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Serial: MDR-54494
15 January 2008

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Sincerely,

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Chief
Declassification Services

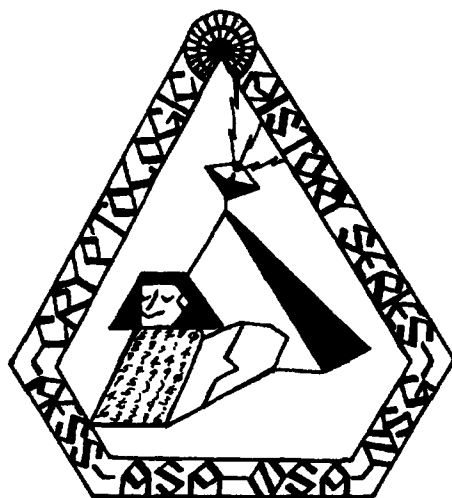
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SOUTHEAST ASIA

Focus
on
Cambodia

PART ONE



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~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY SERIES

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Focus on Cambodia

Part One

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

 NSA

January 1974

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Although the information contained in this study ranged in security classification from UNCLASSIFIED to TOP SECRET CODEWORD, the overall security classification assigned to this issue is TOP SECRET UMBRA.

While the TSCW classification by itself requires careful handling, additional caution should be exercised with regard to the present journal and others in the series because of the comprehensive treatment and broad range of the subject matter.

CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY SERIES

Southeast Asia

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Foreword

Focus on Cambodia provides a thought-provoking account of the SIGINT support rendered to U.S. forces during the Cambodian cross-border operations of May and June 1970. In the weeks before the coup d'état in Cambodia, which toppled the pro-communist Prince Sihanouk from the leadership of that country, and the incursion by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces, SIGINT produced from Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist communications served to define the complex relationships between the Cambodian Government, its military forces, and the Vietnamese Communists occupying base areas in Cambodia. Once the U.S.-ARVN incursion was underway, elements of the SIGINT community—NSA and SCA field units primarily based in South Vietnam []—adjusted the support system (collection, direction finding, analysis, processing, and reporting) to provide U.S. forces with special intelligence of tactical value in these cross-border operations.

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The significance of this volume, beyond its historical interest, lies in what it has to tell us concerning the applications of SIGINT in military operations. The volume affords us the opportunity to study in some detail the operations of the Army Security Agency and the Air Force Security Service as they performed a full range of direct support duties for the ground and air commands in this major Allied operation. The volume gives, moreover, considerable insight into how tactical commanders used SIGINT during the heat of this campaign, recording many instances of how commanders effectively applied it and one major example in which—from the viewpoint of SIGINT observers—commanders did not make full use of the SIGINT available to them. From this latter case, examined in some detail, it seems apparent that measures normally taken by the SIGINT community to facilitate the use of SIGINT by the military commands deserve our continued attention, particularly as they may relate to U.S. military planning in the years ahead.

LEW ALLEN, JR.
Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force
Director, NSA

Preface

SIGINT information contained in this publication was extracted from a myriad of documents originated by ASA, AFSS, NAVSECGRU, and NSA, as well as from CIA, USIB, and NIC. The author made particular use of two documents. The first, the MACV Command History, 1970, was of value in sketching the military setting in which SIGINT specifically worked. The second, *Ride to the Sound of Guns* (509th RRG, September 1970), compiled by the Hq, USASA Pacific Military History Section during the cross-border operations, recorded in detail the SIGINT support provided by ASA Direct Support Units during the incursion.

Another primary source of information was author interviews with individuals who had been directly involved in the tactical, command, and cryptologic aspects of the operations. The information from these interviews provides, I hope, a provocative glimpse into the human element of SIGINT support. I would therefore especially like to extend my gratitude to LTG William E. Potts, Colonels Merritt B. Booth, Jr., James E. Freeze, William F. Strobebridge, William F. Vernau, Frederick Westendorf, and Majors James W. Bradner, III, and Nelson B. Johnson, of the U.S. Army; and to [redacted]

[redacted] of NSA. The willingness and candor of these gentlemen have enabled me to close many gaps and clarify many points in the story.

It would be impossible to list all of the other people at NSA, as well as at the SCAs, whose help and advice contributed immeasurably to the creation of this volume. Among these, I extend my appreciation to all of the traffic analysts, cryptanalysts, reporters, and other specialists of NSA's B1 and B6 organizations who so graciously provided on-the-spot information and answers to all questions. My gratitude also goes to [redacted] for the excellent illustrations which he produced for this journal. Finally, a personal note of thanks to [redacted] of B1 for his technical and moral support.

Non-cryptologic material used in this publication has come, for the most part, from Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 550-50, *Area*

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Handbook for Cambodia, October 1968; a book by Martin F. Herz, *A Short History of Cambodia*, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, 1958; a book by I.G. Edmonds, *The Khmers of Cambodia*, the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Publishers, Indianapolis, 1970; the *1971 World Almanac*, Newspaper Enterprises Association, Inc., Publishers, New York; and the *New York Times* Newspapers, covering the period 1 January through 30 June 1970.

A documented copy of this publication is on file at NSA. Requests for additional copies should be sent to Director, NSA.

The author and staff accept sole responsibility for any errors of fact or interpretation of the source material made available to them.

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PART ONE

Background to the
Incursion

SELECTIVE CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN CAMBODIA TO JUNE 1970

1941—1970	Norodom Sisowath Sihanouk rules Cambodia as King or Chief of State.
1942—1945	Japanese occupation.
1946	France recognizes Cambodia as an autonomous kingdom within the French Union. Sihanouk promulgates an electoral law and establishes a constitution.
1947—1949	Parliamentary government under National Assembly.
1949	Sihanouk dismisses the National Assembly and rules by royal mandate to 1955.
9 November 1953	Cambodia is declared independent. At the same time Cambodia accepts American aid.
1954	Viet Minh invade Cambodia. Cambodia views this move as an act of aggression by Vietnamese rather than by communists. Effect of Geneva Conference on Cambodia: (1) total ceasefire in Cambodia; (2) complete withdrawal of all foreign elements—French and Viet Minh—from Cambodia; (3) International Control Commission organized with provision to supervise Cambodian neutrality.
1955—1970	Sihanouk abdicates and forms a new political organization, the Sangkum, and runs for office. The Sangkum wins national election and Sihanouk, through the Sangkum, rules Cambodia.
Mid-1957	North Vietnamese Army uses Cambodia to infiltrate South Vietnam. Sihanouk condones infiltration in order to gain the good will of the Chinese Peoples Republic.
1960	Sihanouk amends the Constitution so that in the absence of the King, a Chief of State shall have all powers granted the King. Sihanouk is then elected as Chief of State. Concerned about the Viet Cong, Sihanouk sends troops to Cambodian-South Vietnamese border to prevent incursions of Viet Cong into Cambodia.
1963	Cambodia breaks diplomatic relations with South Vietnam, terminates U.S. assistance to Cambodia, and accepts aid from the USSR and the Chinese Peoples Republic.
Mid-1960s	Cambodia continues diplomatic relations with North Vietnam and also recognizes the Viet Cong National Liberation Front as the legitimate government of South Vietnam.
March 1964	Cambodians sack the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh.
1965	Cambodia terminates diplomatic relations with the U.S.
1967	When the Chinese Peoples Republic interferes in Cambodian internal affairs, Sihanouk announces he may be forced to ask the U.S. for assistance.

Figure 1.—Selective Chronology of Events in Cambodia to June 1970

1968	Sihanouk closes Cambodia to foreign journalists. Country-wide demonstrations against the presence of Vietnamese Communist troops in Cambodia.
Mid-1969	Sihanouk resumes diplomatic relations with the U.S.
August 1969	Salvation Government formed. Lon Nol appointed as Premier and Sirik Matak as Deputy Premier.
Late 1969	Cambodian Army units begin action against VC/NVA base areas in Cambodian territory.
11 March 1970	Cambodians sack and burn the embassies of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong.
Mid-March 1970	Cambodian Army engages VC/NVA forces in Cambodia.
18 March 1970	Prince Sihanouk is deposed as Chief of State. Nol and Matak assume complete control of Cambodia.
April 1970	Cambodian and South Vietnamese forces cooperate in border area operations against VC/NVA. Communist forces, meanwhile, move deeper into Cambodia and increase their area of control.
14 April 1970	Lon Nol publicly appeals to any and all nations to furnish arms to Cambodia.
22 April 1970	The White House approves aid in the form of several thousand rifles previously captured from VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam.
Late April	South Vietnamese ground and air forces mount limited attacks on suspected VC/NVA sanctuaries in Cambodia. Allies build up forces in South Vietnam near VC/NVA base areas on Cambodian border. Communist forces in Cambodia overrun almost the entire eastern portion of the country, and pose a threat to Phnom Penh.
29 April 1970	White House announces that it is providing combat advisors, tactical air support, and supplies to ARVN forces conducting attacks against VC/NVA bases in Cambodia.
30 April 1970	President Nixon announces on television the incursion of United States combat forces into Cambodia.
May—June 1970	Allied operations in Cambodia.

Figure 1.—Selective Chronology of Events in Cambodia to June 1970
(Continued)

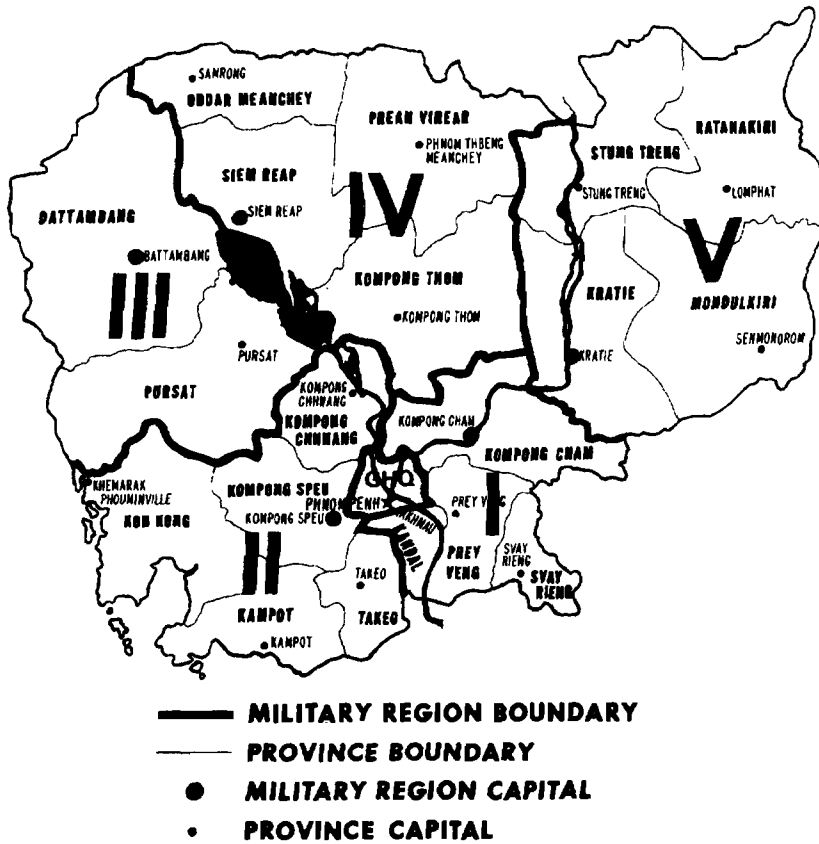


Figure 2.—Cambodian Republic—Administrative Divisions and Military Regions

Part One

Background to the Incursion

To best understand the reasons for the Allied incursion into Cambodia during May and June of 1970, one needs some familiarity with the turbulent events which characterized Cambodian political life before the Allied military operations began. Since the beginning of World War II, the rise and fall of Prince Norodom Sihanouk—first as King and later as Chief of State—contributed largely to those events leading up to the two months of fighting between U.S. and communist forces on Cambodian soil.

Cambodia, a country of seven million population, situated in the southwestern corner of the Indochinese Peninsula, covers an area of approximately 66,000 square miles. Bordered on the east, north and west by South Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, and on the south by the Gulf of Siam, its present boundaries represent all that remains of the former much larger Khmer empire.

While led by the irascible Prince Sihanouk, Cambodia was oriented toward cooperation and, in a sense, alignment with the Communist Bloc nations. Believing that natural political developments would in time convert the whole of Southeast Asia to communist philosophy as defined by Peking, the Prince constantly echoed his belief in the "wave of the future," which assumed the continued dominance of Communist China in Southeast Asian affairs and a Vietnam under eventual communist control.

Cambodia's intense mistrust toward Vietnam goes back many centuries. Cambodians, in their fight against the Viet Minh, hated those adversaries far more as Vietnamese than as communists. The Viet Minh invasion of Cambodia in 1954 further heightened such feelings and reinforced the view of communism as a Vietnamese slogan. Cambodia felt that it was fighting for its freedom mainly against the "Vietnamese," with communism a mere side issue. Although Cambodia emerged from the war with ample reason to fear North Vietnam, the traditional hatred and suspicion of the Vietnamese extended as much to anti-communist South Vietnam as it did to the North.

The hostility displayed between Cambodia and Laos, its northern neighbor, can be directly attributed to Prince Sihanouk—whom the French dubbed "The Mad King of Cambodia" due to his unpredictable and scandalous nature. Sihanouk has not been admired in Laos since the time, shortly after he became King of Cambodia in 1941, he paid a royal visit to Vientiane and Luang Prabang and was given a Laotian Princess for a bride. The young King did not make the Laotian Princess his queen, but kept her only as a concubine. Additionally, a border problem further aggravated relationships between the two kingdoms. Sihanouk wanted Laos to publicly renounce any claim to territory in northern Cambodia that was once Laotian and to guarantee Cambodia's frontiers. Vientiane was prepared to give the guarantee if Prince Sihanouk would, in turn, guarantee the rights and protection of the Laotian minority in the disputed area. He never did.

There has also been continued hostility between Cambodia and Thailand—two of the main points of contention being the border disputes between those two countries and the "neutralist" attitude of Cambodia, which Thailand considered pro-communist.

During the 1960's, Prince Sihanouk appeared to be heavily involved in a game of "diplomatic ping-pong" with Communist China and the United States. His nimble footwork between the pro- and anti-communist camps was in keeping with his policy of manipulation—favoring first one side, then the other—hence keeping his opponents off guard and in a constant state of frustration in their attempts to deal successfully with him.

Since 1961, however, the evidence of collusion between the Government of Cambodia and the Vietnamese Communists has grown to become a testament of, and in effect epitaph to, Sihanouk's inimical interests. Following the internal revolt led by political factions against the presence of Vietnamese Communist forces in Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk lost control of the Government. Two short months later, the Allied forces entered Cambodia.

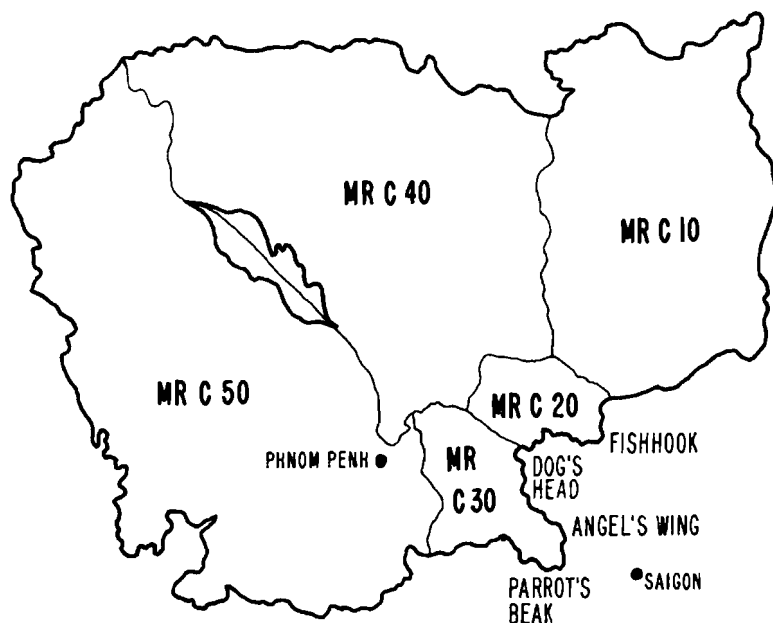


Figure 3.—Cambodia: Vietnamese Communist Military Regions and designation of Areas on the Cambodian-South Vietnamese Border

CHAPTER I

The Importance of Cambodia

The Allied drive into Cambodia in 1970 represented a watershed in the U.S., South Vietnamese, and Cambodian involvement with the Vietnamese Communists in the Second Indochina War. For the U.S., and South Vietnamese military officials, it meant action at last against an enemy who enjoyed the military advantages of the Cambodian sanctuaries. For the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, it meant the end of a strategy employing base areas in territories off-limits, for the most part, to the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. And for the Cambodians, opposed as they were in 1970 to the Vietnamese Communist use of their territory, it offered hope that these alien forces might be evicted from their country. In the years leading up to 1970, however, Cambodian-Vietnamese Communist relations had been such that Cambodia had permitted, or at least tolerated, the Vietnamese Communist use of Cambodian territory.

Cambodian Relations with Asian Communists and the U.S.

To understand why it was that the Vietnamese Communists were able to enjoy the use of Cambodian territory as they did during the mid- and late 1960's in their military operations against the Allied forces in South Vietnam, it is necessary to draw at least briefly from the record of Cambodia's relations with Asian Communists and the principal non-communist countries involved in Southeast Asia during the period. The record affords, to be sure, no consistent pattern of Cambodian behavior.

After Cambodia won its independence from France, Prince Sihanouk, anxious to build up his country's military strength, accepted American aid. His decision was not popular in government circles. There was a fear—shared by Sihanouk himself—that it would be difficult to accept American aid without tarnishing the image of Cambodia's new independence. Into this uncertain situation, the Chinese moved swiftly and with great finesse to show friendliness to

Cambodia. Prince Sihanouk was invited to make a state visit to China. He was hosted by Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai. After his return to Cambodia, the mercurial Prince made a speech in the General Assembly in which he said: "We will accept aid from the right, from the left, and from the center in any way that will assist our country." He went on to demand that Vietnam return the Mekong Delta to Cambodia, "its rightful owner." At the same time he angrily rejected the United States suggestion that Cambodia join SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) to present a solid military front against communist aggression in Southeast Asia.

Prince Sihanouk gradually became disgruntled over United States aid and what he considered American attempts to dictate to him, and in 1963 terminated all United States economic assistance to Cambodia. In his decision to end this aid, the Prince stated that he believed the United States was supporting anti-government broadcasts by the Khmer Serei (Red Khmer—a small rebel group operating outside of Cambodia). He then accepted four Soviet MIG aircraft and increased aid from Communist China and after 1963 aid came from Communist Bloc nations under a guarantee of "no strings attached."

Sihanouk's attitude to the communists was, of course, a matter of concern to the United States. The State Department in 1963 noted that "Prince Sihanouk has on numerous occasions in the past denounced communism, pointing out that democracies provide liberties for the individual, while communism suppresses individual liberties." In a speech, the Prince further elucidated this philosophy by stating: "We know perfectly well that the Reds only applaud our neutrality because it serves their interest."

Despite this remark, Sihanouk maintained friendly relations with the Peoples Republic of China. In doing so, he felt he was serving the best interests of Cambodia. Convinced that South Vietnam could not win even with powerful American aid, the Prince felt that by permitting supplies and munitions to funnel through Cambodia for the Vietnamese Communists, he was protecting Cambodia from possible Chinese fury if the communists took over all of Vietnam.

Although he had time and again been accused of cooperating with the communists, Sihanouk flatly denied the allegations each time,

claiming that his country was completely neutral. He maintained that the basic goal of Cambodia's foreign policy was the survival of his country as an independent and neutral nation. "When two elephants fight," he explained, "the wise ant stands to one side to avoid being trampled."

As further evidence, the Prince constantly reiterated his belief in his "policy of the future," which he justified by political conditions in the whole of Southeast Asia. He viewed three factors as the basic determinants of Cambodian foreign policy: his conviction that Communist China would become the future dominant power in Southeast Asia; Cambodia's military weakness in relation to other nations; and the presence of nations, which he considered unfriendly, on his country's borders. Since the unfriendly border nations he had in mind were South Vietnam and Thailand, a fourth factor became important: opposition to the military presence of the United States in those countries. Of the two neighbors, Cambodia feared South Vietnam most. The buildup of that country by the United States as part of the Vietnamese war made Prince Sihanouk edgy. A strong Vietnam had always meant trouble for Cambodia.

It was hardly a surprise therefore when Cambodia broke off diplomatic relations with South Vietnam in 1963. In doing so, the Prince asserted that the South Vietnamese were mistreating ethnic Khmer groups living in South Vietnam, that the South Vietnamese Embassy personnel in Phnom Penh were giving financial assistance to anti-government groups in Cambodia, and that South Vietnamese military units were not respecting the Cambodian border.

American relations with Cambodia were not faring much better than were those of South Vietnam with that country. Throughout the 1960's—and especially during the latter half—Cambodia had been the safest of the communist sanctuaries; safer than Laos, safer even than North Vietnam. Troops of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) 1st and 7th Divisions and the Viet Cong (VC) 5th and 9th Divisions remained on Cambodian soil between offensives, then attacked again when ready from such Cambodian launching areas as the Angel's Wing, Fishhook, and Parrot's Beak (only 35 miles from Saigon). After offensive activity they would retreat to Cambodia again to lick their wounds, retrain, and resupply. The pattern was always the same,

and always the American and South Vietnamese units were prohibited from following in hot pursuit in accordance with the American unofficial—and later official—recognition of Cambodia's territorial integrity and respect for its "neutrality."

In early 1967, the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, expressed a deepening concern over the use of Cambodia by the Vietnamese Communists for infiltration and sanctuary. In a message¹ to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Sharp discussed the subject of Cambodia and gave recommendations to resolve the problem:

" . . . The more successful our operations become in NVN and Laos, the more use the enemy will seek to make of his supply sources and channels in Cambodia . . . It would appear appropriate to undertake actions at an early date aimed at persuading the Cambodian leadership to adopt a more neutral position. . . . The importance of Cambodia as sanctuary and as a source of supplies, particularly rice, cannot be overemphasized. Consequently, we must get on with a strong program to inhibit this use of Cambodia, preferably by non-belligerent political and diplomatic means. If we do not achieve the required degree of success by these means then we must be prepared in all respects to use the necessary degree of force to attain our objectives."

American commanders in South Vietnam ground their teeth in frustration. GEN William Westmoreland, former Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV), long advocated action against the Vietnamese Communists in Cambodia. Junior officers who served in Vietnam along the Cambodian border and had seen concentrations of NVA and VC troops just across the border, and thereby immune from attack, also chafed under the restrictions imposed upon them. Some military officers strongly believed that bombing of Cambodia by the United States could have been justified as an extension of the bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. Other commanders pointed out that there would be no way to defeat the communists as long as they had Cambodia as a sanctuary, while still others felt that the communists would not be able to carry on the war for more than a year if they were denied their Cambodian

refuge. Some senior officers, however, opposed any action in Cambodia that might widen the Vietnam conflict into an all-out Indochina war, particularly during the time that United States forces were withdrawing from South Vietnam.

The American military and diplomatic communities felt that Cambodian neutrality was a ruse, as mounting evidence clearly illustrated Prince Sihanouk's sanctioning of Vietnamese Communist use of Cambodian territory. On 20 March 1964, Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge wrote:

"There is no question in our minds here and there should be none in Washington that the VC have been using with impunity Cambodian territory as sanctuary for purposes of regrouping, training, and equipping their military units and for receiving these units from South Vietnam when they are tired or hard pressed. Our aerial photos reveal VC military complexes in Cambodia, on or straddling the border, which play a very significant role in VC tactical operations against ARVN (Army of the Republic of South Vietnam) in SVN."²

The frustration and anger inherent in this statement echoed the resentment felt by the United States military leaders in South Vietnam over the protocols to which they had to adhere.

Along with his trafficking with the Vietnamese Communists, Prince Sihanouk unilaterally terminated diplomatic relations with the United States in 1965, claiming that the Americans were trying to interfere in Cambodian internal affairs and to dictate its policy. Moreover, the failure of the United States to recognize Cambodia's borders in 1967 and its charges that Cambodia was used as a sanctuary for VC troops intensified the differences of opinion. Charge and countercharge, however, had not completely alienated the two countries. Chinese interference in Cambodian internal affairs in late 1967 prompted Sihanouk to state, for example, that if the unfriendly activity were continued he would be forced to ask the United States for assistance. He also indicated in 1967 that, if the United States would recognize his country's borders, he would send an ambassador to Washington immediately.

In 1968, the unpredictable Prince pulled another surprise. He closed the country to foreign journalists. The official curtain was so

tight that even diplomats did not know what was going on inside Cambodia. With his complete control of the country, Prince Sihanouk was able to keep internal activities well hidden from the outside world. During this period, however, Sihanouk had to deal with considerable civil unrest. The pipeline through Cambodia supplying the Vietnamese Communists with arms, ammunition, food and medicine—which operated with the cooperation of the Prince and some senior officials—appeared to blow up into a major political crisis and further magnified the presence and apparent permanency of Vietnamese Communist troops in the country.

A minor incident in January 1969, however, paved the way to better relations between Cambodia and the United States and at the same time indicated a withdrawal by Prince Sihanouk from his out-and-out position of supporting the communists. After a tour of his eastern provinces when he was angered by an NVA patrol which stopped him from entering a Cambodian village, Sihanouk publicly disclosed that there were North Vietnamese troops on Cambodian soil. The next month, in his French language political monthly, *Le Sang-kum*, the Prince suggested that, as much as he opposed it, the presence of the American "imperialists" in Vietnam was allowing Cambodia to survive. Then, in April, the Prince issued a formal statement that he would resume diplomatic relations with the United States. The announcement followed a declaration by the United States that it "recognized the sovereignty, independence, neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia within its present frontiers." Within a few days, Sihanouk reversed himself again, complaining that the United States statement did not mention certain islands in the Gulf of Siam. Then, in late June, the matter was straightened out. Sihanouk announced that Cambodia and the United States would exchange chargés d'affaires.

But consistency was not one of Sihanouk's virtues. After the United States charge that the 1969 spring offensive by the Vietnamese Communists was staged from Cambodia's Svay Rieng Province, the Prince said in a speech that he would not object to the United States bombing communist military camps in his country—but he qualified the statement by asserting that he knew of no such targets.

Whatever the turns of Cambodian policy during the 1960's, it had one characteristic significant to the military forces of the U.S. and the Government of South Vietnam: it permitted extensive use of Cambodian territory as sanctuary for the Vietnamese Communists.

Vietnamese Communist Use of Cambodian Territory

The Vietnamese Communists recognized the importance of maintaining sanctuaries along the Cambodian border with South Vietnam. They built base areas (BA) from the tri-border area of Cambodia-Laos-South Vietnam southward to where the border meets the Gulf of Siam. These BAs were particularly abundant opposite South Vietnam's III and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ)³ which along with the Saigon area were home to more than two-thirds of South Vietnam's population. Of 14 BAs located on the Cambodian border, 8 were contiguous to III CTZ alone.

Prior to 1966 North Vietnam sent arms, ammunition and other logistics support to III and IV CTZ by sea. In 1966, Operation MARKET TIME, the Allied Naval blockade of South Vietnam, all but closed the direct sea line of movement for supplies. But in October 1966, Sihanoukville (a seaport on the central Cambodian coast of the Gulf of Siam) received its first shipment of arms from North Vietnam destined for the VC/NVA sanctuaries and BAs straddling the border. Through negotiations with private individuals in the Cambodian political hierarchy and with the tacit approval of the Cambodian government, the VC/NVA thus altered their supply route from the coastal waters of South Vietnam to land routes in Cambodia leading from Sihanoukville. Arms were delivered to the port and, along with other supplies, were transshipped to various logistics depots for temporary storage, then transported over Cambodia's all-weather road network directly to the BAs contiguous to the South Vietnam frontier.

Additionally, Cambodia became not only a major channel for supplies to the III and IV CTZ areas of South Vietnam, but also provided secure infiltration routes from North Vietnam via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Cambodian territory provided a safe extension of infiltration trails to III and IV CTZ. Infiltration of groups of personnel through

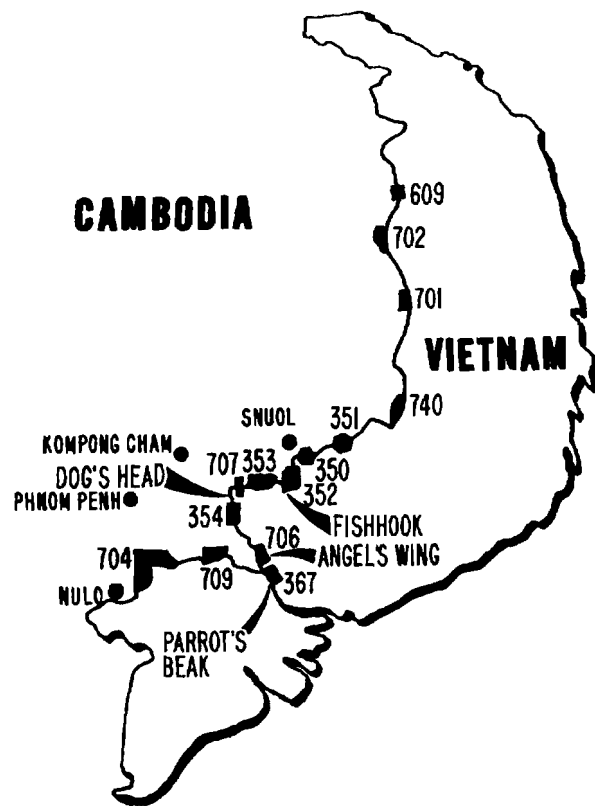


Figure 4.—Location of VC/NVA Base Camps in Cambodia (Prior to Allied Incursion)

Cambodia normally paralleled the border areas of Cambodia and South Vietnam. The infiltrators ultimately entered South Vietnam via a series of Binh Trams⁴ and through the various BAs situated along the border. Usually these infiltration groups disbanded at the BA and regrouped into smaller or larger replacement units which normally received additional training to acquaint them with the weather, terrain, and tactics of a specific area before moving on with guides from the unit to which they were assigned.

Since the BAs were to constitute military objectives for the Allied drive into Cambodia in the Spring of 1970, some indication of their purpose and disposition preceding the U.S.-South Vietnamese incursion is in order. The communist BA was a section of terrain containing VC/NVA installations, defensive fortifications, and other structures. The BA was used for basic or advanced training, regrouping, and resting of personnel and units; for permanent or temporary locating of political, military, or logistical headquarters; for the storage and distribution of medicine, ordnance, food, POL and other war material; for preparing offensive operations; and for termination points in the infiltration routes.

BA 609, located in the tri-border area of Cambodia-Laos-South Vietnam, was the major storage, resupply, and transshipment area and entry point for enemy personnel infiltrating into Cambodia and South Vietnam. This BA housed the NVA B-3 Front headquarters and supplied many of its major subordinate units. Binh Tram North also operated in this BA. To the south, opposite II CTZ of South Vietnam, BA 702 was a major support base for enemy units operating in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces. Binh Tram Central operated in this area. Farther south was BA 701, a major enemy storage and resupply area, transshipment point, and entry point for personnel infiltrating into South Vietnam from Binh Tram South in Cambodia. Finally, BA 740, a major area in Cambodia along the Darlac-Quang Duc Province border, was used by NVA transportation units as a transshipment point for supplies destined for South Vietnam from Cambodia. This BA also housed Binh Tram 4.

The Cambodian border opposite the III CTZ area of South Vietnam contained the largest concentration of BAs. Northeast of Bu Dop along

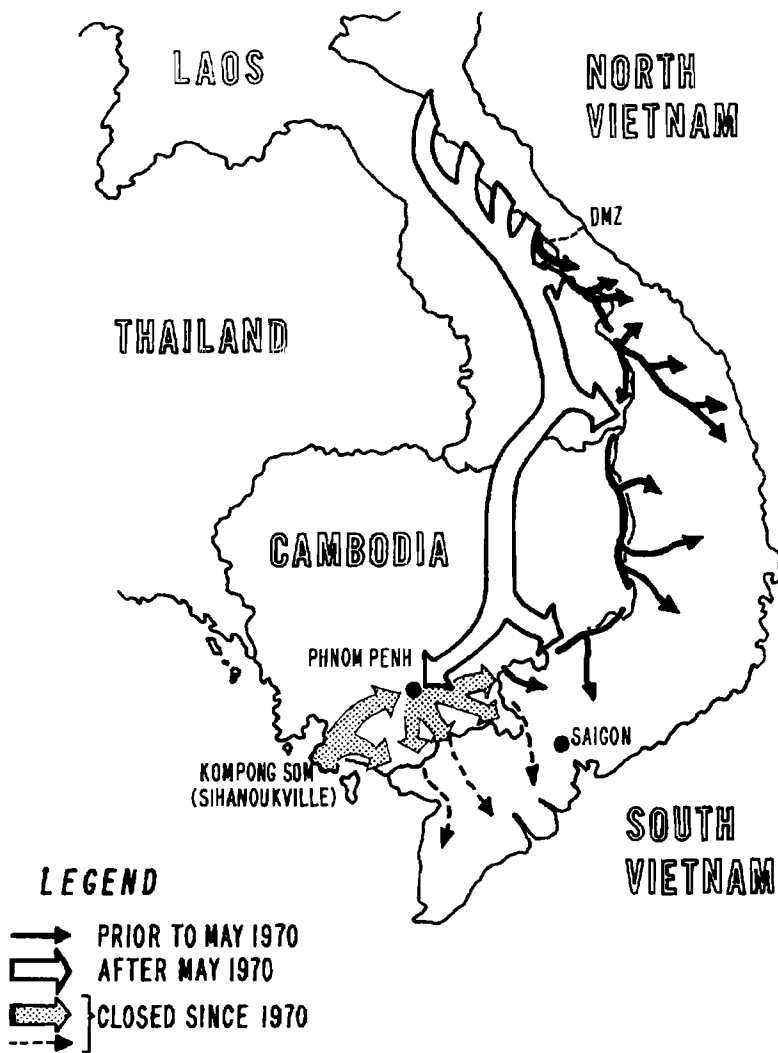


Figure 5.—Vietnamese Communist Infiltration Routes

THE IMPORTANCE OF CAMBODIA

11

the Phuoc Long Province border, BA 351 contained excellent roads and was the southern terminal point of a logistic/personnel corridor paralleling the II CTZ area south from Laos. Elements of the VC 5th Division, as well as the 86th Rear Services Group (RSG), operated from or near this BA. To the southwest of Bu Dop, BA 350 was situated in an area comprising the Cambodian-Binh Long-Phuoc Long Province borders. Elements of the VC 5th Division also operated from this area. BA 352, which was located in the Fishhook area and northward along the northwestern Binh Long Province border, was a major sanctuary from which the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN) and later elements of the NVA 7th Division operated. This BA was the prime target of the initial Allied thrusts into Cambodia which resulted in the capture of "The City"—a COSVN logistics center and depot which was one of the largest and most valuable seizures of the Vietnam war and the largest cache in Cambodia.

To the west, stretched along the northern border of Tay Ninh Province, BA 353 was used as a staging area for attacks on ARVN units operating along Highway 7 (a major infiltration corridor) in Cambodia. This BA also served as the location of COSVN headquarters elements and became a primary target area for Allied sweep operations. Several elements of the NVA 7th Division were later to operate from this location. BA 707, in the Dog's Head area on the northwestern Tay Ninh Province border, was an operating area for COSVN (and subsequently for the VC 272d Regiment, VC 9th Division). This BA, along with BA 354 to the south, was used by the VC 9th Division as operating areas. BA 354 was also a training area, logistical base, and staging area for Vietnamese Communist operations against ARVN forces in War Zone C and Cambodia. The 82d RSG operated from this BA, as did the headquarters of the VC 9th Division and its subordinate NVA 95C and VC 271st Regiments. To the southwest in the Angel's Wing-Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia, BAs 706 and 367, respectively, were used as safe bases for the headquarters of Subregions (SR) 2, 3, and 4, and also RSG 100 (which operated more extensively in Cambodia than did any other RSG). These BAs were chosen as one of the initial areas in which to conduct Allied operations.

