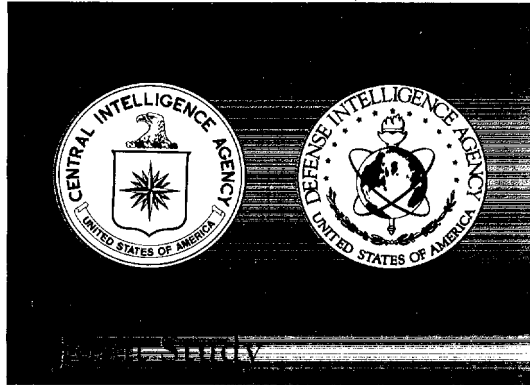


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# Weekly Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

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20 March 1974

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20 March 1974

**Fifty-Fifth Report****WEEKLY SURVEY  
OF COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN INDOCHINA\***

(This report covers the period  
from 13 through 19 March 1974)

The Key Points

- The North Vietnamese continued to dispatch infiltration groups southward last week at a rate of more than one a day. Of the nine new groups detected (totaling about 5,000 troops), five are destined for COSVN, three for the B-3 Front, and one for VC MR 5.
- Communist logistic activity in southern North Vietnam last week was relatively light. Roads in southern Laos and Routes 9 and 613 in South Vietnam, however, appeared to be supporting moderate to heavy traffic.
- During January and February, civilian transportation units in North Vietnam shipped large amounts of cargo from southern North Vietnam to Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam.

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\* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

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## Preface

This report is the fifty-fifth in a series summarizing evidence received during the reporting period of (I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and (III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

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DETAILS

**I. Infiltration and Redeployments of North Vietnamese  
Personnel and Military Supplies**

*Personnel Infiltration*

1. Hanoi continued to dispatch regular infiltration groups last week at an average rate of more than one a day. Eight new regular groups were initially detected moving south through Binh Tram (BT) 8 near Vinh, North Vietnam, during the period -- five en route to the COSVN area, two to the B-3 Front, and one to VC MR 5. The total strength of these groups is about 4,500 troops. In addition, a ninth group destined for the B-3 Front with an estimated strength of 500 troops was detected in the Laotian Panhandle. This group probably was sent south out of numerical sequence with other groups recently detected en route to the B-3 Front, accounting for its location in Laos. The North Vietnamese also substantially increased the southward movement of specialists: 14 new groups with about 475 personnel were detected at BT 8 during the week. Nearly all of these specialists are destined for VC MR Tri-Thien, the B-3 Front, and MR 5.

2. During the 1972-73 infiltration cycle, few troops started south between mid-March and mid-May. If troop infiltration continues at even a moderate level during the next two months, the number of troops starting south since the beginning of the current cycle on 1 September 1973 would approach that of a year ago.

**Comparative Starts of Troops  
from North Vietnam, by Destination  
1 September-19 March**

	1972-73	1973-74
<b>Total</b>	<b>85,000</b>	<b>65,500</b>
MR Tri-Thien	26,000	2,000
MR 5	9,000	5,500
B-3 Front	14,000	8,500
COSVN	25,000	27,000
Southern Laos/MR 559	11,000	22,500

3. According to a recently intercepted message from North Vietnam, troop infiltration to COSVN and the B-3 Front will continue into April. On 14 March an unidentified element of a North Vietnamese training

### Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

South Vietnam

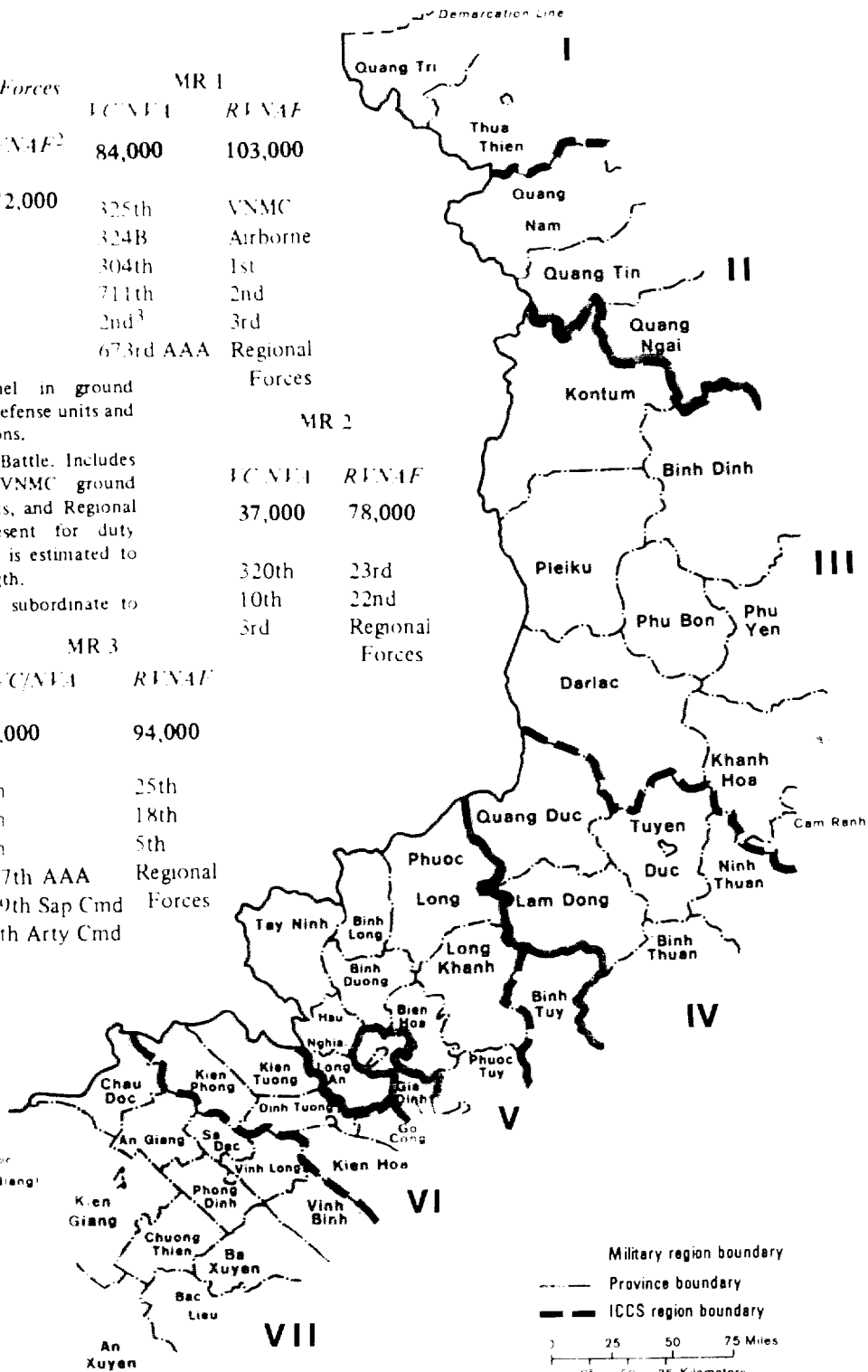
Regular Combat Forces		MR 1	
VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
184,000	372,000	84,000	103,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		711th	2nd
		2nd <sup>3</sup>	3rd
		673rd AAA	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.
2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.
3. Only one infantry regiment subordinate to the division.

MR 2	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
37,000	78,000
320th	23rd
10th	22nd
3rd	Regional Forces

MR 3	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
39,000	94,000
9th	25th
7th	18th
5th	5th
377th AAA	Regional Forces
429th Sap Cmd	
69th Arty Cmd	

MR 4	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
24,000	97,000
1st <sup>3</sup>	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



[redacted]

authority reported that two training battalions would depart for COSVN during the first 10 days of April, and a third battalion later in the month. Two of these units originally were scheduled to depart in March, but were delayed for unknown reasons. Another battalion currently undergoing training is to be sent to the B-3 Front some time in April. Because these groups probably will be assigned standard four-digit group designators, it will not be possible to distinguish them from other combat groups en route to COSVN and the B-3 Front. Nonetheless, this report tends to confirm the 11 November 1973 forecast from a North Vietnamese entity in southern Laos that troop infiltration to COSVN and the B-3 Front would be carried out through April or May.

