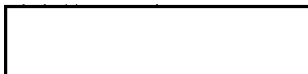


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30 October 1972

MEMORANDUM

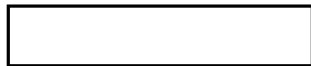
The Detection of Infiltration and Supply Movements Into South Vietnam in a Post-Hostilities Environment

Introduction

1. The successful detection of North Vietnamese infiltration of men and supplies into South Vietnam in a post-hostilities environment controlled by some form of settlement agreement would require a large and comprehensive surveillance program. This memorandum discusses, in summary fashion, the principal measures which would have to be included in such a program. The program outlined to detect movements into South Vietnam would apply to southern Laos as well. An Annex extends the requirements for monitoring North Vietnamese movements of manpower and supplies into northern Laos. This memorandum does not, however, consider the question of Communist supply movements within Laos or Cambodia or the movement of stocks from Communist caches in these countries into South Vietnam.

2. It is our judgment that no inspection organization of feasible size can expect to do even a minimally effective job if it is limited in its geographical location to the territory of South Vietnam alone. Furthermore, the South Vietnamese land border with Cambodia and Laos is so long and provides so many crossing points that the only useful approach -- and it is the one which this memorandum takes -- is to exercise the inspection and control function at the borders of North Vietnam itself.

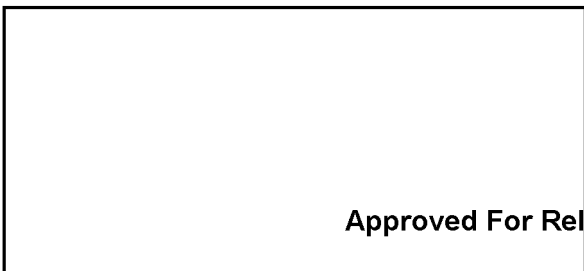
3. Even the task of monitoring supply and personnel movements along the North Vietnamese border will be extremely difficult. North Vietnam has a very complex



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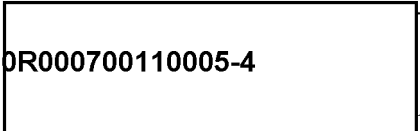
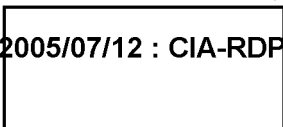
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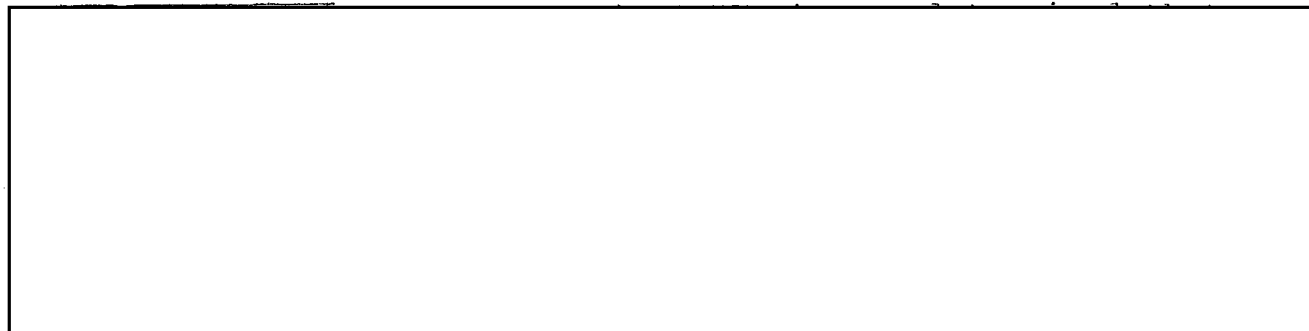
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logistic system, even though it is primitive by U.S. standards. In the following discussion we describe a program which would have a reasonable chance of detecting large movements of personnel or materiel. It must be emphasized that if the North Vietnamese are determined to engaged in small-scale surreptitious infiltration over a prolonged period, it is doubtful that any practicable surveillance system could prevent them from doing so.\*

