

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

DIA review
completed.

ARMY Review
Completed

[DIA REVIEW COMPLETED]

5 August 1970

[ARMY Review Completed]

The North Vietnamese Logistical System --
Capabilities and VulnerabilitiesI. Introduction -- The Laotian Panhandle
and Sihanoukville

Communist forces in South Vietnam have been supported almost entirely by two separate logistical routes. (1) The Ho Chi Minh Trail from North Vietnam through Laos to South Vietnam and, (2) The sea route by which supplies have moved to the port of Sihanoukville and then overland to Communist sanctuaries astride the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border.

Both the Washington intelligence community and the intelligence components at CINCPAC and MACV have agreed since early 1968 that enemy forces in III and IV Corps of South Vietnam have received large amounts of sea-delivered arms and ammunition transshipped through Cambodia.

However, there has been some disagreement between Washington and the field in the relative importance of the land and sea routes. The field view has been that the Communists have moved VC/NVA military supplies through the port of Sihanoukville since October 1966 and that this route has completely supplied the VC/NVA forces in southern II Corps and in III and IV Corps.

The CIA view -- and the Washington view -- has been that the overland route through Laos has been the primary logistics route for even those enemy forces that operate in the southern half of South Vietnam. CIA has believed that the Sihanoukville route did not become an important source of supply for the Communists until sometime around mid-year 1968, and that probably no more than one-half of the estimated Communist resupply requirements for arms and ammunition in Southern II, III, and IV Corps were supplied by sea.

MACV has estimated that during the period October 1966 - September 1969 about 17,800 tons of Communist arms and ammunition were delivered to Sihanoukville. The comparable CIA estimate included 7,100 tons of confirmed ordnance (that is, arms and ammunition) and 4,100 tons of other military cargoes both ordnance and non-ordnance. The differences in the estimates stem from judgments about the size and composition of cargoes, not the sources available to the analysts.

Other differences between CIA and the field have involved the share of Communist arms legitimately destined for the Cambodian Armed Forces (FARK) and the tonnage of ordnance that actually moved to the

VC/NVA forces. The CIA position has been that until recently there has been little reliable evidence with which to quantify this latter flow. Thus the CIA position has been that the sum of our intelligence on both the Sihanoukville and overland routes has been inadequate to assess the relative importance in terms of specific tonnages supplied by each with any degree of confidence.

25X1

Despite the past differences about the role of Sihanoukville in supporting enemy forces in South Vietnam it is obvious that the Communists, probably

for all time, have lost this convenient back-door route to their forces in lower South Vietnam. The total logistic burden must now be carried by the 700 mile overland route that stretches from Hanoi to the Fishhook and Parrot's Beak. Since the last known arms shipment to Sihanoukville was in April 1969, the land route has in fact been the sole supply channel for the last 15 months.

II. The Overland Route Through Laos

A. During the remainder of this briefing:

1. I shall describe the characteristics and capabilities of the enemy's overland supply system from North Vietnam, through Laos and Cambodia.

2. I shall follow this analysis with CIA's conclusions as to how this system has operated under the pressure of air attack, first during the last months of the Rolling Thunder program in 1968, and second, more recently in the panhandle of Laos.

B. Nature of the Overland System

1. Organization

The logistics organization responsible for supplying Communist forces in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia is the General Directorate of Rear Services (GDRS), located in Hanoi, and subordinate to the North Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense. This organization moves men and supplies from North Vietnam into Laos, Cambodia, and ultimately South Vietnam. In the Laotian Panhandle specific responsibility for infiltration and supply was assigned to the NVA 559th Transportation Group (TG) as long ago as 1959. The 559th TG has about 40,000 personnel in its transport, engineer, commo liaison, and infantry units. Its truck inventory is maintained at an estimated 1,400 trucks in current use. This probably represents about 10% of the North Vietnamese truck inventory. The 559th TG controls an elaborate supply organization whose basic units are military stations called Binh Trams (BT). Binh Trams dotted along the entire logistical network comprise trans-shipment points, storage warehouses, and other facilities.