4. The exfiltration of North Vietnamese personnel from South Vietnam continues at a high rate. Since 1 March, about 8,500 people have been observed moving northward, bringing the 1974 figure to some 22,000. About 60% of the March total -- more than 5,000 people -- were classified as "sick and wounded," a somewhat lower percentage than during January and February. In addition, one intercepted enemy message discussed the northward movement of "battlefield returnees."

#### *Movement of Military Equipment and Supplies*

##### *North Vietnam*

5. Communist logistic activity in southern North Vietnam was relatively light last week in sharp contrast to the heavy activity detected in recent weeks, when several hundred tons of ordnance moved through the Panhandle daily. [redacted] logistic units near Vinh reported receiving some 65 tons of ordnance, dispatching 40 tons, and having another 200 tons of ordnance awaiting shipment. Only light activity was noted in this area [redacted] when some 180 tons of ammunition were unloaded at the Cho Si Railroad Station north of Vinh. Poor road conditions near Vinh may have contributed to the light activity; [redacted] a logistic unit near the city stated that Route 1 was muddy and vehicles were having difficulty moving cargo from one of the main storage areas. Farther south, between Quang Khe and the DMZ, no significant logistic activity was detected.

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##### *Laos*

6. Aerial reconnaissance of the main supply corridor in Laos detected only moderate vehicle activity from Tchepone south to the tri-border area. Limited reconnaissance [redacted] showed about 75-100 trucks moving daily, most heading south. Although only moderate activity was observed, [redacted] the roadbed is being used

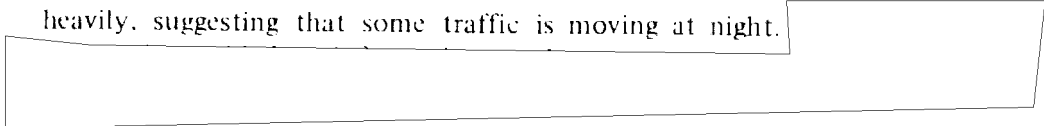
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heavily, suggesting that some traffic is moving at night.



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*South Vietnam*

7. Limited photography of Route 9 in Quang Tri Province and Route 613 in Kontum and Pleiku Provinces (see the transportation map) indicates that these roads are supporting moderate to heavy vehicle activity. Few trucks, however, were actually observed. COMINT also failed to provide information on the amount or type of cargo moving. Although the Communists' western supply corridor in South Vietnam probably is sustaining heavy traffic.



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**II. Significant Communist Combat Activity**

8. Although daily Communist cease-fire violations last week (averaging 75 per day) remained well below the 1973 daily average of 100, a series of bloody clashes in Kontum Province of MR 2 dominated the week's activity and caused a dramatic increase in government and Communist casualties. These clashes occurred northeast of Kontum City and resulted in some 400 Communist and almost 100 ARVN dead. Elsewhere in South Vietnam, activity remained at normal levels.