Pattern of North Vietnamese Supply and Personnel Infiltration

4. North Vietnam has historically used a number of different resupply and infiltration routes. Movement from the Hanoi area into southern North Vietnam is primarily by rail as far south as Vinh. There, supplies and personnel are transferred to vehicles for movement into South Vietnam or southern Laos. Upon reaching the terminus of their rail journey at Vinh, supplies and men can be moved by a myriad of routes which have burgeoned throughout southern Indochina during the course of the war. Traditionally, for example, personnel infiltration to South Vietnam has been via routes through the Ban Karai Pass into the Laos Panhandle. Other corridors could as easily accommodate this flow, of course, and in recent weeks there has been evidence that the Communists are adding to their traditional manpower infiltration system a number of new routes west of the DMZ. The logistic resupply routes make use of four major corridors from North Vietnam into southern Laos, and most recently, numerous direct routes across the DMZ. This labyrinthine system of roads is supplemented by a petroleum pipeline system extending the length of North Vietnam and on into northern South Vietnam and South Laos; its existence considerably lessens the resupply burden placed on rail and truck routes.

5. North Vietnamese supply and manpower movements have usually been closely related to seasonal weather patterns in Southeast Asia. Though the monsoons affect



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different areas at different times, their prime impact over the years has been during the June through September period when rains peak in the Laos Panhandle, and both large-scale resupply and personnel infiltration to Cambodia and the lower half of South Vietnam ceases or is reduced to a trickle. Typically, by late September personnel infiltration through southern Laos begins to pick up, while the marked increase in logistical activity lags by a least a month until major supply routes have dried out and are ready to carry heavy vehicle loads.

#### The Desirability of Inspection within North Vietnam

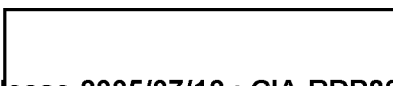
6. At the present time, the infiltration of supplies or personnel to the south generally commences in or around Hanoi, and via rail (under a non-bombing environment) moves on to Vinh. Vinh is a marshalling center for the major part of all infiltration and supply movements -- either into Laos or directly into South Vietnam. Thus, Vinh appears a logical first point for detecting the covert movement of war materiel and troops. If a number of inspection teams were stationed in and around Vinh on the railway and the several highways entering and leaving the city, we would be in a fairly good position to detect the beginnings of a large-scale surreptitious buildup in the south at its inception. The greatest difficulty of such surveillance would be that supplies and personnel moving through the Vinh area could be not only destined for covert buildup in South Vietnam but could also be destined for NVA units operating in North Vietnam nearer the DMZ. (A buildup of NVA strength in this area, of course, would also be a threat to South Vietnam, though such a buildup would probably not contravene the proposed peace agreement.)

7. If inspection teams were also placed on the major north-south roads to the west of Vinh, the chances of properly identifying a military buildup directed at South Vietnam would be considerably enhanced. However, any concept of establishing an east-west line across the whole of North Vietnam near Vinh, with inspection teams all the way along the line, is impractical. It would require impossibly large numbers of inspection personnel.

#### Monitoring of Exit Routes Out of North Vietnam

8. In addition to inspection teams at Vinh, an even partially effective approach to monitoring the southward movement of men and materiel would require surveillance of

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the logistics channels which lead either directly or indirectly from North Vietnam into South Vietnam.\* The direct routes include the major roads and the POL pipeline which run across the DMZ. The indirect routes include the roads, river, and POL pipelines from North Vietnam to southern Laos and the sea routes from North to South Vietnam.

