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I sent a xerox copy to Mr. Holdridge for
his comback and action.

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Retention

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INFORMATION

October 9, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge *JAH*

SUBJECT: CIA South Laos Interdiction Report

I'd like to know the impact on the flow of supplies. Please get minimal

Attached is CIA South Laos Interdiction Report No. 5 (Tab A), covering the period up to October 7. The main points are as follows:

- Operation Guantlet achieved its intended results, especially in the Bolovens area where PS-26 was recaptured. (This puts friendly forces on high ground over the Se Kong River and in a position to harass traffic on it.)
- A very high price was paid for this success. For example, the six battalions participating in the PS-26 attack suffered 71 killed 379 wounded.
- The aftermath of these losses has produced poor morale and combat effectiveness. Desertion rates are high with one entire unit abandoning its weapons and deserting en masse.
- "Prior to initiating phase two of the interdiction program most of the irregular units in South Laos should receive a respite for recuperation and retraining."
- The enemy has reacted strongly to Guantlet. Harassment has been constant since the capture of PS-26. In the Se Kong Valley the enemy overran positions held by irregular forces. The enemy reacted similarly both north and south of Chavane along Route 96.
- In addition to positions overrun by the enemy all but a few active teams have had to be withdrawn from the Se Kong Valley.

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-- Despite strong enemy reaction river-watch and ambush teams continue operations.

Comment: In terms of positions taken and locations reached by interdiction teams, Operation Guantlet is considered to have achieved its intended results by CIA, which is responsible for carrying it out.

CIA frankly describes the high price which has been paid in men to achieve these results and offers no views as to what extent Operation Guantlet has resulted in a reduction in the flow of men and supplies through Laos into South Vietnam and Cambodia. Though CIA does not say so, at the very least it could be claimed that Operation Guantlet has resulted in the North Vietnamese having to devote greater resources than heretofore to protect this flow. Most of the infiltration groups now moving southward through the system appear destined for South Laos.

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DIRECTORATE OF
PLANS

SOUTH LAOS INTERDICTION REPORT

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Handle via Comint Channels

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7 October 1970

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SOUTH LAOS INTERDICTION REPORT

REPORT NO. 5, 7 OCTOBER 1970

SC No. 13355/70

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- South Laos Operations
- Cambodian Operation
- Salem House Operations
- Prairie Fire Operations

Map A -- Interdiction Units in MR-IV

Map B -- Interdiction Units in MR-III

DISTRIBUTION

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SOUTH LAOS INTERDICTION REPORT

REPORT NO. 5, 7 OCTOBER 1970

CURRENT INTERDICTION ACTIVITIESA. SOUTH LAOS OPERATIONS:

1. Summary: The first major operation in the South Laos Interdiction Program, Operation Gauntlet, is now completed. South Laos interdiction units are in the process of regroupment, resupply, and redirection. The intelligence gained since 29 August on enemy disposition and vulnerabilities is being evaluated for future interdiction programs in the corridor.

2. Post-Gauntlet Appraisal of Irregular Forces: Operation Gauntlet achieved its intended results, especially in the Bolovens phase which resulted in the recapture of PS-26. Irregular units involved in Gauntlet, however, have been severely mauled. The six battalions participating in the attack on PS-26, for example, suffered 71 killed and 379 wounded. Morale and combat effectiveness of four of these battalions must be rated as fair to poor. Indications of poor morale within many of the other irregular units in South Laos is seen in high desertion rates. Within the past week one such unit abandoned its weapons and deserted in mass just prior to being airlifted into combat on the Bolovens. Prior to initiating phase two of the interdiction program, most of the irregular units in South Laos should receive a respite for recuperation and retraining.