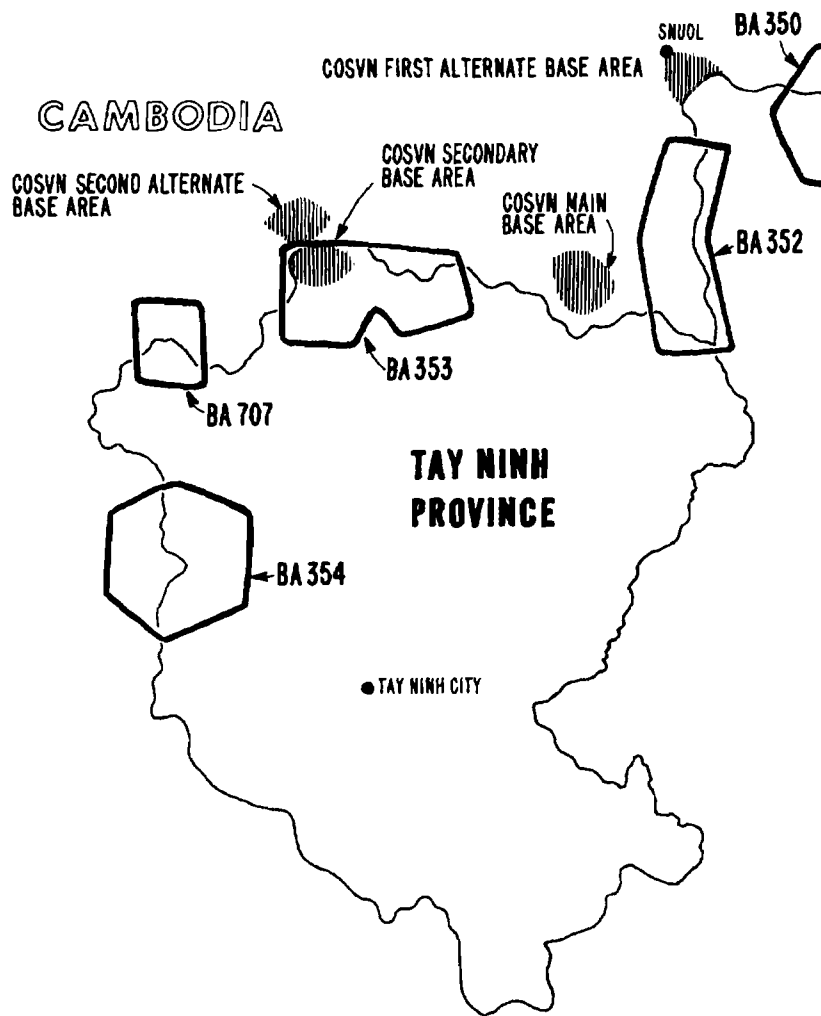


Figure 6.—COSVN Base Areas along Cambodia-South Vietnam Border

Two BAs served as enemy strongholds along the border separating Cambodia from IV CTZ in South Vietnam. BA 709 along the north-western Kien Tuong Province border was used by elements of the NVA 88th Regiment. This BA posed a constant threat to friendly shipping on the Mekong River and was a staging area for attacks in Dinh Tuong Province to the south. Finally, BA 704 (one of the largest BAs along

the Cambodian border) straddled the boundary line from northwestern Kien Phong to northern Chau Doc Provinces. This BA, a major logistical center for IV CTZ, was used by the Headquarters, Military Region (MR) 2 and the NVA 88th Regiment as an operating area and was the primary target for South Vietnamese forces conducting operations in IV CTZ.

Central Office of South Vietnam

The Vietnamese Communists not only established numerous BAs within Cambodia but also counted on the use of Cambodian ground to shelter COSVN, the Vietnamese Communist headquarters for the Nam Bo area of South Vietnam. COSVN was to figure prominently as one of the principal objectives of the U.S.-South Vietnamese forces during their 1970 drive into Cambodia. Since the establishment of COSVN in 1960, information on its organization has been obscure. However, both SIGINT and non-SIGINT intelligence over the years have made possible the constructing of a partial, although incomplete, description of its set-up and functions.

COSVN was the creation of the North Vietnamese Lao Dong (Workers) Party and its controlling body, the Central Executive Committee (CEC) in Hanoi, and as such has operated as an extension of the Lao Dong Party in the south ever since. Five ranking members of the CEC became, in fact, charter members of the new organizational headquarters for Nam Bo.

Under the direction of the CEC in Hanoi, COSVN as a whole acted as the provisional communist-controlled government for the Nam Bo area in all military/political affairs affecting South Vietnam and Cambodia. For the most part, the subordinate echelons of COSVN paralleled the quasi-government functions and authority of the CEC in the North.

The principal communications for COSVN were those which served the overall policy-making authority, the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP--the covername for the Lao Dong Party in the south). These communications were controlled by a radio station identified in SIGINT as serving COSVN. A Standing Committee (also referred to as the Current Affairs Committee) was responsible for the overall direc-

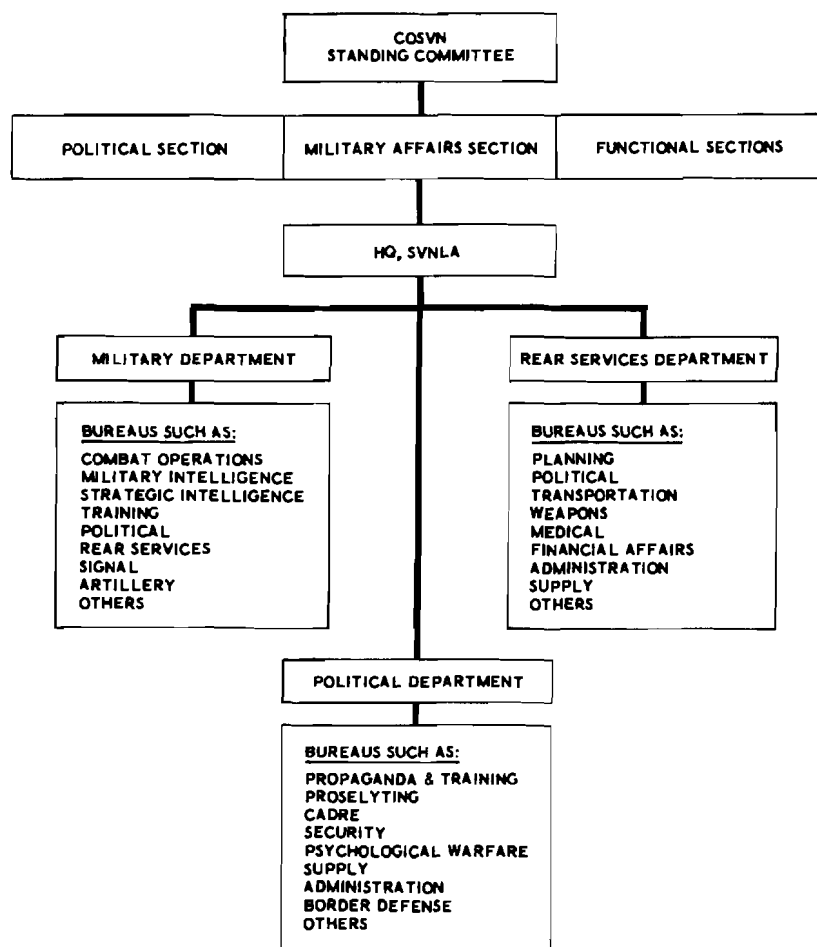


Figure 7.—Headquarters, South Vietnam Liberation Army
(Organizational Structure)

tion of COSVN. The Standing Committee consisted of high-ranking members of separate political and military staffs—some key personnel being members of both—and functional staffs. Members of the Standing Committee were always members of the Lao Dong Party and were usually selected from the Politburo in Hanoi.

Staff Sections of COSVN such as the Security Section, among others, were separate in that they had their own communications facilities. Staff Sections such as the Military Affairs Section (MAS), Public Health, Economy and Finance, Military Proselyting, and Propaganda and Training, as shown in SIGINT, used the communications facilities of a single radio station serving COSVN (i.e., terminals serving these latter Staff Sections of COSVN were consistently located near each other by direction finding and have traditionally used the same radio transmitters in that facility).

Although the separate communications nets of the staffs—Party, military, functional—which comprise COSVN served different aspects of Vietnamese Communist activity in Nam Bo and Cambodia, the Party remained the final authority in all matters. Other services provided the means by which the Party executed its policy. Additionally, the separate communications nets controlled by COSVN were often parallel, going to counterpart elements in different headquarters. Most of the staff components of COSVN communicated with the senior North Vietnamese authority in Hanoi serving the same function.

In 1960, the North Vietnamese also introduced the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN)—purportedly formed by a spontaneous movement of "Southern patriots." COSVN looked to the NFLSVN to serve as its "legal" facade for representing the "true aspirations" of the South Vietnamese people and for performing governmental functions. Fronting for COSVN, the NFLSVN maintained, through COSVN, direct contact with the Lao Dong Party in Hanoi. It conducted diplomatic activities through NFLSVN missions in a number of countries.

The Liberation News Agency (LNA), established in early 1961, was the official news/propaganda organ of the NFLSVN and functioned through the Main Office of the LNA (MOLNA), the latter being directed by the Propaganda and Training Section of COSVN.

From 1961 on the LNA maintained an extensive separate network for plain-language communications which blanketed South Vietnam and in most respects paralleled VC Party communications.

Separate military communications began to emerge in April-May 1962. The military arm of COSVN, the Headquarters, South Vietnam Liberation Army (Hq, SVNLA), commanded MRs 2, 3, 6, and 10 in South Vietnam, the Nam Bo SRs as well as the Tay Ninh Provincial Unit, the communist MRs and Phuoc Long Front in Cambodia, and some main force divisions and regiments.⁵ The Hq, SVNLA operated from an extensive area along the Kratie-Kompong Cham Province border in Cambodia. Each of its three main departments—Military, Political, and Rear Services—were organized into several Bureaus which, in turn, contained many Staff Sections. The Bureaus controlled most of the general and combat support units of the Vietnamese Communist Army apparatus.⁶

From November 1968 until 22 March 1970, COSVN was located primarily in its main base area at XT4595 on the northeastern Tay Ninh Province-Cambodia border. A secondary base area in northwestern Tay Ninh, a first alternate base area located on the northwestern Binh Long Province-Cambodia border, and a second alternate base area in eastern Kompong Cham Province, Cambodia, were also maintained by COSVN as contingency areas. According to captured communist documents, if its main base was attacked, COSVN was to relocate to its secondary base area. If COSVN was unable to get to this area, it was to proceed to its first alternate site. If COSVN was attacked while occupying its secondary base area and was unable to return to its main base area, it was to proceed to its second alternate base area.⁷

CHAPTER II

Circumstances Preceding the Allied Incursion

Events in Cambodia during 1969 and the first part of 1970 before the joint U.S.-South Vietnamese drive into the critical border regions in May 1970 were to set the country on a course in direct conflict to that which Sihanouk apparently desired.

Cambodia's Rift with the Vietnamese Communists

The VC/NVA presence in Cambodia was the major catalyst for the change in attitude. VC/NVA use of Cambodian territory, their need for food, and the flourishing illicit transit of arms to them required the tacit approval of Cambodian Government and Army officials at all levels. Activities supporting the alien forces distorted the price system and led to graft, corruption, and bureaucratic malfunctions, all of which increased resentment toward Prince Sihanouk.

Cambodian Government officials in particular blamed Sihanouk for collaborating with the communists and for the poor economic policies hampering Cambodia's growth. Cambodia's military figures also found fault with Sihanouk. Exasperated by apparent differences in the Chief of State's words and his actions, Cambodian soldiers charged that, while the Prince was condemning the communists in speeches, he was forcing the Cambodian military to release all Viet Cong troops they had captured. They saw a contradiction between the Prince's complaints that the communists were obtaining much of their food through illegal purchases from Cambodian farmers and his recognition and eventual trade agreement in 1969 with the Viet Cong's "government," the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRGRSVN).

The protagonists making these and other charges were none other than LTG Lon Nol⁸, Minister of Defense and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak⁹, Deputy Minister of Defense. The General's control of Cambodia's Armed Forces of about 38,000 men was complete, and the disaffection of the military for Sihanouk, it was said, helped to change Lon Nol from a loyal follower of the Prince into a determined opponent. Prince Sirik Matak's opposition was rooted more in disapproval of what he considered his cousin's bizarre megalomania, his insistence on nationalization of Cambodia's few industries, his wastefulness in the use of limited investment capital, and his tolerance of widespread corruption.

It was the latter problem that caused Sirik Matak to most bitterly oppose Sihanouk and his court. Much of the corruption centered upon Monique (Sihanouk's fifth and then recognized wife), her mother, and her half-brother. These three and their following were deeply involved in selling favors and positions in the government. They sold the VC/NVA protection, weapons, and land rights along the border. They also had been involved in smuggling gold, jewels, and drugs. Many of Matak's efforts to stop smuggling and to control the VC/NVA activities in the country were circumvented by what was referred to as "Monique's Mafia."

It was against this background that the Salvation Government of Lon Nol began to take shape in the summer of 1969.

The Salvation Government of Lon Nol

Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, it was said, agreed that the only way to return Cambodia to order was to limit the Chief of State's power. When Sihanouk asked Lon Nol to form a cabinet, the General (the overwhelming choice of a special congress assembled by Sihanouk to form a government) replied that he would form a government only as Premier and not merely as a secretary to Chief of State Sihanouk. Nol also indicated he would not agree to form a government until Sihanouk met further conditions: principally, that Nol would have the right to choose his own ministers and that they would report to him, not to Sihanouk. The Chief of State, however, could keep as his own domain the area of

foreign policy. Sihanouk accepted, and the cabinet took office on 12 August 1969.

Acceptance by Sihanouk of a government with powers not dependent upon his whims, some observers thought, was in effect a bloodless coup. The new Premier and his appointed deputy, Sirik Matak, issued decrees in the early days of their government to solidify their position. Lon Nol ordered all government communications and letters to be addressed to the Premier's office rather than to the Chief of State. Deputy Matak ended the practice of having certain taxes paid into the Chief of State's treasury rather than into the Government's.

During an absence from Phnom Penh in late 1969 and early 1970 following the death of his wife, Lon Nol left Sirik Matak in charge of the government. In this period, friction between Matak and Sihanouk became intense. Sihanouk felt that Matak was unfairly limiting the Chief of State's influence over domestic politics and that he was intruding on his foreign policy prerogatives. Matak accused Sihanouk of reneging on his mandate to allow the Salvation Government to solve domestic problems.

After three unsuccessful attempts to bring about the fall of the Salvation Government, Sihanouk departed for Europe, the USSR, and China on 6 January 1970. Sihanouk's absence left the government and the country totally in the hands of Lon Nol and Sirik Matak.

Although Sihanouk had health problems—and that was the reason given for his departure—there was, MACV intelligence analysts surmised, other considerations leading to his relatively long trip abroad. By leaving, Sihanouk would not be associated with Matak's economic reforms and his strong stand against the VC/NVA in Cambodia. If Matak's actions succeeded, Sihanouk could take the credit. If they failed, he could blame Matak. Sihanouk's departure also enabled him to avoid the embarrassment of a meeting with Pham Van Dong, North Vietnam's Prime Minister, who was scheduled to visit Phnom Penh on 26 January. Sihanouk may not have wanted to explain to the Prime Minister either Cambodia's military policy or his statements concerning the VC/NVA presence in and threat to Cambodia.

In commenting to its units about the departure of Sihanouk, COSVN also recognized the Chief of State's dilemma. COSVN felt that the true

reason for Sihanouk's trip was "to get away from strong right-wing opposition to his economic and foreign policies."

While out of the country, Sihanouk apparently wanted Cambodia to continue providing sanctuary for the VC/NVA forces. According to Sihanouk's Chef d' Cabinet, in an exchange of correspondence between Sihanouk and acting Prime Minister Matak during January and early February 1970, Sihanouk suggested to Matak that future aid to the VC/NVA forces be made overtly by the government instead of covertly by private individuals. Sihanouk pointed out, according to the source, that by doing this the Cambodian Government would only be doing what the Americans and South Vietnamese had accused it of doing already and that the Cambodian Government could realize the profits which were going to the private individuals engaged in the VC/NVA trade. Matak responded to the suggestion by agreeing that this would be a worthwhile idea as long as similar assistance could also be offered to the South Vietnamese and Americans.

Anti-Communist Measures Begin

From about the end of 1969 Nol and Matak were taking measures against the interests of the VC/NVA. By closing down the Hak Ly Trucking Company (long suspected of transporting communist arms, ammunition, and medical and food supplies), they cut off the supply route from the Gulf of Siam port of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) in the south to VC/NVA forces along the Cambodia/South Vietnam border. They also took the first military action to drive the communists back across the border into South Vietnam. In December 1969, Sirik Matak said that he had issued "personal" orders to Cambodian Army (FARK)¹⁰ units to attack VC/NVA troops located within the borders of Cambodia, especially in and around Prey Veng Province. Matak also stated that a significant problem facing the Lon Nol government then was the possession by communist commanders of "certificates" signed by former Cambodian Chief of Staff Gen Nhiek Tioulong, acting under Sihanouk's auspices, which authorized the communist troops to remain within Cambodia's borders. Since Lon Nol had refused to recognize the validity of such certificates, Matak urged his Cambodian troops to oppose the enemy units.

Matak did not stop there. As of mid-January 1970, using the bombing of Dak Dam (a town on the Cambodian/South Vietnamese border) by U.S. aircraft as a pretext, Matak requested the VC/NVA to move out of Cambodia. He also ordered destruction of all VC/NVA installations in Svay Rieng Province and directed that the supply of foodstuffs to the communists be discontinued.

During this period, U.S. intercept of Cambodian communications showed the heightened concern by Cambodian commanders over unauthorized VC/NVA movements inside the Cambodian border, particularly in Kandal, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng Provinces. In late February 1970, intercepted Cambodian military messages revealed that new security measures were being instituted by the Cambodians along that part of the border. On 16 February, FARK forces were moving, to judge from further SIGINT, deep into the VC/NVA BA 702 in the tri-border area of Cambodia and the South Vietnam provinces of Kontum and Pleiku and slightly inside Vietnamese territory.

Public Demonstrations Begin

In March 1970 a series of events took place which led to the ouster of Sihanouk as Chief of State and to open war between Cambodian and VC/NVA forces. The hostile feelings which had intensified throughout Cambodia over the government's failure to remove the VC/NVA forces had finally reached a peak. Demonstrations against the VC/NVA presence flared up in early March in several provinces bordering South Vietnam's III and IV CTZ, particularly in Svay Rieng Province, the location of the VC/NVA Parrot's Beak and Angel's Wing sanctuaries. Demonstrations began also in Phnom Penh to register demands for the immediate departure of VC/NVA forces from Cambodia and the canceling of a scheduled visit to Phnom Penh by North Vietnam's Prime Minister. Finally, demonstrators sacked the Viet Cong PRGRSVN and North Vietnamese Embassies.

8 March, 2,000 villagers from . . . Svay Rieng Province

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

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demonstrated with sidearms, placards, and pennants calling for the departure of the Viet Cong from Cambodian territory and for respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity In Phnom Penh on 11 March, several thousand demonstrators . . . with banners and slogans reading 'Down with the Viet Cong,' 'Cambodia's not Viet Cong land,' etc., . . . went toward the Embassy of the (NFL) . . . Despite the intervention of police reinforcements, the demonstrators ransacked the property¹¹ . . . then went to the Embassy of North Vietnam where the same scene was repeated. Regrets are to be sent to the embassies concerned, but their attention will be drawn to the people's exasperation provoked by increasingly severe Viet Cong activities in our territory"¹²

After the sacking of the communist embassies, which appeared to commit Cambodia totally to an anti-VC/NVA policy, the Cambodian Government ordered all Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops to leave Cambodia before dawn on Sunday, 15 March.

Cambodian Queen Kossamak kept her son, Sihanouk, informed to some extent on events in Cambodia. In a message on 14 March, she informed the Prince, then in Moscow, that the situation in Phnom Penh was "peaceful for 45 hours now" with "nothing abnormal to report." The Queen mentioned that "good results have been obtained by talks between the Vietnamese (and Cambodians)" and that she was waiting for information on the finalized talks. The following day, a communique of the Cambodian Government announced to the nation that in response to its message sent to the North Vietnam and PRGRSVN Embassies "concerning the problem of our friendly relations based on noninterference in each country's affairs . . . all parties have agreed to meet on 16 March to discuss the settlement of problems."

Cambodian Military Action Against VC/NVA Forces

Despite the discussions of a possible Cambodian-Vietnamese Communist agreement not to interfere in one another's affairs, the situation was quickly worsening as the FARK was preparing to take direct mili-

tary action against the VC/NVA to enforce Lon Nol's dictate that these alien forces leave Cambodia no later than 15 March.

On 14 March, the Cambodian General Staff directed its military authorities, according to SIGINT, to "pay very serious attention" to the reactions of the VC/NVA in Cambodia. The General Staff ordered daily reporting of the reactions, movements, and withdrawals of VC/NVA forces by subordinate commanders of the MRs and Military Sub-Divisions (MSD) concerned. In Ratanakiri MSD, orders went to posts to "activate the mine fields and the planting of mines, booby traps, and barbed wire entanglements," and to establish fire plans. Orders also went to two sectors in the Kamchai Mea MSD on 15 March to stop all convoys "before they deliver rice and other supplies to the Viet Cong."

Some communist units did withdraw, or prepare to, but in the main it soon became evident that the VC/NVA either did not intend to or could not withdraw. The VC promised, according to an intercepted 12 March message from the Kandal MSD, to withdraw from Kandal prior to dawn on the 15th. In the Kamchai Mea MSD, all positions held by the VC at one location were reportedly evacuated on 15 March, while on the same date, the VC at another location were in the process of heading toward the border. Only a number of infirmaries and hospitals were having difficulty in moving, but they too were ordered to "leave as soon as possible." Even in Svay Rieng MSD, where most of the initial military activity and actual clashes took place, an estimated regiment of VC in the Chantrea subsector promised, to judge from an intercept of 15 March, to leave Cambodia by the 17th.

Svay Rieng proved, however, to be a pivotal point for the VC. Although they had been instructed by Hanoi to avoid clashes with the Cambodians, the VC had no alternative but direct confrontation in view of the pressures being applied by the FARK. Cambodian messages reported that the VC had to be driven from Kbal Sangkar on 12 March. On 13 March, approximately 700 to 800 armed VC resisted withdrawal from two of the villages in the province. In one of the villages, Cambodian forces were warned by the VC of "bloody reprisals" if attempts were made to expel them. The VC at Kokisan refused to leave Cambodian territory, and were reinforcing that area.

On 14 March, 100 VC located at Bengi Kamprok resisted and were later reinforced by 300 other VC. The communists in Kampong Rau subsector also refused to leave, and their strength was increased from 100 to 300 troops. On 15 March, 1,250 VC troops were, according to a SIGINT report, deployed along the border to the southwest of Svay Rieng city. Although their heavy weapons were aimed toward Cambodian territory, they did not actually expect an attack. According to a non-SIGINT source, the Vinh Gia Civilian Irregular Defense Group Camp located in western Chau Doc Province along the border reported that two firefights occurred on 14 March between FARK and VC/NVA forces near Nui O Mountain to the northeast.

The Coup

While FARK units engaged in military operations against the VC/NVA forces, rumors of a possible coup against Sihanouk were circulating in Phnom Penh. The negotiations that had started on the 16th of March between the Cambodian Government and the communists, about which Queen Kossamak had informed Sihanouk, collapsed on the 17th, and there was to be no "noninterference" agreement.

On 18 March, during a National Assembly debate, Sirik Matak read a Royal Government communique—said to have been drafted by Lon Nol—on policy during the critical situation. The communique dealt with the recent events in Cambodia and "rumors started by foreigners" of a possible coup d'état following the anti-Viet Cong demonstrations. The acting National Assembly Chairman then announced that the government had asked for a closed-door assembly session, and the President of the Council of the Kingdom invited all council members to be present at the National Assembly immediately for a special session "to examine the national situation under the current special circumstances." Shortly thereafter, the government announced that the National Assembly had withdrawn all confidence from Prince Sihanouk as Chief of State and had named Cheng Heng¹³ as acting Chief of State pending the election of a new Chief of State.

When they took control after deposing Sihanouk, the new Cambodian leaders moved quickly to consolidate their position. Cambodian military and police communications during this period depicted efforts by Nol's Salvation Government to establish order and security in the country. The new leaders closed Cambodian airfields to all unauthorized landings and gave orders to prevent, even by the use of arms, any action that Sihanouk might take. They declared martial law and undertook other measures to ensure security in Phnom Penh.

During this period, the leaders also terminated all official Vietnamese Communist diplomatic representation in, and communications with, Cambodia.

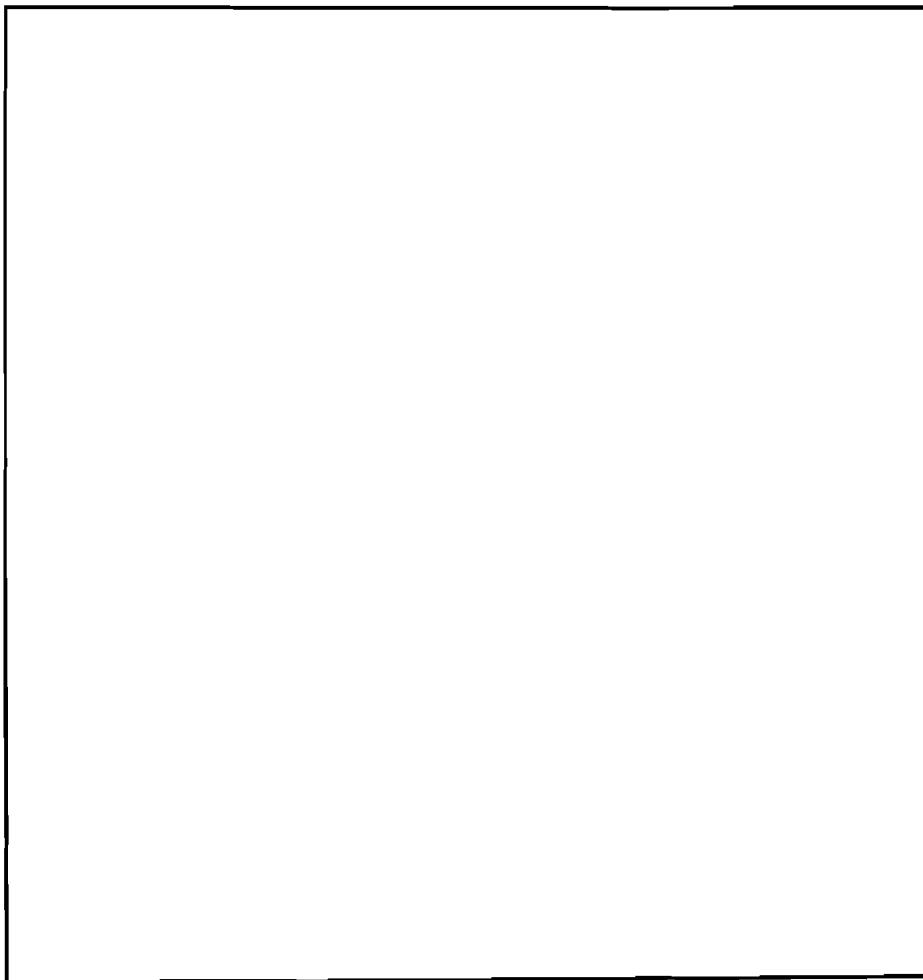
The last diplomatic ties between the Vietnamese Communists and the Lon Nol government were apparently severed on 25 May when the remaining six representatives of the North Vietnam and PRGRSVN Embassies left Phnom Penh along with 64 Chinese Communists and 19 North Korean Embassy personnel.

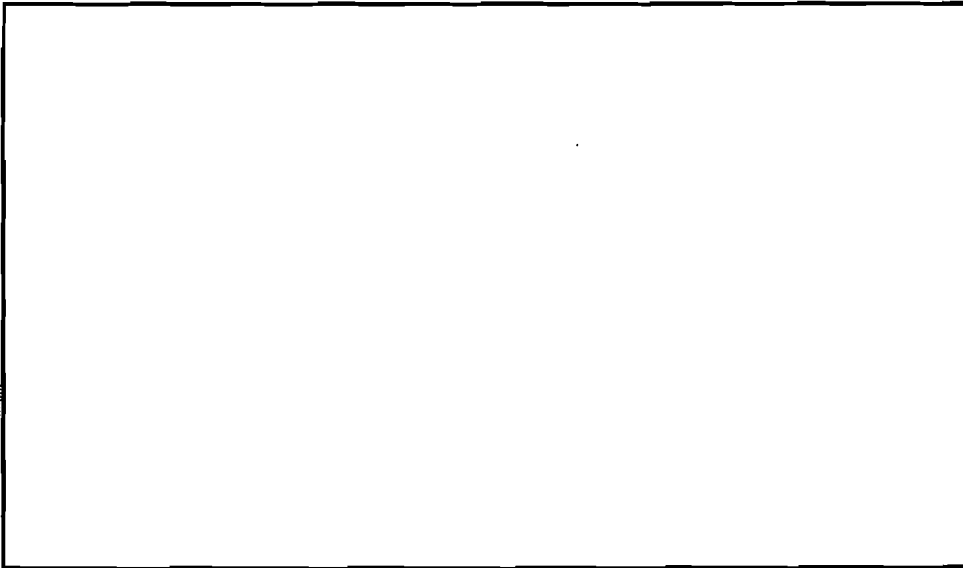
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The flight, via a chartered SWISSAIR DC-8 jet, was arranged to facilitate the exchange of diplomatic personnel following the break in diplomatic relations by Cambodia with Communist China and North Korea. According to a press report, Cambodian officials who had been in Communist China and North Korea arrived in Phnom Penh on 26 May via the same SWISSAIR aircraft that had left Phnom Penh the previous day.

Communist Reactions



*Vietnamese Communist Reaction*

The events of March 1970 caused considerable confusion and disruption among the communist hard-core tactical units. After mid-January 1970, SIGINT began to depict the heightened concern expressed by the Vietnamese Communist military and military intelligence forces over Cambodian hostility and later over the possibility of Allied attacks on their troops in Cambodia.

Some evidence of forewarning of moves directed against them and significant communist unit movements within the border area appeared also in their communications. Sensitive to the threat presented by the Cambodian forces, the Vietnamese Communists began in mid-January to keep their Cambodia-based units informed of events in that country which related to their security. On 14 January, COSVN informed its units that the Cambodian authorities in the border provinces had requested the withdrawal of Vietnamese Communist forces and goods from Cambodia. COSVN went on to relay information on projected Cambodian military actions against the communist forces in Svay Rieng and Takeo Provinces. While warning units to be extremely vigilant, COSVN did not indicate that any of its forces would

withdraw. Also in January, the Strategic Intelligence Bureau (SIB)¹⁷ of SVNLA informed its Commo-Liaison Unit 5 in Cambodia that the situation was very tense, and to be careful and "make no mistakes." The unit also received orders not to use political or military force against the Cambodians.

Between 11 and 15 March, COSVN described for its units the Cambodian demonstrations of 8 March, including the sacking of the PRGRSVN and North Vietnamese Embassies, and provided guidance on the situation. In addition, COSVN directed its elements along the border to maintain vigilance, avoid provocations, remain calm, and make every effort to win over the Cambodian people and local officials.

Along with the exchange of security information and exhortations to keep the guard up, the Vietnamese Communists also took measures to upgrade intelligence on Cambodia. On 11 February, the SIB asked Unit 5 "when reporting enemy situations," to state if the enemy were ARVN or Cambodian. Intercepted messages showed that Unit 5 had reported on at least five Cambodian attacks by mid-March. In apparent response to the change in Cambodian policy toward the communists, on 16 March the CRD began to pass regular situation reports on Cambodian forces to the Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) of SVNLA.¹⁸

The Vietnamese Communists were apparently obtaining COMINT from Cambodia's communications. A report of 19 March from the CRD to the MIB, intercepted by the U.S., concerned the disposition of Cambodian forces in MR 1. Since a U.S. intercept of an 18 March Cambodian message had contained essentially the same information, the communists had by then initiated, it could be concluded, a COMINT operation against Cambodian communications. Their reporting on Cambodian military moves continued throughout the Cambodian operations. Similar intelligence support to communist forces in South Vietnam has been noted for years. The initiation of such reporting on Cambodia apparently indicated Hanoi's desire to upgrade its intelligence in Cambodia.¹⁹

By the end of the third week of March, particularly after the Lon Nol coup, the communists decided they would have to fight the Cambodians. On 20 March, a MIB COSVN forward element informed the 4th Company of the VC 47th COMINT Battalion that Cambodian

rightists had overthrown Prince Sihanouk and that the Americans had helped to instigate the action. The forward element then stated that "we" have tried to work with the Cambodians, but they had continuously caused "us" trouble. Therefore, the communists had resolved to strike back.

On the same day that Sihanouk was overthrown, COSVN informed subordinates, according to SIGINT, that the Cambodian situation had grown progressively worse. It instructed units to transfer those elements which could be moved back to South Vietnam and to disperse the caches. Again COSVN urged subordinates to exert every effort to win over the local authorities and people but to be prepared to fight in self defense in case of attacks by either Cambodian or Allied forces.

COSVN issued a directive on 27 March, intercepted by the U.S., concerning the coup d'etat in Cambodia, summing up its position as well as providing an analysis of the then current situation as it appeared to the VC. COSVN believed that the Allies had staged the coup to "turn Cambodia down a pro-American path;" the United States would not send troops into Cambodia but would provide finances, advisors, weapons, and war materials; Allied activities along the border would remain the same; pro-American forces in Cambodia were extremely weak and confused; and, a number of "temporary difficulties" had been created by the coup d'etat—conditions conducive to the creation of an anti-American Indochinese front. COSVN policy as stated was to create conditions for expanding the offensive against the Allies; promote the Cambodian revolution and maintain the friendship of the Cambodian people and local authorities; protect the caches and leadership organs and at the same time disperse and better organize the fighting; increase the vigilance against Allied activities along the border; make every effort to follow the line of Sihanouk; and, make every effort to economize finances, weapons, and ammunition while increasing production, stockpiling provisions, and increasing revenue.

Evidence of relocation of COSVN elements, apparently in reaction to FARK operations along the Cambodian border, also began to appear in SIGINT. On 26 March, COSVN was twice located in its secondary base area near XT1596, approximately 35 kilometers (km) west of its main base area from where it is believed to have moved between 22 and

24 March. Concurrent with this move, the secondary base area became COSVN's principal operating area.²⁰ Additionally, beginning on 4 April, radio terminals serving COSVN were located for a short time span not only in the main base area but also in the secondary base area and the second alternate base area near XU1508, about 5 km north of its 26 March location. This probable use of split communications facilities indicated that COSVN was maintaining an operational capability in each of the three areas. Throughout April, however, COSVN appeared to have stabilized within, or in the general vicinity of, its second alternate base area.

In addition to relocating elements, the communist forces began to act with increasing hostility toward the Cambodians who were attempting to drive them back into South Vietnam. According to Cambodian military messages, approximately 2,000 VC reoccupied an area in southern Kandal MSD as of 22 March, and a day later Cambodian forces directed 76mm fire on this area. Another message of 23 March disclosed that Cambodian elements in Kandal MSD found leaflets written in both Cambodian and Vietnamese which requested that the Cambodian forces not fight the VC, but await the return of Prince Sihanouk so that they may "offer their allegiance." The leaflets also stated that the VC were not familiar with Cambodian forces and therefore were obliged to return fire when these forces advanced into VC zones.

On 24 March, Cambodian elements reportedly encountered about 100 VC in Mondolkiri MSD, "firmly dug in." The VC stated, according to a Cambodian military message, that they were waiting for the return of "His Excellency" and would not withdraw, but would move westward if attacked. The message indicated that the VC attitude was aggressive, that they were infiltrating large elements into the country, and that Cambodian demands for withdrawal of VC/NVA forces were accomplishing nothing. Still another message reported that a VC/NVA force of approximately 2,000 troops attacked and occupied a Cambodian military post near the northwestern Tay Ninh Province border on 29 March. The defending force withdrew to the Kamchai Mea MSD Command Post under air cover provided by FARK MIG-17s, T-28s and A-1s. New VC installations appeared in Prey Veng MSD, according to reports, where about 500 VC organized a center of resistance. A

VC battalion intended to force a crossing of the Mekong River at the point which separates Kandal and Prey Veng Provinces in Cambodia from South Vietnam, according to a 21 March message, and Cambodian military officials asked for two Cambodian Naval vessels to control passage along the Mekong.

As the end of March arrived, additional VC/NVA forces had penetrated, according to SIGINT, at least 20 km inside of Cambodian territory all along the Cambodian/South Vietnam border, had occupied many towns, and were moving westward. Other Vietnamese Communist forces already located in Cambodia were well dug in and were ready to fight.

The Vietnamese Communists anticipated Cambodian collusion with the American and ARVN forces across the border. References to possible U.S. involvement had been noted from late March through mid-April. On 24 and 25 March, the forward element of COSVN reported to an element of the 47th COMINT Battalion that units of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division were active, and on 9 April that the "enemy" might strike into the company's area with "hordes" of Cambodians and ARVNs. The COSVN element cautioned the 47th COMINT Battalion unit not to allow any documents to be lost or personnel to be captured.

Additionally, in late March, SIB's Unit 5 reported to the SIB that "Americans are coordinating to attack us." The SIB informed its Unit 5 that enemy forces were active along the border and ordered the unit to prepare for combat and be wary of Cambodians. Then on 9 April, the SIB told Unit 5 that nearly 10 battalions of Cambodians had concentrated at Svay Rieng with the intention of sweeping north and south of Route 1. According to the message, the Cambodians would be coordinating with American and ARVN forces in a large-scale attack in the Ba Thu area of the Parrot's Beak. The message further reported on Allied and Cambodian activities in and around the Parrot's Beak area and concluded by instructing its units to prepare to cope with sweeps and attacks, and to protect their forces.

A Nation in Jeopardy

By the first part of April the country was in a state of siege. Demonstrations on 26 and 27 March had been organized, according to COMINT, by the VC in Phkar Rumchek MSD, and on 30 March VC forces disguised as Cambodian soldiers had appeared in Svay Rieng MSD. Additionally, VC wearing hats bearing pictures of Prince Sihanouk were in Kampot Province on 27 March. During the first few days of April, according to Cambodian military and police messages, widespread anti-government activities, including pro-Sihanouk demonstrations and attacks on Cambodian military and government installations took place. Most of the activity occurred in the border provinces of Kandal, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, and particularly Kompong Cham, and involved thousands of demonstrators.

The Cambodian Government continued to take what measures it could. It forbade Cambodian nationals to leave the country, and it questioned those who returned concerning their loyalty. In addition, it formed committees at the MR level to control news in favor of the Salvation Government. It was also seeking, according to SIGINT, to jam broadcasts from Radio Peking and Radio Hanoi in which Sihanouk had been asking for the support of the Cambodian people against the Lon Nol government.

