

Market impressions from Southeast Asia

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their emerging free market attitudes, this formerly closed nation could drive the golf industry for decades to come.

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• Immediately following the Gulf War, then-President Bush made a point of exorcising the specter of America's Vietnamese experience. And while he assured us this chapter in U.S. history was closed, his mere mention was proof that we, as Americans, have yet to put it

behind us.

Recently uncovered documents revealing the Vietnamese government has not been truthful about the fate of American POWs presents yet another obstacle to the normalization of relations.

While it is difficult for U.S. citizens to forget the war-torn images of Vietnam in the 1960s and 70s, it's important to remember the Vietnam of today is a very different place. From all accounts, its people are

avidly interested in developing a free market, industrialization and, yes, attracting tourist dollars. The story on page 31 of this issue indicates the broad-based Vietnamese interest in making their country accessible to golfers, businessmen and foreign investors.

The pain of POW families can't be swept under the rug of capitalist venture. But Americans will find themselves behind the eight-ball in this emerging nation if they don't recognize current realities and opportunities. Every day the embargo remains in place, U.S.

companies fall further behind.

Eventually, the embargo will be lifted. Indeed, many American firms are already in Hanoi, poised for an end to sanctions.

This is not insensitive, traitorous behavior. This is not carpetbagging. It's good business.

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• Sobering news item #1: Singaporeans — typical of many people in Southeast Asia — are very serious about their country's economic place in the world. Further, the level of personal savings and investment is phenomenally high. Shortly

after Golf Asia '93 came to a close, an investment expo was scheduled for Singapore. A video advertisement for the upcoming show was shown in a busy downtown mall. A large crowd gathered to watch, completely engrossed.

Can you imagine a crowd of American mall rats watching a 10-minute promo for an investment exposition?

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• Sobering news item #2: Wealthy Southeast Asians often hold memberships in three or four different golf clubs around the region. Can they afford a fifth? Luckily, the fast-emerging middle class — stocked with savings and eager for status — are prepared to pick up the slack. In emerging nations with minute native golf populations, the development of player pools is essential. Public golf is still difficult to come by in this region, but many are perfectly content to spend years learning the game at a range, and flying to Bali or Batam for their golf weekends.

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• Last but certainly not least, kudos to Steve Allen and the staff at Connex Private Ltd., who put on a great show at Golf Asia '93. Everything went smooth as Thai silk. The crowds were large and many a deal was struck. Allen, in particular, was a whirling dervish. He was all over the show floor with his walky-talky, accommodating exhibitors, escorting guests (like the Sultan of Jawar), and personally handling the smallest details. At the end of the day, he could be seen out in front of the World Trade Center, hailing cabs.

Steve Allen, clearly the hardest working man in show business.

Hopkins the new Southeast rep for Sostram Corp.

ATLANTA, Ga. — Sostram Corp. has named Robert Hopkins sales representative for Florida, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina.

Hopkins will be based in the company's Atlanta office. Hopkins was previously national accounts manager for Oil Dri Corporation.

In other management changes, Jim Bryan has been named business manager with responsibilities for the Sostram line of herbicides, including: atrazine, Sim-Trol (simazine) and Trophy. Bryan remains based in Memphis.

Ron Dezember has been named business manager with responsibilities for fungicides, including Echo and other chlorothalonil formulations. Dezember will also be responsible for the Sostram line of specialty chemical products. Dezember remains based in Cleveland, Ohio.

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