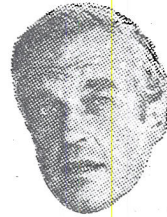


Our Man Hoppe

43

With Allies Like Ours, Who Needs Enemies?



Arthur Hoppe

IT WAS in the 43rd year of our lightning campaign to wipe the dread Viet-Narian guerrillas out of West Vhtnng.

At long last, our humanitarian Bombs for Peace Program had paid off. The stubborn enemy had finally agreed to a negotiated settlement.

Our ace negotiator, Dr. Hughes Kissinger, brought the good news to the Loyal Royal Palace in Sag On. The Premier of West Vhtnng, the revered leader of that bastion of democracy and key to Southeast Asia — General Skaloo U Thieu — greeted him with his usual inscrutable smile.

"Put her there, dear friend and ally," said General Thieu, holding out his hand. "Say another million or three?"

"Great news, General," said Dr. Kissinger. "The war is over!"

"I can't tell you how glad I am to hear that," said General Thieu, after his aide, General Dat Sma Boi, revived him with smelling salts.

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YES," said Dr. Kissinger, happily rubbing his hands, "thanks to our dropping seven tons of explosives on the heads of every East Vhtnngian man, woman child, we have finally induced them to think peaceful thoughts. They have agreed to a cease-fire and new elections."

"Oh, I love elections," said General Thieu, placing a hand over his heart. "What's a democracy without elections? Let's see, this time I think I'll run against General Nho Diem Ghud. My beloved people loathe him. Even more than me. Or maybe General Tai Won Onn. There's a man with a reputation. Of sorts. Or perhaps General Phat Chans . . ."

"I'm afraid," said Dr. Kissinger, "that they must be internationally supervised, free and honest elections."

"Sun oh ghun!" cried General Thieu, lapsing into Vhtnngian billingsgate. "Honest elections! Impossible! What would my beloved people do without me? Who would insure that they continued to enjoy the blessings of democracy if I weren't around to close down their newspapers, throw them in jail and chop off their heads?"

"Look, here, Thieu," said Dr. Kissinger, frowning, "you'll have to retire to your modest 47-room villa on the Riviera or else!"

"Or else what?" inquired General Thieu politely.

"Or else we'll cut you off at the pockets and pull out, that's what," said Dr. Kissinger.

"I'm confident your decent fair-minded President would never radically revise his policies and desert a loyal ally," said General Thieu, smiling, "not with an election coming up."

"Damn it, Thieu, we'll think of something," shouted Dr. Kissinger, as he angrily stomped out. "After all, whose war do you think this is?"

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IT WAS a week later that General Thieu placed an emergency phone call from under his desk to Dr. Kissinger in Washington.

"Look here, Kissinger," he said, "there seem to be 600 B-52s blowing the bejabbers out of The Loyal Royal Palace. I warned you the American public would never accept a radical revision of your President's policies!"

"What radical revision?" said Dr. Kissinger, cheerfully. "You are simply on the receiving end of our continuing Bombs for Peace Program."