In addition to measures to keep the population in check and to curtail the influence of Sihanouk, Cambodian military units began to cooperate with the ARVN in border area operations. With Sihanouk deposed and an anti-communist regime in power, the South Vietnamese appeared eager to exploit the changing situation. A Presidential Palace aide in Siagon stated, "We see the present situation as an opportunity and we are not nearly so concerned as the (American) embassy about the diplomatic complications."

Between 18 and 26 March, Cambodian and South Vietnamese border officials planned their initial joint operation. American advisors participated but were unaware that the operation would not be limited to boundaries of South Vietnam. The planning agreed upon, two FARK battalions served as a blocking force as three ARVN Ranger battalions pushed at least two miles into Cambodian territory.

The ARVN move into Cambodia surprised both MACV and the U.S. Embassy at Saigon. "The South Vietnamese never informed us of the operation or asked for our approval," said one U.S. official, "probably because they knew in advance what our answer would be. Coming so quickly after President Nixon's statements about limiting American involvement and respecting Cambodian neutrality, we would have had to say no."

The Cambodians and South Vietnamese continued to deal with the common enemy. On 2 April, a FARK battalion commander, acting on behalf of the commander of Cambodia's Svay Rieng MSD, met with the G-2 of the ARVN's III CTZ to request South Vietnamese air strikes and artillery fire against VC/NVA troop concentrations in Svay Rieng Province. The Cambodians also wanted an ARVN sweep through target areas after the airstrikes and artillery bombardment. By 8 April, Cambodian and South Vietnamese authorities were cooperating, according to numerous reports being circulated, in efforts to crush the VC/NVA troops inside Cambodia and American ground forces were serving at that point only as blocking or support forces on the South Vietnam side of the border. In mid-April, ARVN troops, operating with a small force of Cambodians, destroyed an NVA base camp inside Cambodia. Americans observed the operation from a point near the Cambodian border, while the action ranged over a five-mile front in the Parrot's Beak area.

Despite the Cambodian-South Vietnamese moves against them, in mid-April VC/NVA forces in Cambodia appeared to be in no serious danger. They enjoyed almost unrestricted movement in southern Kandal and Prey Veng MSDs and had overrun several Cambodian defense posts in the region. They collected taxes from local fishermen and, according to reports, had distributed weapons to the Vietnamese inhabitants of the region. They enjoyed the same freedom of movement in Phkar Rumchek MSD, where VC-Red Cambodian collusion had been reported.

Vietnamese Communist tactical units, elements of the VC 5th and 9th Divisions in the border area, also began to move in mid-April. About the same time, elements of the NVA 7th Division moved into the Cambodia-Binh Long-Tay Ninh Province border area. By the end

of April, all three divisions were dispersed into border areas they had previously used for their bases. The only major identified unit moving out of the border area and deep into Cambodia, to Kratie Province from the Cambodia-Binh Long-Phuoc Long Province border area, was the VC 275th Regiment²¹ of the 5th Division.

The FANK was unable to turn back the VC/NVA forces. At one point during April a VC base had been reported, according to SIGINT, within 15 miles of Phnom Penh. A Cambodian military spokesman stated that in the first half of April the VC had more than doubled their area of control in Cambodia—three of the country's provinces (Ratanakiri, Svay Rieng, and Mondolkiri) then virtually in VC control and several other provinces more than half occupied. The communists also had a number of border provinces (Takeo, Kampot, Kandal, Kompong Cham, and Prey Veng) under partial control. The Cambodian military spokesman further noted that if the VC completed the occupation of Prey Veng, Phnom Penh would be cut off from all the provinces to the east and northeast.

Meanwhile, the Cambodian Government was undertaking a flurry of defensive measures to deny the threat of total communist takeover of the country. The Cambodian High Command sent messages to all MR and MSD commanders instructing them to apply the measures of "active and mobile defense in the large zones" and to adopt the principles of guerrilla warfare. Lon Nol issued directives to all Army, Navy, and Air Force commanders concerning measures to be taken in preparation for total war and also ordered that all "capable residents" be mobilized into battalions, each of which were to comprise three commando groups of 120 men each.

But the Cambodian forces were hardly a match for the VC/NVA. Intercepted Cambodian military messages during mid-April painted a gloomy picture of the supply and other problems confronting the Cambodians. They had insufficient ammunition for their troops in the border provinces from the sub-district level up through the MSD levels. By the end of April, VC/NVA forces had continued, according to Cambodian military and police messages, to penetrate deeper into Cambodian territory. Cambodian aerial bombardment of and introduction of troops into the threatened areas still had only a marginal

effect in slowing down the Vietnamese Communist moves into the eastern section of the country. Cambodia's eleventh hour had apparently arrived. There was only hope that some turn of events might preclude the total surrender of the country to the Vietnamese Communists.

Lon Nol Appeals for Help

The survival of the Salvation Government depended upon the possibility of foreign assistance as well as the will and ability of the leadership to effectively organize military resistance. The chaotic economic problems created by the war further emphasized the need for foreign aid. The increased aggressiveness of the communists in Cambodia and the lack of adequate logistical support for FANK units led Lon Nol to appeal for arms from any country that would provide them. On 14 April the Premier declared: "The Salvation Government has the duty to inform the nation that in view of the gravity of the present situation, it finds it necessary to accept all unconditional foreign aid wherever it may come from, for the salvation of the nation." Nol stressed that he was asking for arms and made no mention of other forms of assistance. To emphasize Cambodia's determination to remain neutral, he declared that Cambodia would accept arms from any country, regardless of the political bloc to which it belonged.

Only Indonesia responded to Nol's 14 April appeal with a commitment to supply military equipment. Discouraged over the failure of the United States and France—on which Cambodia had mainly counted—to provide the substantial aid needed, Nol wrote a letter on 15 April to President Nixon for help. The request for aid presented the President with a dilemma both political and military. On the one hand, he was under intense domestic pressure to avoid any step that would widen the United States military involvement in Indochina, but at the same time he was aware that the thinly deployed and under-equipped Cambodian Army was no match for the hardened VC/NVA troops dug into sanctuaries in the eastern provinces of Cambodia. The letter was taken under consideration at the White House.

By this time, the division of opinion that was so prevalent in Washington over the situation in Cambodia resulted partly from the ineffec-

tiveness of the Cambodian Army and partly from the reports of the mass murders of Vietnamese civilians by the Cambodians. Following the ouster of Sihanouk, when "Viet Cong" became a catchword applied indiscriminately to all Vietnamese in Cambodia, the news wire services began to pick up reports of an officially inspired campaign of hatred against Vietnamese throughout Cambodia which resulted in detentions, in disappearances, and in several cases in mass killings that witnesses attributed to Cambodian soldiers. On 17 April, the White House condemned the slayings in a statement which said that, while detailed reports on the latest killings in Cambodia were not available, "we consider the massacre of innocent civilians to be abhorrent and to be actions that warrant condemnation."

The mass killings also confronted the Saigon Government with a difficult political dilemma—but with a shade of difference. "We are in a difficult situation," a spokesman in the Saigon Presidential Palace explained. "On the one hand, it is in our interest to cooperate militarily and diplomatically with the new government, but on the other we cannot appear to be condoning the slaughter of Vietnamese."

Finally, Cambodia made another urgent appeal, this time in a letter of 22 April to the United Nations Security Council asking "all countries which love peace and justice" to help the new government fight the invading VC/NVA forces. This letter also said that the enemy forces in Cambodia "were supported by local Vietnamese inhabitants." One purpose of the letter, it was apparent, was to take the sting out of the by then numerous public reports of reprisals being taken by the Cambodians against the Vietnamese civilians residing in Cambodia.

The U.S. Response

After careful appraisal of Cambodia's request to the United Nations for aid, on 22 April the White House approved the supply of several thousand rifles to that beleaguered country, weapons of Soviet design previously captured from VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Washington and Saigon had come to an understanding that South Vietnamese ground and air forces would mount limited attacks on suspected VC/NVA sanctuaries in Cambodia. At the time

South Vietnamese troops were moving toward the border to support those already in Cambodia, United States forces were maneuvering closer to the Cambodian border to block the VC/NVA when the ARVN troops entered Cambodia to attack them. The buildup of Allied forces along the Dog's Head, Parrot's Beak, and Fishhook areas of the border increased rapidly, but still no American ground forces entered Cambodian territory.

By the end of April, the communist forces in Cambodia had overrun almost the entire eastern portion of the country, disrupted or threatened several of its provincial capitals, and posed a greater threat to Phnom Penh. In the countryside, VC/NVA forces continued to move at will, attacking towns and villages in the southeast and converting the northeast into an extension of the Laos corridor and a base for "people's war" throughout Cambodia and in South Vietnam as well.

It was clear that stronger measures had to be taken immediately in order to resolve the situation. On 29 April, the White House announced that it was providing combat advisors, tactical air support, and supplies to the South Vietnamese forces who were conducting attacks against the communist bases in Cambodia.

Then, on the night of 30 April, President Nixon announced on television the incursion of United States combat forces into Cambodia for the first time. As he was addressing the nation, American combat troops were moving across the border from South Vietnam into the Fishhook area of Cambodia, while South Vietnamese forces were attacking in several other areas, including the Parrot's Beak. The President described the actions as a necessary extension of the Vietnam war designed to eliminate major communist sanctuaries and staging areas on the Cambodian-Vietnam border and to attack "the headquarters for the entire communist military operation in South Vietnam."

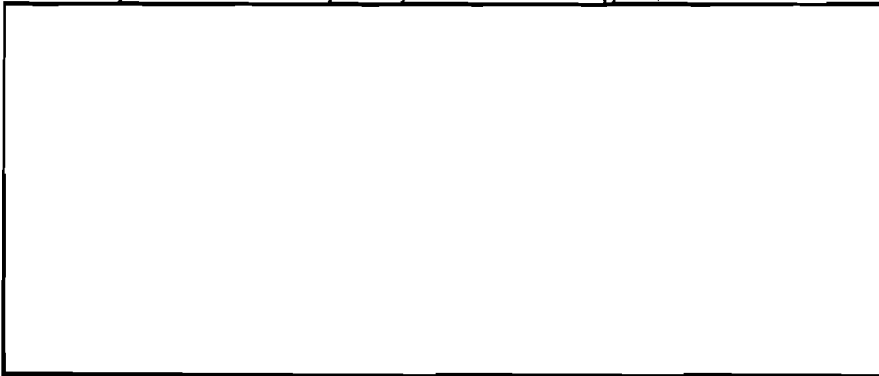
CHAPTER III

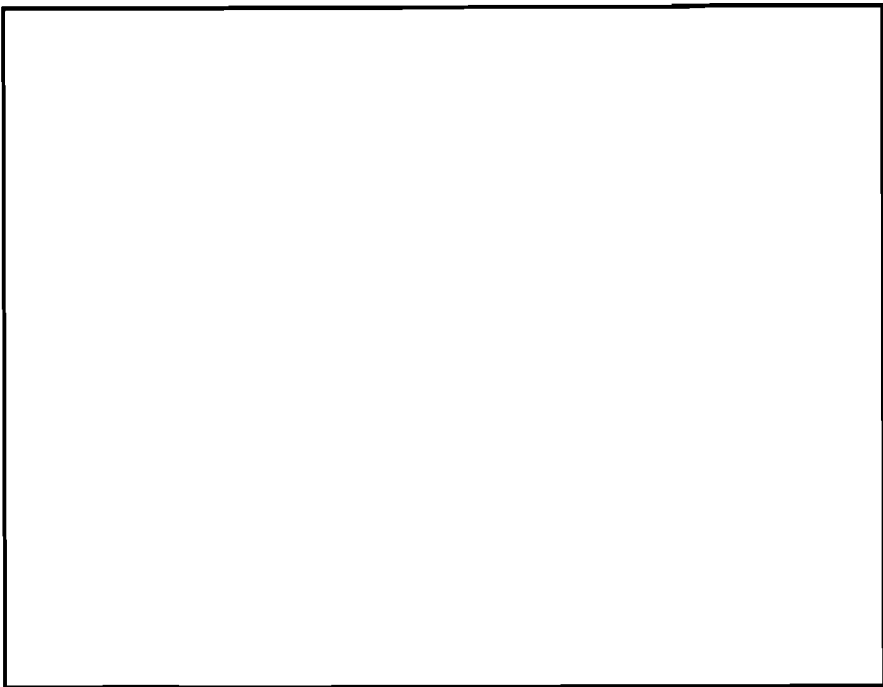
Sigint Background to the Incursion

By 1970, U.S. SIGINT units had acquired considerable experience not only with the communications of COSVN and the communist units in the border areas, but with Cambodian communications as well. And by 1970, U.S. SIGINT agencies also had in place, everything considered, the qualified men and the appropriate equipment to support the U.S. forces and their ARVN allies during the incursion into Cambodia.

Operations Against Cambodian Communications

Principal modes of communications employed by the Cambodians within their own country included HF manual Morse and voice; VHF voice; [REDACTED] Of these internal communications intercepted and processed by the U.S., by far the major part was the HF manual Morse and voice traffic passing over Cambodian police and Army nets. The Army communications facilities were also used, at times, by the Cambodian Naval and Air Force Headquarters. Cambodia's Naval and Air elements mainly employed manual Morse communications. Although some voice communications were known to exist they were not intercepted by the U.S. on a regular basis. Addition-





the 1960's, and work on Cambodia's communications at times involved NSA and units of all three Service Cryptologic Agencies (SCA)—the Army Security Agency (ASA), the Air Force Security Service (AFSS), and the Naval Security Group (NAVSECGRU).

Ground Unit Collection and Processing

Primary collectors of Cambodian communications were ASA units located in South Vietnam [REDACTED]. In late 1964, the 3d Radio Research Unit (RRU) at Tan Son Nhut Airbase, Saigon, began collecting and processing Cambodia's military communications. In 1965, elements of the 400th Special Operations Detachment (SOD)²⁴ at the Trang Sup Special Forces Camp in Western Tay Ninh Province were intercepting communications passing over Cambodian police voice nets, which were later processed by the 3d RRU (fixed site designator, USM-626). After the 400th SOD elements closed down operations in September 1965 preparatory to their return to their parent organiza-

tion [] and following a successful hearability test at Bien Hoa, Detachment 2 of the 3d RRU (USM-629, a DSU²⁵ of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division at Bien Hoa) assumed the Cambodian collection mission of the 400th SOD.

During the latter part of 1965, Detachment 2 (405th ASA Detachment) of the 3d RRU consolidated the coverage of Cambodian police communications. When Detachment 2 was discontinued, its personnel and equipment were assigned to the 11th RRU (USM-629), which moved from Bien Hoa to Di An, where hearability was adjudged better than at Bien Hoa. Three French linguists from USM-626 in Saigon joined USM-629. The 11th RRU received tasking from its CMA, the 3d RRU, to man three manual Morse receivers primarily on Cambodian communications—the Cambodian police voice net, a VC search mission, and Cambodian Naval and Military manual Morse communications. Additional tasking was received in March 1966 to cover Cambodian plaintext voice communications.²⁶

Meanwhile, as the build-up of U.S. forces in South Vietnam continued, it became necessary to reorganize and expand Army cryptologic resources. Thus, by mid-1966 ASA disestablished its 3d RRU and effective 1 June 1966 used its personnel and equipment to form the nucleus of the 509th Radio Research Group (RRG) as the senior ASA authority in South Vietnam.

During January 1967, the need for more collection against Cambodian communications targets to meet requirements for intelligence brought about the manning of manual Morse and radiotelephone receivers at the 330th Radio Research Company (RRC) (USM-604, Pleiku, South Vietnam) for intercept of Cambodian communications.

During the first part of 1967 favorable results from hearability tests—dubbed FOURSCORE and DRIVEWAY—on Cambodian communications at USM-7 (Udon, Thailand) []

[] paved the way for the transfer of collection/processing tasks on Cambodian communications to Thailand, and USM-629 transferred its Cambodian manual Morse mission to USM-7 (7th RR Field Station). Tasked as the CMA []

[] acquired the remaining tasks—processing and reporting—from USM-626 (designator as-

signed to the 175th RRC when the 3d RRU was discontinued). With the transfer of radiotelephone (RTT) collection positions from [redacted]

[redacted] had full responsibility for intercepting, transcribing, translating, and processing the major part of these communications.

The RTT section [redacted] originally transcribed all French and Cambodian language radiotelephone communications intercepted, including military, paramilitary, Air Force, Navy, and civil air. French-language qualified operators first transcribed the tapes, and then the Cambodian-language qualified operators reworked the tapes to cover Cambodian language texts and chatter.

During this period, the technical reconnaissance ships (TRS) USS *Oxford* and USS *Jamestown* intercepted Cambodian [redacted] communications, while at the same time maintaining a search and development mission on HF voice communications. Although it was originally intended that [redacted] transcribe and process all Cambodian voice intercept, the volume became too great, and [redacted] had to forward the tapes received from the TRSs and USM-7 to NSA for transcription. NSA was at the time providing guidance for the field transcription operation.

In mid-1967, SIGINT disclosed the first indications of a planned language change from French to Khmer in official Cambodian communications. U.S. SIGINT agencies took steps to cope with the anticipated change. NSA initiated a course in modern written Cambodian, [redacted]

NSA also shipped instructional materials used in the course [redacted]

[redacted] Additionally, NSA produced a Cambodian language aid *A Glossary and Grammar of Modern Cambodian* in April 1968.

Meanwhile, hoping to find an ideal location from which to intercept Cambodian VHF [redacted] communications, the 509th RRG in cooperation with the NSA Representative, Vietnam (NRV) began on 3 June 1967, a hearability test nicknamed EARDROP at Black Widow Mountain (Nui Ba Den), a lonely mountaintop in Tay Ninh Province near the Cambodian border. This was chosen over other sites at Phu Quoc Island and Ha Tien (a town on the coast of South Vietnam

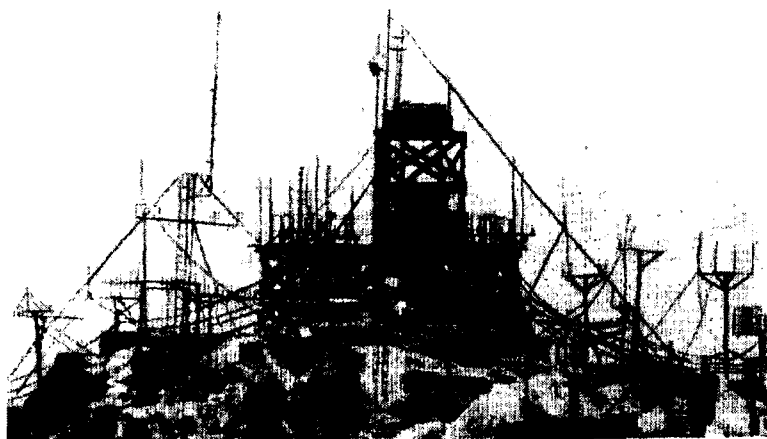


Figure 10.—Intercept site atop Black Widow Mountain (Nui Ba Den) used for the collection of Cambodian communications

near the Cambodian border) because of better security and technical considerations. Black Widow Mountain was accessible only by helicopter, and then only if weather conditions (wind and cloud cover) were favorable. Space was at a premium and high winds (up to 80 mph), plus considerable rain and moisture, presented a harsh environment for men and equipment.

The foremost objective of the hearability test was to determine how well Cambodian VHF [redacted] communications could be heard from a fixed ground site. If the test proved favorable and the mountain became a permanent site, the TRSs *Oxford* and *Jamestown*—then tasked with that mission—could concentrate attention on the identification/development of VC communications in South Vietnam's Delta area. A second objective of the test was to intercept Cambodian air-to-ground communications—another task in which the TRSs had been successful. Still a third objective was the collection of any Vietnamese Communist tactical voice communications on HF/VHF.

Preliminary results of the test, which ended four days later due to the tactical situation near the mountain, indicated favorable success in collecting targets of primary interest. A French linguist from the 509th RRG was able to distinguish between Cambodian [redacted] communications contained within the same frequency band. In some

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of the tapes the linguist identified voice channels as possible Cambodian/South Vietnamese border traffic.

The high quality and volume of intercepted traffic from the hearability test prompted NSA to decide to make the mountain a semi-permanent site. Although NSA and ASA had the site ready for operations in early May 1968, the entire project was short-lived. About two weeks after the project had begun its limited SIGINT operation, the mountain—including the Special Forces Camp with a pagoda in which the Radio Research personnel and their equipment were housed—came under attack by Vietnamese Communist forces. SIGINT personnel in the pagoda destroyed all documents and some of the equipment at the station during the three hour attack. Enemy forces killed one and wounded another of ASA's men at the site. With the frustration at Black Widow Mountain and termination of the site's operation, the TRSs *Oxford* and *Jamestown* reverted to their original missions until their later deactivation in 1969.

By February 1970, various actions were underway to increase collection of HF manual Morse communications serving Cambodia's anti-VC/NVA operation forces in the Ratanakiri MSD. One existing Cambodian collection position [] had been devoted exclusively to collection of known operational communications groups. In accomplishing this, collection had been suspended temporarily on certain Cambodian MR 3 and MR 4 communications. Moreover, coverage on another position [] was [] [] reestablished as a search and development position for additional Cambodian military communications.

Action was soon underway to provide two additional 16-hour manual Morse positions on Cambodian military communications at [] [] as Cambodia's military communications network expanded to accommodate the formation of new battalions and brigades. One of [] 16-hour positions initially searched for and developed new brigade echelon communications groups. The other [] position worked on the new communications groups and on high priority communications in Cambodia's MRs 1, 5, and 6. This increase in Cambodian coverage at [] resulted in reduced intercept of other communications commanding less priority, notably the

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Laotian [] military communications being covered at USM-7 []

Following the hijacking in mid-March of the U.S. merchant vessel *SS Columbia Eagle* to Cambodia's territorial waters, Cambodian Naval manual Morse communications also received high priority attention

[] These communications, serving the Cambodian Navy and Coastal Command headquarters, were previously only on assignment [] On 17 March, NSA suggested [] that an additional radiotelephone position be manned temporarily to collect Cambodian Naval voice communications as well. During a 71-hour period intercept operators heard, however, only three minutes of [] voice communications, and there was no reason to continue the voice coverage.

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As the military and political conditions in Cambodia further deteriorated, the intelligence community felt that if the Cambodian Army continued their hostile activities toward the VC/NVA, then the latter forces would retaliate in kind. Thus when Prince Sihanouk was overthrown on 18 March, NSA declared a SIGINT Readiness ALFA for Cambodia and mounted a 24-hour watch on all Cambodian internal and external communications between 18 and 23 March.

Washington and the tactical field commanders gave close attention to the SIGINT reporting on Cambodia. NSA incorporated a special Cambodian/South Vietnam section in the NSA B6 organization's

daily *Southeast Asia Summary* for the purpose of reporting related Cambodian/Vietnamese Communist developments, and on 14 March 1970 the Special Support Group (SSG) Detachment, MACV (USF-794A) requested that it be put on distribution for all SIGINT from Cambodian [] communications.

Balance between SIGINT reporting in the field and at NSA also received close attention. NSA undertook the longer-term reporting of Cambodian items in the B6 Summary, as noted, and looked to [] for the shorter-term reporting. The [] station published, in Spot Report or Electrigram form, compilations of related intelligence items for the preceding 24-hour period to complement the reporting from NSA. Exceptions to the 24-hour period were items not originally reportable by themselves, but which subsequently became reportable, and intelligence derived from couriered traffic collected from other intercept sites and forwarded []. In order to sharpen the reporting requirements on Cambodia, NSA sent to [] a number of changes to the standard NSA instructions on SIGINT reporting. []

On 1 April, [] increased its Cambodian manual Morse coverage by 8-hours daily and voice coverage by 16-hours daily—increases which brought the [] CMA up to its program requirements.

Meanwhile, NSA's B Group specialists were interested in isolating Cambodian low-level HF voice communications. For this purpose, []

Finally, in response to questions asked about coverage in late April, NSA advised NRV that identified Cambodian military HF manual

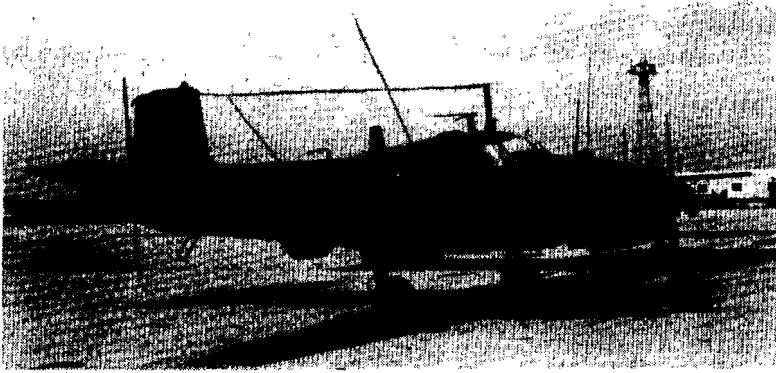


Figure 11.—U-8 aircraft from the Army 224th Aviation Battalion (RR) used for ARDF

Morse communications along the border areas of South Vietnam were then receiving adequate coverage. But, in the event new Cambodian military units appeared, it would be necessary to assign additional coverage.

Airborne Collection and Direction Finding

The ARDF mission in South Vietnam, which was extended into Cambodia shortly after the incursion began, had been providing tactical commanders and strategic planners with a very specific means of locating enemy radio transmitters. COMUSMACV exercised operational control of the ARDF/Collection activities, and Director, NSA (DIRNSA) exercised technical control. Requirements for ARDF/Collection missions came from requests made by Army field commanders, 7th Air Force (7AF), and units of the cryptologic community. These requests went to J-2 MACV, who turned over the proposed tasking to the ARDF Coordinating Committee on a weekly basis. The Committee consisted of representatives (usually Operations Officers) of the 509th RRG, the USAF 6994th Security Squadron, the ARDF Coordination Center (ACC), J-2 MACV, 7AF, NRV, and the Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam (COMNAVFORV). The Coordinating Committee then passed a recommended requirements list to J-2 MACV for final approval and return to the ACC for issuance. Upon approval from J-2 MACV, the ACC assigned individual missions to the designated ASA

aviation units and AFSS squadrons in order to fulfill the tasking requirements.

Prior to each day's series of missions, the applicable CMA provided the major part of the SIGINT technical data to the ARDF/Collection units on "cherry sheets" listing information on each targetted radio transmitter such as transmit/receive callsigns, frequencies, and schedules. Once airborne, the Army and Air Force crews had access to additional technical data for individual frag areas from the DSUs in those areas. In addition, the DSUs accepted all fixes from the airborne platforms in their areas, passed tip-offs to the aircraft, and accepted all messages considered of potential intelligence value by the airborne crew.



Figure 12.—U-21 "LAFFING EAGLE" aircraft, 224th Aviation Battalion (RR). This light plane has ARDF/Collection/RFP capabilities

The ARDF/Collection mission in South Vietnam was performed by the U.S. Army 224th Aviation Battalion (RR) (located at Long Thanh North Army Airfield, Bien Hoa Province, after January 5, 1970), and the USAF 6994th Security Squadron (located at Tan Son Nhut Airbase, Saigon). Operational control of the 224th Battalion's aircraft was totally under the 509th RRG; however, operational control of the 6994th Squadron's COMBAT COUGAR aircraft was exercised from two sources: the 509th RRG for SIGINT tasking and ARDF/Collection positions aboard the aircraft, and the 7th Air Force Tactical Electronics Warfare Squadrons for the aircraft themselves. Ultimate opera-

tional control of both Army and Air Force units in South Vietnam was, of course, held by COMUSMACV.

During the Cambodian incursion, aircraft utilized by the Army included the U-8, the U-21 "LAFFING EAGLE," and the HU-1H "LEFT BANK" helicopter. The Air Force used the C-47 "COMBAT COUGAR" and "COMBAT COUGAR ZULU" (names changed to COMBAT CROSS on 25 June 1970 as a result of a suspected compromise).

Army's 224th Aviation Battalion (RR) was tasked with the ARDF/Collection of Vietnamese Communist radio transmissions in the HF/VHF range in order to provide SIGINT support to COMUSMACV and to complement the work of ground-based medium range direction finding (MRDF) and collection sites. Army's U-8, a multi-engine light aircraft, employed AN/ARD-15 DF equipment in the 3-8MHz range. Its U-21 LAFFING EAGLE aircraft is an airborne intercept platform having ARDF and Radio Fingerprinting²⁸ and operating in

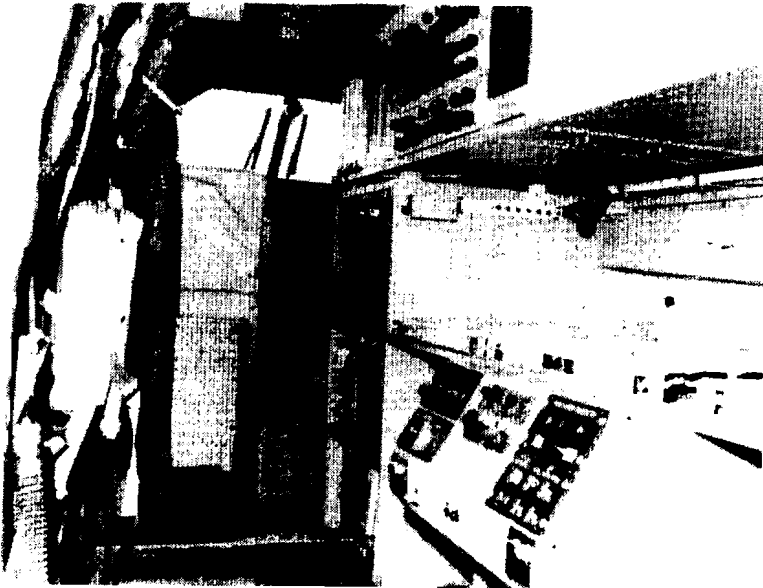


Figure 13.—U-21 "LAFFING EAGLE" interior display of mission gear

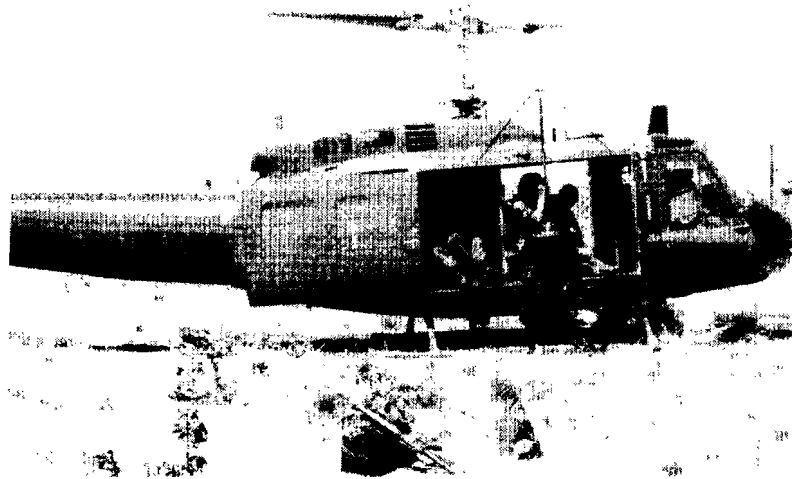


Figure 14.—Army HU-1H "LEFT BANK" helicopter with ARDF/Collection/RFP capabilities

the HF/VHF ranges in conjunction with an HF "V-Scan" DF set. Although this aircraft holds two operator positions—one for RFP collection and one for collection/HF and VHF range ARDF—the positions were used only for collection missions in the 2–100 MHz range during the Cambodian operations. The HU-1H LEFT BANK aircraft were heliborne ARDF/Collection/RFP platforms usually controlled by a DSU, and responsive to the intelligence requirements of the supported tactical command—usually of division echelon—to which the aircraft were assigned. SIGINT-indoctrinated pilots flew the LEFT BANK platforms, and DSU personnel performed the cryptologic functions. LEFT BANK had two positions, one for ARDF in the 4–8 MHz range and one for Collection/RFP in the .5–30 MHz range. LEFT BANK aircraft passed the ARDF fixes to DSU ground positions, from where they were further passed to the tactical units via the division intelligence nets.

The USAF 6994th Security Squadron was tasked with: ARDF/collection, and processing of Southeast Asian Communist HF/VHF tactical voice, single-channel communications; HF/VHF manual Morse communications; and, on occasion, other communications. The pri-

mary objective of COMBAT COUGAR missions was to fix enemy target transmitters selected by MACV as priority targets. COMBAT COUGAR aircraft had two individual SIGINT positions: the "X" console and the "Y" console. The "X" console was the ARDF position and fixed targets within a frequency range of 2-16 MHZ. During fix operations, the "Y" console determined which targetted transmitters were active and provided supporting intercept copy of ARDF targets and, when time permitted, performed a COMINT collection mission directed toward maximum continuity and development of all hostile target transmitters. "Y" console operated within a frequency range of .5-30 MHZ. The COMBAT COUGAR ZULU platform differed from the COMBAT COUGAR configuration in that, besides the "X" and "Y" consoles, it also had "Z1" and "Z2" consoles. In normal operation, the "Z1" console was for both HF/VHF collection and the "Z2" console strictly for HF collection ("Z1" enabled the operator to hear voice targets from .2-300 MHZ, while "Z2" was for manual Morse targets in the .2-30 MHZ range). COMBAT COUGAR ZULU aircraft had two different types of missions: primary collection and primary ARDF. On those missions tasked with primary ARDF operations, a collection mission was immediately undertaken whenever equipment failure precluded fix operations against enemy target transmitters.

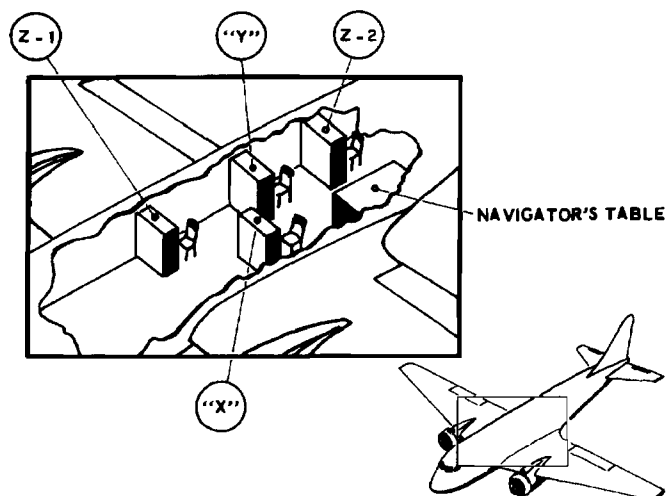
In May 1969, CINCPAC had requested that an ARDF effort be undertaken by MACV in the MR 5 area of Cambodia. His purpose was to detect a possible build-up of enemy forces then suggested by the heightened Cambodian Army activity in that area. CINCPAC's request also cited the limited intelligence available on the disposition of FARK units in northeastern Cambodia. The J-2 MACV, in turn, requested NRV to determine if the present coverage on these communications was adequate. As a result of the CINCPAC request and a MACV Special Operations Group (SOG) requirement for locations/collection on Cambodian units operating in northeastern Cambodia, NRV [REDACTED] [REDACTED] provided J-2 MACV with a current disposition list of FARK forces in MR 5 and a current recapitulation of the U.S. intercept.

At the time, NRV felt the existing coverage on Cambodian communications was adequate. MACSOG, however, required more precise locations than were available in SIGINT on Cambodian units in Rata-

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EC-47

COMBAT COUGAR

X - ALR-34 (ARDF) 2-16 MHz
 Y - HF/HF RECEIVE, 5-30 MHz

COMBAT COUGAR ZULU

X - ALR-34 (ARDF) 2-16 MHz
 Y - HF/HF RECEIVE, 5-30 MHz
 Z1 - HF/HF RECEIVE, 5-30 MHz OR
 HF/VHF (AM/FM 10-260 MHz)
 Z2 - HF/HF RECEIVE, 5-30 MHz

Figure 15.—COMBAT COUGAR/COMBAT COUGAR
 ZULU Basic Configuration

nakiri Province. Fully understanding the limitations on the accuracy of MRDF (25 nautical miles), J-2 MACV decided to reassign one COMBAT COUGAR aircraft to fly seven missions along the Cambodia-South Vietnam border in an attempt to establish precise locations of Cambodian units in that area. At the end of May 1969, NRV advised [redacted] that ARDF missions would be flown daily in the area along the Cambodia-South Vietnam border between southwestern Kontum and northwestern Pleiku Provinces. Flown during the week of 31 May-6 June, the mission called only for work on FARK transmitters. [redacted] provided the technical data requested for this operation and also provided identifications on fixes obtained on

FARK targets which first were reported as unidentified entities. Positive results brought an extended mission for COMBAT COUGAR on Cambodian transmitters during the month of June. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] also exchanged information on targets in the mission area with USM-604 (Pleiku).

On 2 July 1969, [REDACTED] forwarded to NRV for its use in future discussions concerning ARDF on targets in Cambodia. [REDACTED] evaluation of the missions flown daily during June. In essence, [REDACTED] concluded that the results of the ARDF operations did not contribute measurably to knowledge of Cambodia's communications and the ARDF locations for June 1969 on Cambodian targets were in consonance with the locations already held [REDACTED].

In early April 1970, NRV told the 6994th Security Squadron that COMBAT COUGAR ZULU aircraft were under consideration for collection and processing of Cambodian communications, and other tasks. NSA was also looking to AFSS for French language specialists at this time for transcribing/translating tasks entailed in the processing of these communications. 7AF had also levied a formal requirement for collection of Cambodian tactical air VHF communications along the Cambodian/South Vietnam border. The developmental work at Black Widow Mountain²⁹ had only been a partial response to 7AF needs. By the end of April, COMBAT COUGAR ZULU had heard Cambodian VHF voice traffic, but it had contained nothing of intelligence value.

