Viet Nam has relocated from East Hampton to TriBeCa. Its mission is to present the most varied and unique collection of Vietnamese art, both past and present, to please the eye and intrigue the soul.

Gallery Viet Nam
55 North Moore Street New York, NY 10013
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Conference Announcement

Hold the Date: 22-23 March 2003, American Museum of Natural History, New York

Vietnam in the 21st Century: Journeys on the Ground and in the Imagination will feature recent fieldwork in Vietnam by younger scholars. The conference is open to the public and is free of charge. For further information, please contact Ann Fitzgerald at afitz@amnh.org or (212)769-5891.

Play: Silence of God

A new play about Cambodia, "Silence Of God", will have its premiere production at Contemporary American Theater Festival July 12-August 4, 2002. In the Spring of 1998 the United States had a secret plan to capture Cambodia's Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot to try him for crimes against humanity. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge adversary Ta Mok, known as "The Butcher," made overtures to hand him over. Fictional characters have been placed in a fact-based story. Tickets and information for the production at Contemporary American Theater Festival at www.catf.org/1-800-999-CATF.

International Alert Seeks Interns

International Alert, an NGO in London, seeks 2 interns for six month positions in their Security and Peacebuilding - Light Weapons Programme. International Alert is a non-governmental organisation which analyses the causes of violent internal conflict, enables mediation and dialogue between parties in conflict, sets standards of conduct to avoid the recourse to violence, and helps develop skills amongst those involved in resolving conflicts to ensure that it occurs non-violently.

For more information, contact Stephanie Powell at spowell@international-alert.org or International Alert, 1 Glyn Street, London, SE11 5HT, UK

VIA Seeks Executive Director

VIA (formerly Volunteers in Asia) is an independent non-profit organization housed at the Haas Center for Public Service on the Stanford University campus. VIA coordinates volunteer work and student exchanges between the US and East Asian countries. VIA's annual budget is \$1.7 million, and has 10 full-time staff, 30 student program assistants, and 3 field coordinators in Asia.

Interested parties should find more information at www.viaprograms.org. The Executive Director position is set to begin in Sep/Oct and the published deadline for applications is 31 July.

SSRC Needs Professors

The Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the National Center for Social Science and Humanities (NCSSH) are holding an interdisciplinary social science research training course in Hanoi, Vietnam. They seek professors of anthropology and sociology for academic year 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. More details are at www.ssrc.org under employment opportunities, or contact Van Tran (tran@ssrc.org) or Hoa Duong (duong@ssrc.org).

Travel Learn Trip to Cuba

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contact: Irwin Nesoff in the Social Work Department Inesoff@kean.edu (908) 527-2077, or James Conyers in the Africana Studies Program Jconyers@kean.edu (908) 527-2375

Witness for Peace Trips to Cuba

WFP will be hosting three upcoming trips to Cuba. Each trip will cost approximately \$1000 beyond airfare. Contact the leader of each trip, or for information about WFP, contact David Quick at Witness for Peace, 1229 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, dquick@witnessforpeace.org, www.witnessforpeace.org.

January 9-19, 200, **Witness for Peace Upper Midwest**, John Pegg, 218-349-1786, wfpumw@witnessforpeace.org

February 17-29, 2003, **Witness for Peace New England**, Joanne Ranney, 802-434-3233 wfpne@witnessforpeace.org

March 7-16, 2003, **Alternative Spring Break to Cuba**, Ross Meyer Miami University of Ohio, meyerrp@muohio.edu

Columbia University Needs Translators

The Columbia University Tutoring and Translating Agency (CUTTA) is currently looking for a translator of Khmer to transcribe a Documentary videotape shot in Cambodia. The pay for transcribing tapes is \$25/hour. CUTTA is currently receiving applications for all languages and subjects for both translating and tutoring positions.

People interested in this job should contact CUTTA by e-mail (cutta2000@hotmail.com) or phone (212)845-4888. Candidates may apply in person at CUTTA, located at the Center for Career Services (entrance at 116th Street, between Amsterdam Ave. and Morningside Dr.).

LAWG Seeks Senior Associate

The Latin American Working Group seeks a Senior Associate. LAWG conducts advocacy and education to build US foreign policies that support peace, human rights, and sustainable development in Latin America. Requirements of the Associate include fluency in Spanish, knowledge of Latin America and experience with Congressional advocacy.