3. Post-Gauntlet Operations: In the post-Gauntlet period, Royal Lao irregulars continue to solidify their position on the Bolovens Plateau and secure their hold on PS-26. Enemy harassment activity has been constant since the capture of PS-26, but no serious enemy attack to retake the site has been launched. The enemy has reacted strongly in the Se Kong Valley to the east, however, where company-level attacks successfully overran PS-20 and PS-27, both of which had

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been held by small irregular forces. The enemy has reacted in a similar fashion both north and south of Chavane along Route 96, where they have forced the withdrawal of all but a few active teams. Despite this strong enemy counteraction river-watch and ambush teams in the Se Kong Valley have sunk three boats, and commando-raider teams to the north in the Ban Bac Sector have continued their operations. The interdiction of Route 23 by three Military Region III half-battalions has also continued in the face of stepped-up enemy pressure.

4. Bolovens Plateau: As of 7 October, PS-26 was still in control of the Royal Lao Government irregulars. SGU combat units, aided by tactical air support, are trying to remove enemy mortar teams and patrols from further harassment activities around this site. (See Map A) Between 25 and 27 September, two minor irregular support sites PS-20 and PS-27, located 28 and 42 kilometers respectively north of Attopeu were overrun by enemy forces. River-watch teams operating north of Attopeu sank three boats on the Se Kong River.

5. Ban Bac and Chavane: Between 26 September and 7 October, raider teams ambushed North Vietnamese patrols on two occasions east of Ban Bac. Enemy reaction both north and south of Chavane along Route 96 forced the withdrawal of all but a few of the SGU commando units. Irregulars will continue to infiltrate teams into the Chavane sector for mining, harassment and air targeting missions.

6. Route 23: The two SGU battalions deployed 12 kilometers west of Muong Phine have forced two enemy battalions to remain deployed outside of Muong Phine. During the early morning hours of 6 October these irregular battalions, along with a reinforcing battalion that had just been airlifted into the area, came under heavy mortar and 122mm rocket attack. Two companies of North Vietnamese attacked one of the irregular units forcing it to withdraw to the west. To the south two irregular battalions about 10 kilometers northwest of Toumlane began an engagement with an undetermined number of enemy troops on 30 September. Probing actions have continued for several days. As of 7 October, the three SGU battalions operating in the Xe Bang Hiang and Toumlane Valley area have mined parts of Route 23 and Route 23 bypasses along a 40 mile stretch. These three battalions are now preparing for exfiltration.

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B. TRAINING OF CAMBODIAN INTERDICTION FORCES AND INTELLIGENCE UNITS: A battalion of Cambodian troops destined for interdiction duty in South Laos is currently undergoing training at PS-18, located northwest of Pakse. A second such battalion is arriving in stages. When it has reached full strength on 10 October, training for this second battalion will also commence. The first battalion is expected to be operational by 1 December and the second by 1 January. The arrival of a third and fourth battalion is contingent upon the construction of camp facilities to house them, since present facilities are fully employed. A group of 255 Cambodians was graduated on 19 September from an intelligence operations training program at PS-18. These trainees are scheduled for insertion into northeastern Cambodia commencing 10 October.

C. CAMBODIAN OPERATION: All Lao intelligence teams controlled by Vientiane Station are currently being exfiltrated for debriefing and future reinsertion into Cambodia. In addition, three teams are being prepared by Saigon Station for insertion into Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces.

