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### THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

DANANG, SOUTH VIET NAM--This is the story of how the Communists are controlling the villagers and hence winning the war in Quang Nam province--where 9000 American Marines are defending a jet airbase.

The story was told vividly and graphically last week by a Vietnamese Catholic who literally escaped from a Communist-controlled village in the province. The name of the village and the escapee can not be disclosed.

The problem started in 1959, the escapee explained, when in the beginning there were only a small group of two or three secret Viet Cong terrorists who came to the village in the night-time. They started their terrorist activities to make the people frightened. Then they tried to murder a certain number of government officials and the village chief. Then in 1962, the Catholic priest was murdered--by a new Catholic convert who was a Communist. Then in 1963, after the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem, there was a change of all the village chiefs and district chiefs and the Communists got their man or a man more or less favorable to them into the government positions.

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The escapee continued: the purpose of the terrorism is to scare the people and to neutralize everyone who collaborates with the government. Soon, no one dares to become a government official so the Communists get their man into the government job.

Now, in 1965, only the district center and a few outposts are in the government hands because they have troops there. All of the villages in the district are lost, he said.

"Even within three weeks--and without troops--the Communists can seize control of a village. Even with only armed secret cells of men still working in the underground they can organize the population into associations and seize control without even the government village chief knowing it," he explained. "So how can we expect the American Marines to know it--or to stop it?"

"Now there's no more hope in the villages. Now it is too late. The situation is like a bowl of rice filled with ants--one can not separate the ants from the rice. Maybe the only way is to destroy both the rice and the ants.

"Can the American Marines re-conquer the villages? We still do not know. When the American Marines come to the villages, the Communists withdraw all the young men from the village. They leave behind the old men and children. When the Marines move to another village, the Communists return to the village. The Communist use the young men as fighters and the elders and children to produce food.

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"Sometimes the Communists use the provocative tactics of shooting at the government or American airplanes and then the planes bomb the population. Once, I saw a Communist sniper fire at a plane and the plane bombed the Catholic Church. Thirty six Catholics died--but the Communist sniper didn't.

"Even if the American Marines do re-conquer the village, oan the population be made anti-Communist again. I doubt it. Even Catholic priests could never trust their Catholic flock again.

"The Communists even use the women as fighters. To go from Village to village, the population must have a Communist paper; eventhe Catholic priests must have one. And who does . the Catholic priest have to present his paper to? The Children. The Communists organize the little children as guards to check the papers. It is a shame for a Catholic priest to present Communist identity papers to be checked by children. Even the children watched where the priests went and who they talked with and reported everything to the Communists."

The escapes was asked how the Communists organize the village.

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"First they have cells of a few men," he explained. "Then they will try to organize associations. They have associations for the youth, for the women, for the children, for old people and for the peasant. So everyone becomes a member of at least one association. The Communists get the young men by using either propaganda to win them over or else threaten them and the young men have to join the Communists and be trained by them. The Communists sometimes allow the old people to move out of the area to the government side, but they never allow the young men or bigger children to move. They work very hard with the young, especially the 10-11 year old children.

"The most effective weapon of the Communists," he continued "is to sow suspicion among the people, so everyone distrusts everyone else. Even people in the same family distrust each other. They use Buddhists to spy on Buddhists and Catholics to spy on Catholics. They use the new Catholic convert to go to confessional--not to genuinely confess to the priest but to know more about the thinking of the priests--then even the Catholic priest does not know which one is a true Catholic and which one is a false Catholic. They infiltrate their men into every organization--into the government, into the national army--everywhere.

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"Of course, the Communists never said officially and openly that they are atheistic and are against the freedom of religion. However, in practice, it is impossible to practice the religion. They say that all the Catholics can go to Church and the priests can hold mass. However, at the time of mass they would think of some collective activity so the Catholics do not have free time to go to mass. They tell the priest it is dangerous to go out of the Church to visit the Catholic masses, and that if the people, such as the sick or the dying, need his services, then the Communists will bring them to the priest for the ritws. But, in practice, the Communists never bring them.

"The Communists never let the people have any free time-- they always keep the minds busy," he explained. "Work during the day; study in the night. Sometimes the people study from 8 in the evening until 4 in the morning. They study Marxism-Leninism. The first theme the Communists use is against the Americans, saying that the people must be liberated from the Americans and must be independent and self-sufficient. They say tu luc canh sinh--we live by our own energy. The Communists always urgen the pepple to do that--never to rely on outside help from another province, region or country.

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----- Through terrorism and propaganda, once they get hold of the people, then they use the second theme of social injustice to denounce poverty, then a tenant turns against his landowner and a servant against his master. All former bonds of the past are broken. They set the poor against the rich and say everyone must work for himself. The Communists distribute the Catholic Church lands and refuse to let the people give the Catholic priests alms, so the priests have no way to live. Within three weeks they have a new society.

"Of course, the true Catholics welcome the American Marines because they are against the Communists who are atheists. But for the non-Catholics, there's no reason why they would not be Communist. The Communists are against social injustice, for independence, for hard work and no corruption. They are for the poor. The Americans have given so much aid to Viet Nam-- but the people do not get the rice, money and clothing. It's like the Americans were pouring the money in the river."

The Catholic escapee was asked whether or not it was too late to gain the people and win the war.

"If Jesus Christ says Vietnam will not be Communist," he shrugged, "then maybe South Vietnam will not be Communist. It would be a miracle. But we do not know what Jesus Christ will say."