



"I had some psychological operations teams. I taught the VNese army how to take some psychological actions. It was the only thing the French would initially let me do. There was a G-5 office for psychological warfare in the VNese army. The French had their own officers as G-1, 2, 3, and 4 of the VNese army. There was a VNese major who served as G-5 over in a separate bldg. I said to him, Alright, you can play around. The French psychological warfare man was a reserve colonel who taught Shakespeare at the Sorbonne. He was mentally old, past his prime, didn't think fast at all, knew nothing about psychological operations. He had some wonderful equipment .

In 1953 [when EGL visited on the O'Daniel mission] the only one in the whole French force who knew what he was doing was a very young LTC in command of combat lines up in Hanoi. He'd gone to school in Hanoi, knew Giap and others personally, and wanted to beat them. Talking with him, he just sparked with ideas and threw them back to me and we had a great time. He carried out a number of psychological operations. I think they pulled this particular slogan [The Virgin Mary is going South] themselves.

"I taught them how to spread rumors in marketplaces; to get people talking and comparing stories and build a new thing out of them. I suggested they could do it about Chinese troop operations there. Let people think the Viet Minh had made a deal to let the Chine army down south of the border where they were raping women, misbehaving, stealing things. Later I got a queryu from Washington: would I please find out if there was any truth to the fact that two Chinese regular divisions were in NVN? I checked up in Hanoi and Haiphone in 1954 and Jesus, my teams had been telling the story I suggested. I had thought of telling about a platoon--a small group--just enough to frighten people. I wanted people moving south out of communist control and that was one way to get them moving. I had to wire back to Washington and say, it's not true, but something I started. Mea culpa.

"I also had VNese civilians who were nationalists, very patriotic, wanted to help do things, get into psychological operations on their own. We ran two operations in the north that were so close to what communists would actually have done that those inside one town went ahead and followed the orders I gave them. Communist headquarters told them to cease and desist; that the French must have given those orders. The ones I had fooled got these radio messages from headquarters and thot the French must have broken their codes and were sending them false messages and went ahead doing what I wanted them to do.

"We distributed pamphlets to show people what was going to happen. I had shopkeepers making inventory of what they had, to give to the local party, so they could confiscate them when the communists came in.. The local party inside this town insisted on the shopkeepers doing so. That got an awful lot of people suddenly realizing that we ought to get the hell out of here, which was what I was trying to do. The only one of our guys who got caught was the chief of police in Hanoi. His friends were distributing the pamphlet. If any of them were caught by the French, he was to get them out of jail right away. He got so involved he was distributing them himself. The French gendarmerie came along and

put him in jail. I had to go to Diem to get him sprung. Diem said, the guy's a traitor. No, I said, he's trying to help you and the country. He's really on our side. He said, did you pay him? I said, No, I don't even know the guy. I talked to some people, friends of mine, and they did it. Diem couldn't understand that. It was too much duplicity for him.

16 May 1984 EGL interview