2. Description of the Logistic System

a. In North Vietnam

Throughout the war, the Communists have worked continuously to build, maintain, and expand a complex overland logistics system capable of supporting their forces in South Vietnam. Stretching more than 700 miles from Hanoi to the many enemy supply bases along the border of South Vietnam, this system uses all modes of transport except air to move supplies southward.

Since the total bombing halt on 31 October 1968, Vinh has become the major storage and distribution center in the panhandle of North Vietnam, providing logistic support not only to the front in South Vietnam, but also to Communist forces fighting in northern Laos. Supply shipments destined for South Vietnam are transported over a net of roads, waterways, and a meter-gauge tramway which feed into the cross-border corridors linking up with the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos. A smaller volume of supplies moves directly south across the DMZ to support NVA forces in that area.

In July 1968 the North Vietnamese started the construction of a petroleum pipeline

system capable of moving up to 1,000 tons of fuel per day. This line now extends south from Vinh through the Mu Gia Pass and some 22 miles into Laos. More recently, the Communists have built another pipeline system farther to the south, crossing the border near the western DMZ and terminating near Tchepone -- the major logistical transfer point in southern Laos for supplies destined for South Vietnam. When complete, this new pipeline should connect with recently installed petroleum storage depots at the ports of Quang Khe and Dong Hoi. The addition of the two pipelines to the enemy's logistic system provides him with the year-round means of transporting large amounts of petroleum across the rugged Laotian border largely uninhibited by either weather or Allied interdiction efforts.

b. In Southern Laos

Three logistics corridors consisting of five major roads, a long-used water route, two petroleum pipelines and numerous trails serve as cross-border access from the sanctuary area of North Vietnam to the Ho Chi Minh Trail in southern Laos.

The oldest and the northernmost active corridor crosses through the Mu Gia Pass, 80 miles southwest of Vinh. The second corridor crosses the Laotian border at Ban Karai Pass 40 miles farther

south. Built in early 1966 to counter the effects of the air interdiction campaign, this 56 mile long road (Route 137/912) has become more important than the Mu Gia route in moving supplies to Base Area 604 (Tchepone). To further counteract the effects of the bombing, the North Vietnamese opened a third cross-border route in the vicinity of the western DMZ during the 1969/70 dry season. This latter trans-border route is the most complex of the three, comprising three major road crossings with a fourth presently under construction, the heavily-used Se Bang Hieng river, and, as mentioned earlier, the newly completed petroleum pipeline extending into Tchepone. After reaching the logistics hub at Tchepone, supplies are shuttled southward by truck through a series of Binh Trams southward to the Cambodian border.

To expand the capacity of the major north-south artery which focuses mainly on Route 92/96 the North Vietnamese have during the past several dry seasons undertaken a major road-building program. Parallel road segments and numerous bypasses have been built creating a dual road system that has proved virtually impossible to interdict on a sustained basis

during this dry season. Supplementing Route 92/96 is the Se Kong river which crosses the north-south route at Ban Bac and winds south 145 miles to the Cambodian border. Until now, only the extreme northern and southern reaches of the river have been used by the Communists for logistics purposes. There are recent indications that the North Vietnamese now intend to exploit this means of transportation much more fully. The Communists have secured control of the Se Kong and Mekong route from Laos to within 100 miles of Phnom Penh.

c. Along the Laos-South Vietnam Border

Between the DMZ and the triborder area of Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam (Base Area 609) supplies are moved into South Vietnam over a network of trails and one major road (route 9 into the A Chau valley). Nine Binh Trams support this activity, which, because it serves the supply needs of the enemy in I and II Corps is a fairly high volume logistical operation.

d. Along Cambodian-South Vietnamese Border

Logistic support to the B-3 Front in South Vietnam has been chiefly supplied from depots in the tri-border area (Base Area 609) and from Base

Area 740 adjacent to Quang Duc Province. Four Binh Trams and an interspersed net of com-mo-liaison stations along the border between Base Area 609 and the Tonle Srepok river provide route security and the means for the movement of supplies to B-3 Front elements. Reconnaissance reports indicate that truck transport is used on only the northern 40-50 miles of this corridor, with bicycles, animal carts, and porters assuming the burden thereafter. Below the B-3 Front, enemy forces are supplied by Rear Services groups concentrated in 12 Base Areas in South Vietnam and Cambodia subordinate to COSVN, the controlling authority for all enemy military operations in Southern South Vietnam.

