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## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

USE OF CAMBODIAN TERRITORY  
BY THE VIET CONG  
AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

SECRET

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F O R E W O R D

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Summary

The Communists have increased their use of Cambodian territory in recent months to support the insurgency in South Vietnam, and the tempo of their activities is expected to accelerate. Recent aerial photography reveals that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army have established a second base camp in the northeast corner of Cambodia.

New road construction linking the Laotian infiltration route with Cambodia has been completed, and older roads have been improved. The most significant development in this regard is the construction of a new road from Cambodia into Laos -- route 110 -- which appears almost certainly to have been built to serve the Laotian infiltration network by extending it southward into Cambodia (see the map). There is, however, no conclusive evidence that this was the sole intent of the improvements.

Supplies procured in Cambodia for support of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces in South Vietnam apparently continue to consist primarily of food and other commercial items available on the open market. Cambodia, however, is by no means a major source of food supplies to the Communists, who continue to depend primarily on the South Vietnamese countryside.

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\* This memorandum was produced by the Office of Research and Reports; the estimates and conclusions represent the best judgment of the Directorate of Intelligence as of 1 June 1966.

The extent to which Cambodia is used either as a transfer area for or as a source of arms and ammunition is difficult to assess although it must be small. Almost certainly, however, the Communists have established arms caches on Cambodian territory for support of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, and Communist activity in the northern part of the country strongly suggests that military supplies originating in North Vietnam are moving across Cambodian territory.

There continues to be considerable evidence that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces use Cambodian territory in many areas along the 600-mile border for sanctuary and bivouac purposes.

The Cambodian government has taken an increasingly favorable and accommodating attitude toward the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam but has stopped short of direct military support. There is considerable evidence, however, of cooperation with the Viet Cong at lower levels of the Cambodian government.

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1. Supply Routes

Information that has become available in the past six months indicates that North Vietnam is making increased use of Cambodian territory as a logistic supply route to support activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army in South Vietnam. Most of the supplies acquired for use by these forces in South Vietnam and Cambodia either are indigenous or arrived in Cambodia through normal trade channels. Although some military supplies, other than those carried by infiltrators, apparently move from North Vietnam to Laos and then through Cambodia, there is no evidence that supplies specifically intended for Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces are imported through the ports of Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville.

Over the years, supplies have been moved into South Vietnam from Cambodia by the following means: (a) by sampan or junk on the inland waterways; (b) by porters on the trails that cross the South Vietnamese border; and (c) by sampan or junk from minor Cambodian ports to islands in the Gulf of Siam and to the west coast of South Vietnam. In recent months traffic moving by sea has been reduced whereas traffic moving by truck has been noted. A substantial illegal trade for private profit has also been taking place between Cambodia and areas in South Vietnam, held by both South Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, especially in the Mekong Delta. Many crossing points have been identified along the border between Cambodia and South Vietnam that are used by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. The relative importance of each area, route, and mode cannot be determined from available information. The Communists apparently shift back and forth from land to water transport and from one area of entry to another as the tactical situation changes.

The land and water routes through the northeastern provinces of Cambodia are becoming increasingly important for the movement of supplies to Communist forces in South Vietnam and Laos. Photographic analysis reveals that in recent months at least one new route has been built and old routes have been improved and are being used more heavily than before.

Cambodian traders are reported to be moving substantial amounts of rice northward on the Mekong River from Phnom Penh to the Cambodian river towns of Kratie and Stung Treng. The rice is then moved onward by small watercraft or by truck to the South

Vietnamese and Laotian borders. Although the traders try to avoid major roads, route 13 leading from Kratie toward Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Phuoc Long Provinces of South Vietnam is probably used. From Stung Treng, route 19 and the trails leading from it toward Pleiku Province reportedly are used for this traffic. Some of the rice and other supplies are shipped from Stung Treng by boat on the Se Kong River to Siem Pang or Ban Don Fai near the Laotian border or on the Se San River to Bo Kheo. Photographic analysis has shown river traffic by motorized craft and the locations of land/water transloading points. With respect to all of this traffic, it is not always clear what portion is destined for internal Cambodian use and what for Communist forces.

The most significant development of the transport network in this area is the construction in early 1966 of a new land route paralleling the Tonle Kong River from near Siem Pang to Ban San Keo, opposite Ban Don Fai. The southern end connects with route 15 in Cambodia, and the northern end extends east into Laos to the North Vietnamese truck route which runs through the Laotian panhandle. This new route is identified as 110, which is about 100 miles long, with about 30 miles in Cambodian territory. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Cambodian and Vietnamese troops cooperated in the construction of the Cambodian section of the road, but there are no other reports to confirm this.