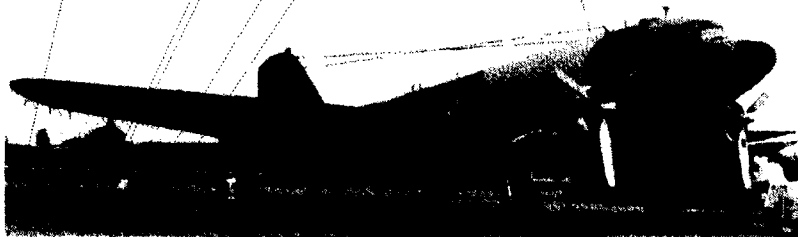


Figure 16.—USAF C-47 "COMBAT COUGAR" aircraft belonging to the 6994th Security Squadron

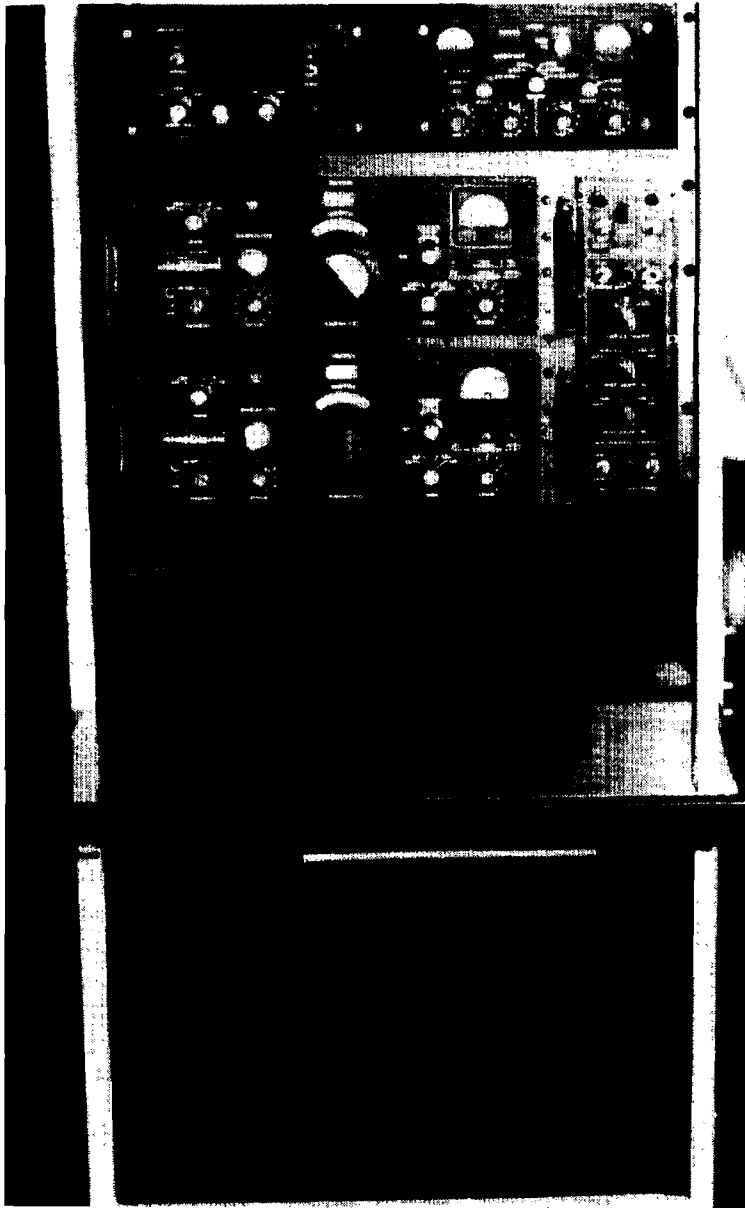


Figure 17.—"Y" Position aboard "COMBAT COUGAR" aircraft

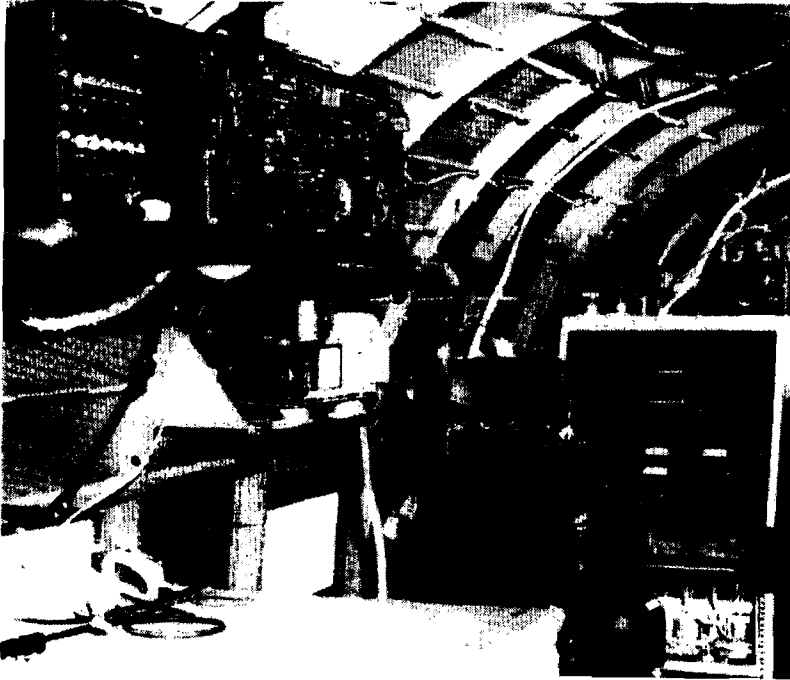


Figure 18.—Navigator and "X" Positions aboard "COMBAT COUGAR" aircraft

Just before the incursion, J-2 MACV released written authorization for overflights permitting ARDF/Collection missions over Cambodian territory within 30 km of the South Vietnam border. Aircraft were forbidden, without qualification, to overfly Cambodian territory in any area not specifically fraggged (i.e., fragmentation area, a term used—normally by the USAF—to delineate certain mission areas of a target country for the purpose of air reconnaissance, bombing strikes, ARDF, etc.) by J-2 MACV through the ACC. The MACV Tasking Office and the ACC formulated necessary changes in tasking, while the CMAs in II, III, and IV CTZ under direction of the 509th RRG, ensured that the appropriate technical data would reach the respective aviation units of the 224th Aviation Battalion (RR) and the 6994th Security Squadron for their relay to aircraft fraggged over Cambodia.

Collection and Processing Platforms Afloat

In 1965, two Technical Reconnaissance Ships, the *USS Oxford* and *USS Jamestown*, began to undertake SIGINT tasks in the waters off South Vietnam. Formerly Liberty ships of World War II vintage and redesignated as TRSs in the early 1960's, the ships were to serve as a contingency force in the event that land-based SIGINT producing sites in Southeast Asia should be lost to the enemy and to undertake developmental collection missions. Following a United States Intelligence Board decision in April 1965, the two ships moved, accordingly, from their operational areas [REDACTED]

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Figure 19.—TRS USS Oxford in waters off the coast of South Vietnam

coasts to the western Pacific. The *USS Oxford* deployed to Southeast Asia waters in May 1965, and the *USS Jamestown* arrived in the western Pacific in December 1965. From these dates until their deactivation and decommissioning in mid-December 1969, the *Oxford* and *Jamestown* engaged in a wide variety of collection tasks in Southeast Asia. Primary collection targets, among others, were North Vietnamese, South Vietnamese, and Cambodian communications.

In the execution of their assigned missions, the research operations departments on *Oxford* and *Jamestown* undertook collection tasks, processed or recorded the raw intercept for further analysis and reported their product through the cryptologic chain-of-command. Shipboard personnel performed cryptanalysis, traffic analysis, signal analysis, translation, and transcription. Modes of intercept included manual Morse, automatic Morse, radiotelephone, single sideband and double single sideband radiotelephone, [REDACTED]



Figure 20.—TRS USS Jamestown in waters near the coast of South Vietnam

The TRSs *Oxford* and *Jamestown* rotated off Phu Quoc Island (near the Cambodian/South Vietnam coast) to conduct SIGINT search, development, and collection of Cambodian communications. The *USS Jamestown* was successful in intercepting Cambodian [REDACTED]

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FOCUS ON CAMBODIA

[] communications revealing communist infiltration and supply routes through Cambodia. This TRS also intercepted the first Cambodian VHF Naval communications.

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Footnotes Part One

¹ CINCPAC to JCS, 252126Z JAN 67.

² American Embassy, Saigon cable, 20 MAR 64 (Confidential).

³ See Fig. 4, p. 8.

⁴ Binh Tram, literally translated as "military station," may also be considered as "way station," "relay station," or "troop station." Binh Trams normally included security, transportation, engineering, and medical troops in its organizational structure, which served the infiltration groups passing through Cambodia into South Vietnam.

⁵ Although the Hq, SVNLA is generally regarded as the senior authority over all communist military units in Nam Bo and Cambodia, the communist practice of interposing political control over the military at every echelon suggests that the actual command and control authority of Hq, SVNLA may be limited. MRs 2, 3, 6, and 10 in South Vietnam are considered part of its subordinate command structure; however, Hq, SVNLA does not actually command any military units assigned to those regions but rather provides guidance and functions as a higher echelon staff headquarters. Directives are issued under the authority of COSVN and sent through Regional Party Committee channels to the military units.

⁶ See Fig. 7, p. 14.

⁷ See Fig. 6, p. 12.

⁸ Lon Nol's career dates back to 1934. After serving in the Cambodian administrative service, he joined the Army in 1952. At the time of the formation of the National Assembly in 1955, he was the leader of the Khmer Renovation faction. Long associated with American military officials, Lon Nol has served, at various times since 1960, as Deputy Premier, Premier, and Defense Minister. During his first period as Premier he was rumored in late 1966 to be planning a right-wing coup against Sihanouk, but a severe automobile accident forced him to resign.

⁹ Sirik Matak has long been active in Cambodian politics, having held the posts of Defense Minister and Foreign Minister in preindependence governments. After independence, he was identified with the Khmer Renovation faction. Matak has also been Cambodia's ambassador to Peking and envoy to Tokyo. He is a member of the Sisowath branch of Cambodia's royal families and is a cousin of Sihanouk.

¹⁰ The Royal Khmer Armed Forces (FARK). Name changed to Khmer National Armed Forces (FANK) in April 1970.

¹¹ A non-SIGINT intelligence source has stated that a safe containing three lists of names had been seized during the sacking of the PRGRSVN Embassy. The first list comprised names of Cambodian officials with annotation according to PRGRSVN intentions toward the individuals. Opposite the names of Sihanouk, Lon Nol and Sirik Matak was the annotation "kill." Another list contained names of men considered "dangerous." The third list had names of men regarded as being favorable to the PRGRSVN or as being susceptible to bribery.

¹² 2X/0/[]/T51-70, 112200Z MAR 70.

¹³ Cheng Heng was first elected to the National Assembly in 1958 and was appointed as Chairman of the Assembly in 1968. He is reputed to have amassed a personal fortune when he served as a director of a government import-export monopoly. He has long been identified with a faction which was critical of Sihanouk's policies of nationalized rather than free enterprise.

¹⁴ 2X/0/[]/T91-70, 221831Z MAR 70.

¹⁵ 2X/0/[]/T74-70, 201340Z MAR 70.

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¹⁷ Established in late November-early December 1968 as a functional element of Hq, SVNLA, the SIB was responsible for the production of strategic intelligence obtained from penetration operations against high-level South Vietnamese military and political organizations and personalities located in Nam Bo. The SIB not only furnished tactical information to the VC/NVA but also provided military, political and economic intelligence to COSVN and the leaders of North Vietnam via the

Central Research Directorate (CRD) in Hanoi. The collection of strategic intelligence was the responsibility of agent nets located in the major cities and capital areas of Nam Bo. After obtaining the intelligence, the agent contacted personnel of the Commo-Liaison Section of the SIB who, in turn, couriered the information to a sub-station of the SIB for further processing. In addition, the Commo-Liaison Section maintained a network of way stations between the SIB base area and the Angel's Wing area of Cambodia to aid in the transportation of personnel and the processing of information.

¹⁸ The MIB, as a functional element of Hq, SVNLA, was the largest Vietnamese Communist intelligence organization in South Vietnam. By means of an extensive manual Morse communications complex, the MIB exercised control and/or staff guidance over all military intelligence activities in Nam Bo and MR 6. Its intelligence collection mission was designed primarily for support of military operations and for forewarning. This mission was accomplished in large part through the efforts of its subordinates. The production, collection, and dissemination of Vietnamese Communist intelligence in Nam Bo was a far-reaching operation which extended downward beyond the local VC/NVA administrative structure and became at the very lowest level a one-man responsibility. Between the lowest echelon and the MIB were several types of intelligence-oriented elements. There appeared to be much overlapping of functions among many of the elements, and functions varied to some extent according to the area in which a unit was located. Included in this group were MI sections (intelligence-gathering units colocated with the tactical units); MI detachments and reconnaissance units (teams, squads, etc.); sapper teams, agents, and also units which conducted communications intelligence (COMINT) operations against Allied Forces.

¹⁹ SVNLA's Technical Reconnaissance Bureau had the primary COMINT mission in South Vietnam. The operating units, known as Technical Reconnaissance Units (TRU), had a substantial English language capability and worked on U.S. and South Vietnamese communications networks. The units usually deployed immediately prior to and during combat to maximize the collection of intelligence on Allied strength, disposition, and intentions. At the beginning of 1970, there were an estimated 4,000 communist troops assigned to integral COMINT units in direct support of field units. Their inventory included several thousand U.S. tactical and commercial receivers and Chinese Communist tactical receivers. They also had battery-operated tape recorders for exploiting U.S. voice communications.

²⁰ See Fig. 30, p. 99.

²¹ The VC 275th Regiment, according to SIGINT, was actually temporarily deactivated during this period. Elements of the Regiment were used to form the nuclei of new, combined VC/Khmer Communist units, such as the 203d and 205th

Regiments, and possibly the 201st and 207th Regiments. Some of the new units eventually moved deep into Cambodian territory. The 203d Regiment, for one, was observed through SIGINT operating near Siem Reap in western Cambodia.

²². At the time of the Allied incursion, much of the traffic passed over Cambodian Government communications was plain language.

²³. B12 TSRs #010-70, 30 Sept 70; #013-70, 26 Oct 70; B Group Semi-Annual Review of Cryptosystems (1970-1971 period).

²⁴. Long before the introduction of ASA direct support units (DSU) into South Vietnam to support regular U.S. ground units, ASA had developed the SOD program for support of American units in counterinsurgency situations. Begun in 1961, the SOD was to provide SIGINT and COMSEC support to U.S. Army Special Forces units. SOD personnel received airborne and Special Forces training before deployment. In addition, all members were, of course, SIGINT specialists. First assigned to Vietnam in 1962 and attached to the 5th Special Forces Group, 400th SOD elements worked with ASA's 3d RRU in Saigon.

²⁵. Army DSUs deployed along with the tactical commands they supported. ASA support during counterinsurgency operations provided the commands with SIGINT from manual Morse collection and direction finding. The DSUs had mobile positions for air-to-ground communications to control Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF), for ground-based PRD-1 Short Range Direction Finding (SRDF), and manual Morse and voice intercept. Basically, each DSU used four positions at its base camp and one or more mobile positions. To eliminate duplication of intercept between the Collection Management Authority (CMA) fixed sites (USM-604, USM-626, and USM-808) and the DSUs, the fixed sites, as CMAs, controlled and assigned intercept responsibility for major VC military targets. Those targets assigned to the DSU usually were units of greatest interest to the supported command. By using mobile positions, as well as equipment in base camp, the DSU could intercept, provide ARDF and SRDF tip-off information, and receive resulting fix reports from other special identification techniques (SIT) sources.

²⁶. Of prime interest to the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, which the 11th RRU supported, was the intercept of numerous references to U.S. and ARVN troop activity during Operation BIRMINGHAM near the Cambodian border.

²⁷. See Fig. 26, p. 87.

²⁸. See pp. 89-90.

²⁹. See pp. 44-47.

APPENDIX

List of Abbreviations

ACC	ARDF Coordination Center
AFSS	Air Force Security Service
ARDF	Airborne Radio Direction Finding
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASA	Army Security Agency
BA	Base Area
CINCPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
CMA	Collection Management Authority
COMINT	Communications Intelligence
COMNAVFORV	Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam
COMSEC	Communications Security
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
COSVN	Central Office of South Vietnam
CRD	Central Research Directorate
CRITICOMM	World Wide System for Critical Intelligence Transmissions Combined with Improved Communications Support of Communications Intelligence
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DIRNSA	Director, National Security Agency
DMAC	Delta Military Assistance Command
DSU	Direct Support Unit
FANK	Cambodian Army (Khmer National Armed Forces—since June 1970)
FARK	Cambodian Army (Royal Khmer Armed Forces—prior to June 1970)
FFV	Field Forces, Vietnam
FSB	Fire Support Base
HDFD	High Frequency Direction Finding

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66	
LLMM	Low Level Manual Morse
LLVI	Low Level Voice Intercept
LNO	Liaison Officer
LZ	Landing Zone
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MHZ	MegaHertz
MIB	Military Intelligence Bureau (SVNLA)
MR	Military Region
MRDF	Medium Range Direction Finding
MSD	Military Sub-Division
NAVSECGRU	Naval Security Group
NFLSVN	National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam



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NRV	NSA Pacific Representative, South Vietnam
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OPSCOMM	Operational Communications
PRGRSVN	Provisional Revolutionary Govern- ment of the Republic of South Vietnam
RATRACE	Rapid Transcription and Crypt- analytical Exploitation (team)
RD	Reference Designator
RFP	Radio Fingerprinting
RRB	Radio Research Battalion
RRC	Radio Research Company
RRD	Radio Research Detachment
RRG	Radio Research Group
RRU	Radio Research Unit
RSG	Rear Services Group
RTT	Radio Telephone
SCA	Service Cryptologic Agency
SIB	Strategic Intelligence Bureau (SVNLA)

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SOD	Special Operations Detachment
SR	Subregion
SRDF	Short Range Direction Finding
SSG	Special Support Group
SSO	Special Security Officer
SVNLA	South Vietnam Liberation Army
TACREP	Tactical Report
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TRS	Technical Reconnaissance Ship
VC	Viet Cong
VHF	Very High Frequency

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58/112

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Focus
on
Cambodia

PART TWO



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CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY SERIES

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Focus on Cambodia

Part Two



NSA

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

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~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

SECURITY NOTICE

Although the information contained in this study ranged in security classification from UNCLASSIFIED to TOP SECRET CODEWORD, the overall security classification assigned to this issue is TOP SECRET UMBRA.

While the TSCW classification by itself requires careful handling, additional caution should be exercised with regard to the present journal and others in the series because of the comprehensive treatment and broad range of the subject matter.

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

PART TWO

The Incursion

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Part Two

The Incursion

Thirteen separate cross-border operations took place in Cambodia: five involving U.S. combat units and the remainder involving ARVN units. U.S. advisors accompanied ARVN units into Cambodia, and U.S. tactical air and other combat support units assisted in all operations as required. American ground forces and advisors confined their operations to an area not exceeding 30 km penetration into Cambodia from South Vietnam's border. As a general rule, the South Vietnamese confined their operations to the same area except when requested to move farther inland by the Cambodian Government.

The Allied forces moved into Cambodia primarily against the Vietnamese Communist BAs along the western border areas of II, III, and IV CTZ of South Vietnam. The main objective was the destruction of enemy facilities and the capture or destruction of enemy material. With the exception of two ARVN operations (TOAN THANG 41 and 42) initiated during the month of April, all other Allied operations occurred in the period of time specified by President Nixon—1 May to 30 June. The operations ran in three separate series: TOAN THANG (Total Victory) conducted along the III CTZ border; BINH TAY (Peace to the West) along the II CTZ; and CUU LONG (Mekong River) along the IV CTZ.

The Allies used air power extensively in all 13 operations. Both the USAF and the South Vietnamese Air Force flew support missions along the South Vietnam-Cambodia border. The VNAF flew the majority of sorties in the CUU LONG series and also in Operation TOAN THANG 42. The USAF flew the majority of missions in the other operations. Strategic Air Command B-52s flew 653 ARC LIGHT sorties in support of six of the 13 operations. ARC LIGHT airstrikes provided massive firepower for landing zones (LZ) and allowed objectives to be prepared prior to initial ground assaults. The U.S. employed ARC LIGHT against suspected COSVN headquarters elements and other enemy locations beyond the 30 km limitation imposed on U.S. ground forces. In addition to USAF and VNAF airstrikes, the U.S. Army used its organic air support extensively.

CHAPTER IV

Adjustments in the Sigint Organization

During January and February 1970, MACV drew up contingency plans for possible cross-border operations into Cambodia. In outline form these called for relatively modest (regimental size) ARVN cross-border raids with U.S. combat support. The South Vietnamese were not privy to these initial plans. In late February, COMUSMACV, GEN Creighton W. Abrams, reviewed the plans and directed that unilateral planning continue and focus on lucrative targets, particularly on enemy command and control authorities. At the same time, GEN Abrams lifted, for planning purposes, the restriction on the size of the force to be employed, although the planning would continue to specify predominately South Vietnamese forces. For security purposes knowledge of these plans was restricted to key staff officers during the early stages of the planning.

In late March, planners selected two general locations as the proposed operational areas: the Angel's Wing-Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia (BAs 367 and 706) and the Fishhook area (BA 352). There was to be a controlling headquarters for operations in each of these locations. Most of the proposed operations were to be under ARVN command: all operations in the Parrot's Beak; in IV CTZ; in II CTZ, except for an attack on BA 702 which was to be under the command of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division; and in BA 350, III CTZ. All other operations in III CTZ were to be under U.S. control: BA 354 under the CG, 25th Infantry Division; and BAs 351, 352, and 353 under the CG, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) (1st ACD). Planners estimated a period of time up to 30 days duration, with the possibility of staying for a longer period in the event developments warranted further combat activity.

Since U.S. moves would start from the III CTZ area of South Vietnam, on 24 April COMUSMACV instructed LTG Michael S. Davison, CG, II Field Force, Vietnam (IIFV) to be prepared to conduct military operations in Cambodia in order to eliminate the Vietnamese Communist BAs in the Fishhook area. BA 707, north of Thien

Ngon, was also under consideration for attack. The first attack was to be launched within 72 hours following a final decision to be made in Washington. This was later shortened to 48 hours after permission was received to extend the planning down to brigade level. The originally planned date for operations to begin was 30 April, but by direction from Washington this was delayed by 24 hours.

Describing the general situation in a debriefing report on 27 May 1971, one year after the incursion, LTG Davison wrote:

"One interesting aspect of the Cambodian campaign was the operational environment from which it was launched. In III CTZ, we were in a relatively static, counterinsurgency posture, operating out of fire support bases, with company, platoon, and even squad-size units conducting ambushes and search operations in specified areas. From these limited small unit operations, we suddenly changed to mobile operations involving the employment of battalions and regiments into the Cambodian sanctuaries. The primary aim was to isolate the enemy and block his routes of egress. This war of movement was followed by a reversion to the use of fire support bases (FSB) and night defensive positions from which companies searched painstakingly for enemy base camps and caches.

"There were three considerations that were important in the planning of this operation: intelligence, surprise, and task organization. Our intelligence effort got us into the general areas but could not pinpoint caches or base camps. Actually, our intelligence had absolutely no idea of the manner in which the NVA had established their storage areas. One might presume that, because they were in sanctuaries, they had made no great effort to dispose (of) or conceal their supplies. Such was not the case. The communists went to extraordinary lengths and, at an enormous cost in man-hours, concealed and decentralized their logistics depots. Almost everything was underground in remote heavily jungled areas, far from existing high speed roads. It is interesting to note that never amongst the tons of documents we captured did we find a key to the overall NVA logistics layout."

In identifying intelligence along with "surprise" and "task organization" as important to planning, LTG Davison had SIGINT in mind:

"Generally, communications intelligence was the most reliable and timely intelligence concerning enemy locations and plans. Intelligence continuity on some active enemy units could have been maintained through collateral sources; however, without COMINT, many enemy organizations would have remained undetected, and our intelligence effort severely hampered. Obviously, this would have been a detriment to the successful planning and conduct of tactical operations. This was especially true for the enemy organizations and units located in Cambodia."

SIGINT Agencies Fail to Receive Timely Notification

While there was recognition that SIGINT was to be important not only in the planning but also during the conduct of the incursion, the tight security surrounding the planning for Cambodia apparently prevented MACV from giving the senior cryptologic authority in South Vietnam, (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36 Chief, NRV, any advance notice of the operation. The cryptologic agencies were to learn of the operation only in an indirect manner and then just three days prior to the incursion itself.

In South Vietnam, the close relationship which existed between the cryptologic units and the military services had forged a bond and fostered a spirit of cooperation. A by-product of this relationship was, as would be expected, the off-the-record trafficking in information of mutual interest between SIGINT units and their supported commands. Although plans for the impending incursion remained heavily veiled in secrecy, unofficial or, at best, semi-official notification of the incursion filtered through the various channels of tactical command—deliberately or accidentally—to several members of the SIGINT apparatus during the last week of April.

The first suggestion of tactical interest in Cambodia involving U.S. forces came to the attention of a few key ASA men on 26 April, five days before the incursion. CAPT Peter G. Kucera, CO of the 371st RRC was perhaps the first Radio Research person to become aware of

the impending operation when he was tasked by LTC Michael L. Conrad, G-2, 1st ACD to provide a density plot of ARDF fixes in the Fishhook area for the preceding six months.

On 28 April, CAPT Kucera accompanied MG Elvy B. Roberts (CG, 1st ACD from 5 May 1969 to 12 May 1970), and BG Robert M. Shoemaker, (CO, Task Force SHOEMAKER) and party to the IIFFV Headquarters at Long Binh. The ARDF density plot which they carried with them was the chief instrument used to brief LTG Davison, and it became the prime intelligence product used to orient the axis of the Allied advance into the Fishhook area and to locate strategic sites for the establishment of FSBs and LZs.

The first man in the cryptologic community to be officially notified of the forthcoming operations was LTC James E. Freeze, CO of the 303d Radio Research Battalion (RRB) at Long Binh. LTC Freeze was one of the key individuals to become deeply involved in SIGINT support arrangements for the Cambodian operations right from the very start.

At the conclusion of the daily IIFFV Special Intelligence briefing on 28 April, COL Charles F. McKee, G-2, IIFFV, asked LTC Freeze to report to his office. Once inside, COL McKee closed the door and, as LTC Freeze recalls, said that LTG Davison wanted him to know that the U.S. was about to move into Cambodia. COL McKee then outlined the concept of operations, which was virtually bereft of details, and stated which primary U.S. tactical units would be involved: the 1st ACD; the 25th Infantry Division; and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (11th ACR)—all operating in the III CTZ area at the time. He also indicated that the Fishhook would be the probable area to be attacked.

The magnitude of such an operation was immediately evident to LTC Freeze, and after rapidly sifting this information through his mind, he realized that his major concern centered on the choice of two alternatives that depended largely upon tactical decisions outside of his purview and, indeed, his knowledge. He considered two possible actions: drop existing intercept coverage and go totally mobile, or continue to cover targets at his present facilities but add some forward sites for the expected additional coverage that would be necessary.

Within the context of the limited data available, Freeze believed that his subordinate units could best support their tactical commands by the latter alternative. Further decisions relating to mobility would depend upon the tactical decisions as they became known. His preference was to analyze the results of the initial cross-border operations in terms of enemy reaction, and then move SIGINT detachments in with the second border crossing. ASA would have to act, he knew, with the concurrence of the supported tactical commanders.

But regardless of the sketchy information that he had just been given, LTC Freeze saw an opportunity for innovative SIGINT support in a unique situation. According to Freeze, COL McKee told him to go ahead and develop his plan of operations, but also cautioned that knowledge of the forthcoming operation was very sensitive and closely held.

Freeze returned to his battalion area and immediately informed COL Frederick C. Westendorf at the 509th RRG of the forthcoming action. LTC Freeze requested that a warning order be sent by Group to all of its major subordinate units alerting them to the possibility of tactical operations in the Fishhook area and tasking them with reporting SIGINT reflections. He reported that the 371st and 372d RRCs, and 409th Radio Research Detachment (RRD), were in a position to support their respective commands, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He also acknowledged that his CMA—the 175th RRC in III CTZ—was prepared to provide any and all assistance required.

COL Westendorf later recalled that he was advised by Freeze of the cross-border operations in an ambiguous manner:

"It was very close-hold, and he really didn't have permission to tell me about it. But he wanted my approval to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So, of course, when LTC Freeze informed me that he had been requested to provide the direct support at the Division and Regimental level, I agreed. If the U.S. forces were going, it was proper that [REDACTED] We talked at that time about the type of support which would be required. We thought that the North Vietnamese would probably use a lot of voice during these operations."

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(b) (3) - 50 USC 403
(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

After informing COL Westendorf, LTC Freeze notified his primary commanders who would be involved according to the U.S. tactical units being committed: CAPT Peter G. Kucera with the 371st RRC in support of the 1st ACD; CAPT Ronald W. Carter with the 372d RRC in support of the 25th Infantry Division; and CAPT Joseph W. Stillwell with the 409th RRD in support of the 11th ACR. Freeze instructed each commander to report to the 175th RRC for an important meeting. At the meeting, LTC Freeze was able to outline a course of action. The DSU commanders were to be prepared to move into bases as U.S. units leapfrogged into a new area. They were to determine in short order what intercept positions they wanted to close down and to coordinate the decreased intercept with their supported G-2's. Freeze further asked CAPT Carter to have his Signal Maintenance Officer, WO James R. Giblin, build several additional special antennas for the operation; CAPT Kucera to prepare LEFT BANK for a change in its area of operations; and CAPT Stillwell to prepare at least one position—and be ready with another—for the mobile operations.

Immediately following the meeting, a formal message went to subordinate units of the 303d RRB to be on the alert for any SIGINT indications of increased tactical activity in the probable area of operations. Other instructions to the units required them to prepare for totally mobile operations in the event this was required.

LTC Freeze then was on the move. After visiting Cu Chi and talking with the G-2, 25th Infantry Division and CAPT Carter of the 372d RRC, Freeze traveled to Phuoc Vinh to discuss the tactical situation with the 1st ACD and to discuss SIGINT preparations with CAPT Kucera, 371st RRC. Freeze questioned COL Conrad and the Special Security Officer (SSO), 1st ACD, concerning the possible utilization of additional Radio Research resources. He stressed the desirability of moving a low-level voice intercept (LLVI) position forward as soon as possible, but he was advised that the 1st ACD was satisfied with the intelligence produced by ARDF at the time. COL Conrad was interested in LTC Freeze's opinion on committing LEFT BANK over Cambodia, a proposal which Freeze favored. However, the 1st ACD preferred to watch the situation develop before actually deploying the aircraft.

LTC Freeze left Phuoc Vinh and went to Quan Loi to check on the communications equipment that had been set up by the 371st RRC in the 409th RRD's communications center.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] While at Quan Loi, Freeze also visited COL Donn A. Starry, CO, 11th ACR, [REDACTED]

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(b) (3)-50 USC 403
(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

Thus, the main part of ASA support would come from South Vietnam's III CTZ area, and the 303d RRB and its subordinate units were primed. In supporting this operation—perhaps the most important Allied activity since TET 1968—the affected units would have an opportunity to put to a test their ability to provide direct support to the tactical commanders.

Aligning the ASA Support

While given only minimal forewarning of the impending incursion, SIGINT units prepared very quickly for a wide range of SIGINT support for the U.S. tactical units scheduled to go into Cambodia.

The 509th Radio Research Group hastily readjusted its mission and directed preparations of its subordinate units during the last week before the incursion through the first week of the cross-border operations. Additionally, COL Westendorf, the Group's Deputy Commander, set up a daily reporting system from the 175th Radio Research Company

to the 509th RRG for relay to the Group's Commander, COL William W. Higgins, who was at that time attending the USASA Commanders Conference in Washington, D.C.

Representatives from the 509th RRG visited J-2 MACV on 3 May and offered to provide any SIGINT analytical assistance or special studies that J-2 might require. Since MACV already received all information published by subordinates of the 509th RRG, technical assistance and interpretation from NRV, and analytical aid from the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam and DIA's Intelligence and Data Handling System, J-2 MACV decided that no additional assistance was required at that time.

The 509th RRG's Processing and Reporting (PAR) section organized a consolidated full-time analytical effort on Cambodia during this period. This included a pattern analysis study of ARDF fixes on Vietnamese Communist Rear Services elements within Cambodia and along the frontier for use by MACV and field commands. Additionally, on 1 May the 509th RRG coordinated with NRV for remote wiretap (CIRCUS ACT)³⁰; equipment in the event any wire lines were discovered.

The 509th RRG Advisory Section was engaged in the Vietnamization program during this time. In order to provide SIGINT training for three ARVN Special Technical Detachments (ASTD) supporting the ARVN 5th, 9th, and 25th Divisions during the Cambodian incursion, the 509th conducted a rapid on-the-job training course for four ASTD intercept operators and set plans to train additional operators. As a result of this training, two mobile LLVI teams were able to support the ARVN divisions during the incursion. The 371st and 372d RRCs devoted considerable time to this phase of the Group's Vietnamization work.

Mobile Team Concept: Direct Support Units

Perhaps more than in any other area of direct SIGINT support, the 509th RRG concerned itself with low-level voice intercept. In contrast to long range HF manual Morse, LLVI held out the prospect for intelligence which U.S. tactical commanders could use on an almost immediate basis.

The major part of VC/NVA communications in the Cambodian border areas opposite III CTZ consisted of long range HF manual Morse [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Since these communications could be heard from South Vietnam-based sites and required analytic processing prior to production of SIGINT from them, the 509th [REDACTED] looked to the 175th RRC, the CMA at Bien Hoa, to copy most [REDACTED] long range manual Morse communications emanating from Cambodia. [REDACTED]

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(b)(3)-18 USC 798
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[REDACTED] and voice communications were short range. Success in intercepting voice communications required, therefore, the deployment of mobile intercept teams from the DSUs to FSBs and LZs in the South Vietnam/Cambodia border region and as near to the targetted transmitters as possible.

Intelligence content of the voice intercept was such that it had to be made available to U.S. military units on a very rapid basis for the U.S. to gain an advantage from it. For this purpose, secure communications equipment was at times put into operation at the forward intercept sites. To obtain help, the voice intercept operators could then hand-log the intercepted transmissions and pass them over the secure communications circuit to the DSU or CMA for processing and reporting.

A mobile team's composition normally included two linguists. Occasionally, a team would also have a manual Morse intercept operator to check for short-range manual Morse communications, although none was to be detected during the incursion. The team's use of mobile voice equipment (R4-R5 and PRR-15 receivers) made air deployment practical.

To test its ability to conduct LLVI, the 509th RRG sent formal messages to the 303d RRB and 313th RRB requesting that they examine their present LLVI requirements against their capabilities, consider possible future requirements, and determine if additional resources would be necessary. When COL Westendorf learned that IFFV was planning an operation in BAs along the II CTZ frontier on 5 May, he informed the 313th RRB of this fact and also of the certainty that the 374th RRC would provide direct support. Westendorf further ordered the 313th RRB to be prepared to offer any kind of SIGINT support

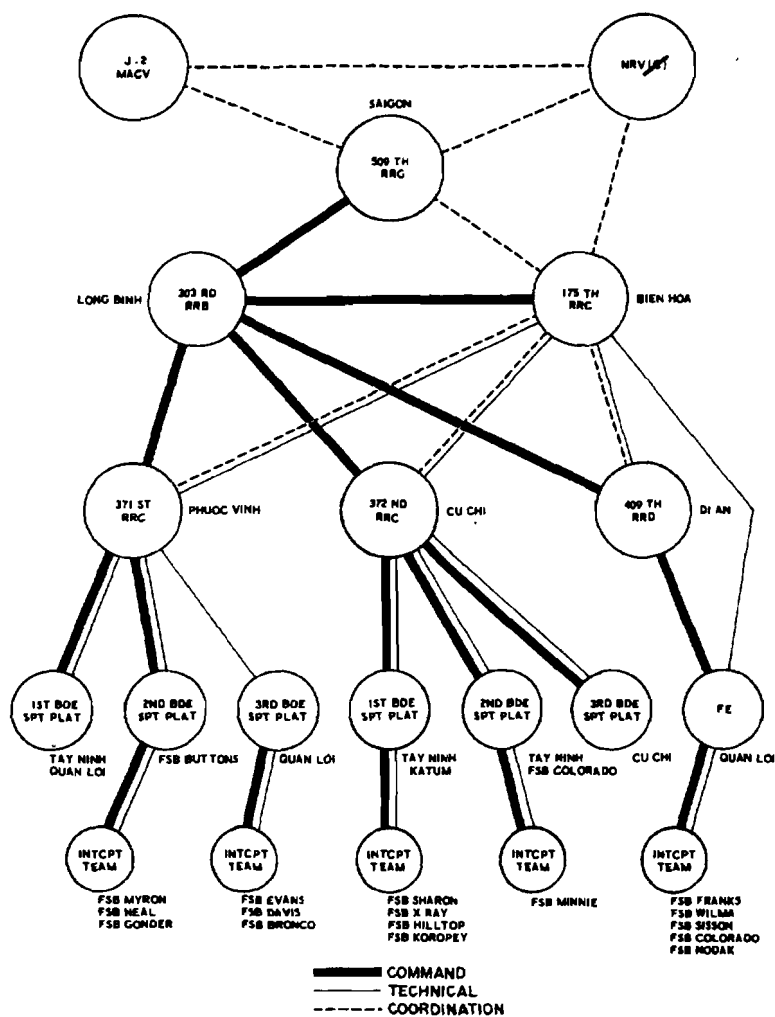


Figure 21.—III CTZ Ground SIGINT Support Organization

that might become necessary. Although realizing that nothing could be finalized at the time, the 509th RRG was determined that its subordinate units would be prepared to meet any contingency and offer any additional SIGINT support that could be arranged.