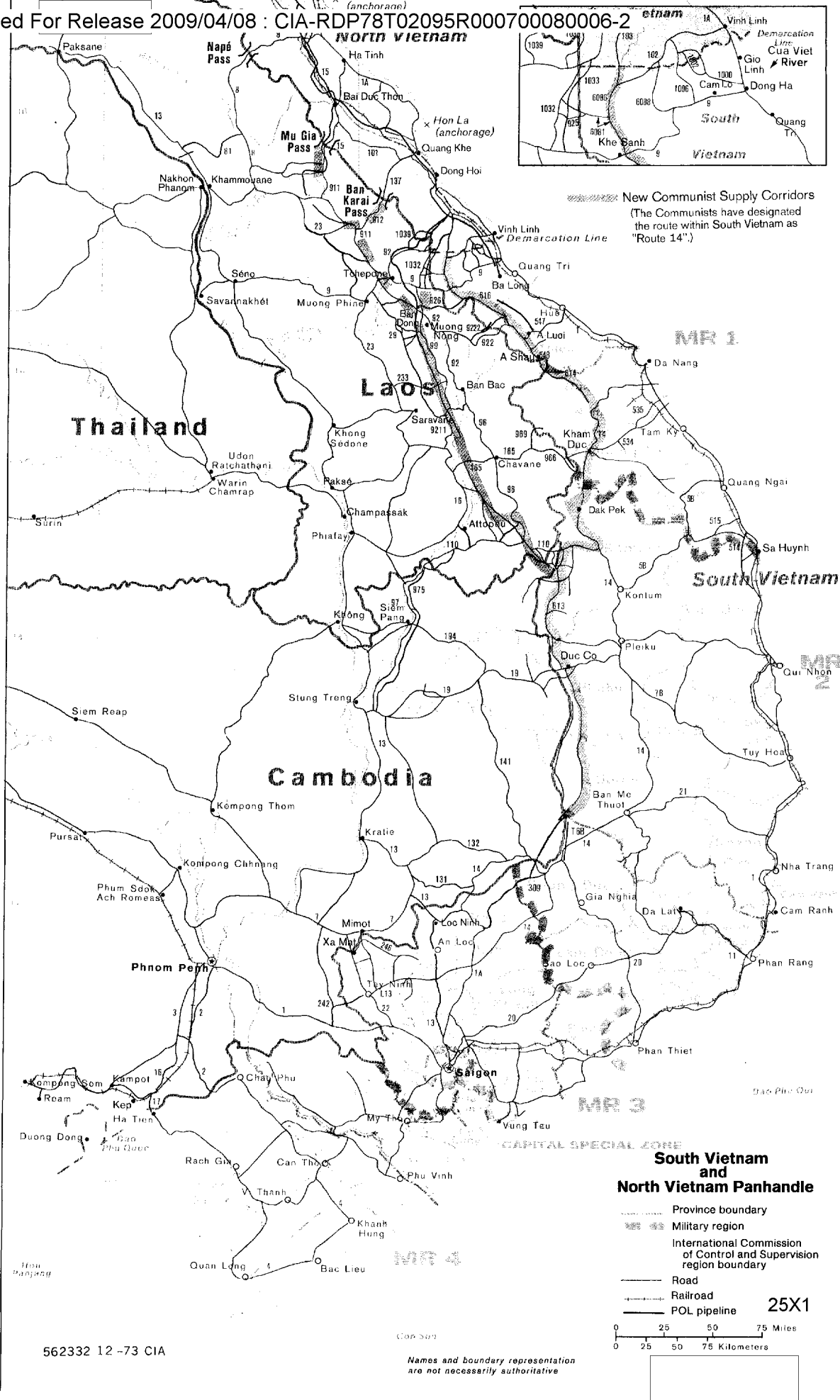
**III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina**

*New Regiment Identified in North Vietnam*

9. A new regiment, the 175th, has been identified from COMINT in southern North Vietnam. The regiment, formed possibly as early as mid-1973, is currently operating in Nghe An Province. Although the unit's branch of service is unknown, it has been engaged in training, construction, and agricultural activities. Because of the losses incurred in the 1972 offensive and its commitment of large forces to South Vietnam since the cease-fire, Hanoi has expanded its combat force structure by creating and regenerating a number of units in the North Vietnamese Panhandle. In addition to the 175th Regiment, this expansion has included the 308B and 341st Infantry Divisions and the 270th and 271st Infantry Regiments.







[REDACTED]

*Large-Scale Civilian Delivery of Cargo to Quang Tri  
Province, South Vietnam*

10. During January-February 1974, civilian transportation units in North Vietnam shipped large amounts of cargo from southern North Vietnam to Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam. In early January an unidentified civilian entity in Quang Tri Province revealed plans to distribute some 16,000 tons of cargo from North Vietnam during the month. Of the total, half would be delivered by vessel through Dong Ha and half would be sent by truck. In February the Ministry of Grain and Foodstuffs directed a grain company in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam, to transport 8,800 tons of cargo to Quang Tri Province during the month. Although the cargo was not identified, the involvement of the Ministry of Grain and Foodstuffs indicates that most of it was probably food.

11. Shipment of cargo to the civilian sector in Quang Tri Province has been detected fairly regularly since the cease-fire. The size of the effort in recent months, however, indicates the extent to which North Vietnam is going to support the civilian population in the area. Since the cease-fire, Hanoi has tried to consolidate its control over the civilian population in Quang Tri Province and, besides economic support, has attempted to integrate this area into the political and administrative framework of North Vietnam. Among other things, North Vietnamese currency has been introduced into this area, and various civilian ministries directly subordinate to Hanoi have been established.

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