



The US Abandonment of the Hmong – How easily we forget those who saved our lives!

By **Chuck Palazzo** on January 27, 2010

Danang, Vietnam – Many of us may recall the peace loving, and US loyal peoples of Vietnam. There are many stories that have been told of how these wonderful and such courageous folks fought with us, alongside us, protected us, and died with and for us. Some of us remember them as the Montagnards.

The Hmong are an Asian ethnic group of people – primarily from the mountainous areas of Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and Burma. There are many personal accounts that have been told to me, and a very near and dear friend, whose husband met a very untimely demise as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange, was shot down while here during the war. He survived the crash – and was protected from the VC as well as the NVA because of the loyalty and devotion of the Hmong to him and to the US. They literally hid him, fed him, protected him, and helped him find his way back to an allied controlled area where he ultimately met up with his unit and safety with US Ground Troops.

In the 1960's, the CIA started to recruit the Hmong to help the US fight in Vietnam as well as the "secret war" in Laos. The main reason in my opinion and documented by several historians – their familiarity with the terrain, especially when it came time to block the NVA from heading south via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Between 1962 – 1975, about 12,000 Hmong died fighting against the Pathet Lao. Following the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, the Lao kingdom was overthrown by the communists and the Hmong became targets – literally.

This began the mass exodus of the Hmong from Laos to Thailand – those who were successful, wound up in UN refugee camps. Sadly, those who were not part of the exodus to Thailand were sent to re-education camps most of whom died. Others found their way to the US and several other friendly nations. An estimated 30,000 Hmong would be killed by Communist forces while trying to reach Thailand. Over 100,000 Hmong people died as a result of the war.

The Hmong apparently were told that they could bravely fight for the US because the United States would always be there to protect them should local communists turn on the Hmong. It was a relationship of trust, but Hmong trust in the US would be sadly

misplaced. After taking over Laos in 1975, the Pathet Lao Communists stated that they would wipe out the Hmong.

A Vietnamese broadcast apparently called for genocide against them. From 1976 to 1979, there were credible reports of chemical warfare used against Hmong villages. The world tried to ignore these reports, and some influential voices in the United States tried to discredit the evidence, claiming that the “yellow rain” that had been used to kill Hmong people was just natural bee feces, not a chemical toxin. By the time overwhelming evidence had been gathered to shatter the “bee feces” theory, the media no longer seemed interested in exploring charges of genocide by Communist forces.

On December 27, 2009, Thailand launched an operation to close a refugee camp and send some 4,500 ethnic Hmong back to Laos, despite concerns about their safety. Thailand blames other countries for the deportation, and we, the friendly US, whom the Hmong did so much for, risked and lost so many of their lives for US forces, “criticized” the Thai Government. That was as recent as a week ago.

The Hmong’s fate? One could only guess.

Do not forget what they did for us, perhaps many of you reading this have had personal experiences you could share – share them with your congressional and US Representatives, The White House, The UN. We have a responsibility for these people’s safety – as we promised them we would protect them over 40 years ago. Another lie from the US Government that the rest of the world just ignores.

Source: <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2010/01/27/the-us-abandonment-of-the-hmong-%E2%80%93-how-easily-we-forget-those-who-saved-our-lives/>