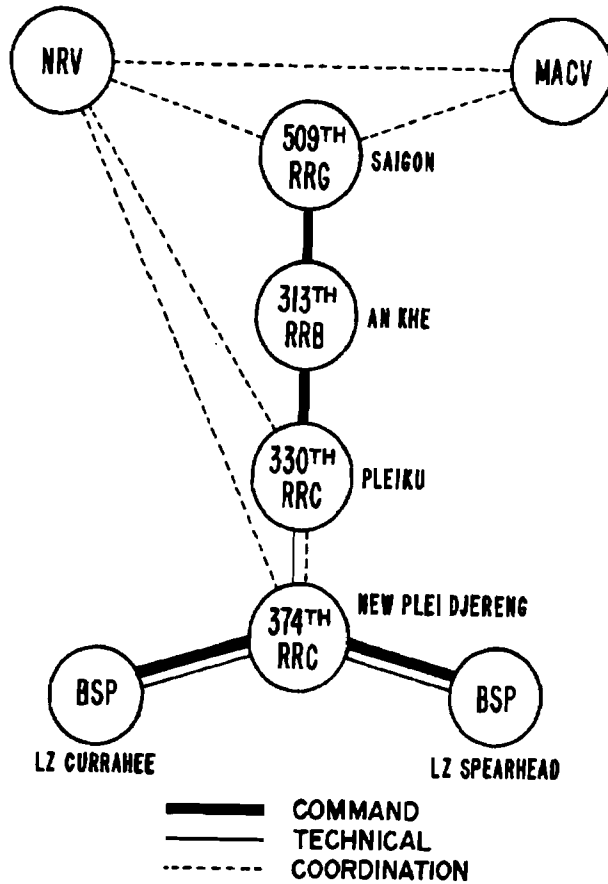
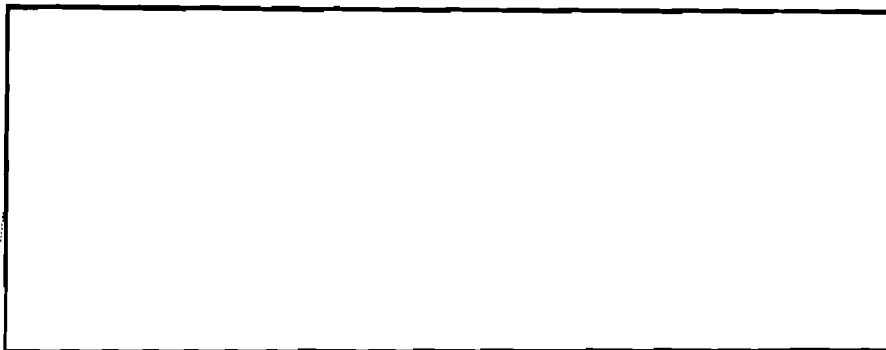


Figure 22.—II CTZ Ground SIGINT Support Organization



Freeze noted that no one then seemed to know if "forces will remain in the Cambodian area of operations for an extended period" or not.

On that same date, in order to discuss LLVI matters, Freeze visited the LLVI position (USM-636M), which had moved with the 11th ACR to FSB South I from FSB Burkett on 1 May, to evaluate its state of readiness. Then, along with CAPT Kucera and CAPT Stillwell, he went to Quan Loi and received briefings at the 409th RRD (Forward) and the 371st RRC (Forward). Freeze also visited the Tactical Operations Center for Task Force SHOEMAKER and suggested the

[REDACTED] He pointed out that since enemy units operated with low power and at low frequency, it was difficult to search for and develop targets—especially moving ones—elsewhere than in their immediate area. Furthermore, the tactical situation increased the likelihood that the enemy was relying on low-level communications, particularly plain-text voice.

On 3 May, COL Westendorf made an on-site survey of operations at the 175th RRC and then went to Phuoc Vinh for a briefing by the 371st RRC and 1st ACD. Upon his return to the 303d RRB, he conferred with LTC Freeze and once again emphasized the value [REDACTED]

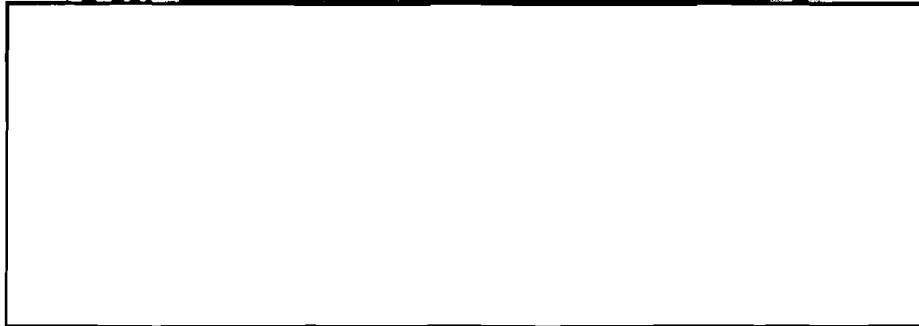
[REDACTED] That evening word came down that the 11th ACR was ready to move from FSB South I the next morning.

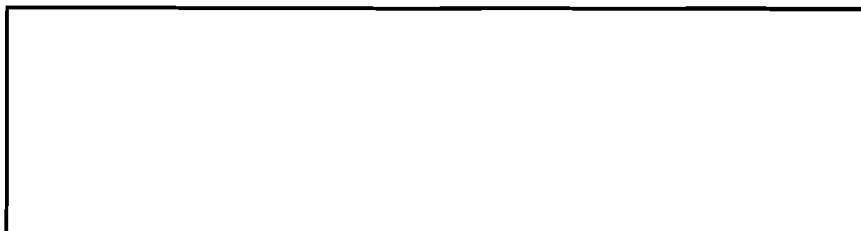
[REDACTED] (b) (1)
(b) (3) - 50 USC 403
(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

The 409th RRD's LLVI team (USM-636M) had been with the 11th ACR since November 1969 and had been successful in intercepting and exploiting the voice traffic of the NVA 7th Division. The team worked in an armored cavalry vehicle situated in the center of a conventional "covered wagon" circle of armor at FSB South I—the "assembly area" for the forthcoming U.S. attack into Cambodia. By 29 April, the 409th RRD had received official notice that the 11th ACR would cross the border, [REDACTED]



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(b) (3) - 50 USC 403
(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36



*Collection Management Authorities*

In the short days before the incursion and during the entire (b) (1)
of the operations in Cambodia, the 175th RRC in III CTZ and the (b) (3)-50 USC 403
330th RRC in II CTZ were instrumental in effecting a number of (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
changes to align the support system to commanders' needs. As Collec-
tion Management Authorities, these radio research companies performed
several vital functions [redacted]

collection management, decryption, translation, issuing of special and
summary reports, and recommendation for and technical tasking of
ARDF/Collection missions.

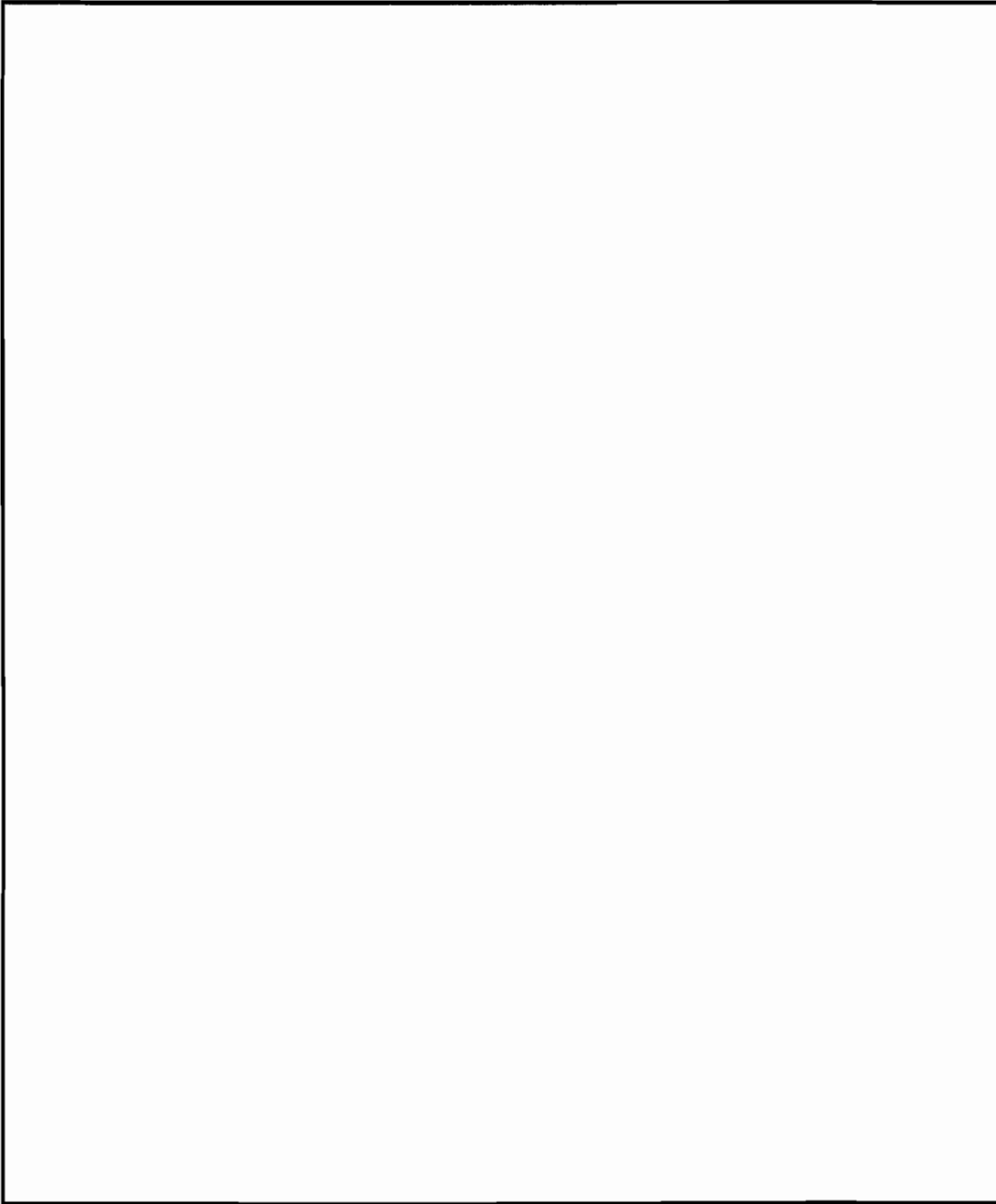
175th Radio Research Company The 175th RRC (USM-626)
became a nerve center for SIGINT support, and the early days of this
support were crucial. [redacted] (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36 an NSA crypto-linguist
assigned to NRV with duty at the 175th RRC during the incursion,
spoke of support rendered by the CMA in the week before the U.S.
forces entered Cambodia:

"When the 303d RRB asked the 175th RRC for a list-
ing of targets to be copied, [redacted] (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
(the PAR Officer) and I got together to figure out which VC/
NVA units would most likely be involved, and hence which
ones had to be copied through manual Morse or voice intercept.
We initially decided that the Hq, SR 2; Hq, NVA 88th Regi-
ment; and some elements of the VC 9th Division—all of which
were deployed along the Cambodia/South Vietnam border from
western Tay Ninh Province to northwestern Kien Tuong Prov-
ince—should be the high priority targets. Since most of the
targets chosen happened to be concentrated in the vicinity of
the Parrot's Beak area (where TOAN THANG—one of the
major U.S. operations in Cambodia—was to be conducted),

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ADJUSTMENTS IN THE SIGINT ORGANIZATION

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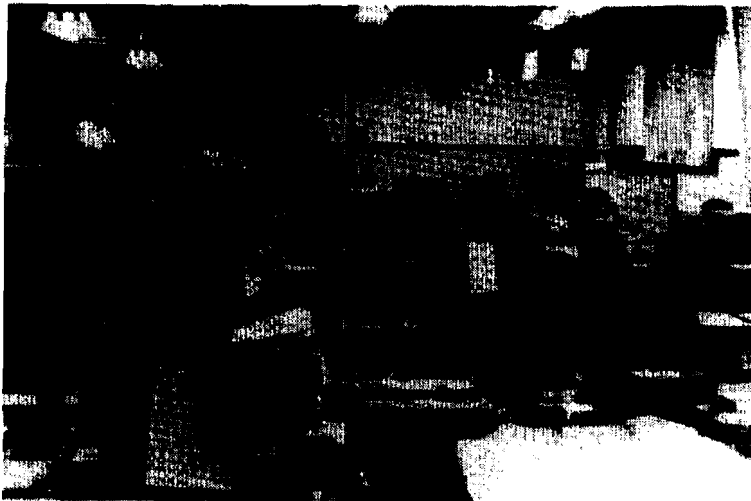
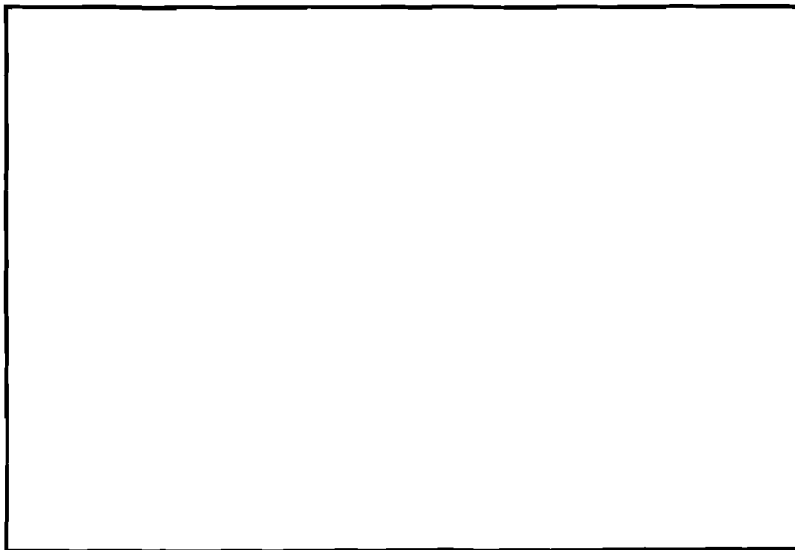


Figure 25.—Processing and Reporting Section, ASA's 175th RRC



While the 175th RRC was covering many of the enemy's key communications, COSVN and SVNLA terminals required particular emphasis. An OPSCOMM conversation on 1 May between the 175th RRC and NRV discussed 12 high interest targets³³, determined to be tactically important to MACV, IIFV, and division-level commanders.

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(b) (3)-18 USC 798
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CAST IRON³⁴ intercept and maximum ARDF coverage were under consideration for these targets. On the following day, the 175th RRC told all its DSUs [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] of the high interest in these targets and requested that individual stations prepare to make immediate mission realignments to place these targets on top priority for intercept and ARDF. It was not feasible on such short notice to prepare COMINT control messages realigning the entire intercept mission, but in the realization that this requirement was not necessarily for a short term, the Intercept Collection Management Section initiated action to completely realign the intercept mission of the 175th RRC and the DSUs it served.

On 3 May, [REDACTED] (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36 NRV called the 175th RRC via OPSCOMM to give "advance notice" of a requirement for maximum air and ground coverage on COSVN and Hq, SVNLA. A follow-up message directed that the 12 critical targets selected on 1 May be placed, in fact, on CAST IRON coverage and that the 175th RRC advise NRV of what coverage had to be dropped in order to accomplish the task.

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(b) (3)-50 USC 403
(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

Examination of the intercept mission revealed that CAST IRON coverage was impossible on all the specified targets. If attempted, it would preempt other important coverage at the 175th RRC and sacrifice much of the U.S. SIGINT mission in III CTZ. The 175th RRC resolved the problem by placing two targets (COSVN and Hq, SVNLA)³⁵ on CAST IRON coverage and placing the other 10 key targets on full cover³⁶ positions. This solution had the advantage of placing maximum coverage on the desired targets while allowing continuity on the remainder of the 175th RRC's mission. As a result of this action, COMINT control messages went to all stations placing the appropriate targets on top priority. The mission as realigned continued in effect throughout the period U.S. forces remained in Cambodia.

ARDF Additionally, the 175th RRC ensured that the appropriate technical data would be forwarded to aviation units for relay to aircraft fraggged over Cambodia. The Airborne Systems Management Section (ASMS) of the 175th RRC reviewed existing ARDF locations of key targets, suggested frag areas and optimum time-over-target for the realigned missions, prepared packages of technical data, and forwarded supplemental "cherry sheets" to the Army and Air Force aviation units. The quality of work performed by the ASMS from that point on was such that, in contrast to a normal acceptance rate of approximately 60%, J-2 MACV accepted 100% of the suggested frag areas and optimum time-over-target for the missions subsequently tasked.

On behalf of the G-2, IIFFV, LTC Freeze requested special emphasis on air-to-ground fix reporting and ground-to-air tip-offs. This tasking went to the DSUs, while the 175th RRC prepared to maintain continuous monitoring of this tip-off net. Also, especially close coordination between the 175th RRC and the ACC and aviation units in Saigon and Long Thanh was arranged. The ASMS passed at FLASH precedence all fixes on key radio terminals to NRV, the 303d RRB Liaison Officer (LNO) and the ACC. This information, in turn, went to J-2 MACV, IIFFV, and supported field commanders. Additionally, the 175th RRC worked up special technical data (based on the review of recent schedules, fixes, etc.) and forwarded revised "cherry sheets" on this data to the 146th Aviation Company (RR) in Saigon.

Radio Finger Printing The 175th RRC also made good use of Radio Finger Printing (RFP)³⁷. From RFP, the 175th RRC was able to determine the movement of COSVN to a new base area, probably in



Figure 27.—Special Identification Techniques Section, 175th RRC

reaction to the Allied advance into Cambodia. RFP with the aid of direction finding proved that COSVN did not move, however, all at once and in toto. Rather, COSVN used a "leap-frog" style of movement to relocate to the new base area. On successive days, COSVN moved about one-half of its communications with some subordinates, leaving the rest behind with other subordinates, until the move was completed. Through the use of RFP, the 175th RRC was able to determine which set of radio transmitters COSVN was using on particular days and which were being moved. Thus, the U.S. knew which element of COSVN was active and which was on the move. DIRNSA required that RFP on COSVN be given special emphasis with results forwarded to the Fort Meade agency daily. During May 1970, more than 100 RFP matches were made of COSVN terminals by the 175th RRC in response to this special emphasis project.

RFP was of help also in understanding changes in the Hq, SVNLA Tactical Control. The SVNLA radio terminals also had to relocate in

reaction to the Allied advance. Since the headquarters had to abandon some of its transmitters during the move, several of its subordinates, it was believed, had the opportunity to make use of those transmitters. Through the use of RFP, the 175th RRC was able to prove the colocation of such major functional elements of Hq, SVNLA as the Tactical Control, the Subregion Control, and the Rear Services Control.

RFP coverage was not restricted to COSVN and Hq, SVNLA. Information from RFP was gathered on almost every target believed to be of significant value to the military operations being conducted inside Cambodia. From the beginning of the incursion, the 175th RRC made approximately 1,000 recordings and of these matched over 800 to previous recordings. Without RFP, it would have been more difficult for SIGINT analysts to keep abreast of the movements of enemy units during the operations.

Reporting SIGINT reporting also took on a new emphasis at the 175th RRC. Instead of reporting on a 6-hour basis, the CMA began sending in its summary of significant developments on the 12 key targets to NRV (to be passed to J-2 MACV) every three hours to satisfy the input requirements for briefing COMUSMACV. It also continued to send the summary twice daily to IIFFV and daily to the 509th RRG. During May and June, about three-fourths of the translations issued by the 175th RRC dealt with the Cambodian operations: 350 translations were issued, and of that number 28 were sent electrically to the tactical user. The CMA also issued 50 Spot Reports primarily concerning NVA military communications.

In addition to the myriad of regular reports, the 175th RRC issued a daily summary report on SIGINT and collateral intelligence. This report, the single best source on SIGINT developments and general Radio Research activity for the III CTZ operations in Cambodia, required an average of over five man-hours daily for its preparation. The 175th RRC also made an extensive SIGINT study for the U.S. 25th Infantry Division of enemy elements located in its area of operations. Moreover, on 7 June the CMA was providing wrap-up reports on COSVN every 30 minutes to NRV for the latter's briefing of J-2 MACV. This report included times-up, times-down, and the units with which COSVN was communicating. One analyst had to be given

ADJUSTMENTS IN THE SIGINT ORGANIZATION

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the responsibility for full-time review of COSVN for the purpose of this report alone.

Putting it all Together During the first two weeks of operations, LTC Freeze used the 175th RRC conference room for a daily briefing, held each evening, mainly to filter command guidance down to subordinate units, but also to provide a medium of exchange for information. In this manner, the DSUs would forward reports on their preparations in progress and information passed to them from their supported commands. The CMA would discuss technical data, coordination, and reviews of III CTZ operations and SIGINT activity. Additionally, Freeze and his Executive Officer, LTC Claude E. Vannoy, would pass on material from IIFV, the major tactical field command responsible for the III CTZ area and adjacent border region of Cambodia. In this setting complex questions and answers were exchanged efficiently. (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36 also remarked on the daily briefings: "A lot of questions, if conducted over normal channels, such as CRITICOMM, might have taken days to resolve. Through the evening briefings, these problems could be approached and resolved immediately."

The result of such close coordination within the Radio Research structure was that key personnel—commanders, lower-level decision makers, technical experts and specialists—belonging to the 509th RRG, the 303d RRB, and subordinate Radio Research units, were well informed of all aspects of the operations on a personal and timely basis.

TIGER CUB By early June 1970, it was evident that more intelligence was required on the increased enemy presence in the central, northern, and western portions of Cambodia. Cambodian Government reports, [redacted] were indicating numerous contacts and sightings of VC/NVA elements in those areas. The Cambodian reports were often inflated and at times contradictory, making a sound evaluation of the enemy strength in those regions extremely difficult.

SIGINT specialists felt that deployment of a special collection/analytical team to [redacted] believed to be the best location from which to cover the target communications, might

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produce the desired intelligence. The 509th RRG arranged for the deployment—nicknamed Project TIGER CUB—and placed it under the technical control of the 175th RRC. And on 26 June, the TIGER CUB team went to []

The team consisted of a Warrant Officer (traffic analyst), one NCO traffic analyst, two traffic analysts, one NCO manual Morse intercept operator, and seven manual Morse intercept operators. USM-7 at Udorn, Thailand, also provided one traffic analyst and [] [] added one more manual Morse intercept operator. TIGER CUB was operational on 27 June with four manual Morse positions, three working 16-hours daily and one, 24-hours daily. During its first day of operation, it conducted hearability tests of known VC/NVA communications in the South Vietnam/Cambodian border region from the B-3 Front area of II CTZ to the northern part of IV CTZ. It then devoted its time to searching for new communications which might lead to the desired intelligence on VC/NVA units operating well into the interior of Cambodia.

By 30 June the project was using an HF DF flash position to obtain location data from the Southeast Asian direction finding net. It also began to work closely with USM-626 (175th RRC) at Bien Hoa to determine how well that station could hear these new communications. When these communications were up, TIGER CUB alerted USM-626 via an OPSCOMM link, and that station attempted intercept of the same communications for the purpose of subsequent evaluation. Since USM-626 could hear most of these communications, the Bien Hoa station undertook regular collection of the communications developed by TIGER CUB.

By the time TIGER CUB completed its work at [] at the end of July 1970, the project had isolated and developed 10 military intelligence communications links in central Cambodia and identified about 40 additional links believed to be serving VC/NVA forces in Cambodia for further development. The most significant accomplishment of TIGER CUB was, however, its isolation and subsequent development of the communications of Headquarters Phuoc Long Front, Cambodia, opposite South Vietnam's IV CTZ.

330th Radio Research Company Although U.S. operations remained centered on areas adjacent to III CTZ throughout most of the Cambodian campaign, operations against Vietnamese Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia also extended north to regions near II CTZ. In II CTZ, the 330th RRC (USM-604), located at Pleiku, provided SIGINT support to IFFV at Nha Trang and the U.S. 4th Infantry Division at Pleiku. Prior to the cross-border operations from II CTZ (known as BINH TAY), the 330th RRC received tasking from its senior, the 313th RRB, to provide a detailed in-depth study of the history of enemy units operating in BAs 609, 701, 702, and 740. This report included the 1969 Ben Het/Dak To and Bu Prang/Duc Lap campaigns, units operating in those BAs at the time, units which had previously operated in those BAs and their then current locations, all collateral information available and, finally, all ARDF fixes obtained since January 1970 on radio terminals (both identified and unidentified) located in those Cambodian sanctuaries.

During the Cambodian incursion, the 330th RRC maintained liaison with the SSO, 4th Infantry Division via a communications link to the deployed SSO team at the ARVN II CTZ Headquarters, Pleiku. It passed significant SIGINT (TACREPs, Spot Reports, ARDF fixes, etc.) over this link. Whenever the communications link was not available, it sent courier teams to the SSOs. The 330th RRC also provided all ARDF fixes of units in or near the BAs to the SSOs and to the U.S. 52d Artillery Group on an immediate basis to support firing missions of the Allied artillery units.

In addition, the CMA prepared a special daily report on combined SIGINT/tactical activity with input from the LNOs of IFFV and the 4th Infantry Division. Throughout the Cambodian operations, the 330th RRC, working with the 374th RRC, was able to issue SIGINT consistently to the supported tactical units through these SSOs and LNOs within two hours of receipt by the 330th RRC.

CHAPTER V

TOAN THANG

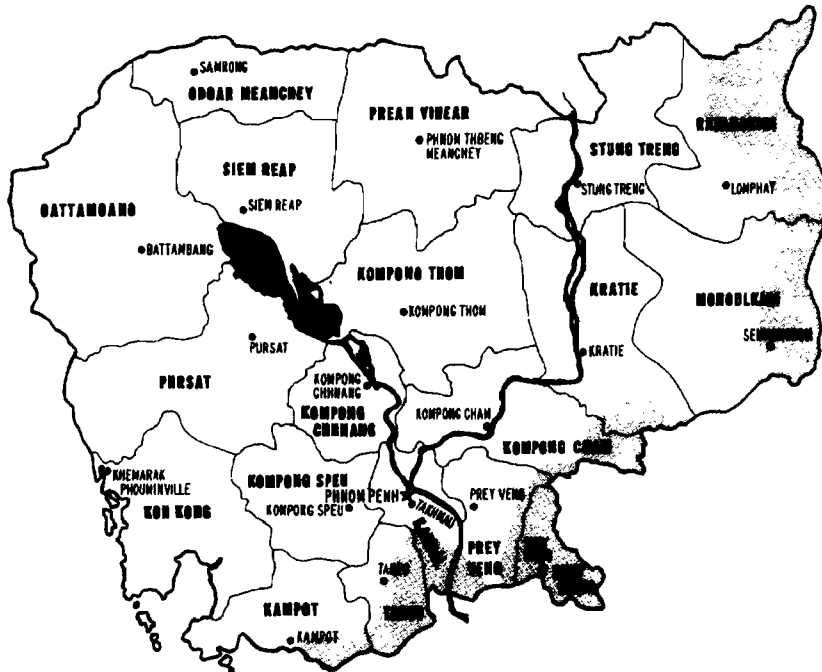
Just prior to the cross-border operations, Vietnamese Communist activity in South Vietnam's III CTZ had increased as phase one of Campaign X, the communists' primary task for 1970, began. Campaign X, as specified in a COSVN resolution, called for psychological rather than military programs to discredit the South Vietnamese pacification machinery and promote political pressures for a U.S. withdrawal from the war. The campaign would, according to communist expectations, create a significant change in the war and attain the goals that could not be achieved through the 1968 TET offensive.

During the two-week period before U.S. units entered Cambodia, ARVN units had staged several operations in the border regions opposite III CTZ, the area designated for TOAN THANG operations. From 14 to 17 April, the CG of South Vietnam's III CTZ conducted TOAN THANG 41 against enemy sanctuaries in the Angel's Wing area of Cambodia. On 29 April, the ARVN launched another operation—Operation ROCKCRUSHER (later designated TOAN THANG 42)—in the Parrot's Beak area of Cambodia. This operation employed a sizeable combined force of ARVN cavalry, infantry, and rangers. An extension of Operation ROCKCRUSHER (designated TOAN THANG 500) followed in the same area as TOAN THANG 42.

Finally, between 6 May and 30 June, Operation TOAN THANG 46 was conducted by the ARVN 5th Division. This division clashed

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with elements of the similarly numbered enemy division, the VC 5th Division, and rear services elements in BA 350.

During the two-month period of the incursion, SIGINT intercept of Cambodian and Vietnamese Communist communications and ARDF locations of communist control authorities and main force units provided U.S. commanders with a continuing view of the effect of their operations on the enemy units. The intelligence information also

gave the commanders specific information on the basis of which they could focus their tactical moves on the ground or request supporting air strikes.

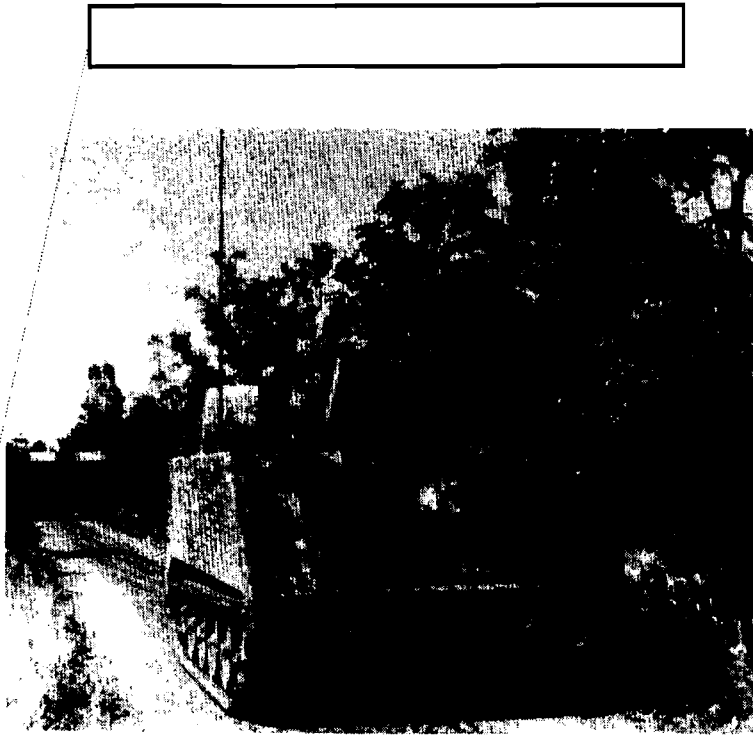


Figure 29.—Troops of the 11th ACR on a search mission in the Fishhook area of Cambodia

The U.S. 1st ACD and 11th ACR conducted two of the TOAN THANG operations during the two-month incursion. On 1 May, a combined U.S.-ARVN force kicked off TOAN THANG 43 in the Fishhook area of Cambodia. Originally designated Task Force SHOEMAKER, on 5 May the Task Force concept was dissolved and the 1st ACD assumed direct control of the operation, with the 11th

ACR, and the ARVN 1st Infantry Regiment and 3d Airborne Brigade utilized as part of the attacking forces. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The operation was targetted against enemy elements in BAs 352 and 353, and against COSVN and its Hq, SVNLA and their associated and subordinate elements, as well as enemy rear services and the NVA 7th Division. This initial and most significant operation terminated on 30 June and resulted in seizure of "The City"—the main COSVN logistics center and depot which served the Vietnamese Communists in Cambodia and III/IV CTZ of South Vietnam.

On 6 May, TOAN THANG 45 (originally called GIONG-TO) was initiated by the 1st ACD—its second cross-border operation. This operation, which terminated on 30 June, was directed against BA 351 northeast of Bu Dop and led to the discovery on 8 May of a very large ammunition and weapons storage area which became known as "Rock Island East." [REDACTED]

Following the Enemy in SIGINT

[REDACTED]

COSVN SIGINT was of particular value in following the successful moves made by the Vietnamese Communist COSVN headquarters to avoid capture. In early May, COSVN and two of its elements appeared to be in the general vicinity of the COSVN second alternate base area. Through 4 May, communications between COSVN and its subordinates continued at a normal level. [REDACTED]

Indications of the establishment of an emergency redeployment site or new base area came on 4 and 6 May when COSVN was located near XU 2229, approximately 25 km northeast of the COSVN secondary base area and about 1 km beyond the 30 km zone prescribed for U.S. operations by President Nixon. Confirmation of the establishment

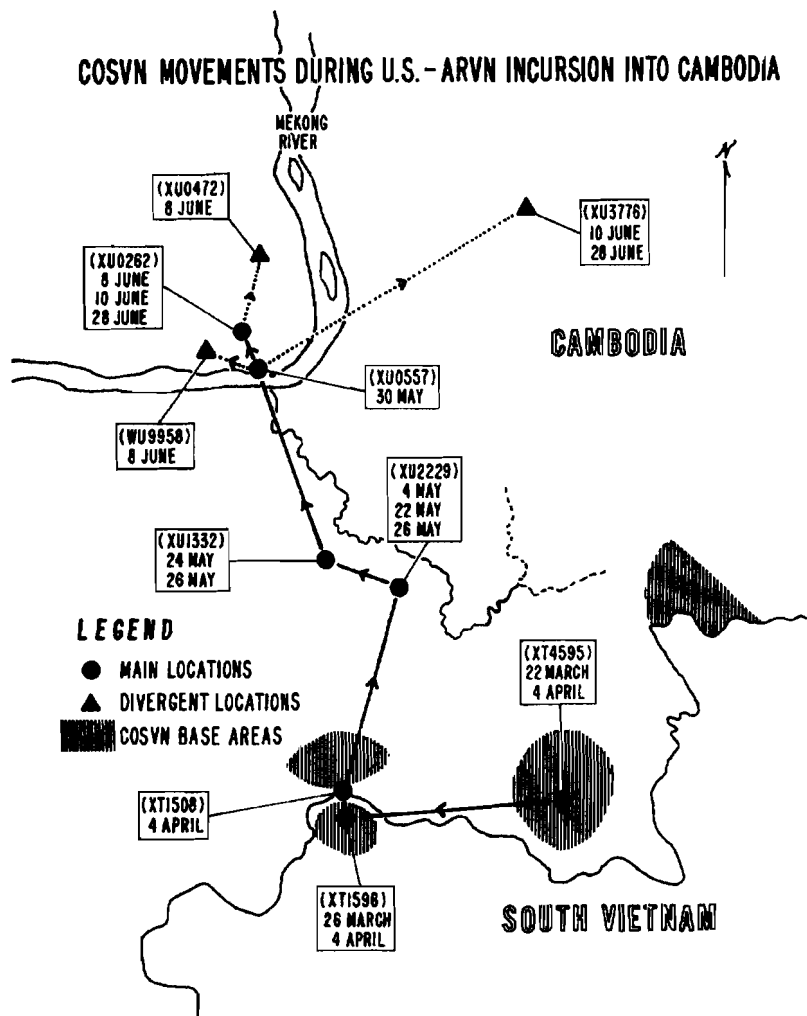


Figure 30.—COSVN Movements During U.S.-ARVN Incursion into Cambodia

of this new base area appeared on 10 May when COSVN was fixed by ARDF in the same general area that, according to captured documents, had been designated by COSVN as an emergency redeployment site. The COSVN staff sections, according to these documents, were also to deploy in a staggered line along a stream located in the Kompong Cham-Kratie Province border area, and the COSVN Command Group was to deploy to an area east of the stream. The new site had landlines for communications between the staff sections and the Command Group; runners and Morse communications were to serve for interstaff communications. This site served as COSVN's principal operating area through 22 May.

Interruptions in communications indicate, of course, changes in an enemy's military status (redeployment, for example), and in May interruptions in COSVN communications occurred on a number of occasions. To judge from the SIGINT made available in May, COSVN had effected a retreat from its secondary base area to a new area north of the Mekong River in southwestern Kratie Province in three stages, in each instance probably as the result of Allied sweeps. After moving from the secondary base area to the second alternate area in early May, COSVN then redeployed farther into Cambodia to establish an emergency redeployment site where it remained until approximately 22-23 May. On 24 May, COSVN was known to have moved some 10 km more to the west to XU 1332, away from the controlled zone of American operations. Two days later, COSVN was positioned in divergent locations: one terminal was located near XU 1331, while another terminal was positioned at XU 2126, about 10 km to the southeast in the vicinity of the emergency redeployment site. Completing the last stage of its move, by 30 May COSVN had again moved about 27 km to the northwest near XU 0557 and established an operating area north of the Mekong River. On 8 June, COSVN terminals were located in its new primary operating area near XU 0262 and again in two divergent locations: at WU 9958 about 5 km to the southeast, and approximately 10 km to the north at XU 0472.

Divergent locations were again evident on 10 and 28 June: one COSVN terminal was located in its new established area near XU 0262, while another terminal was located approximately 45 km to the

northeast at XU 3776. Although several instances of divergent locations were noted during June, in each case one of the locations was in COSVN's operating area north of the Mekong River near XU 0262, where COSVN apparently maintained its command and control functions at a reduced level throughout the month of June.