Contact: Latin America Working Group, Senior Associate Search, 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Box 15, Washington, DC 20002, or by email to: lawg@lawg.org

Museum of Natural History Trip to Cuba

The American Museum of Natural History will sponsor a trip February 17-28 entitled Cuba: A World in Transition. The itinerary will include visits within Havana as well as six other main towns, and has a basic land cost (airfare excluded) of \$4760. For more information, contact Alicia Stevens at (800)426-8687, (212)769-5700, or visit the website of the tour operator at www.discoverytours.org.

Veteran's Delegation to Cuba

10 days in Cuba, from November 7 to November 16, 2002 including airfare Cancun/Havana/Cancun, 9 nights hotel accomodation in Cuba and Cienfuegos with breakfast, all airport transfers, permanent bus for transfer and program, permanent English speaking guide. \$1,400.00 double occupancy, \$1,500.00 single occupancy

Includes visits to museums, churches, etc. Meet with Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and The Combatientes. US Veterans and Cuban Veterans will join together in a memorial service on Veteran's Day.

Participants must be veterans or be accompanied by a veteran. A veteran is anyone who served in the armed forces of any country at any time. A copy of your discharge paper - DD214 or a photocopy of your membership in a Vets group that requires DD214 should be sent with the application. Please contact Jim Long at 415-841-9635, Patsy Behrend at patsybehrend@hotmail.com, or Jim Long at vets4cuba@mindspring.com

PS ... from the Editor

On July 23, the House of Representatives expressed once again its strong bi-partisan sentiment for a change in US policy toward Cuba (see page 27). Following is the contribution to that debate by FRD.

Dear Member of Congress;

As a not-for-profit organization, we are constrained in how deeply we may be involved in the legislative process. And as a Member of Congress, your primary duty is to the people from your own district. With those caveats, I wish to make a few observations that may be relevant to your decision on the amendments by Representative Flake, Rangel, Goss and others to the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Bill that may come before the House as early as tomorrow.

- 1) Our organization has worked since 1985 to bring about normal US diplomatic, trade and cultural relations between the US and three countries with which our country had concluded a long and bitter war. It cost 56,000 deaths to Americans and more than two million deaths to the people of Indochina and left a legacy of deep mutual distrust. Two of those countries today still have political systems and perspectives on human rights that are very similar to Cuba's.
- 2) The embargo of Vietnam and Cambodia and the restrictions on travel to those countries by American citizens were ended without requiring a change in their political systems or human rights policies. Laos has never been subject to either an embargo or travel restrictions, although paradoxically it does not yet have Normal Trade Relations.
- 3) As a result of traveling to Indochina two to four times per year I have personally observed the liberalizing impact of countless program oriented visits by Americans from non-governmental organizations, universities, foundations and business, as well as of tourism by average Americans, as mutual ignorance and suspicion steadily declined. This evolution is real and it is peaceful, albeit distressing to the diminishing number of hard liners in all four countries.
- 4) Our organization began work with Cuba about four years ago. During half-a-dozen visits I have seen how US government efforts to bring about change by imposing barriers to personal and institutional contact between Americans and Cubans have clearly backfired. Such US policies perpetuate a negative historical image of American intentions and values and thus reinforce the nationalist response of the most cautious and suspicious Cubans.
- 5) One consequence of US attempts to force change in Cuba is that Cuba has not experienced a fundamental self-driven change that has characterized Indochina, namely dramatic opening of the economy to local and international free markets.
- 6) The partial opening for travel and humanitarian assistance introduced in the later years of the Clinton Administration were having a real impact, allowing greatly expanded travel sponsored by groups like ours. These reforms are being choked to death by the political imperatives of President Bush's team. The only solution is to end all bureaucratic authority over these most fundamental of American freedoms that are essential to good citizenship, the right to travel and personally witness.

Sincerely,



John McAuliff, Executive Director

July 22, 2002

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As you reassess priorities, we hope you value our successful 17 year effort to strengthen US ties with Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, as well as our newer very similar work with Cuba. There is still a lot to be done and this is a critical moment for FRD to receive your generous tax deductible contribution.

If you can't join us in September for our annual Foreign Ministers' dinner in New York, we look forward to listing you as a donor who is "present in spirit." (see page 3)

Thank You, Au Kun, Kop Chai, Cam On, Gracias.

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