Route 15 from Siem Pang to a junction with route 19 near Bo Kheo has been realigned in part and shows signs of increased traffic. Photographic analysis has identified at least five truck parks concealed in dense vegetation on side roads from route 15. From route 19 a recently completed fair-weather truckable route, route 141, extends south and joins route 14 near the border of Quang Duc and Phuoc Long Provinces. This route and its connections to route 110 now provide a dry-season truckable route all the way from North Vietnam into important southern provinces such as Tay Ninh in South Vietnam. The second road which connects Laos and Cambodia extends west from Siem Pang into the Laotian territory along the Mekong River in which a Communist buildup has taken place. Evidence is inconclusive as to whether this is a new road or an improved old road. All the evidence strongly suggests that much of the improvement and construction of roads and waterways in northern Cambodia is designed to serve as logistic routes and constitute a southward expansion of the infiltration corridor into Cambodia.

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Use of primitive land routes and inland waterways in the southern and delta areas across the Cambodia-South Vietnam border continues much as it has in the past. In addition, supplies now may be moving by truck transport across the border into South Vietnam in this area. Traditionally, traffic into South Vietnam has consisted of Viet Cong purchasing agents and smugglers carrying supplies by trail or small boat. The supplies are acquired in local Cambodian markets along the border or from legal importing firms and business houses in Phnom Penh. The Mekong-Bassac River complex formerly was a principal route for moving supplies into South Vietnam. Since 1963, seizures of illegal supplies on the rivers have practically ceased. This change may reflect the increased lack of South Vietnamese control of the border or an increasing use of land routes. The Viet Cong control the border on four routes that enter Tay Ninh and Binh Long Provinces. Truck convoys carrying rice now cross the border four or five miles into Vietnamese territory after nightfall.

In the past, some supplies were infiltrated by sea from Cambodia via the islands in the Gulf of Siam. It is believed, however, that substantial infiltration of supplies by sea from Cambodia has been blocked for the most part by the Market Time Operation.

## 2. Organizational Control

Various reports indicate that the infiltration of supplies from outside sources, including Cambodia, is under the control of the Viet Cong Peoples Revolutionary Party apparatus. The Finance and Economic Sections of the District Party Committees, under the provincial-level Party Committee, appear to have immediate supervision of these movements. Recent intelligence indicates that military transport units of the North Vietnamese Army are also involved in moving supplies, including food, across the border from northeastern Cambodia.

## 3. Types of Supplies Moved

Most of the supplies procured in Cambodia have been purchased on the open market. Arms and ammunition also have been infiltrated through Cambodia from North Vietnam. Because of the clandestine nature of the Viet Cong procurement in Cambodia, an accurate estimate of the total volume of the shipments cannot be made. The current volume of food shipments possibly is about 5,000 tons per year. Cambodia is by no means a major source of

food supplies to the Viet Cong, who depend primarily on the South Vietnamese countryside. The Viet Cong collect more rice than they need in the delta area, some of which is sent to Cambodia for export. The purchase of rice in Phnom Penh is probably a logistic expedient to supply Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army units operating in deficit mountain areas. The Viet Cong clandestine apparatus in Phnom Penh has regularly purchased drugs and medical supplies in the open market in Cambodia. Although appreciable amounts of medical and other non-military supplies have been procured in Cambodia for use by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, the bulk of such items have been procured in South Vietnam itself or have been brought in from North Vietnam.

The Viet Cong apparatus in Phnom Penh has successfully solicited some contributions from the Vietnamese minority elements in Cambodia who are generally unsympathetic to the government of South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese commercial representative in Phnom Penh reportedly pays the Cambodian merchants after the supplies have been delivered.

The extent to which Cambodia is used either as a transfer area or as a source of arms and ammunition is difficult to assess. Almost certainly, the Communists have established arms caches on Cambodian territory for support of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army. The movement of weapons from these caches to distribution points in South Vietnam probably accounts for some recent sightings of arms movements. At least one  report states that Cambodian troops have provided arms to the Viet Cong. There is no confirmation of this report. If the incident did in fact occur, such incidents have not been on a wide scale and almost certainly have not involved collusion or foreknowledge on the part of the central government of Cambodia.