Allied operations into eastern Kompong Cham Province in late April and early May disrupted the communications of COSVN's Hq, SVNLA organization to such an extent that the headquarters was able to maintain only limited communications from 30 April through 10 May. After 10 May, communications stabilized but operated at a reduced level as the components of Hq, SVNLA settled into new areas in southern Kompong Cham and southern Kratie Provinces.

Interruptions in the communications of Vietnamese Communist intelligence units also flagged for U.S. attention changes in SVNLA's major military intelligence authorities, the SIB and the MIB. By 8 May, both of these authorities had moved well north into Cambodia. Despite the interruptions, several of the intelligence units were taking note of the Allied operation. SIB SVNLA units reported serious losses and disruptions as a result of the Allied operations. In an evaluation of the Allied sweeps, SIB SVNLA stated that, although "we were taken by surprise and suffered a number of losses, we were able to protect our forces and facilities."

NVA 7th Division In accordance with the strategy to be followed for Campaign X, a general and southwestward shift had occurred during early April in the operating areas of three major Vietnamese Communist divisions operating in the III CTZ border region. The NVA 7th Division, a target of TOAN THANG 43 and the U.S. 1st ACD and 11th ACR, was one of these divisions. It moved from its old area in northern Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces southwest to the Fishhook area to assume, it appeared, the mission of the VC 9th Division which had departed the area. In late April the Hq, 7th Division and its subordinate NVA 141st Regiment moved into Kompong Cham Province and from there threatened FANK forces in the Mimot area and around Snuol in Kratie Province.

When Allied cross-border operations began, the NVA 7th Division's mission was to defend the VC/NVA BA's. Failing to secure them,

major units of the division, as followed in SIGINT, scattered to various locations. Elements of the 7th Division's 141st Regiment in Snuol retreated to Kompong Cham Province. The division's 209th Regiment made a number of moves throughout May to evade the Allied forces. Another regiment, the 165th, emerging from a long period of inactivity, launched attacks against Allied forces in southern Kompong Cham and Kratie Provinces in early May. A 165th Regiment element was under orders on 3 May to continue striking in the vicinity of Tan Kan in the Fishhook area and to coordinate and protect communist storage facilities. Meanwhile, another NVA 165th Regiment element had orders to strike an ARVN airborne battalion in the area.

By early June, the Hq, 7th Division had relocated about 25 km north-northwest of the COSVN main BA to the vicinity of the COSVN emergency redeployment site, while a detached element of the 7th Division and a detached element of its 209th Regiment were detected about 50 km to the northeast in the general operating area of the VC 5th Division.

VC 5th Division As part of the division of effort for Campaign X, the VC 5th Division (objective of TOAN THANG 46 and ARVN forces) acquired responsibility for an area extending from the Binh Long-Phuoc Long Province boundary to the II CTZ. The mission of the enemy division was to provide security for the 86th RSG and its BA along the Cambodian border and to attack Allied installations in Phuoc Long Province.

As Allied units crossed the border, the VC 5th Division, as followed in SIGINT, underwent a reorganization, and in addition to the formation of new regiments from its 275th Regiment, the division also drew elements from its NVA 174th Regiment to form the nucleus of a new 6th Regiment, composed of VC/Khmer Communist troops. On 4 May, the VC 275th Regiment had moved, ARDF indicated, about 34 km to the west-northwest to about 25 km east-southeast of Kratie City. On 5 May, the 5th Division's NVA 174th Regiment was in that same general area, about 16 km northwest of its 23 April position. By 6 May, according to a Cambodian military message, approximately 600 VC were occupying Kratie City and other detachments of VC were spread out along the Mekong River just north of the city. VC/NVA troops were assembling trucks to transport their forces northward for an attack on

TOAN THANG

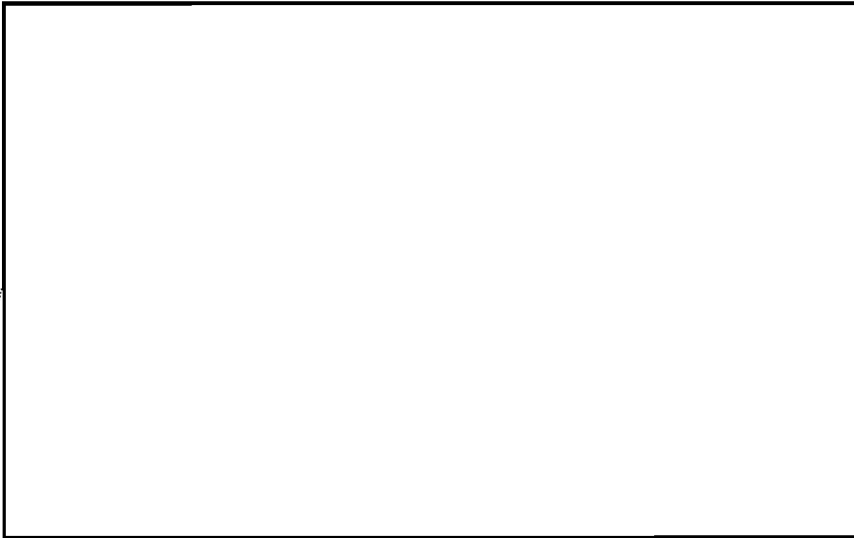
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Stung Treng, according to the Cambodian message. Prisoner interrogation reports later identified the units participating in the attack and occupation of Kratie City as elements of the 5th Division's VC 275th Regiment and the new 6th Regiment.

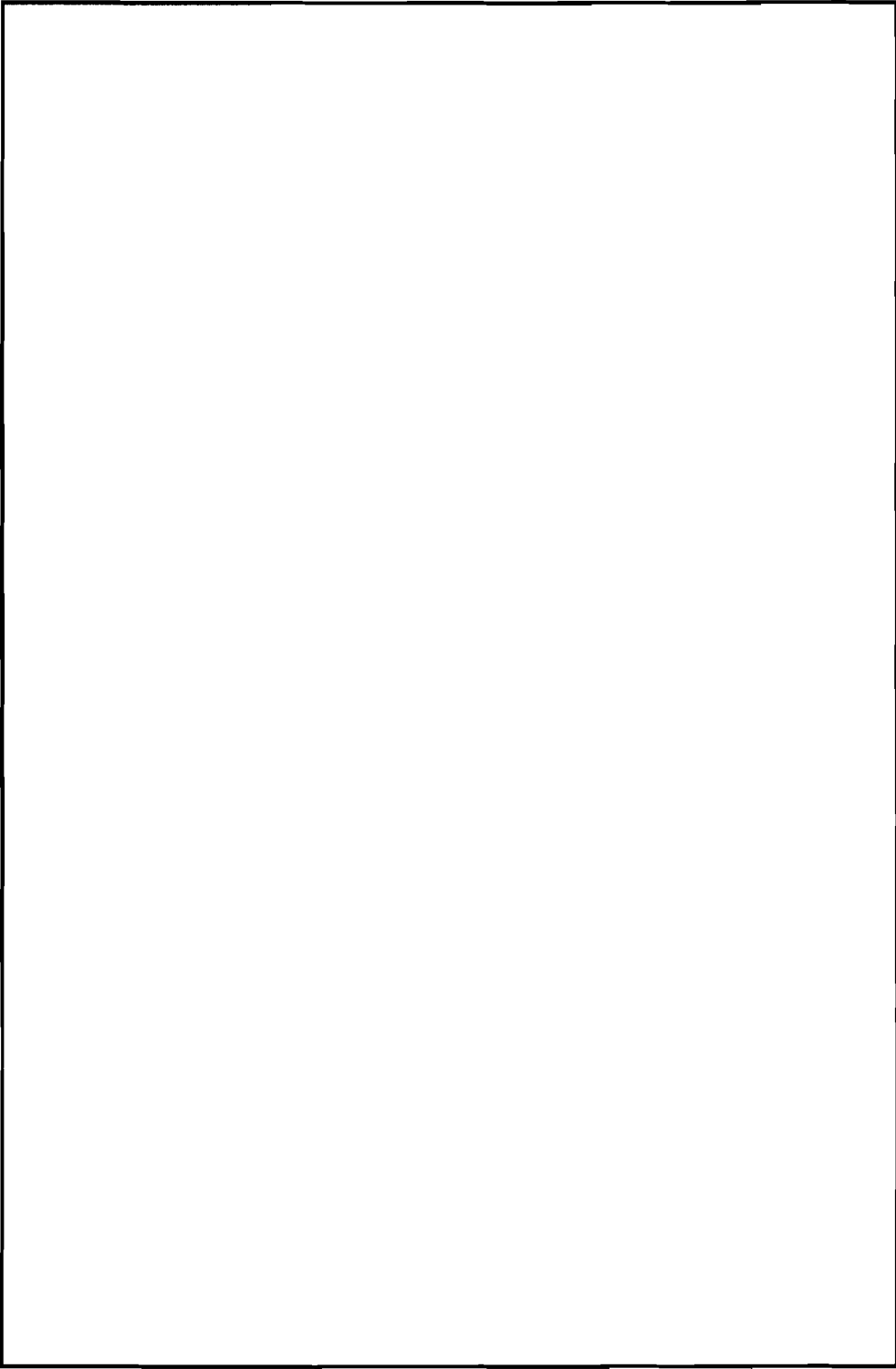
By the end of the second week of May, the VC 5th Division headquarters had relocated about 20 km northwest into Kratie Province where it remained with its NVA 174th Regiment until the end of the month. By 21 May, the main body of the 5th Division's VC 275th Regiment moved to the vicinity of Kratie City, an element of the regiment deploying meanwhile to the area of Siem Reap in western Cambodia. By the end of June, the 275th Regiment had temporarily disbanded, and its personnel formed the newly organized VC/Khmer Communist units. Also, by the end of June, the 5th Division's new 203d Regiment (which absorbed the 275th Regimental element at Siem Reap) carried out attacks above the Tonle Sap near Angkor Wat in Siem Reap Province.

The 409th Radio Research Detachment

The support unit for the 11th ACR, ASA's 409th RRD had its home base at Di An, South Vietnam, and a forward element at the 11th ACR's Tactical Operations Center (TOC) at Quan Loi, South Vietnam. Typically, Radio Research Detachment personnel worked closely

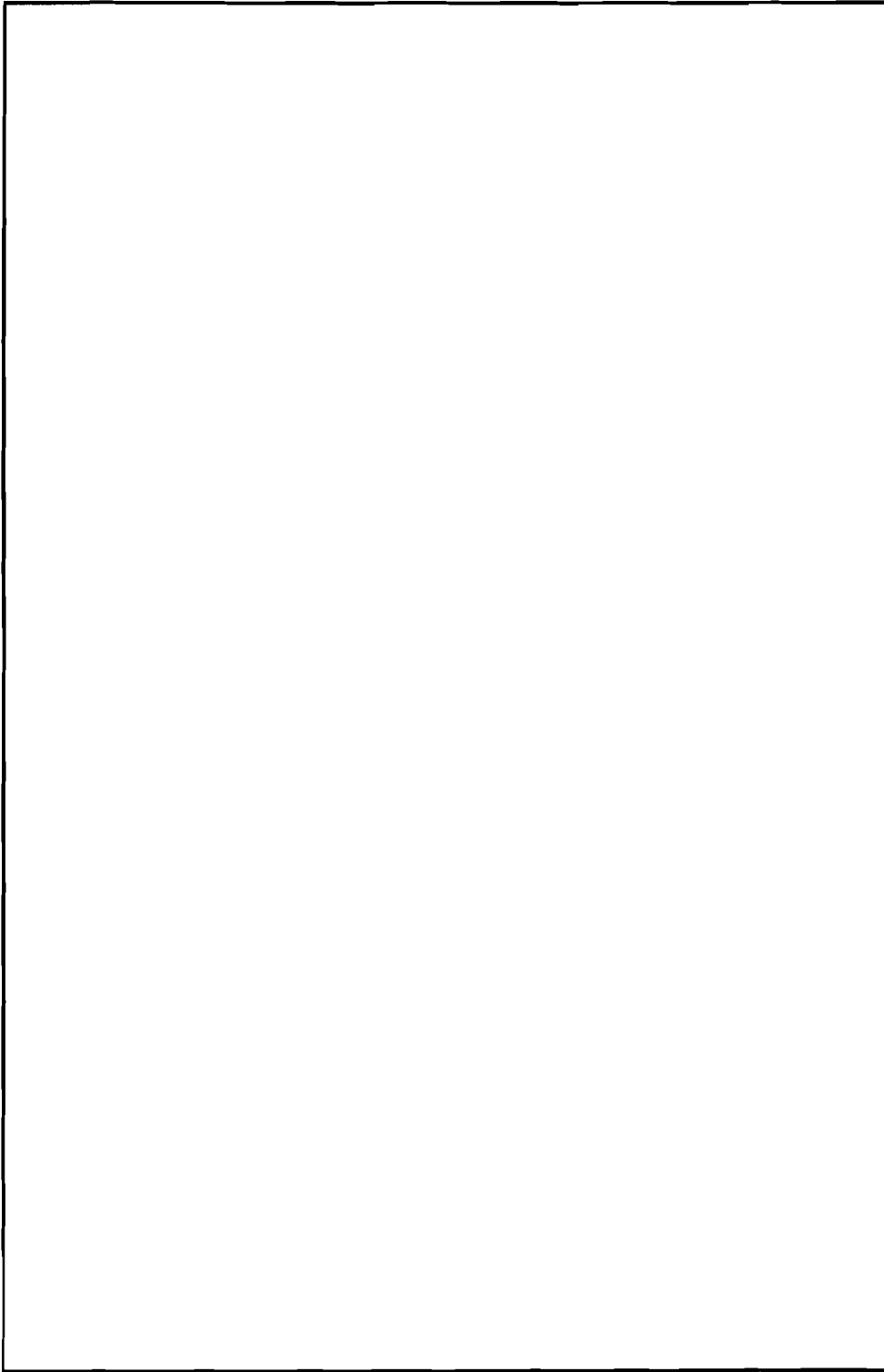


with the commanders and staffs of the U.S. tactical unit they supported. During the Cambodian campaign, the 409th RRD provided numerous plots and overlays of enemy units—one a 3-month study of enemy positions—to the S-2, 11th ACR. Much of the 409th RRD service consisted of passing ARDF fix information to the tactical command. The 409th RRD's forward element at Quan Loi monitored the ARDF net and passed the information to the TOC, through appropriate channels, immediately upon receipt. It also passed to the TOC SIGINT produced from intercepted messages or received from other units of the U.S. SIGINT system. The TOC sanitized the information to disguise its SIGINT source and forwarded it on to the U.S. combat units which could take advantage of it. The OIC of the 409th RRD's forward element also provided, on a daily basis, a SIGINT briefing for the command elements of the 11th ACR.

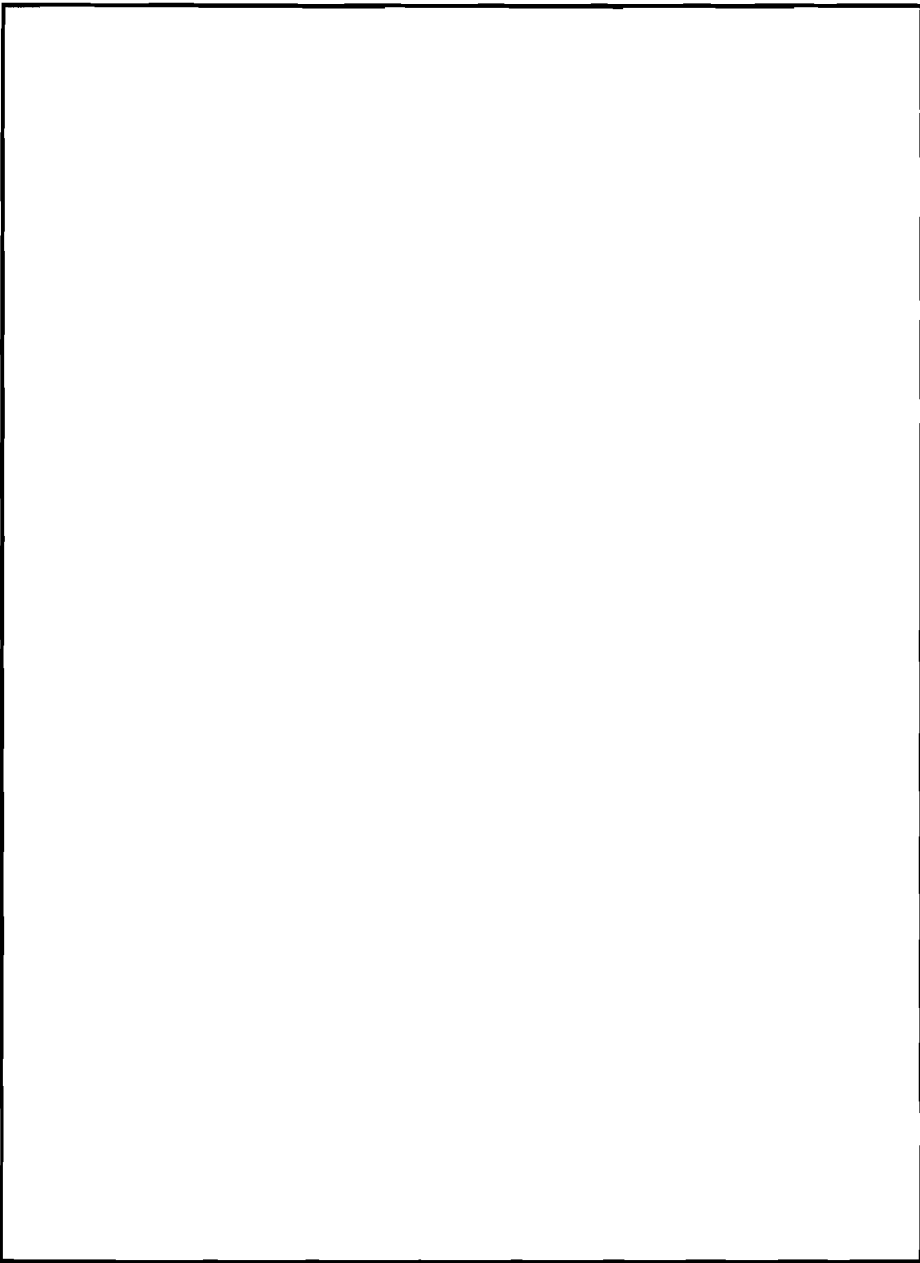


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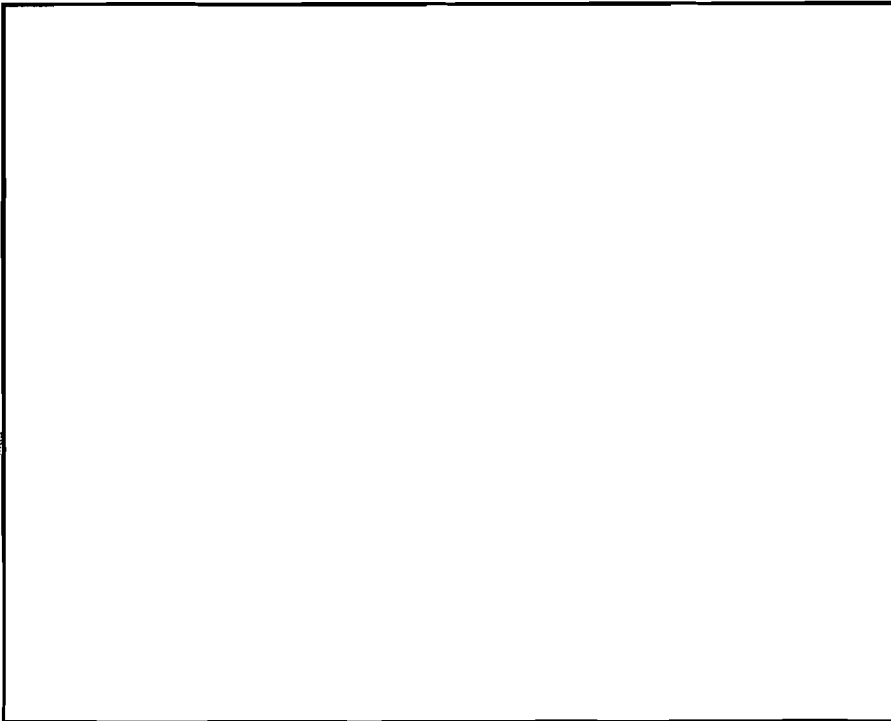
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day, 19 June, USM-636M intercepted a number of messages of tactical value and passed additional SIGINT on the forthcoming attack to the command. The most important of these latter messages concerned a planned attack against a night defensive position of the 1st Squadron,

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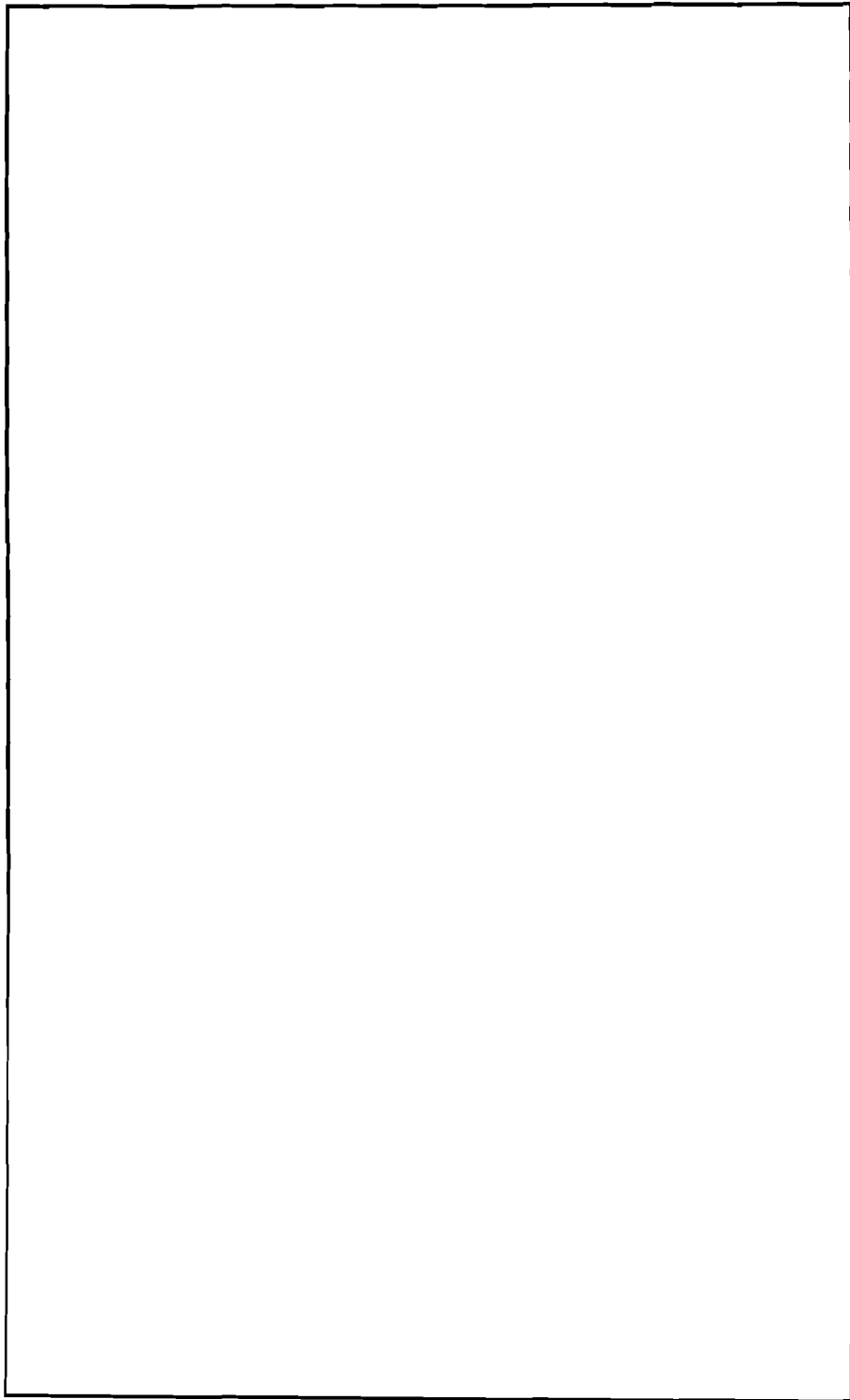
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11th ACR. After processing the message, USM-636M reported the information directly to COL Starry and MAJ James E. Struve (S-2, 11th ACR), who in turn notified the 1st Squadron to expect a heavy attack by fire and possible ground probe no later than 2300H hours that same evening. The command established a 100% alert and had time beforehand to arrange for air and artillery support and reinforcement troops.

As expected the night defensive position received 82mm mortar, rocket-propelled grenades and oversized 107mm rockets from 2145H to 2240H hours that night. During the attack, 80% of all enemy ordnance impacted within the 1st Squadron's perimeter. After the attack, on 21 June, COL Starry estimated that the U.S. casualties (3 killed and 25 wounded in action) during the attack had been cut at least in half as a result of the advance warning from SIGINT.





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try Division)⁴⁰ to Quan Loi, South Vietnam, and from there electrically to the 175th RRC at Bien Hoa for processing. Tapes of intercepted/recorded voice traffic went by the heliborne courier directly to the 175th RRC for processing.

With the increased intercept by the LLVI team at FSBs Colorado and Nodak, the 175th RRC deployed a RATRACE team to the 409th RRD element at Quan Loi on 17 June primarily to expedite processing of the intercepted communications of the NVA 7th Division's 165th and 209th Regiments. During the period of their stay at Quan Loi, the RATRACE team issued 46 translations of tactical interest, the majority dealing with planned enemy ambushes, patrols, reconnaissance and strikes against Allied forces in the Fishhook area.

On 22 June, ASA's USM-626 at Bien Hoa requested airborne collectors over the Fishhook to pass intercepted NVA 165th and 209th Regiment messages via air-to-ground communications directly to the RATRACE team at Quan Loi. This procedure made possible more timely read-out of [] messages from the airborne intercept and more rapid availability of the SIGINT to the tactical commander. Prior to this arrangement, intercepted messages could not be made available [] until after the aircraft returned to its base and the tapes could be transcribed. Lag time, from time of intercept to time of receipt of the SIGINT by the tactical commander, was cut in this case from 24 to 3 hours.

After the RRD teams had returned from Cambodia, the S-2, 11th ACR took special note in a message to the CO, 409th RRD of the measures which expedited the delivery of SIGINT to his command:

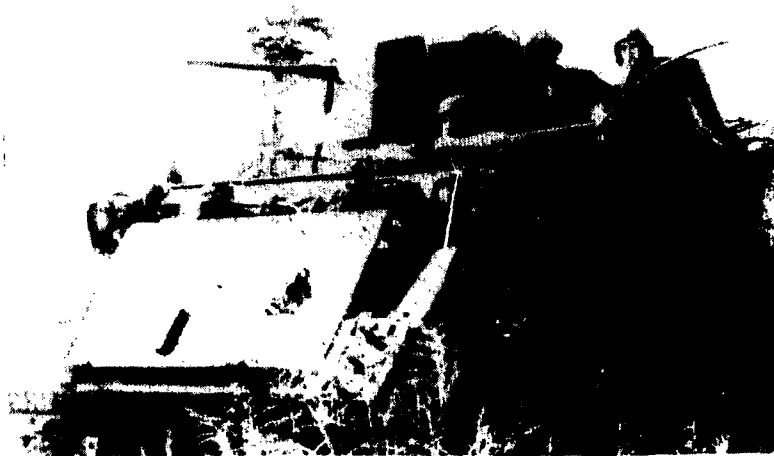
"During the latter part of the operations in Cambodia a RATRACE team assisted the 409th Radio Research Detachment in reading LLVI traffic from enemy units operating against the regiment. Since the team was colocated with the Detachment's forward element at Quan Loi, highly perishable information was able to be acted upon. Outstanding examples of the benefits derived from the procedure were the 50 minutes early warning one troop received of an impending attack by fire and the locations of ambush sites the enemy intended to use during the next day's operation. In both cases, the information

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would have been of no value if it had been processed through normal COMINT channels.

"In addition to these two specific instances the information provided by the combined efforts of the LLVI team and the RATRACE team significantly increased the 409th Radio Research Detachment's capability to provide the commander with timely information concerning enemy locations and intentions."

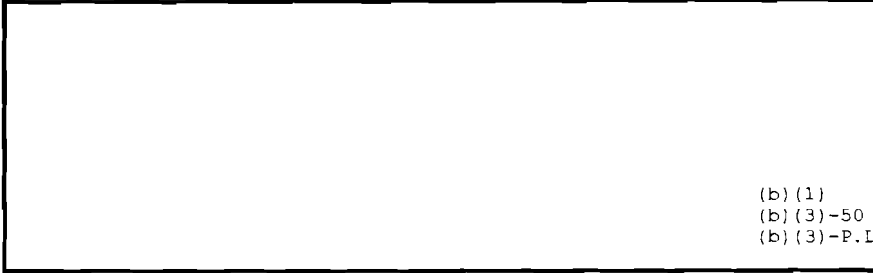


The 371st Radio Research Company

As in the case of the 409th RRD, the 371st Radio Research Company's men worked closely with the 1st ACD command. In a parallel structure, the 371st RRC was located with the 1st ACD headquarters at Phuoc Vinh, South Vietnam, and the DSU's Brigade Support Platoons were situated with the 1st ACD's brigade headquarters at Quan Loi and Song Be, South Vietnam.

By the time U.S. forces entered Cambodia, the 371st RRC had established a secure communications circuit for the exchange of SIGINT between the 1st ACD and its bri-

gades. However, only standard tactical VHF lines were established, for command and control purposes, between the Brigade Support Platoons and their forward teams in Cambodia. This created problems, according to CAPT Kucera, who explained:



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During the Cambodian incursion, the 371st RRC gave daily SIGINT briefings to the CG and G-2, 1st ACD. In turn, the G-2 provided the 371st RRC with timely non-SIGINT intelligence and information on projected 1st ACD moves, including the command's plans for FSBs. Information of this kind helped the 371st RRC to plan for its mobile intercept team operations. The 371st RRC's support of 1st ACD during the incursion derived primarily from ARDF and LLVI; it also included some information from wiretap.

ARDF More than any other source, mission success of the 371st RRC depended on the ARDF program. The ASA unit tipped-off the ARDF platforms when enemy communications were active, providing a sharp increase in manual Morse tip-offs during the period of the incursion. At the same time the unit monitored the communications from the ARDF platforms, recording approximately 3,000 ARDF fixes and cuts on enemy transmitters—167 of which were significant enough to warrant TACREPs. The 371st RRC passed ARDF information to the 1st ACD Tactical Command Post at Quan Loi and plotted all fixes on the G-3, 1st ACD's situation map. In addition, the ASA unit included ARDF locations of both identified and unidentified targets in the SIGINT part of the 1st ACD daily briefing. The careful attention given to ARDF-derived locations of enemy transmitters directly subserved 1st ACD's planning for his own units and also his requests for B-52 bombing missions against hostile units in his area of operations.

During the TOAN THANG series of operations, three COMBAT COUGAR and one COMBAT COUGAR ZULU aircraft from the 6994th Security Squadron, two U-8 and one LAFFING EAGLE aircraft from the 146th Aviation Company (RR), and a LEFT BANK platform controlled by the 371st RRC were providing ARDF on enemy terminals in the Fishhook area, over a region immediately south of the Dog's Head, over the Parrot's Beak, and over the northern Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces. Of these, the Fishhook had the highest priority because it was the best area for continuous, 24-hour coverage of communications targets nominated for CAST IRON treatment.⁴¹ Diversion of ARDF platforms to the Fishhook was necessary at times from missions over the Parrot's Beak and northern Binh Long/Phuoc Long Provinces in order to maintain the emphasis on the Fishhook targets.



Figure 39.—Cache of mortars and ammunition found in "The City" by the 1st ACD

Important to the success of the ARDF program was the operations of the LEFT BANK platform. During the period 3 to 6 May, the LEFT

BANK position controlled by the 371st RRC obtained 75% of the total ARDF fixes in the Fishhook area. On 3 May, a LEFT BANK helicopter from the 371st succeeded in locating a main base area of COSVN known as "The City." On the next day, a "Pink Team,"⁴² sent to overfly the area identified by LEFT BANK, observed a vast, well-hidden complex of bunkers and military structures adjacent to the northwestern tip of Binh Long Province, South Vietnam. Further aerial reconnaissance disclosed that these structures and bunkers were interconnected with bamboo matted trails. One pilot also reported seeing numerous antennas in the southern part of the complex, but subsequent aerial reconnaissance failed to substantiate his antenna sightings.

Acting on the intelligence acquired on "The City," an ARVN unit struck into the northern half of the complex and found numerous storage bunkers containing large quantities of arms and ammunition,



Figure 40.—Ammunition and equipment uncovered in "The City" by the 1st ACD

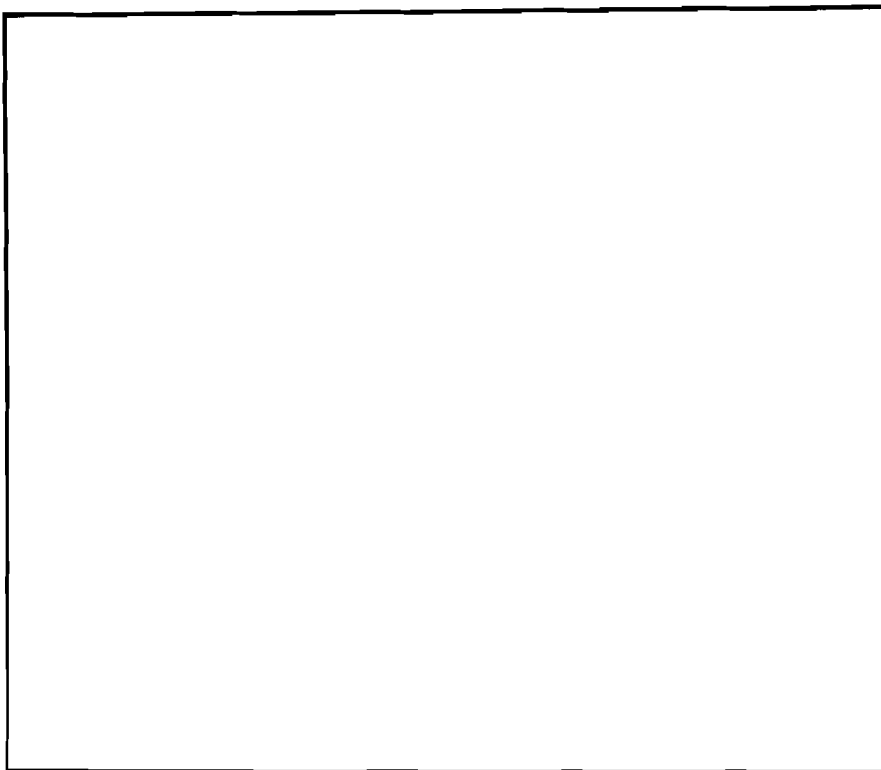
quartermaster clothing and equipment, food stocks, and medical supplies. The ARVN unit also reported that the enemy had only recently evacuated the scene. Throughout the period 5 to 13 May, 182 storage bunkers, 18 mess halls, a training area, and a small animal farm were discovered in the complex. By vacating this important complex and others, the Vietnamese Communists had lost, according to estimates made later, enough rice to feed about 25,000 soldiers for one year at full rations (1.5 pounds per day) or enough rice to feed about 38,000 men for one year at reduced rations (1 pound per day); enough weapons to equip 55 full strength VC infantry battalions (350 per battalion); enough crew-served weapons to equip 33 full strength VC infantry battalions (76 per battalion); and enough mortar, rocket and recoilless rifle rounds to conduct between 18 and 19 thousand average attacks by fire (averaging 7 to 8 rounds per attack).