C. Operation of the System Under Air Attack

Despite the intensive US bombing campaigns in North Vietnam and Laos, which have inflicted heavy and widespread damage and burdensome resupply difficulties, the enemy has continued to move supplies into and through the long logistical pipeline to his forces in South Vietnam.

1. In North Vietnam

During the four years of the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign against North Vietnam the

enemy's logistical system proved surprisingly durable. North Vietnamese success in offsetting the effects of the bombing was due in part to the primitive nature of the target system that US bombing sought to neutralize; but even more important were the inventive counter-measures developed by the North Vietnamese. To insure the movement of supplies, Hanoi put some 600,000 people to work, full and part-time, repairing bombed roads and railroads and building new roads and railroads as well as hundreds of bypass bridges and fords, pontoon bridges, and ferries.

The enemy minimized damage to supplies and transport equipment by moving under cover of darkness and by taking full advantage of sanctuaries provided by air strike restraints. By these and other ingenious countermeasures -- supplemented by large amounts of supplies from their Communist allies -- the North Vietnamese were able to maintain and even expand their logistical flows. The last seven months of the Rolling Thunder program -- the period of the partial bombing halt (31 March-31 October 1968) -- was probably the most effective period of the air war against North Vietnam in terms of complicating the flow of supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. Bombing was concentrated on logistics targets south of the 19th parallel.

For several weeks prior to the total bombing halt the combination of several fall typhoons and heavy air attacks had greatly slowed the movement of supplies in the panhandle. The enemy lost more trucks during the seven months of the bombing restrictions than had been destroyed in all of 1967. But supplies continued to move. Throughout the entire bombing era the system continued to function and was able to support adequately the military effort in Laos and South Vietnam. By the end of the Rolling Thunder Program in 1968 the system had greater capacity and flexibility than at the start of the bombing. The problem of air interdiction was rendered most difficult by the fact that route capacities were less than 20% utilized.

2. In Laos

The interdiction campaign in southern Laos which began in late 1965 has increased in magnitude and scope during succeeding years. The first major step-up in bombing occurred during the 1967-68 dry season when attacks more than doubled compared to the level of the previous dry season. The bombing was further intensified during the 1968-69 dry season when the bombing halt in North Vietnam at the end of October 1968 made available a doubling of resources for the air war in Laos. The bombing continued at a high rate during the past dry season though the number of sorties flown was somewhat lowered.

a. The 1968-69 Dry Season

The sudden and substantial increase in the level of Allied sorties during the fall of 1968 resulted in severe logistic problems for Communist forces. The transportation of supplies was seriously disrupted. Antiaircraft defense and communications systems were ineffective and internal resupply problems prevented quick improvement. There was insufficient food, and work schedules were disrupted throughout the panhandle.

(1) However, in early December 1968 the enemy launched a major effort to counter

the effects of the increased Allied interdiction program. Hanoi ordered crash logistic campaigns: (1) to increase the effectiveness of the AAA defenses in the panhandle, (2) to keep the roads open and build new bypasses, (3) to meet the transportation quotas. In addition, more engineer, AAA and transportation battalions were deployed to the Laotian panhandle, the number of Binh Trams was more than doubled in southern Laos, and radio and landline communications were expanded.

(2) By early January 1969, the North Vietnamese countermeasures had begun to alleviate logistic problems. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] increasingly large numbers of vehicles were reported moving [redacted]

25X1

25X1

(3) The path was by no means a smooth one for the enemy, however. In late spring of 1969, the US Air Force shifted the emphasis of the bombing program from the not too successful attacks on roads to a program of truck killing.

25X1

(4) Overall, however, the season ended with the Communists considering their logistics efforts to have satisfied their requirements.

25X1

25X1

(5) Late in May 1969 -- with the onset of the wet season -- Rear Service units in the panhandle began to withdraw to North Vietnam. The fact that the enemy had maintained at least part of the system open and operational during the summer of 1968 suggests that the decision to close the system in 1969 was dictated by the logistical planners' determination that it was not needed

rather than a decision forced on Hanoi by the bombing.