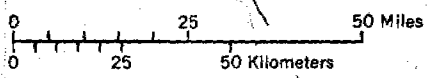
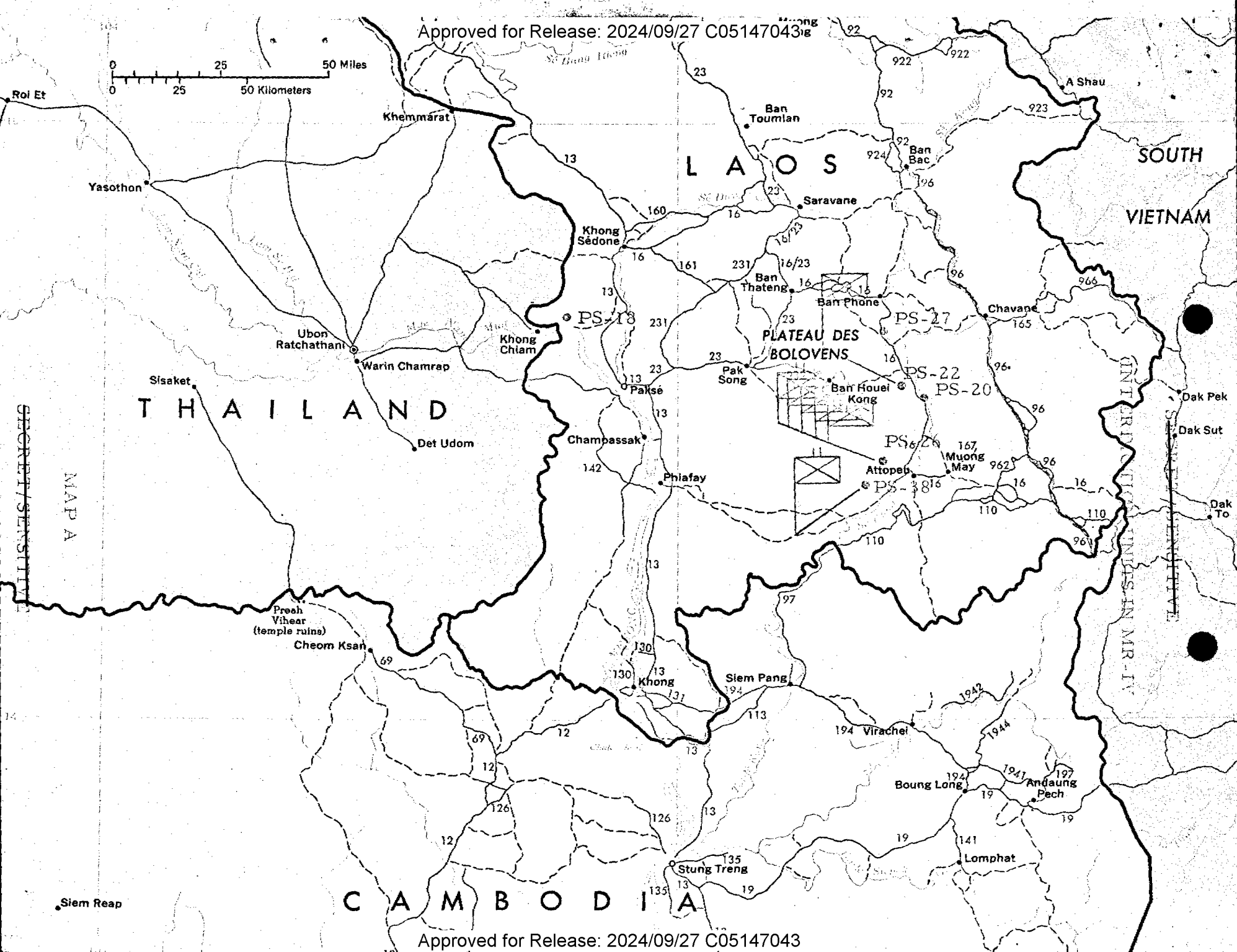
D. SALEM HOUSE OPERATIONS: During the reporting period 13 MACSOG reconnaissance teams were active in the Salem House area and one 2-platoon mobile patrol base was established. Twenty-three RVNAF sorties and two USAF sorties were flown killing 10 enemy and destroying nine structures and one bunker. Six intelligence reports were provided.

E. PRAIRIE FIRE OPERATIONS: During the previous week nine reconnaissance teams were active in the Prairie Fire area with 18 gunship and 24 TACAIR sorties supporting them. Fifteen enemy were killed by the ground force and 12 by aircraft.