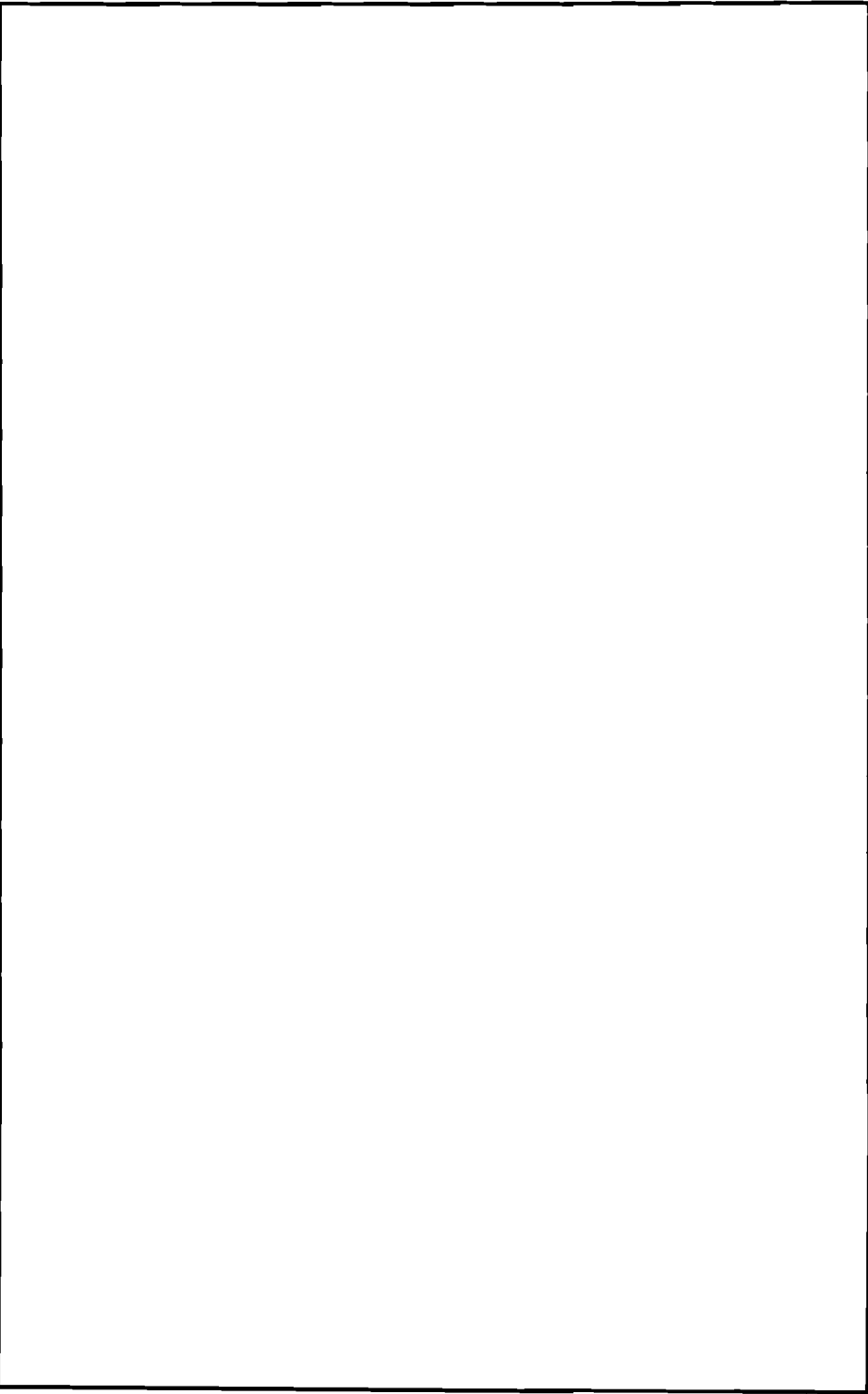
LEFT BANK made a number of contributions other than identifying "The City." Referring to LEFT BANK's work for his division, MG George W. Putnam, Jr.⁴³, in a letter to BG Herbert E. Wolff, CG, U.S. Army Security Agency, Pacific, wrote:

"Our DSU, the 371st RRC, has provided the First Team outstanding support with Project LEFT BANK, a helicopter RDF platform. Before and during the 1970 Cambodian cross-border operations, the terminal locations provided by the 371st, and the intercepted messages, were used to plan directions of our movements, and kept us reliably informed as to the whereabouts of enemy elements. Project LEFT BANK has proved to be one of the most responsive intelligence collection assets available to this Division. It fills the gaps in fixed-wing ARDF programs, actually providing the only coverage for more than three quarters of the First Team's Area of Operations. At the present time, while we are engaged in furnishing U.S. Air Cavalry support to the Vietnamese in Cambodia, LEFT BANK is providing us with reliable, timely information on locations of enemy elements which are being engaged by our Air Cavalry troops, often within one hour from the time of fix. I consider this to be a very effective linking of an intelligence asset with operational forces."

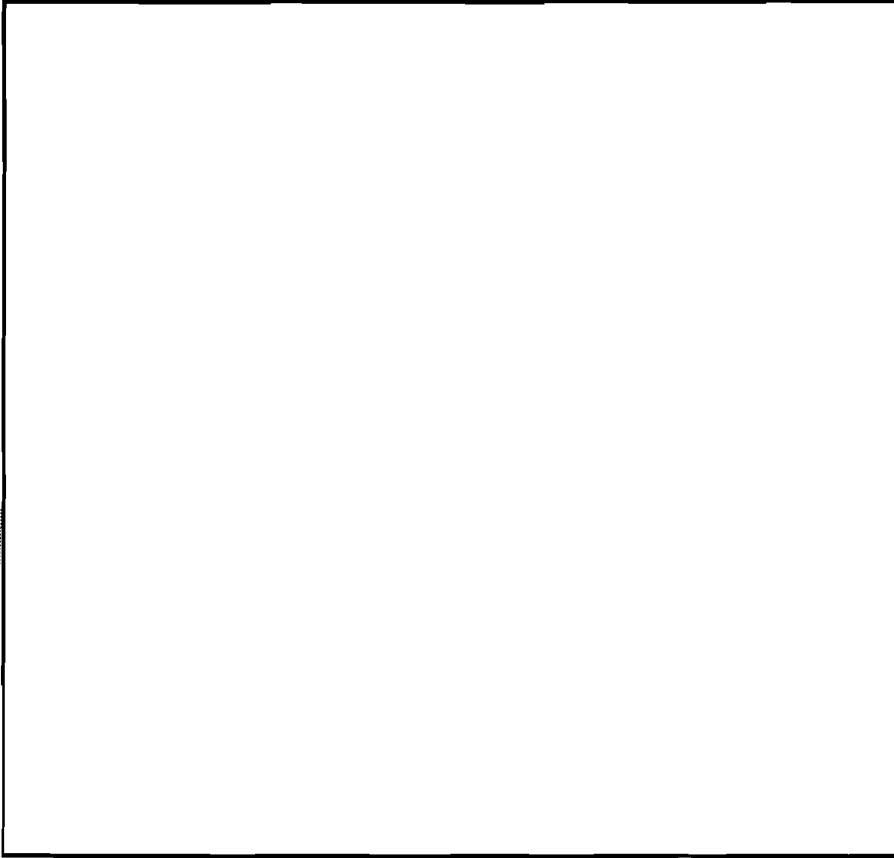


Figure 41.—Track-mounted vehicles of the 11th ACR move through
Snuol following the battle for that city





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(b) (3)-50 USC 403
(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36



The U.S. reaction force succeeded in making light contact approximately 5 km from the FSB and exchanged fire with an unknown enemy element. There were no U.S. casualties, and enemy losses were not ascertained. The reaction force then returned to the FSB that night, and a possible attack on FSB Evans had been averted.

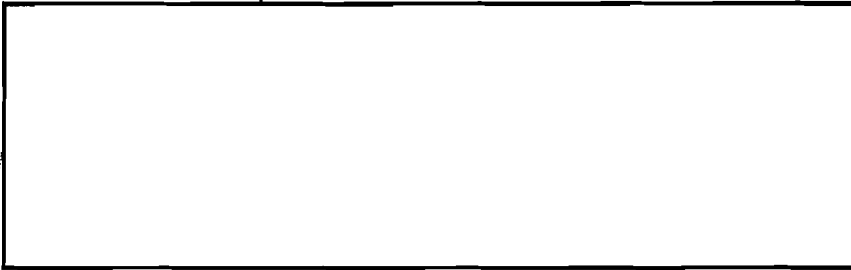
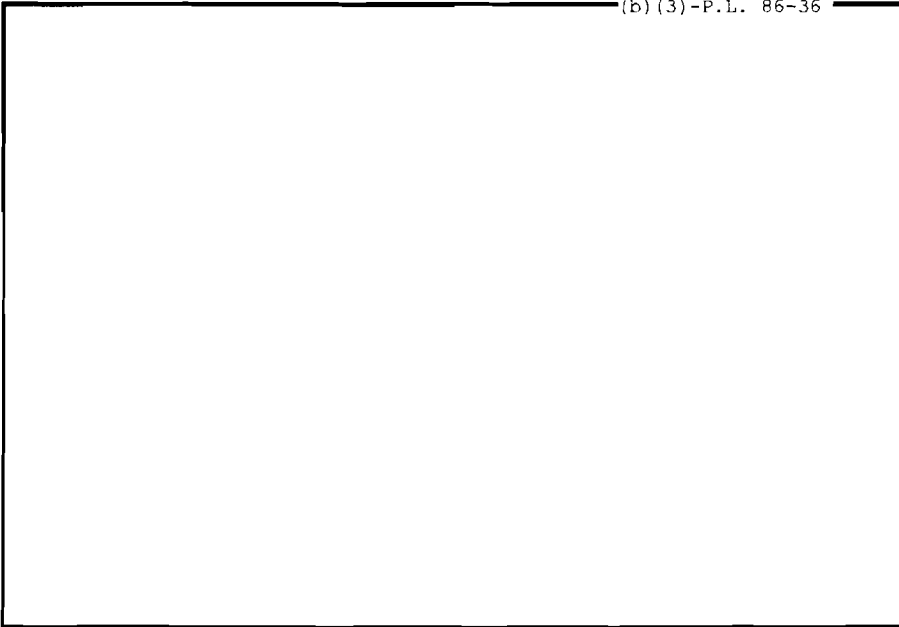




Figure 43.—Troops of the 11th ACR sweep the area near Snuol in search of enemy

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[REDACTED]

Most of the wire found during the Cambodian incursion proved to be that used by the enemy in finding their way from bunker to bunker rather than that used in communications. U.S. ground troops generally followed any wire they found in both directions, destroying the wire as they went. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the 3d Brigade's company learned that a battalion-sized force was assembling in the area with a 75mm recoilless rifle company to attack FSB Ready that night.

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The U.S. 25th Infantry Division [REDACTED] was the attacking force in the TOAN THANG 44 operation (originally named TAI CHOP) which lasted from 6 to 14 May. The U.S. move was against the Hq, VC 9th Division and its subordinate regiments—particularly the NVA 95C Regiment—and logistical units in the vicinity of BAs 354 and 707.⁴⁵ The operational area either included or was adjacent to known locations for COSVN and the NVA 7th Division. The U.S. 25th Division worked, accordingly, with the U.S. 11th ACR and 1st ACD in operations against COSVN and NVA 7th Division regiments. Prior to crossing the border, the U.S. infantry

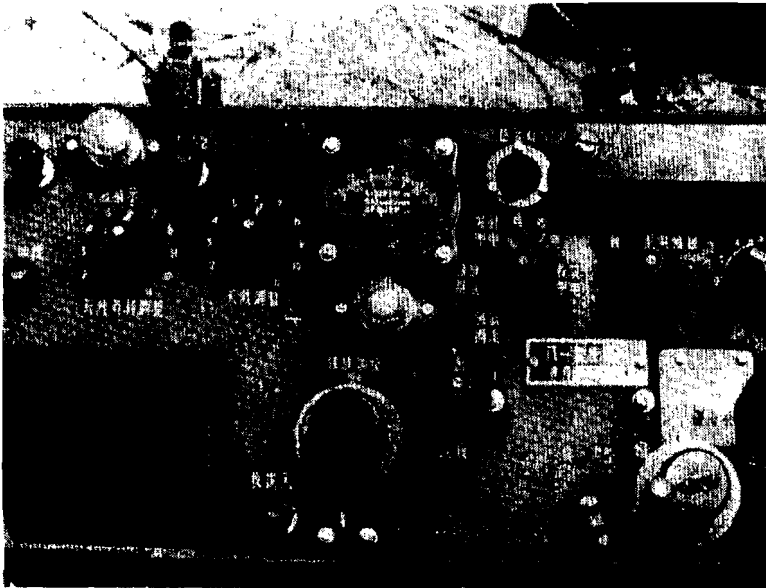


Figure 44.—One of the several Chinese manufactured radios captured by the U.S. 25th Infantry Division during a ground sweep in Cambodia

division operated from a line one mile inside South Vietnam paralleling the border from the Dog's Head in northwestern Tay Ninh Province southward to the Parrot's Beak in northeastern Kien Tuong Province. During the initial stages of the offensive, the division's 1st Brigade advanced to Katum, while its 2d Brigade moved northward to Thien Ngon.

Following the Enemy in SIGINT

For Campaign X, the VC 9th Division had moved southwest from its operating area in the Fishhook and northern Tay Ninh Province border into a new area that extended from just south of the Dog's Head to the Angel's Wing and which included the western portion of Tay Ninh Province. Some elements of the division had been positioned, it appeared, against Cambodian units to the west of the Angel's Wing.

In late April, the 9th Division's 95C Regiment made several attempts to disrupt the Allied buildup for the incursion by conducting

harrassing attacks in northwestern Tay Ninh Province. The NVA regiment then withdrew into Cambodia where its sister VC 271st and 272d Regiments were already operating.

By mid-May, the Hq, VC 9th Division had moved 15 km westward into Cambodia from its previous position on the Tay Ninh border. In the meantime, the VC 271st Regiment deployed about 35 km to the northwest from its early April location in the Angel's Wing. This regiment offered considerable resistance to the Allied forces when the incursion began and battled ARVN forces in Cambodia for more than a month. The VC 272d Regiment effected a zigzag pattern of movement and by the end of May had positions just outside of the Chup Plantation southeast of Kompong Cham City. A detached element of the Hq, VC 9th Division also went to the same general area at that time, apparently to control the activities of the 272d Regiment. By early June, the entire VC 9th Division had moved deep into Cambodia and had concentrated in the Chup Plantation area, which the division used as a springboard from which to launch offensive activity against Kompong Thom City during June.

The 372d Radio Research Company

From its home base at Cu Chi, South Vietnam, the 372d RRC, as ASA's support unit for the U.S. 25th Infantry Division, had provided SIGINT—particularly, ARDF-derived locations of enemy units—



Figure 45.—Home base of ASA's 372d RRC at Cu Chi, South Vietnam

which was useful to the infantry division in formulating its plans for the incursion. The division had focused its attention on ARDF-derived locations of the Hq, VC 9th Division, the Hq, NVA 95C Regiment, and a number of unidentified units along the western Tay Ninh Province border.

When LTC Freeze received word on 5 May from COL McKee, G-2, IIFV that the 25th Infantry Division would mount operations against BAs 354 and 707, he went to Cu Chi to confer with CAPT Carter, CO, 372d RRC. Carter presented his plans for support of the infantry division to Freeze: to move the 372d RRC's brigade support platoons along with the brigades as they moved out; to move the least productive LLVI sites as far forward as possible; to establish a radio-telephone position with an AN/GRC-142 receiver at Thien Ngon for secure communications between the Hq, 25th Division and its forward TOC; and to have a RATRACE team withdrawn from FSB Gettysburg to support the 25th Infantry Division if needed. CAPT Carter's plans gained approval and went into effect.

After MG Edward Bautz, Jr., CG, 25th Infantry Division, informed the 372d RRC of his interest in the communications of the NVA 7th Division, which had become a target for his division, the 372d RRC deployed its 1st Brigade Support Platoon from its normal operating area at Tay Ninh Base Camp to Katum, and its 2d Brigade Support Platoon from FSB Colorado to Tay Ninh Base Camp in order to support their respective tactical units. Both platoons had [redacted] and ARDF tip-off positions mounted in mobile vans to provide specific support for the Brigade Liaison Officer of each tactical unit. The 372d RRC at Cu Chi also sent one MOQV-3 and one MRPV-3 van¹⁸ to Thien Ngon Base Camp and to Katum during May in support of 25th Infantry Division elements. During the incursion, the SIGINT support depended upon the successful ARDF program and also upon the LLVI teams which the 372d RRC sent into the field.

ARDF Airborne direction finding went to work on all the main targets of the 25th Infantry Division. The 372d RRC's ARDF pattern analysis assisted the division in planning its penetration into BA 354 and after that into nearby BA 707. Commenting on SIGINT, the Assistant G-2, 25th Infantry Division singled out "enemy unit iden-

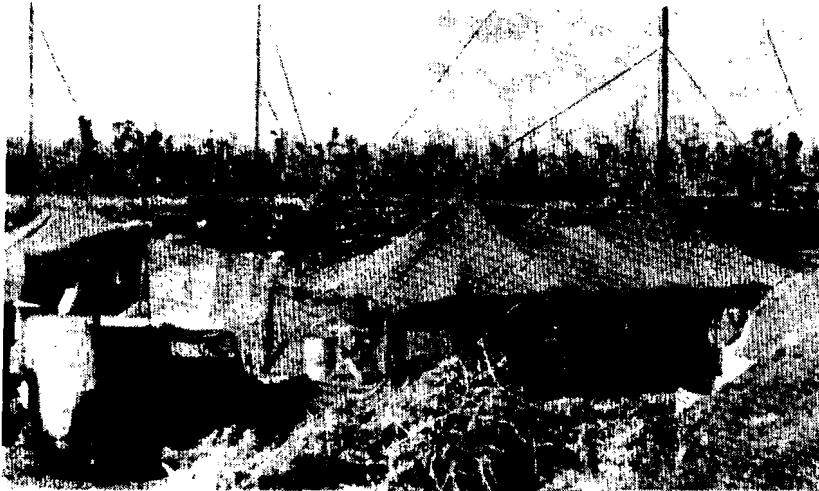


Figure 46.—The Tactical Operations Center of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division at Katum, South Vietnam

tifications and pinpoint locations, especially in Base Area 354'' as having contributed significantly to the success of the division's operations. He added that SIGINT was considered the major factor in formulating an accurate intelligence picture throughout the Cambodian campaign, particularly in operations against COSVN.

The 372d RRC also passed ARDF-derived locations of the Hq, NVA 7th Division and VC 9th Division and their subordinate regiments to the U.S. infantry division on a regular basis during the incursion. On 15 May, the Hq, NVA 95C Regiment was fixed, for example, within a 300 meter radius just below the Dog's Head inside Cambodia. The fix was in the hands of the Division G-2 forty minutes later, and shortly thereafter four aircraft made sorties into the area identified by the fix. Results included several structures destroyed, and planes in the vicinity received ground fire the next day.

In the final stages of the advance into the Fishhook area, ARDF pointed to several large Vietnamese Communist caches. The 25th Infantry Division found one of the largest caches uncovered during the incursion in an area marked off on the G-2's map by a cluster of ARDF fixes.

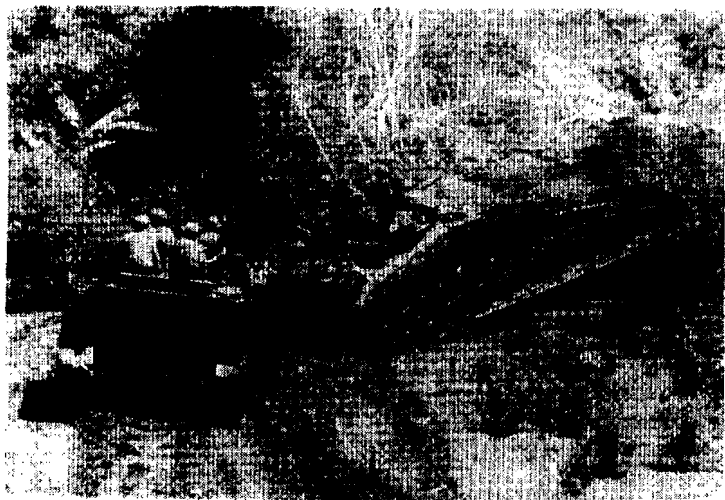
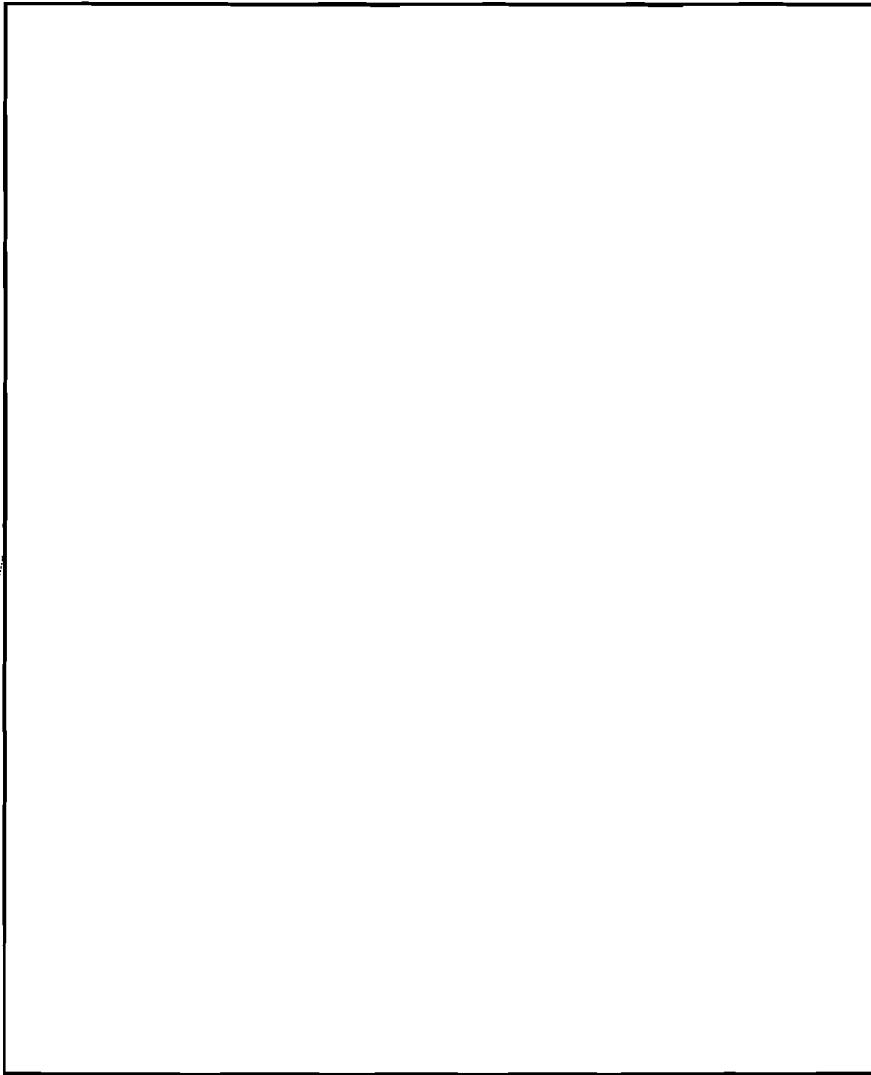


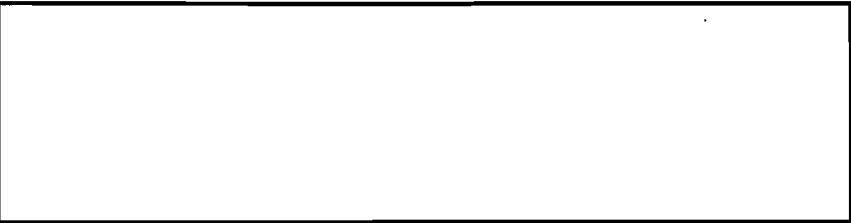
Figure 47.—Troops of the 11th ACR in track-mounted vehicles cross a porta-bridge near Snuol

ARDF-derived locations passed by the 372d RRC to the 25th Infantry Division became the basis for many of the B-52 bombing missions in the Fishhook/Dog's Head areas. Important among these were B-52 strikes made against COSVN and SVNLA's intelligence apparatus, the MIB and the SIB. During a briefing for LTG Davison and MG Bautz on 19 May, a principal topic of concern was the cessation of communications by COSVN two days earlier. Midway through the discussion, the 372d RRC interrupted the briefing to indicate that COSVN was attempting communications. Within 15 minutes the DSU reported to MG Bautz the location of COSVN as derived from ARDF, and the command was then able to plan B-52 strikes on the basis of that intelligence.

Successful application of ARDF to military moves depends at all times, it should be noted, on the desire and the ability of the tactical commanders to react quickly to the timely intelligence being given them. In the early stages of the incursion particularly, because of one exigency or another, the military reaction, it appeared, was not fast enough to assure success. From 2 to 9 May, 11 fixes on the Hq, VC 272d Regiment and more than 40 ARDF fixes on COSVN went to

the 25th Infantry Division's G-2. The fixes on COSVN failed to elicit a rapid military response by the U.S., and COSVN had the time to effect a 20 km relocation on 9 May. Despite SIGINT reporting of COSVN's relocation, major U.S. air and ground attacks then took place in the area previously occupied by COSVN in a futile attempt to capture or neutralize COSVN.





On 20 June, another team went to Katum where the 25th Infantry Division was engaged in combat with the NVA 7th Division's 165th and 209th Regiments. This LLVI position remained at Katum until the end of June to work on any intercepted traffic found to be associated with enemy moves against the 25th Infantry Division during its withdrawal from Cambodia. Intercepted traffic from the 165th and 209th Regiments revealed, in several cases, the disposition of the regiments and tactics planned for that withdrawal period. The information on planned attacks and ambush sites was placed immediately in the hands of the U.S. division officials.

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CHAPTER VI

BINH TAY and CUU LONG

The BINH TAY or "Peace to the West" series of operations took place along the II CTZ border of South Vietnam and the adjacent Cambodian provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri. The CUU LONG or "Mekong River" operations, meanwhile, took place along the IV CTZ border of South Vietnam and within the Cambodian provinces of Prey Veng, Kandal, and Kampot.

BINH TAY

In BINH TAY I, commencing on 5 May, two brigades of the U.S. 4th Infantry Division [redacted] and two regiments of the ARVN 22d Infantry Division comprised the Allied attack force. After B-52 ARCLIGHT missions had pounded the area, elements of the U.S. 506th Airborne Battalion, 1st Infantry Brigade, and the ARVN 40th Regiment attacked NVA tactical and rear services units in BA 702 in Ratanakiri Province west of South Vietnam's Kontum-Pleiku Province boundary. Several days later the remainder of the 1st Brigade followed and met heavy enemy fire but managed to enter the northern and central portion of the BA. The rest of the ARVN force followed, closing the southern part of the BA. U.S. elements withdrew on 16 May, and the operation terminated on 25 May.

Lasting from 14 to 27 May, BINH TAY II employed elements of the ARVN 40th and 41st Regiments of the 22d Division in operations at BA 701 just to the south of BA 702. The objective here was the destruction of logistical, medical, and training facilities.

BINH TAY III, beginning on 20 May and lasting to 27 June, principally employed elements of the ARVN 8th Cavalry Division in a move overland into the southern half of BA 740 in Mondolkiri Province opposite northwestern Quang Duc Province, South Vietnam. Other Allied units assaulted the northern portion of the BA.

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

CAMBODIA

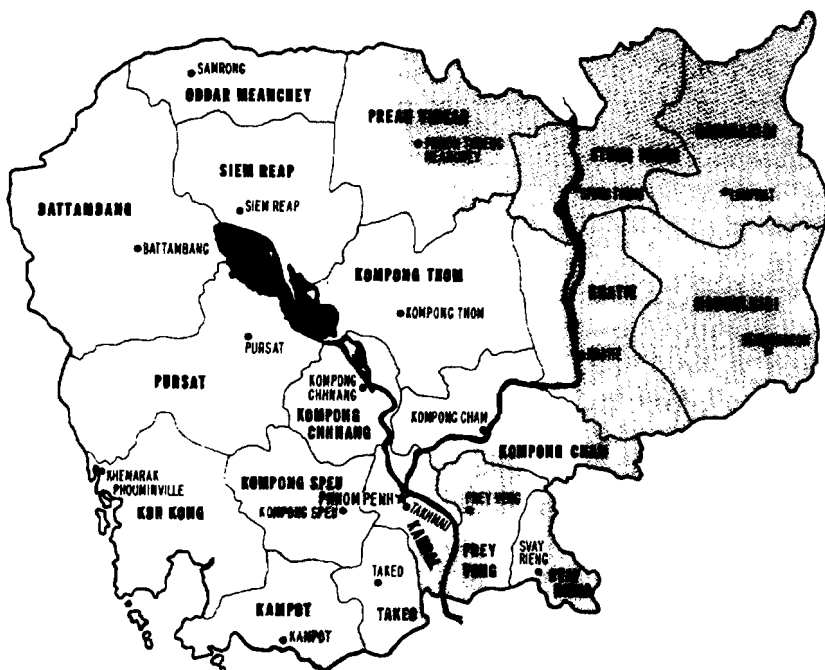


Figure 49.—VC/NVA-Controlled Areas of Cambodia as of 30 June 1970

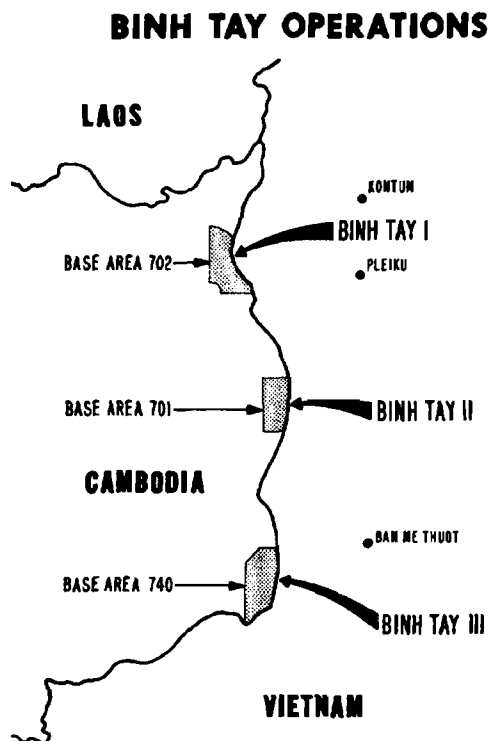


Figure 50.—BINH TAY Operations

Another operation, BINH TAY IV, directed by the CG of South Vietnam's II CTZ and executed by the ARVN 22d Division, undertook to evacuate refugees from Bokeo and Lebansiak in Cambodia's Ratanakiri Province between 24 and 26 June. The ARVN division placed over 8,000 Cambodian refugees in camps near Pleiku, South Vietnam.

Following the Enemy in SIGINT

As Allied forces for BINH TAY prepared to move into Cambodia from South Vietnam's II CTZ border, Vietnamese Communist reconnaissance elements, as followed in SIGINT, were reconnoitering and

reporting on activity in the Lebansiak-Bokeo area of Ratanakiri Province. Meanwhile, traditional NVA B-3 Front units, including elements of the 24th and 95B Regiments and the 120th Sapper and 394th Artillery Battalions, moved toward the growing communist concentration in the Lebansiak-Bokeo-Lomphat area. Throughout the month of June, the communists applied steady pressure to Lebansiak and Bokeo, and by 26 June both towns had been evacuated.

While these forces operated in this area during May and June, the Hq, NVA 24th Regiment and one of its battalions moved deeper into Cambodian territory and took up positions on the Mekong River near the city of Stung Treng. After four days of attacks, the city fell to the communists on 18 May. With the earlier fall of Kratie to the south and the loss of the towns mentioned in Ratanakiri Province, the occupation of Stung Treng gave the VC/NVA control of most of northeastern Cambodia.

Toward the end of June, the VC/NVA limited their actions primarily to harassing attacks against the Allied units moving back into South Vietnam. The NVA 95B Regiment, which had moved into the South Vietnam-Cambodia border for this operation, conducted much of the harassment.

Supporting the U.S. 4th Infantry Division

ARDF coverage of the western border of II CTZ enabled the SIGINT support units to keep abreast of the movements of many enemy forces and to locate several previously unknown units. The channeling of ARDF information to U.S. 4th Infantry Division elements—and ARVN units as well—was the primary form of SIGINT support during BINH TAY. The USAF 6994th Security Squadron provided one COMBAT COUGAR aircraft; ASA's 144th Aviation Company (RR) initially allocated one LAFFING EAGLE and one U-8 aircraft. Later, on 16 May, the aviation company provided one additional U-8 aircraft.

During the first week of operations, ARDF fixed the Hq, NVA 66th Regiment on the Cambodian-northwestern Kontum Province border. Because of the high concentration of enemy targets in that area, tasking authorities increased the number of missions to twice daily by refragging another aircraft from the Darlac Province border area. Total

ARDF missions over this particular region were 35 in number or some 143 hours. Results were 90 fixes and 13 cuts.

To the south in the vicinity of BAs 701 and 702 straddling the southwestern Kontum-Pleiku Province-Cambodia border, ARDF fixed several radio terminals not previously identified. ARDF also located several terminals subject to development. Two significant targets identified in BA 702 were a detached element of the Hq, NVA B-3 Front and Binh Tram Central. Two others located in BA 701 were Binh Tram

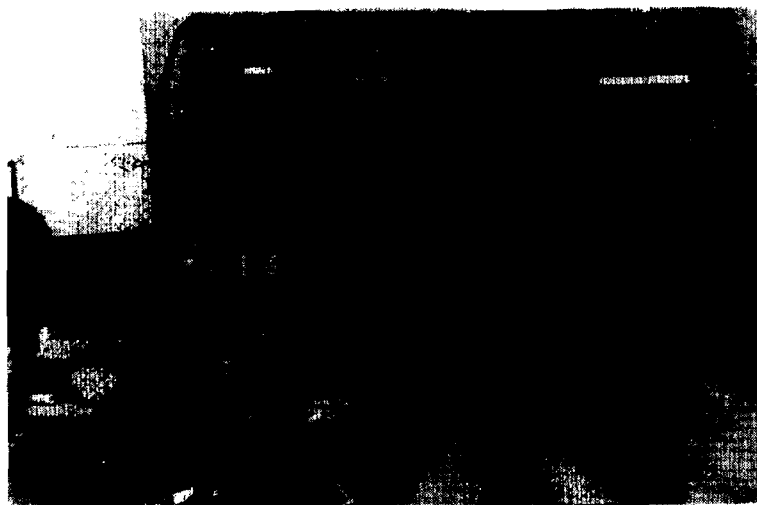


Figure 51.—ARDF Monitor and Tip-Off position found at all DSUs in South Vietnam

South and, in the southern part of the BA, the Hq, NVA 250th Transportation Regiment. As a result of a high concentration of ARDF fixes in the immediate vicinity of the 250th Transportation Regiment, the Strategic Air Command undertook several ARCLIGHT missions against this area. These resulted in numerous secondary explosions. The NVA 631st Artillery Regiment, which had been moving toward the location of the 250th Transportation Regiment on what was believed to be a resupply mission, halted its southward movement after the B-52 bombing missions in the area of the transportation regiment.

Farther south, along a mission area encompassing the entire Cambodia-Darlac Province border, ARDF results were less impressive:

considerably fewer targets fixed per mission hours flown and no fixes of major consequence. The 144th Aviation Company flew 67 missions for a total of 244 hours, resulting in 101 fixes and 18 cuts. Although this area was initially covered by two missions flown daily, tasking authorities soon reflagged one mission to the northwestern border of Kontum Province. Finally, during the period 2-15 May, a total of 19 ARDF missions were flown against BA 740. Since the results of these missions also were negligible, beginning on 16 May only one mission per day went into this area. However, a significant target located by ARDF in this BA was Binh Tram 4.

The 374th Radio Research Company

Working out of its base at An Khe in South Vietnam's Central Highlands, the 374th RRC was the direct support unit for the U.S. 4th Infantry Division during BINH TAY I, the only BINH TAY operation to involve U.S. forces. The ASA unit activated two brigade support teams, one for the division's 1st and one for its 2d Brigade. The teams each consisted of a Brigade LNO, a radiotelephone position, an LLVI team with wiretap capability, and an ARDF monitor position. In the first week of May, the two brigade support teams moved from the 374th RRC's base at An Khe westward to New Plei Djereng in South Vietnam's northwestern Pleiku Province, an assembly point for the U.S. forces preparing to enter Cambodia from II CTZ.

When the forward headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division deployed from An Khe to the location of ARVN's II CTZ Headquarters at Pleiku, the U.S. 4th Division's SSO element—including the LNO, two radiotelephone positions, and two order of battle analysts—deployed with the forward headquarters and joined the 330th RRC, the CMA for II CTZ at Pleiku. From here it served as a forward SSO and acted as a retransmission point between the two brigade support teams at New Plei Djereng and the 374th RRC's home base at An Khe.



Figure 52.—ASA specialist operating a PRD/1 (SRDF) set in the field



For several days during this period, the 1st Brigade Support Team at New Plei Djereng conducted an intelligence research study of BA 609

to the northwest at the request of the Brigade S-2.

Throughout BINH TAY I, each brigade support team LNO provided daily briefings for cleared staff members on all intercepted radio activity, gists and texts of all current summary and wrap-up reports of significance, and pertinent translations associated with enemy activity in the II CTZ border area. While ARDF for several of the operational areas was used in these briefings, the general lack of ARDF fix information for the northern part of BA 702, where most of the operation was conducted, and the lack of LLVI, caused the SIGINT support to take the form of "passive intelligence"—that is, how long the enemy continued to pose little or no threat to U.S. troops and installations in the operational area. In this respect, though "passive" in nature, the knowledge that SIGINT was not showing a threat in the area, was of positive use to the 4th Infantry Division.

CUU LONG

CUU LONG operations took place along the Mekong River and in Cambodian territory adjacent to South Vietnam's IV CTZ.⁴⁷ CUU LONG I, a combined land and naval venture from 9 to 31 May, primarily involved the ARVN 9th Division as well as forces from the Vietnamese Navy and Marine Corps, and U.S. Navy. Its purpose was to conduct interdiction operations on the Mekong River from the Cambodia-South Vietnam border to Phnom Penh, contiguous waterways, adjacent land areas, and BA 709, in order to disrupt VC/NVA lines of communication, destroy enemy base camps and facilities, and to protect friendly shipping on the Mekong River. The amphibious assault portion of the combined operation employed forces of the U.S. Navy, and Vietnamese Navy and Marine Corps, and was under the

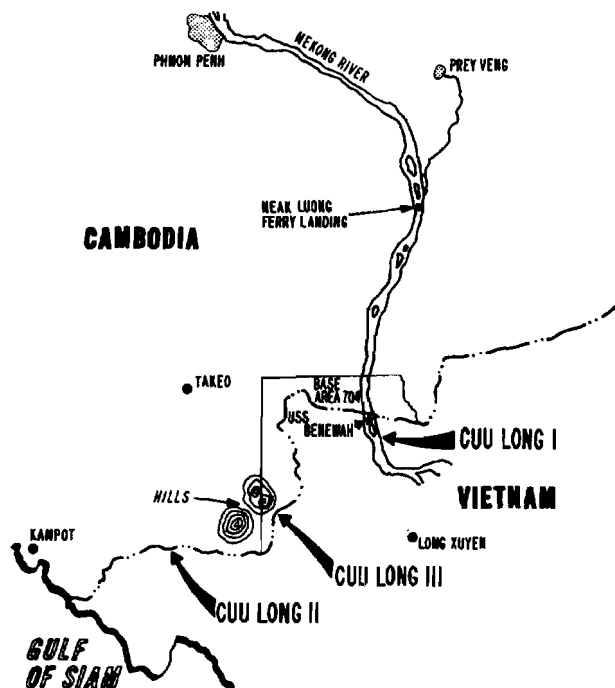


Figure 53.—CUU LONG Operations

direct command of the Deputy, COMNAVFORV. ASA's 335th RRC provided SIGINT support for CUU LONG I.