Instructions from regional military headquarters were sent to Cambodian border units late last year to investigate and stop arms traffic across the border. In recent statements concerning Cambodian support for the Vietnamese Communists, Prince Sihanouk has emphasized that no military equipment is moving to Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army forces via Cambodia.

Although the volume of supplies obtained for Communist forces from Cambodia has always been small, Cambodian territory now seems to be playing an increasingly important role in the movement of military supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. This role could eventually have an important effect on the outcome of the war.

4. Viet Cong Bases in Cambodian Territory

The Viet Cong and, more recently, North Vietnamese forces use Cambodian territory in many areas along the 600-mile border for sanctuary and bivouac purposes. Viet Cong elements have been located on Cambodian territory [redacted] although it appears that these elements are shifted back and forth across the border. Important Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army military facilities, such as rest camps, training areas, hospitals, workshops, and storage depots, now operate in Cambodia. Photography shows at least two Communist base areas in northeast Cambodia and new construction activity to the west near the newly built route 110.

25X1

A recently captured Viet Cong document reveals in the clearest terms to date how the Communists have been using Cambodian territory for sanctuary with the complicity of at least local Cambodian officials. The document is a report of an early April 1966 Viet Cong meeting dealing with problems associated with the use of Cambodian territory. It makes clear the importance which the Viet Cong attaches to its Cambodian sanctuary and suggests that Cambodia will loom even larger in Communist planning as the war intensifies in South Vietnam. The document indicates that the principal use of Cambodian territory, at least in the Tay Ninh-Svay Rieng area, is to harbor rest and recovery camps for Viet Cong wounded.

5. Cambodian Government Collusion

The Cambodian government has taken an increasingly favorable attitude toward the Communist insurgency in South Vietnam. The Cambodian government has expressed its official goodwill for the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV). Sihanouk supports the NFLSV's claim to represent the South Vietnamese people, he has presented medical supplies to North Vietnam, and he has presided at a ceremony in which medical supplies were presented to a representative of the NFLSV. He has publicly stated that Cambodian hospitals would care for the Viet Cong wounded although he also stated that his principal purpose was to prevent the establishment of Vietnamese colonies on Cambodian soil. In addition, he has raised the North Vietnamese commercial delegation to a governmental level short of diplomatic status.



There is considerable evidence of cooperation with the Viet Cong at lower levels of the Cambodian government. The active assistance of Cambodian armed forces in Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army refuge activities in Cambodia has been noted. There have been some reports of Cambodian and Viet Cong troops fighting together against South Vietnamese troops. Viet Cong prisoners of war in 1964 stated that the Cambodian troops attempted to cover up their cooperation with the insurgents, and they also reported that local Cambodian authorities have made no effort to interfere with Viet Cong procurement of supplies in Cambodia. On the other hand, in some areas the Cambodians have tried to police the border against the Viet Cong as well as against South Vietnamese troops with whom they frequently clash. Instances of small skirmishes between Cambodian and Viet Cong intruders have been reported. Cambodian border outposts apparently had been instructed to stop illicit rice shipments to South Vietnam prior to more recent government statements seeking to profit from the rice transactions.

In summary, the Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory appears to be due to active Cambodian cooperation in some areas, a laissez-faire attitude in others, and the inability of the Cambodian government to control its frontiers in isolated regions. The increasing intensity of the war in South Vietnam is putting a severe strain on Sihanouk's principal short-term policy objective -- to keep the Vietnam war from spreading to Cambodia. He has through the years cultivated Cambodia's international posture as a "neutral" in large measure to further this objective. At the same time, acting on the calculation that the Communists would win in South Vietnam, he has moved circumspectly toward a political accommodation with Hanoi and the Viet Cong. The continuing problem for Sihanouk has been to improve relations with the Communists without inviting retaliation from South Vietnamese and US forces.

This has been a difficult game but Sihanouk has played it adroitly and successfully. He has been able to do so principally because the Communist use of Cambodian territory to date has been relatively limited and covert in nature and generally deniable. In recent months, however, the Communists have been forced to make increasing demands on Cambodia at the same time that Sihanouk has been increasingly irritated by Khmer Serei activities. Sihanouk has met Communist demands in a characteristic way -- giving the Communists what they want but without officially admitting that he is doing so. He probably hopes that by expanding contacts with the West and pushing for an expanded International Control Commission operation at the port of Sihanoukville he can continue to portray Cambodia as the innocent victim of the South Vietnam war.

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