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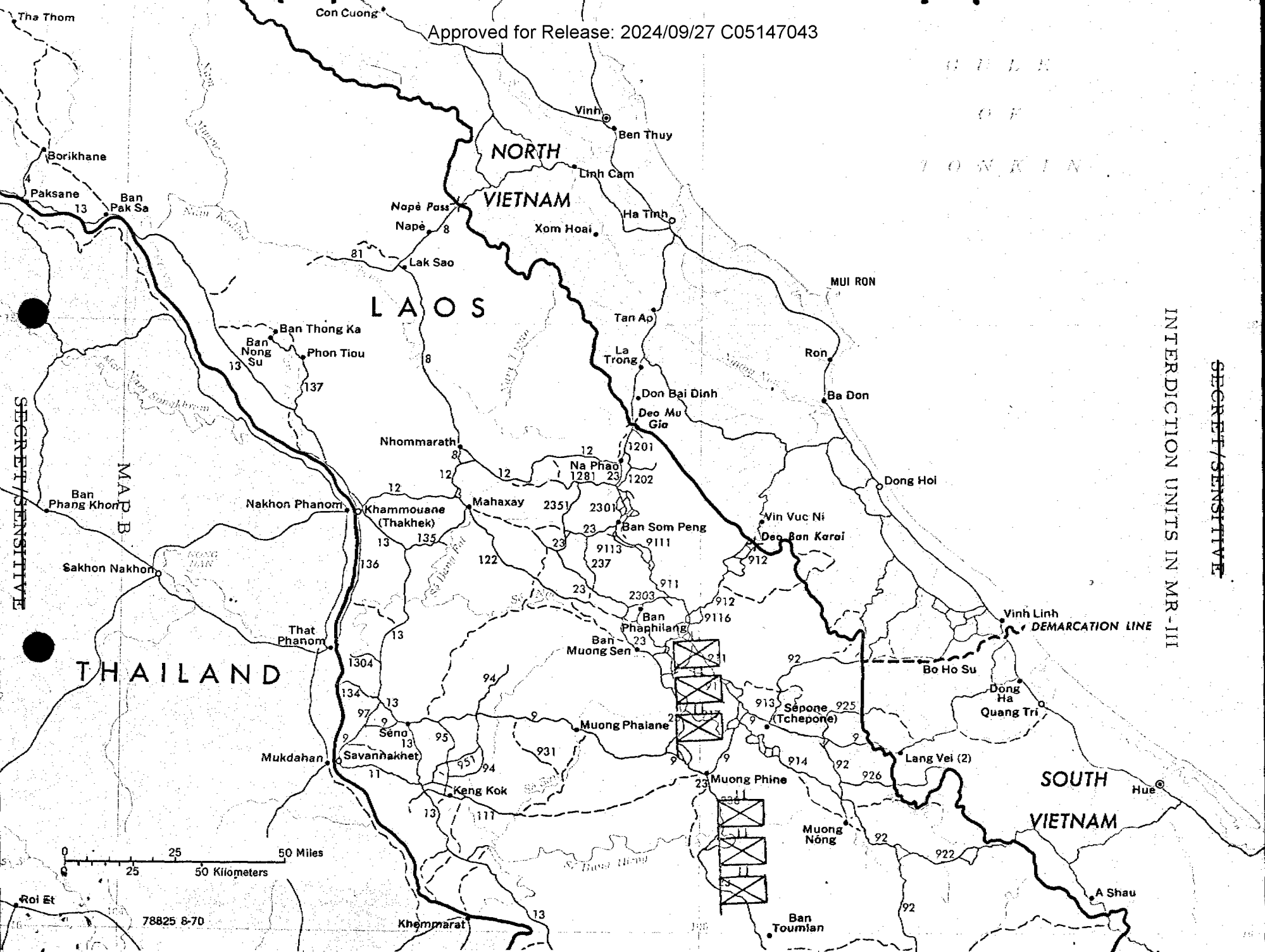
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MAP A

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS IN MR. IV
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G U I D E
O F
T O N K I N



INTERDICTION UNITS IN MR-III

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