(6) It is also significant that the decision to close down for the wet season was taken despite the fact that in May 1969 Sihanouk had suspended all supply shipments to the Communists while attempting to negotiate new arrangements governing the use of Cambodian territory by Communist forces. Hanoi planners could have had no assurance at that time when, or even if, the unpredictable Sihanouk would permit the resumption of supply shipments through his country.

b. The 1969-70 Dry Season

The enemy returned to his logistical tasks in the panhandle early in October with a deliberateness and resolve that clearly underscored Hanoi's intentions to resume large-scale resupply to its forces in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

(1) Initial activity was focused on the restoration of the weather and the bomb damaged panhandle roadnet which was opened for through traffic to the tri-border area by the end of November. An intensive program was also launched for constructing new access roads and a POL pipeline in the western DMZ area.

(2) By early December 1969 the logistic system in the panhandle was completely operational and the first of a series of well-organized "crash" transportation programs to move supplies to South Vietnam was laid on. Similar programs during the previous dry season had not occurred until early January -- indicating the relative speed with which the North Vietnamese re-stored the logistic system this past dry season.

25X1

(4) In contrast to the preceding year, the system operated without prolonged or chronic problems. Convoys moved continuously because roads were kept open and gasoline supplies were adequate. Favorable weather, effective camouflage of truck parks and warehouses, and an efficient AAA defense also contributed significantly to the effort.

c. Comparisons of the 1968-69 and
1969-70 Dry Seasons

The primary lesson to be learned from the enemy's behavior under two years of intensive bombing in the Laotian panhandle is that he possesses the capability to learn, to adjust and to adapt his logistics efforts to the rigours imposed by the bombing. At the beginning of the 1968-69 season, the Communists did not have in place in southern Laos a logistic organization properly equipped (or experienced) to counter the effects of a greatly intensified US bombing. Consequently, the early portion of the dry season was devoted primarily to increasing the capability and flexibility of the system. The net effect of this experience was demonstrated during the 1969-70 season; a well-coordinated logistics effort early in the season led to the completion of transportation missions two months ahead of schedule.

III. The Effect of the "Sihanoukville Load" on the Overland Route

A. Introduction

1. Our studies of the enemy's logistical efforts of the past several years and the effects of the US bombing has led us to several conclusions which are based on a considerable body of intelligence. The evidence I am referring to is:

a. Statistics on miles of new roads, new bypasses, new pipelines, and the observed repair times of damaged facilities, all of which can be measured in aerial photography.

25X1

c. [] sources such as captured documents, interrogations, road watch teams,

25X1

[] all play important roles.

25X1

B. Our conclusions, based on such hard evidence carefully studied over the years, are that:

1. The bombing caused the North Vietnamese great difficulties and resulted in the destruction of very significant quantities of war-supporting goods. We believe

that the Communists lost about 25% of their supplies in transit.

2. The Chinese and Soviets have shown a willingness to replace the destroyed supplies. The North Vietnamese, by applying massive amounts of labor, have been able to repair the damage to their logistical system and keep supplies moving needed to support their forces in the South.

3. In summary, bombing has not prevented the Communists from supplying their forces in South Vietnam. We believe that more supplies could have been pumped through the overland system if the North Vietnamese had felt the need to do so. In southern Laos during the past dry season, the North Vietnamese countered the effects of the bombing much easier than the year before and clearly delivered the planned quantities of materiel early in the year.

4. We do not, however, conclude that the overland route can absorb the Sihanoukville burden with ease in the face of a continuing air war in Laos, or if the bombing of the panhandle of North Vietnam were

to be resumed. Even with no bombing, the additional trucks, carts, and porters that will be necessary to move the Sihanoukville tonnages are a significant new drain on Communist logistical resources. The distances are long, and the crates heavy even if the total tonnages to western eyes seem small.