In CUU LONG II, units of the ARVN 9th and 21st Divisions, as well as other ARVN elements, crossed the border into Cambodia north and west of South Vietnam's Chau Doc Province in order to deny the Vietnamese Communists access to sanctuary in BA 704 and the surrounding area. The operation lasted from 16 to 24 May.

In CUU LONG III, from 25 May through 30 June, units of the ARVN 9th Division had the additional mission of supporting Cambodian troops in the construction of outposts and in the re-establishment of local authority in the same area in which CUU LONG II had been conducted.

Following the Enemy in SIGINT

The Allied move into Cambodia from the IV CTZ area of South Vietnam accounted for a number of the moves of enemy units followed in SIGINT. The VC Hq, MR 2 relinquished its traditional territory in BA 704 for safer ground across the Mekong River and about 20 km to the northeast, where it remained during May. Hq, NVA 88th Regiment made a move of about 25 km to the north by 21 May to a position near that of the VC 9th Division's 271st Regiment, in east-central Prey Veng Province. One week later the 88th Regiment was located another 25 km to the northeast, deep in the VC 9th Division's operating area.

The most extensive moves, however, were by tactical units of the NVA 1st Division. In early May, the forward element of the Hq, NVA 1st Division—along with its subordinate Hq, NVA 101D Regiment—moved from South Vietnam into eastern Kampot Province, Cambodia. By mid-May, the forward element deployed deep into Takeo Province and became the nucleus of a new major control authority, the Phuoc Long Front.⁴⁸ This front had the apparent objective of counteracting the threat to communist BAs but had the longer range mission of isolating Phnom Penh through interdiction of the principal western routes leading into the capital city. By the end of May, the main body of the Hq, NVA 1st Division had moved deep into Cambodia. There, the headquarters expanded and became the Hq, Phuoc Long Front. The Hq, NVA 101D Regiment and other newly formed regimental and battalion echelon units—drawn mainly from Vietnamese Communist units but filled out with Khmer Communist recruits—joined the Front to conduct limited tactical activity, mostly in Kampot Province. The Phuoc Long Front's total area of responsibility, however, extended throughout southwestern Cambodia and included Takeo, Kompong Speu, Kampot, Koh Kong, Pursat, and Kompong Chhnang Provinces.

ARDF Support

During CUU LONG, SIGINT assistance came almost entirely from ARDF. Opposite South Vietnam's IV CTZ, authorities estab-

lished two zones for overflying Cambodian territory in support of U.S. Navy elements. The frag areas, which were for USAF aircraft only, covered the Mekong River area and also the area between Ha Tien (on the Gulf of Siam coast at the South Vietnam-Cambodia border) and Nui O (a mountain just inside the Cambodian border between Chau Doc City and Ha Tien). On 16 May, area of emphasis for ARDF shifted west to cover a new phase of the Naval operation. Finally, on 12 June, authorities refragged the missions from locations east of the Mekong to points on the west side of the river and no longer restricted overflights to a zone up to 30 km from South Vietnam's border. Although ground forces withdrew from Cambodia by 30 June, overflights continued.

The 335th Radio Research Company

Located at Can Tho and acting as the CMA for the Delta region of South Vietnam, the 335th RRC had the responsibility for providing SIGINT support for South Vietnam's IV CTZ units. Although it did not give direct support to U.S. ground troops, there being few or none in the area, the 335th RRC did provide continuous SIGINT to the Delta Military Assistance Command (DMAC), a U.S. organization, and the 164th Aviation Group during the time IV CTZ units were involved in CUU LONG I. The SIGINT, after sanitization, went to the ARVN CG, IV CTZ and his subordinate unit commanders for application in the tactical phase of the operation.

The 335th RRC also provided SIGINT assistance to the *USS Benewah*, the command ship for the CUU LONG operations along the river. The ship, with RADM Herbert S. Matthews, Deputy COM-NAVFORV aboard, was to accompany the operational force from the South Vietnam-Cambodia border crossing to the Neak Luong Ferry landing approximately half-way to Phnom Penh.

To facilitate the use of SIGINT by the *Benewah*, the 335th RRC, after receiving the 509th RRG's authorization, prepared to place a small team on board the *Benewah* for LLVI and LLMM collection and ARDF monitor/tip-off. NRV also arranged to send two NSA civilians, (b) (3) - P.L. 86-36 along with the seven-man team from ASA. LTC Jack H. Jacobus, the 509th RRG

Operations Officer, arranged for technical packages on VC/NVA communications believed pertinent to the proposed operations of the *Benewah*.

In making arrangements with the *Benewah*, CAPT Kenneth A. Wendt, the 335th RRC's Operations Officer, gained authorization to use the Special Intelligence Communications net. The small detachment would relay reports via the SPINTCOM net aboard the *Benewah* to Binh Thuy, the site of a Naval air facility just north of Can Tho across the Hau Giang River. From there the traffic would go via courier each hour to Can Tho where the 335th RRC would process it for intelligence, forwarding the product through CRITICOMM channels and also back to the *Benewah* when necessary.

With men and equipment on board, the SIGINT operation began on 9 May in a secure area below deck. Equipment consisted of one VHF (20-100 MHZ) radio telephone, one HF LLVI position, two LLMM positions and one ARDF monitor/tip-off position.

For about a week the small detachment failed to develop SIGINT from its operation on board the *Benewah*. Contrary to expectations, [REDACTED] an event which might have improved the opportunity for collection of low-level, low-power communications. And the intercept operation suffered, as it was, from heavy interference by the ship's radios and from an inadequate antenna system.

On 16 May, the intercept team relocated to Chau Doc City and downgraded the operation to one LLVI position and one ARDF monitor/tip-off position, dropping the manual Morse collection to avoid duplicating that already being undertaken at Chau Doc. Later, when the LLVI position also failed to produce, the detachment functioned solely as an ARDF monitor/tip-off station, continuing this service until 15 June.

This latter operation proved, however, to be highly successful and made possible the passing of timely information on enemy locations to the flotilla. There were 184 ARDF fixes passed to the detachment over air-to-ground communications. Of these, 103 were significant and went to the DMAC Forward Command Post, the 164th Aviation Group, and the *USS Benewah* for application in their operations.

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On 20 January 1971, MG Hal D. McGown, CG, DMAC, stated in an interview that the 335th RRC was "by far our number one intelligence source," and he was particularly pleased with the "Green Hornet"⁴⁹ system of sanitizing ARDF fixes. He added that he realized the enemy was fully aware of our special intelligence efforts—and particularly the Green Hornet—but that he accepted this knowledge on their part. He especially found this true in the Cambodian operations. MG McGowan concluded by expressing his opinion that "In the continuing cross-border operations of the ARVN, SIGINT has been the most significant, timely and abundant intelligence."

CHAPTER VII

The Sigint Support in Retrospect

The reliance placed on SIGINT during the Cambodian incursion on the part of military commanders was generally evident during this examination of U.S. cryptologic support. Tactical ground and air commanders made good use of most of the SIGINT provided to them.

One subject deserves, however, somewhat further retrospective examination. Could the SIGINT support have been better than it was? Had the cryptologic authorities been brought squarely into the planning phases for the Cambodian incursion, would the SIGINT support have been more effective than it was, particularly in the U.S. drive to capture COSVN?

Lead Time In Planning SIGINT Support Operations

SIGINT specialists felt generally that their SIGINT support would have been more effective if they had had advance information on the Cambodian incursion. They know, of course, that a military commander must keep his plans secret and at the same time pass out essential information on those plans to those on whom he must count during operations. The military commander, all recognize, must exercise considerable judgment in deciding who is and who is not to receive advance information on operations of the dimension of the Cambodian incursion. These considerations notwithstanding, SIGINT officials felt they should have had this advance information in view of the extensive use being made of SIGINT.

As early as 1967, the need for greater cooperation in planning was recognized as a potential problem area for the military tacticians and the cryptologic community in South Vietnam. A MACV SIGINT Survey, dated 22 September 1967, conducted for MACV during the month of August 1967 by members of NSA, recommended that procedures be established to enhance cooperative planning for tactical

SIGINT support. In his report, Mr. Robert E. Drake, Deputy Chief of the NSA Pacific organization, who led survey team, discussed the findings and recommendations suggested by the survey team:

"The team believes that SIGINT support to operations could be improved by more cooperative planning. A recommended procedure would be that the major station in an area be notified of the requirement for target development in advance of impending operations. The major station should then be responsible for: planning the SIGINT operation; notifying the applicable control authorities of the required resources; either providing, developing, or acquiring from NSA or other stations the requisite technical base; arranging for or requesting appropriate communications support; and requesting appropriate authority to provide the skills needed for the operation, but not locally available."

In the case of the Cambodian incursion, it appears that the element of cooperation in the planning process may have been overshadowed by the emphasis on secrecy. SIGINT officials felt that the secrecy which shrouded the Cambodian planning inhibited a fully balanced SIGINT support operation for the incursion. The secrecy apparently induced the planners to withhold all specific details from the SIGINT units, among others, although the cross-border operations were based, in part, on existing SIGINT data. The military planners, on the other hand, felt that the SIGINT information on hand was adequate for planning purposes, and withholding the planning information from the SIGINT authorities resulted from a consideration that secrecy and surprise would be more valuable than immediate cryptologic support.

During the latter part of May 1970, three members of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) visited Saigon on a fact-finding mission. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had come to question key individuals concerning the situation in Cambodia. During their visit, [REDACTED] talked to [REDACTED] of NSA, who was at the time serving as Deputy Chief, NRV. [REDACTED] asked [REDACTED] if he had been made aware of the U.S. incursion into Cambodia during the pre-invasion stage? [REDACTED] answered that he had not. Then, according to [REDACTED] the PFIAB members posed the question, in effect, that had he known

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in advance, would NRV have been able to provide better SIGINT support? [] remembers that he replied in words to this effect:

"I suppose it's quite easy to say 'Yes', but to quantify how much more SIGINT we would have been able to provide, had we known, is difficult to say. We probably could have re-organized our ARDF resources somewhat. Had we known the objectives of the operation, we perhaps could have adjusted and increased our collection against the targets of prime interest."

[] also recalls that about two or three weeks prior to the ARVN penetration of the Parrot's Beak area, he had been informed by BG William E. Potts, J-2 MACV, that the U.S. had a plan for the eventual introduction of South Vietnamese forces into Cambodia. He further recalls that the NRV office was not advised by MACV of plans for U.S. entry into Cambodia at any time before the incursion commenced. "What bothered me," he remarked, "was that NRV had to pick up a good deal of the management ball, at least in III and IV CTZ for the organization of SIGINT support to U.S. forces."

[] of NSA was assigned during the period of the cross-border operations as Chief of the SSG Detachment (MACV). He stated that his impression of why there was such secretiveness, or lack of communication, with the appropriate SIGINT authorities, was that those at MACV who knew about the operation were told, in no uncertain terms by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that under no circumstances would they communicate this information to anyone else other than the ones designated. [] believed that those instructions were followed literally, and added:

"The operation . . . was sensitive, and I am not challenging that. Because, as a decision for the President to make, it was going to cause a lot of concern about the credibility of his announced policy of withdrawal. . . . The United States decision to do something of such magnitude which had not been done in the war to date by moving into base areas would cause a number of problems if, in the estimation of the Washington-level planners, the information ever got out. I would imagine that because of that, everyone was sworn to secrecy on it. From what we were seeing in Saigon, this was just as

true . . . back at NSA, in terms of tip-off or being aware of the operation before the fact. I have never heard that this was known (at NSA), especially since they were on the line with us immediately, trying to find out what was going on It may be some concession . . . to say that many commanders were so pleased and satisfied, day in and day out, with their SIGINT support, and with the ability of the cryptologic community to do a job, that they would have no problem bringing themselves into line quickly—within a matter of hours—to do what needs to be done with no advance tip-off. So, to that extent, I would think that a high ranking policy maker could make what could be considered a judicious, wise decision."

On the other hand, LTC James E. Freeze, CO, 303d RRB, believed that lack of information concerning details of the impending operation was a major problem that plagued Radio Research planning in the pre-invasion stage. In fact, he recalled, it was at times difficult to receive friendly dispositions of Allied forces—real or projected—a necessary item for effectively planning Radio Research deployment. He also observed that a "total systems approach" was not taken in the planning of the incursion and maintained that such planning, from the Radio Research point of view, should have included a concept of SIGINT support.

COL Frederick Westendorf, Deputy Commander, 509th RRG, offered the opinion that had the 509th RRG been informed of the Cambodian incursion during the planning stages, the Group could have provided a much higher level of SIGINT support. He explained:

"One of the early problems that we encountered in providing support—at least from the 509th RRG level—was a lack of information that the operation was going to take place. . . . We were in-country . . . which gave us an advantage from the standpoint of perspective. We could feel the enemy. I think that had we known that there was going to be cross-border operations, and if we had known what the targets were going to be . . . we could have gone into our data base and pulled out the information that we needed."

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36 Chief, NRV, also claimed that lack of notification adversely affected, to some extent, the amount and quality

of SIGINT support that could have been provided, particularly in the critical early period of the incursion. [] stated:

"There would have been some, I think, different deployments of SIGINT assets, particularly in the ARDF area, that would have been available to task. Although the reaction was very rapid once we got the word, I think planning for this kind of thing, even if it simply took the form that certain key people . . . myself, [] . . . were prepared and knew . . . would have helped. How extensive that spreading of the word could be and still maintain the security desired is a command problem. You certainly couldn't go too far because . . . that would tip-off your problem. But, between the area which was essentially no forewarning to too much forewarning, there is certainly room to have done it. Positions could have been deployed, ARDF plans for frag areas into Cambodia thought of in advance for more timely response, and special things such as the COSVN DFing and RFP linkage could have been looked at in advance and maybe made more effective."

In a message⁵⁰ to NSA after the incursion had begun, [] further defined the problem:

"Information on ARVN/U.S. operations in Cambodia were successfully closely held in-country. Neither this office nor 509th RRG were aware of the operations before the fact. However, the direct support level of ASA (i.e., 303d and 313th RR Bn) commanding officers were told of the operation no less than two days prior to launch and thus had an opportunity to make plans for COMINT support by direct support resources. In this limited arena no serious planning problems arose. It appears clear, however, the SIGINT community as such was not given the opportunity to determine the need to redirect or concentrate its more important direct service resources to the problem. It must be assumed that this was a conscious trade-off that the command was willing to accept for security purposes. Since the bulk of operational intelligence is derived from SIGINT, I would not have opted thusly. It is interesting to note that elements of J-2 MACV who operationally control the

ARDF/collection aircraft were equally unaware of the operations and they and we have been playing catch-up ever since."

MAJ Nelson B. Johnson, assigned as the J-2 MACV ARDF Tasking Officer during the period of the incursion, added:

"The essentials of what [] said, I think, are true. Primarily, it is one of those areas which bothered most of us Action Officers in working on this problem. When we first heard of it they had already started the action, both in the Fishhook area and in the Parrot's Beak. So, we were essentially in a 'catch-up' mode of operation. We weren't able to get our aircraft in, in sufficient time to develop a data base that would have possibly supported the initial planning stages. . . .

"As it might relate to why we didn't know about this, one thing I did notice throughout the whole year that I was there, is that there was some modicum, if you will, of jealousy between the MACV J-3 and the J-2. They felt that since they couldn't get into the SI areas, that they had comparable areas of 'no access' for the SI people. This tended to militate against a truly effective planning for such a wide operation as was visited upon us by the Cambodian incursion. If our group had advanced knowledge of this, we would have worked our aircraft in a slightly different pattern, but not very much different—since prior to the incursion, most of the activity that we were concerned with was either in-country or just on the border."

When questioned on who was involved in the planning stages and what roles the respective levels of command played in the Cambodian incursion, MAJ Johnson replied:

"The SIGINT collection level—at least at MACV—wasn't aware of it until the action started across the border. However, there was apparent higher-level planning that had gone on considerably before that, looking at ARDF and SIGINT resources. Those activities can only be identified in retrospect, insofar as I was concerned, I guess because of the close-hold nature of the operation. They did not—and, I guess, rightly so—want everybody to know what was going

on. So, I would venture to say that the J-3 MACV had a special area to which I had no access. I knew it was there but I couldn't have access to it—it must have been the planning area (which later turned out to be such). I do know that the J-2 Directorate of Intelligence Collection, the Chief of the Air Reconnaissance Division, and our Special Projects Branch were engaged in preliminary evaluations—after the fact, if you will. That certainly was required to get us as far as we were. We could have suspected that something was going on, but again it was only in retrospect in the action officer level in our shop."

Finally, COL William F. Strobridge, who served as the G-2 of the 4th Infantry Division in II CTZ during the cross-border operations, said:

"The Cambodian incursion came as a surprise. We had just a matter of 65 hours from the first notification to be prepared to go to Cambodia until we were actually there. This caused us to have to disengage every battalion in the division area and re-engage them in Cambodia. So, when we were notified of the incursion, the 374th RRC had their platoons deployed in Binh Dinh Province. They had to collect their personnel and get them back into the base camp at An Khe,

[REDACTED] . . . The main thing that really hit me was that there was 65 hours between our notification that we were going to Cambodia and when we were actually there on the ground with our leading battalions. . . . The main thing was the time: 65 hours! My God, even today I get tired just thinking about it."

COSVN: The Elusive Giant

President Nixon's announcement on 30 April 1970 that U.S. forces would attack "the headquarters for the entire communist military operation in South Vietnam" kicked off a sequence of events which plummeted the Allied forces entering Cambodia into a series of attempts to capture COSVN. The President's words apparently referred

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to Hq, SVNLA; however, the Press probably interpreted his words to mean COSVN—a popular, if enigmatic, name used by most of the public media in describing the Vietnamese Communist political and military headquarters in South Vietnam. Although it is not known specifically how COSVN became a primary target immediately after the President made his speech, it can almost certainly be attributed to pressure generated by national press and television coverage.

In any case, within days after the incursion had started, COSVN became a priority target for COMUSMACV. From that point on, NRV directed most of its support towards the problem of locating COSVN headquarters and refining those locations for tactical use by U.S. forces. MACV informed NRV that a decision was being taken to create a two-phase attack against COSVN. The first phase was going to be a B-52 ARCLIGHT strike against the locations indicated by the ARDF fixes.

[redacted] recalls:

"Our experience with targeting, especially with ARCLIGHTs on the basis of DF had been less than enthusiastic—not that we wouldn't provide the information. The point was: what are you targeting? You're targeting the antennas of the radio stations... which serve the facilities. We had a fairly good idea, over the course of the war, that the enemy would not locate his antennas right on top of his communications center, nor for that matter in the middle of his headquarters facility. They were at least a few kilometers away with connecting landlines to the communications center. This was pointed out very often to the people in J-2 and J-3 MACV. Nonetheless, planning went ahead."

After the ARCLIGHT strike, which was to run in a series of waves for about three hours before dawn, according to [redacted] the second phase of the plan called for a ground assault involving both infantry and armor. It turned out that a number of hours before the operation, when the first of the ARCLIGHT strikes were to go in, NRV started getting fixes on the COSVN terminals a fair distance away from where they had been for the previous few weeks. More fixes were obtained during that critical period in the several hours before time-over-target for the B-52s. And they continued to show that COSVN, in fact, relocated—far enough away to be unaffected by the strike. The

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strike went ahead, nonetheless, in the early morning hours before dawn.

Some ground sweeps went in subsequently. Several prisoners were taken and one, a Sergeant assigned to the Postal Section of COSVN which dealt with their communications, indicated, [] recalled, that the senior officials and facilities of COSVN had, indeed, been located in the strike area. He also told the interrogators that they had gotten word of the impending strike just beforehand and had evacuated the area in rather considerable haste. At least all the key personnel were moved to a new location, which on the MACV plotting map fell in with where the new fixes on COSVN were being located—in the emergency redeployment site area.⁵¹

"It does prove," [] added, "and I think it was quite evident to all concerned in J-2 and J-3, that the evidence we provided. . . was very well documented by the after-action debriefing information provided by the prisoner."

This encouraged the planners to keep on going. The ARDF fixes continued to come in and a new targeting area was set up. A new mission was scheduled, and again. . . the same thing happened. The facilities serving COSVN were fixed elsewhere hours before the intended strike.

[] concluded:

"At no time could it be said that we lost COSVN communications by virtue of its being destroyed, damaged, or put out of commission. I have no reason to believe, on any subsequent occasion other than the first one, that we ever really got, captured, destroyed, or did anything to COSVN."

COL William F. Vernau served during the cross-border operations as the Chief of the J-2 MACV Special Projects Branch, and as such worked closely in support of BG Potts. In discussing Washington's request to take action against COSVN, COL Vernau reiterated the primary emphasis which was placed on ARDF at MACV headquarters:

"It was apparently decided by GEN Abrams, with probably the advice of BG Potts, that 'now the time was right to get COSVN.' To do this, it was determined to maximize the use of our assets against him. We had clusters of COSVN fixes. There was no set place, as I recall the situation, where you could say, 'There is COSVN.' In effect we put CAST IRON coverage on COSVN. . . wherein I had an aircraft orbiting

overhead of the latest fix clusters and/or sufficiently close where we could get fixes on him everytime he was active. . . . When I would be short of aircraft in terms of availability, to get the 24-hour coverage we would frag a man where he could still have top priority over the 7th and 9th Division targets, and also get a fix on COSVN if he became active."

COL Vernau explained that several ground operations were directed against COSVN based on SIGINT successfully maintaining such a close location capability on that headquarters. He also spoke of problems which plagued COMUSMACV:

"If I recall GEN Abrams' words, 'If only I had the 1st Division, I could have boxed him in.' But he had to rely, if I recall, on the 5th ARVN Division, and the 5th just didn't hack it. Didn't cover the amount of ground that you'd expect out of the average American division. He felt that SIGINT provided him with the information he needed when he needed it, but with the absence of a much needed U.S. Army ground division, he did not get COSVN."

COL Vernau further spoke of the J-2 MACV's response to the request for action against COSVN:

"Now, I don't want to say it was almost an obsession with BG Potts, but the mere fact of the assets I used against COSVN . . . they wanted to get COSVN. There was no question about it, they wanted to get that headquarters—capture it intact, if possible. When the opportunity to capture COSVN by ground assaults failed—by the absence of the 1st Division—they then decided to go after COSVN with ARCLIGHT strikes. We reported COSVN fix data to the Special Activity Branch (SAB) of the J-2 MACV Current Operations. They reported to BG Potts, literally on the hour. I provided the SAB with fix information as my shop received it from the ACC. . . . This went on for at least three weeks. And then, of course, it got down to where the SAB was reporting to him every morning after the daily MACV briefing and then at least once more before close of normal business. As I say, I kept aircraft in the near vicinity, or overhead, of COSVN for at least six weeks.

Even beyond the so-called 'withdrawal' from Cambodia, we still continued in an attempt to get COSVN via the medium of ARCLIGHT strikes. But COSVN headquarters elements were intermixed in populated areas bordering the Mekong and thus they were safe."

COL Frederick Westendorf exclaimed:

"As I recall the events at the time, when the cross-border operations were initiated, COSVN—as a single target—was not the primary target. A few days later I recall hearing a press announcement that COSVN was a primary target. That's the first time I heard that that's what we were going after. And shortly thereafter I noticed the interest at MACV headquarters picked up concerning COSVN. I don't know where the problem stemmed. . . I don't know whether MACV really intended to go after COSVN, or after the press announcement they decided they'd better go get COSVN. . . . Chasing COSVN was. . . just an exercise. We devoted an awful lot of resources to find COSVN, but I think it was after the fact. I'm not convinced, in my mind, that COSVN was the real objective initially. I think it developed, a few days later, when COSVN started to move. Then you're trying to catch COSVN. I think that if they wanted COSVN, they had airmobile forces that could have been airlifted into an area where they thought COSVN was, and they could have done an awful lot more."

[redacted] remembers that it was difficult at first to "get in touch with the decision-makers at MACV" to tell them that the plotting of ARDF fixes on COSVN had been successful and that "we really had COSVN locked." He added that after notifying MACV, there was "sort of a groundswell of indifference, but eventually. . . an attack was ordered against COSVN, after COMUSMACV had seen the ARDF results." [redacted] couldn't remember the time frame, but

" . . . days went by, and our ARDF was continuing to build up evidence. . . and nothing happened. We began to get concerned from the SIGINT standpoint that darkening the air with ARDF aircraft might spook this outfit to move

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away. And we began to get evidence that, in fact, that was happening. By the time the attacking units moved against the fixes, we already had a day or two of evidence that COSVN had moved north. We had subsequent collateral information that COSVN—at least elements of COSVN—had been in the fix area and, indeed, had moved when our ARDF revealed that it moved. Attempting to stop the attacking units from going into the wrong area was impossible. I think if the potential of SIGINT that we knew existed was cranked into the plans, so that the field combat forces were alerted and prepared to react to those SIGINT results, we could have captured COSVN."

LTC James E. Freeze vividly remembers how he first became aware of the plans to capture, or attack, COSVN:

"The morning it started, I stood by the window and listened to a little transistor radio. The President was informing the nation of the Allied incursion into Cambodia and explained that the Allied forces were going to attack 'the headquarters for the entire communist military operation in South Vietnam.' He also indicated that our forces would be attacking in the Fishhook area. I stood there at the window and just couldn't believe my ears, because I didn't believe that COSVN was in the Fishhook. I looked at my Adjutant and said, [REDACTED] . . . we're going in the wrong place!'"

Freeze believed that someone, somewhere had sold the idea to IIFV that COSVN was in its primary base area in the Fishhook when, in fact, it was in its secondary base area. He recalled that

". . . some people at IIFV told me that a team from MACV had come to Long Binh and briefed IIFV on the fact that they, MACV, didn't agree with where SIGINT had placed COSVN. They felt that we had located COSVN in the wrong place. I know, in my own mind, that lots of people were espousing the theme that COSVN was in its main base area. People inherently believe what they want to believe. To use an old cliché: you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.

"One problem that comes to mind is that we briefed the IIFFV people everyday, including the G-3, who was the tactician for the operation. . . . We were dealing with what I term the 'power with' syndrome, which historically attaches to G-3s in tactical organizations. That is, the G-3 is the Commander's near alter ego—he plans, organizes, and helps direct the tactical operations. He is, in a sense, the 'strong man' of the staff. In the case in point, he simply overrode the objections, if you will, of the G-2 and his influence upon the Commander with reference to the execution of the tactical operation was greater than the influence of the G-2. The G-3 saw us point out on the map each day to where the ARDF fixes had placed COSVN, and he heard our analysis of the situation, based on SIGINT evidence. But we were the intelligence types and not the tacticians. . . so they probably didn't accept our rationale."

That problem was compounded by the problem of arranging B-52 ARCLIGHT strikes through MACV. Freeze added:

"When we felt we had IIFFV finally convinced that COSVN was to the west where the ARDF fixes indicated—particularly after 'The City' was found—IIFFV could not get ARCLIGHT strikes into the area in less than 72 hours. We requested B-52 strikes be diverted and received a reply each time that the strikes could not be diverted based upon one ARDF fix. But by the time the B-52s struck the target area, COSVN had moved north just far enough to be unaffected by the strike."

MAJ Nelson B. Johnson, who also sat on the ARCLIGHT planning board at MACV, spoke of the problem relating to timeliness of B-52 strikes:

"The fix information that we provided was anywhere from 24 to 48 hours old. Usually, by the time that information had been digested and correlated with other information, this 48 hours gave COSVN time to move. And new fix information, even though processed and passed, did not offer sufficient evidence to divert a strike. Although we did divert a couple of

strikes on the basis of those fixes, they had to have extremely small circular error probabilities (CEP). And even then, when you deal with a small CEP and one or two fixes, you're dealing with a perimeter of activity rather than the central activity of COSVN. Again, you're fixing antennas, and the bombers went in and blanket-bombed around an antenna that may have been 3 - 5 km away from where the edge of the command activity really was."

MAJ Johnson further pointed out that from the start of the incursion, the primary effort of the USAF EC-47 aircraft was to cover COSVN 24-hours a day:

"We had a special plotting group that had been set up shortly thereafter to assure that all COSVN and COSVN-associated fixes would be correlated and passed to the tactical planners as expeditiously as possible. . . . The Air Force did provide . . . quite good coverage of the activity. They developed a type of pattern which we suspected that COSVN had (that they would lay 8 or 10 transmitter farms—or transmitter areas—surrounding their locus of activity). In our fix operations in a four hour flight, for example, we could fix, conceivably, four to six of these antennas. They would be operating in sequence so that, should we fix the first antenna, the next time we made a fix the second antenna would be active and the first one not active. So, you would get a sort of semi-circle pattern. This may have caused people to distrust the fix information that was being provided to them—especially the tactical type people who did not understand communications or the camouflaging, or masking, of communications and their locations. This was brought up a couple of times and it appeared that that was one of the items that may have been primary in the planners minds, in the planning process."

MAJ James W. Bradner, III, who at the time of the incursion was the Chief, Cambodian Section, Intelligence Division at CINCPAC, believed that from the very start the people at MACV were probably skeptical of finding all of COSVN in any one location. He remarked:

"COSVN did somewhat successfully stay one jump ahead of us due to just the requirements of reaction time

Our biggest effort to get COSVN on the ground really was in terms of follow-up to B-52 strikes If a unit or terminal is moving everyday—which COSVN was, almost daily—it is very difficult to put your bombs on that target, within a 24-hour period.”

MAJ Bradner felt that the basic conflict concerning COSVN was due to a better understanding of the nature of COSVN by the people in the field, than by those in Washington:

“I don’t think it was a problem of people not correctly interpreting the COMINT. I do think that the initial tactical priorities were not, perhaps, those that later came out of Washington or were established due to suggestions and pressure from the Washington area to the effect that getting COSVN would certainly enhance the value of the operation. Unfortunately, I think this was due to press releases and a partial misunderstanding of the nature of COSVN in the Washington area. . . .”

There is a lesson to be learned from this retrospective examination of the use of SIGINT during the successive moves against COSVN made by U.S. forces. U.S. military planning should take into account, it would appear, the possibility that SIGINT, by depicting an enemy’s current tactics and locations, may necessitate last-minute changes in planned U.S. operations. SIGINT specialists, on the other hand, should recognize that only the military commanders using the SIGINT can judge its effectiveness in their operations and that overall tactical considerations may well militate against making full use of the SIGINT which is provided. To this end, close cooperation between U.S. SIGINT officials and the military commands would seem to be in order during the planning for military operations which depend in any significant way on SIGINT.

Footnotes Part Two

³⁰ CIRCUS ACT (Wiretap) was a combined project involving DIRNSA, MACV, and the 509th RRG. The purpose of CIRCUS ACT was to intercept enemy field communications by means of tapping his field telephone lines.

³¹ See Fig. 24, p. 85.

³² The RATRACE concept (rapid transcription [redacted]) provided for a three-man team consisting of a U.S. [redacted] linguist and an ARVN transcriber (called a DANCER) to be deployed from the CMA to a DSU or FSB for rapid processing and reporting of SIGINT to deployed tactical units. Information intercepted and processed through the normal channels required an average of nine hours from time-of-intercept to release to SSO channels. Average release time under the RATRACE concept was approximately three hours.

³³ These targets were [redacted]
[redacted] (MIB SVNLA); [redacted] (SIB SVNLA); [redacted] (SIB SVNLA Commo-Liaison Section); [redacted] (MIB SVNLA Forward Element); [redacted] (Hq, SVNLA); [redacted] (Hq, SVNLA MR Control); [redacted] (Hq, SVNLA B-52 Alert Facility); [redacted] (Hq, SVNLA RS Control); [redacted] (COSVN); [redacted] (Reserve COSVN Station); [redacted] (Unidentified COSVN Authority); and [redacted] (Unidentified COSVN Authority).

³⁴ CAST IRON was a rigid system of coverage which required uninterrupted intercept of all transmissions of a high priority target. It specified continuous surveillance of the target frequencies even though the target might have been inactive or uncopiable.

³⁵ That is [redacted] Cf Footnote, p. 88.

³⁶ That is, copy in full when communications are active.

³⁷ RFP is a process of recording signal transmissions on light-sensitive paper. It is based on the principle that all radio transmitters have different signal characteristics, such as do finger prints, hence the term radio finger printing. These characteristics, once recorded, are analyzed and used to identify a specific transmitter. Through this process, it is possible for a signal to be matched to another signal previously recorded from a particular transmitter.

^{38.} In the battle for Snuol in Cambodia's Kratie Province, 409th RRD specialists received two Bronze Stars and five Combat Infantryman Badges.

^{39.} MG Casey assumed command of the 1st ACD on 12 May 1970, but was killed in a helicopter crash in South Vietnam on 7 July 1970.

^{40.} According to CAPT Carter, 372d RRC, success of the LLVI program depended in large measure on the rapid retrieval system obtained through cooperation with the 25th Infantry Division. Two helicopters made a morning and evening round-robin trip to pick up tapes, move teams, replenish supplies, and provide maintenance.

^{41.} See pp. 87-88.

^{42.} The Pink Team consisted of one Light Observation Helicopter and one COBRA helicopter. A Pink Team usually accompanied LEFT BANK in the 1st ACD operational area.

^{43.} MG Putnam assumed command of the 1st ACD after the death of MG Casey.

^{44.} An ARDF cut, as opposed to a fix, is two line bearings taken on a radio transmitter. A cut is normally considered unreliable in confirming the location of a transmitter. It does, however, indicate the general area in which a transmitter is operating. A fix of three or more ARDF line bearings, on the other hand, determines more precisely a triangular area in which the transmitter is located.

^{45.} See Fig. 6, p. 12.

^{46.} An MOQV-3 Van is a 3/4 ton, truck-mounted, manual Morse and RTT FM single-sideband air-to-ground ARDF tip-off position, with an R-1503 receiver operating in the .5-400 MHZ frequency band; an MRPV-3 Van is also a 3/4 ton, truck-mounted, manual Morse and RTT position, but is equipped with an R-392 AM receiver operating in the .5-30 MHZ band and an R-744 FM receiver in the 20-100 MHZ band. This latter van also includes an ARDF tip-off position as well as a DF capability.

^{47.} See Fig. 53, p. 137.

^{48.} Its identification as a major, new VC/NVA headquarters came, however, after the Allied units had withdrawn from Cambodia. See above, p. 00.

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^{49.} Green Hornet, an unclassified cover name for ARDF fixes (1,000 meters or less) given to the ARVN after sanitization (to protect the COMINT source and method). The Green Hornet system emphasized immediate reaction by ARVN commanders.

^{50.} NRV F46-2217-70 F46D-0913, 071330Z MAY 70.

^{51.} See p. 99.

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APPENDIX

List of Abbreviations

ACC	ARDF Coordination Center
AFSS	Air Force Security Service
ARDF	Airborne Radio Direction Finding
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
ASA	Army Security Agency
BA	Base Area
CINCPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
CMA	Collection Management Authority
COMINT	Communications Intelligence
COMNAVFORV	Commander, Naval Forces, Vietnam
COMSEC	Communications Security
COMUSMACV	Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
COSVN	Central Office of South Vietnam
CRD	Central Research Directorate
CRITICOMM	World Wide System for Critical Intelligence Transmissions Combined with Improved Communications Support of Communications Intelligence
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DIRNSA	Director, National Security Agency
DMAC	Delta Military Assistance Command
DSU	Direct Support Unit
FANK	Cambodian Army (Khmer National Armed Forces—since June 1970)
FARK	Cambodian Army (Royal Khmer Armed Forces—prior to June 1970)
FFV	Field Forces, Vietnam
FSB	Fire Support Base
HFDF	High Frequency Direction Finding
LLMM	Low Level Manual Morse

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LLVI	Low Level Voice Intercept
LNO	Liaison Officer
LZ	Landing Zone
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MHZ	MegaHertz
MIB	Military Intelligence Bureau (SVNLA)
MR	Military Region
MRDF	Medium Range Direction Finding
MSD	Military Sub-Division
NAVSECGRU	Naval Security Group
NFLSVN	National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

NRV	NSA Pacific Representative, South Vietnam
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OPSCOMM	Operational Communications
PRGRSVN	Provisional Revolutionary Govern- ment of the Republic of South Vietnam
RATRACE	Rapid Transcription
RD	Reference Designator
RFP	Radio Fingerprinting
RRB	Radio Research Battalion
RRC	Radio Research Company
RRD	Radio Research Detachment
RRG	Radio Research Group
RRU	Radio Research Unit
RSG	Rear Services Group
RTT	Radio Telephone
SCA	Service Cryptologic Agency
SIB	Strategic Intelligence Bureau (SVNLA)

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SOD	Special Operations Detachment
SR	Subregion
SRDF	Short Range Direction Finding
SSG	Special Support Group
SSO	Special Security Officer
SVNLA	South Vietnam Liberation Army
TACREP	Tactical Report
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TRS	Technical Reconnaissance Ship
VC	Viet Cong
VHF	Very High Frequency

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