

Myth: John Kerry also stated that the Vietnamese people didn't care if they lived under democracy or communism, and they would probably be better off under communism. He went on to say that if the communists took over Vietnam, at most, only a few hundred South Vietnamese would be killed.

Wrong! An estimated 2 million South Vietnamese either died as a direct result of executions, torture, starvation in gulags, or died on the highseas fleeing the carnage after the North Vietnamese takeover of South Vietnam in 1975. Over three million Cambodians were murdered by the Khmer Rouge, a creation of North Vietnam that funded it in its initial stages, and supported it with logistics, troops, artillery and rockets in the takeover of Phnom Penh. Today, the regime in Hanoi still receives marching orders from the Vietnamese communists. In Laos, where hundreds of thousands of Lao and Hmong were murdered after the takeover, Vietnam still maintains three divisions of troops and neocolonizes that country.

Even though the Vietnam War has been over for 30 years, infants and youngsters, as well as women and men being killed or are dying in Laos and Vietnam for the purported "sins of their fathers." The sins of the Hmong in the mountains of Laos and the Montagnards in the Central Highlands of Vietnam are that they were loyal allies of the U.S. during the war, the majority of who have now become Christians.

Human rights abuses, religious persecution and ethnic cleansing still continues to this day in Vietnam and Laos, where our former allies, the ethnic minorities, are routinely killed, tortured, imprisoned and sent to gulags for long periods of time. Priests, pastors and democracy and human rights advocates are regularly tried in kangaroo courts and sent to prison for periods up to 15 years. The Montagnards and their families who fought with the U.S. against the communists, even third-generation, are denied access to basic health care, education and other social services. The population of the Montagnards before South Vietnam fell to the North Vietnamese was estimated at 1.5 million, now according to the official figures of the communist regime, it is only 750,000, while the population of the Vietnamese has tripled during the same period.

The Vietnamese and Lao communists are equally as brutal toward the Hmong ethnic minorities in Laos, many of whom are also Protestant Christians. The Lao Communist Party has proclaimed it would hunt down the "American collaborators" and their families, "to the last root." They will be "butchered like wild animals." These are mostly the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of fighters who sided with the U.S. in the 1960s. From a population of about 7,000, there remains but a ragtag band of about 800, mostly women and children. And true to their word, **today** the Lao communists have them bottled up in a narrow strip of jungle in Xaysomboune Special Zone and are in the process of annihilating them down to the last child ["Licensed to Kill," Time Asia Edition, June 30, 2004].