C. The various areas of South Vietnam would be affected differently by intensified bombing:

1. I Corps

The Communists remain in a strong logistical position in I Corps. In-country stockpiles and stockpiles in Laos are intact and large stockpiles exist north of the DMZ. There have been no changes in the enemy's strategic or tactical position that have altered his resupply requirements or upset his plans. The enemy's logistical position in I Corps has always been particularly strong because he has the option of moving supplies directly south across the DMZ, around the western edge of the DMZ, or drawing from the logistical artery that runs parallel to I Corps in the Laotian Panhandle.

At present the enemy's external resupply requirements for weapons, equipment, and ammunition in I Corps are about 9 tons per day,

about 40% of the Communists total 1969 external resupply requirements for these classes of supply in South Vietnam. During a Tet-like offensive this requirement could double but there is no doubt that the enemy could logistically support such an effort in I Corps. Air interdiction is probably already degrading the logistical system in Laos as much as sortie ceilings and the weather permit. A resumption of air attacks against the panhandle of North Vietnam would obviously complicate the North Vietnamese resupply activities but would not critically affect them.

2. II Corps

II Corps is dependent on the Laotian supply system only for weapons and ammunition. Food for the rice-deficient highland provinces comes from Cambodia. II Corps resupply requirements for ordnance have always been much less than I Corps -- less than five tons a day. Thus the total additional burden of supplies (from the Sihanoukville closing) that must now move through Laos for enemy forces in II Corps is small, if indeed it exist at all. It could easily be absorbed by the overland route.

3. III Corps and IV Corps

III and IV Corps, based on 1969 resupply requirements, must receive about 11 tons of ammunition, weapons, and equipment a day via the Laotian Panhandle. If it is assumed that the enemy desires to replace its losses of ammunition and weapons recently incurred in Cambodia, another 11 tons per day of supplies will be required for the next six months. It is clear that III and IV Corps will be the North Vietnamese's major logistical problem in the year ahead; its solution will require significantly higher supply inputs through the Laotian Panhandle. We believe that the Communists will be able to move these additional supplies through the panhandle during the dry season (from October through June) to meet normal needs but will probably have difficulty in restoring his stockpile levels in Cambodia to levels sufficiently high to embark on a Tet-like offensive in III and IV Corps. Restoration will, of course, be possible over many months.

The Communists should have little difficulty, once the rainy season ends in October, in maintaining a sufficient flow of supplies to III and IV Corps to maintain their low profile of recent months.

D. Post Script

There are complicating factors that must be mentioned in conclusion. (a) The future course of the war in Cambodia is obviously unknown at this time. If the enemy steps up the pace of the war during the forthcoming dry season, his logistical requirements in Cambodia may place a substantial additional burden on the overland supply route. (b) Communist control of much of the interior of Cambodia while easing some logistical problems has created others which the enemy must live regardless less his their offensive posture. So long as Hanoi maintains troops in Cambodia, some internal resupply will be necessary. (c) Finally, while we are certain that the Communists suffered a heavy blow as a result of our Cambodian operations, the intelligence community has no firm knowledge of the extent of the stockpiles that remain in VC/NVA hands. Their stockpiling doctrines, however, suggest that very large stocks may yet remain cached in Cambodia, Laos, and South Vietnam; such caches will tend to limit the effectiveness of future US interdiction efforts by providing reserves to tide the enemy over bombing-imposed resupply difficulties.

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

Approved For Release 2008/02/26 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000200110001-5

2/ you can shut off
S. Ham-Kuile,
How much red. from
Bombing, —

Approved For Release 2008/02/26 : CIA-RDP78T02095R000200110001-5

SECRET

3 August 1970

CIA View of the Role of Cambodia As A
Source of Communist Supplies

The Intelligence Problem

1. During the past two or three years the intelligence community has labored intensely to resolve the issue of the relative importance of two routes for getting supplies to VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam ... an overland route through Laos and the so-called Sihanoukville route.

2. The judgments of the relative importance of each route have polarized between the views of Washington based analysts -- CIA, DIA, and State -- and the views of analysts in the field -- CINCPAC, MACV and COMUSNAVFOR.

3. The field view has been that the Communists, with Cambodian complicity, have been moving supplies through the port of Sihanoukville since October 1966 and that this route has been the primary means of resupplying the VC/NVA forces in southern II Corps and in III and IV Corps.

