

The Critical Orphan Shortage



Arthur Hoppe

IT WAS in the 43rd year of our lightning campaign to wipe the dread Viet-Narian guerrillas out of West Vhtnng. Unfortunately, things were going the other way around.

Not only was the capital of Sag On running out of soldiers and ammunition, it was, worst of all, running out of orphans.

For with the country collapsing and millions of people homeless, warm-hearted Americans had gone on a spree of adopting Vhtnngian orphans. The trouble was there were more warm-hearted Americans than there were orphans.

And far more reporters, too. It got so that every arriving orphan was outnumbered a hundred to one by newsmen seeking interviews, which caused fist fights and ill feeling. And finally, even the President could no longer find a single arriving orphan to hold in his arms while smiling broadly to show he really cared about the Vhtnngian people.

The press was actually running other stories on page one. The network news was only devoting 20 minutes nightly to orphans. It was clear that America would fast lose interest in Vhtnng unless something drastic done.

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IN SAG ON, the premier, General Hoo Dat Don Dar, called an emergency cabinet meeting. "Brothers," he said, "and cousins, too, unless we find more orphans to tug the heartstrings of America, I fear their Congress won't send us another \$5 billion to keep up our struggle against Godless communism and finish our villa on the French Rivjera."

"With our luck," said General Phat

Chans gloomily, "they may even start importing orphans from suppliers with bigger inventories, like India and Biafra."

"Phat Chans," said General Hoo, ducking under the table as a bomb dropped by a testy Loyal Royal Air Force pilot hit the Loyal Royal Palace. "They're very loyal customers."

"But they're so picky," said General Phat Chans, dusting himself off. "I know of one adorable, five-foot-four, genuine orphan who eagerly applied to go. But they rejected me because I'm 68."

"Maybe we could swap with the Viet-Narians for some," suggested General Dat Sma Boi thoughtfully. "They must have plenty by now. And we all look alike to them."

"What if they found out we were shipping them Communist orphans?" said General Hoo, shaking his head. "They'd hit the ceiling. It's no good. If we can't provide the orphans, they won't provide ... Wait! I've got it! Take a cable to Congress!"

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THE BRILLIANT CABLE turned the tide. Congress, after studying its irrefutable logic, sent \$10 billion to Sag On.

Soon, thousands of lucky Vhtnngian orphans were happily on their way to America again. Thousands of warm-hearted Americans happily had their needs fulfilled. The press was happy to have something to write about. The President was happy to be able to show he cared. And the war continued happily ever after — all because of the ingenious cable.

"You provide the weapons," it said, "and we'll provide the orphans."