4. The Washington view is that the overland

SECRET

SECRET

route through Laos has been the primary logistics route. We acknowledge that some small flow of supplies was always obtained from Cambodian sources but do not believe that the Sihanoukville route became an important source of supply until sometime in 1968, probably around mid-year. Moreover, our best estimate of actual ordnance deliveries during 1968 and 1969 indicates that the Sihanoukville route probably provided no more than one half of the estimated Communist resupply requirements for arms and ammunition in southern II, III and IV Corps during this two year period.

Evolution of CIA Views

5. Prior to the fall of 1968 the intelligence community was in close agreement on the role of Cambodia in the Vietnam War. All agreed that Cambodian territory was important to the Communists for the infiltration of personnel and supplies, and as the site of a well organized system of base areas used for sanctuary, military staging and training.

6. It was also agreed that Cambodia was an important source of rice -- some 10,000-20,000

SECRET

SECRET

tons annually -- for enemy forces in the rice deficit areas of South Vietnam and in Laos.

7. Cambodia was also viewed as a source of non-lethal supplies -- medicines, communications equipment and clothing -- purchased on the open market or smuggled.

8. Finally, all agreed that the VC/NVA forces worked with Cambodian smugglers to obtain other supplies -- including small arms and ammunition -- but these amounts were not judged to be large. In addition it was agreed that some military supplies were infiltrated over Cambodian beaches near South Vietnam, although this means of resupply dropped significantly after the start of the Market Time operation.

The Graham Group

9. In the fall of 1968 MACV presented its estimate that since October 1966 the Sihanoukville route had been the primary means of resupplying VC/NVA forces in southern II Corps and in III and IV Corps. The seriousness of this estimate was fully appreciated in the Washington community and at the request of Assistant Secretary of State,

SECRET

SECRET

William Bundy, an inter-Agency task force -- known as the Graham Group -- was created to reassess all the evidence pertaining to the external supply routes used by VC/NVA forces.

10. The Graham Group reported on 31 October 1968 that with the evidence currently on hand, neither case -- the overland route or the Sihanoukville route -- could be proven or disproven beyond all doubt. The Group found, however, that the weight of the evidence supported the case for primary reliance on the overland route. The Group also urged more intensive study of the intelligence data relevant to the issue and made recommendations for increased intelligence collection activities,

25X1

11. Upon the submission of this report, Mr. Helms then directed the Graham Group to make further field studies of the extent of Cambodian involvement. In November and December 1968, the team visited CINCPAC and MACV, as well as Hong Kong, Thailand and Laos, to review and discuss available intelligence and collection programs.

SECRET

SECRET

12. The views of the Graham Group were changed somewhat as a result of this field investigation. It became clear that the involvement of the Cambodian army was something more than "small-scale" smuggling of arms to the Communists, and that it involved persons of sufficiently high rank to suggest that Sihanouk himself was aware of this arms traffic. Nevertheless, the Graham Group still differed sharply with MACV's views on the quantities of arms being moved into Sihanoukville, the amounts moved to VC/NVA forces, and the extent to which the Communists had been denied access to other routes of supply, notably the overland route through Laos.

Reasons for Rejecting MACV's Views

13. Our refusal to accept the MACV view was based on several points:

a. The first and most important point was that although we were unable to quantify the flow of supplies, a large body of evidence

25X1

25X1

made it

clear, despite MACV's views, that the

SECRET

SECRET

enemy maintained an effective and functioning overland logistics system through Laos and southward along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border. Moreover, analysis by both CIA and DIA indicated that the tonnages moved through Laos were more than adequate to meet the requirements of the Communist forces in South Vietnam, including those in southern II Corps and III Corps.

b. Secondly, we believed that the evidence available at the time was insufficient to make any firm estimate of the tonnages of arms and ammunition arriving at Sihanoukville. Thus, while MACV, in December 1968, claimed that almost 14,000 tons of arms and ammunition had entered Sihanoukville between October 1966 and August 1968, we were able with hard intelligence to confirm deliveries of less than 1,700 tons of military supplies, less than a fourth of which was arms and ammunition. We also noted that MACV classed all the military deliveries to Sihanoukville as arms and ammunition,

- 6 -

SECRET

SECRET

failing to distinguish between ordnance and other types of military supplies.

c. Third, neither we nor MACV had any satisfactory basis for determining how much of the military shipments to Cambodia were being used to reequip the Cambodian armed forces, for stockpiles in FARK depots, or for Cambodian operations against dissident forces.

d. Fourth, the quantities reported by MACV to have actually been delivered to the VC/NVA forces appeared to be unusually large in terms of the enemy's resupply requirements.

25X1

The 1969 Reassessment

14. With the completion of the Graham team investigations, it was apparent that the divergencies

- 7 -

SECRET

SECRET

between the field and Washington views were still substantial. In CIA we undertook a number of measures designed to clarify the many uncertainties about the role of Cambodia and, hopefully, to resolve our differences with the field. These included the launching of an intensive restudy of all intelligence pertaining to the movement of military supplies to Cambodia

25X1

25X1

15. The new collection effort has had a high degree of success in gaining reliable information on supply operations, as well as documentary evidence providing information on the actual volume and composition of Chinese and Soviet military deliveries.

16. As a result of these efforts, we were able, over the past 15 months, to produce intelligence which resulted in significant breakthroughs in our knowledge of this subject.

17. The result of our study seemed to make two things clear:

a. That virtually all the military deliveries to Sihanoukville until some time in 1968 went to Cambodian forces or stocks.

SECRET

SECRET

b. That even when the Sihanoukville route did become an important supply route in 1968-1969, it probably supplied only about half of the enemy's requirements in southern South Vietnam. The enemy throughout the period has placed continuing reliance on the overland route through Laos as the basic means of supplying his forces in South Vietnam.

The Analysis

18. I would like now briefly to compare the results of our analysis with the estimates held by MACV.

19. For the relevant period -- October 1966-September 1969 -- we estimated that a total of 12,016 tons of military supplies were delivered to Sihanoukville, of which 7,090 tons were confirmed ordnance, 805 tons were goods we know to be non-ordnance materials, and 4,121 tons were probably military deliveries which might or might not be ordnance.

20. During the same period MACV estimates that ~~17,130~~ ^{17,775} tons of Communist arms and ammunition were delivered to the Port of Sihanoukville. The comparable CIA estimate would include 7,090 tons of ordnance and

SECRET

SECRET

~~4,100~~^{4,126} tons of probable military cargoes including both ordnance and non-ordnance items.

21. The resolution of these differences is crucial to a determination of how much ordnance has been available for transshipment to the VC/NVA in South Vietnam. To our knowledge MACV had available the same sources of information as CIA. Differences appear to stem from judgments made about the size and composition of cargoes, particularly MACV's failure to remove non-ordnance items from their figures. The differences in the estimates would also depend on each party's judgment about how much of these supplies were for Cambodian forces and how much were for VC/NVA forces.

22. We have had little reliable evidence with which to quantify the actual flow of materials to VC/NVA forces. A rigorous examination of our intelligence holdings failed to unearth any reliable evidence of a significant and organized flow of ordnance during 1966-1967. Our most reliable evidence

25X1

25X1

25X1

points to the likelihood that about 2,000 tons of ordnance moved to the Communists from October 1968 through January 1970. Even if the actual

SECRET

SECRET

deliveries since 1967 had been 50 percent greater, this amount would be only about half the estimated Communist resupply requirements for their forces in southern South Vietnam, the area supplied by Cambodian base areas. This is an important amount of ammunition. But in our opinion it was not of the magnitude that warranted a judgment that Sihanoukville had been the primary means of resupply since October 1966.

23. Despite a continuing effort to resolve the differing views about the role of Sihanoukville, both the Washington community and MACV were holding to the estimates I have just discussed at the time of the Cambodian operations.

25X1

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

25X1

Our

preliminary analysis of the documents indicates that we will undoubtedly make revisions in our estimates. The size and significance of these revisions cannot be determined at this time, but when they are known they will be published and disseminated throughout the intelligence community. We would at the same time be pleased to brief this Board on the results of the analysis.

SECRET

Page Denied

Next 7 Page(s) In Document Denied