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9. In general, inspection teams should be placed on all major roads where they exit North Vietnam. As for the POL pipelines, supply movements across international boundaries could be [redacted] supervised by inspection teams. To cover possible covert movement by other than these major routes, we recommend aerial surveillance of the North Vietnam border and coast [redacted]

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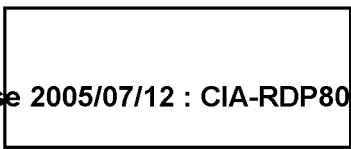
[redacted] where they cross the North Vietnamese border. Specific details are as follows:

10. First, the direct routes across the DMZ: Optimally, an inspection team should be emplaced just to the north of the DMZ on every road which leads into the DMZ. The major roads are shown on the map attached to this memorandum. To monitor movements across the DMZ would require inspection of traffic on Routes 103, 120, 102, 1006, 1000, 1022, and 1A. In addition, to prevent the possible covert construction of new roads or motorable trails into the DMZ, periodic, albeit irregularly scheduled, close ground inspections of the northern boundary of the DMZ would be needed. Finally, the DMZ is bisected by the Ben Hai River. A series of surveillance posts placed along that river (every few miles over its 40-mile boundary length), supplemented by river patrols, would reduce the chance for surreptitious activity across the DMZ.

11. The indirect routes leading from North to South Vietnam via Laos should have similar inspection teams at every major border crossing. The terrain along the Laos-North Vietnam border makes its crossing difficult, and routes have been built through virtually all the passes

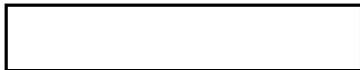
\* In the discussion which follows, we have identified inspection locations on the North Vietnamese side of the border. Such placement would be ideal in that border roads, once they leave North Vietnam, generally divide into several branches. If inspection were to be instituted on the Laos and South Vietnamese side of the border, more stations would be required.

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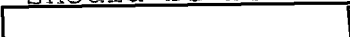
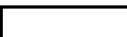


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where the terrain makes construction feasible.\* Specifically, inspection teams would be needed at a point or points on Route 8 just east of the Nape Pass. Similarly, north of the Mu Gia and Ban Karai Passes inspection teams would be required on Routes 15 and 137, respectively. West of the DMZ, a number of roads have been constructed during the past two years. Inspection teams would be required on Routes 910, 1039, and 1032 and on the adjacent Se Bang Hieng River. Finally, frequent close inspection would be required at all the pass areas to determine if additional routes were being constructed.


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12. The POL pipeline utilized by the North Vietnamese should be relatively easy to monitor 

 supervising the flow of petroleum across international borders to Laos and South Vietnam. 

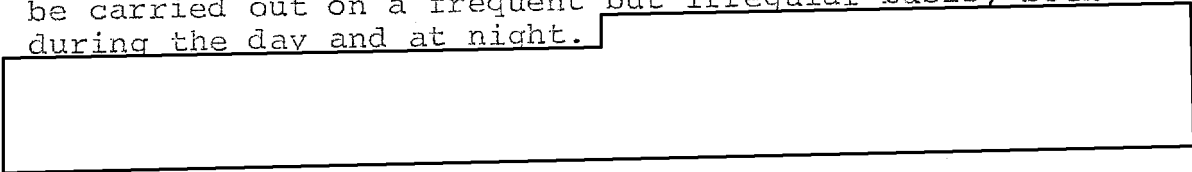
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 three lines from southern North Vietnam: one directly across the DMZ to South Vietnam and one each through Mu Gia Pass and west of the DMZ to Laos. Other available intelligence sources, such as aerial photography (if they remain viable under the cease-fire terms), should detect any construction of new POL pipelines.

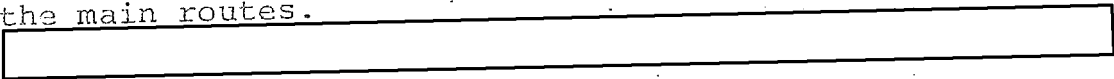
13. Once the above measures were implemented, any further improvement in our ability to monitor the covert infiltration of men and supplies would require the use of technical surveillance. Most important would be a continuation of aerial surveillance along North Vietnam's international borders, including both low-flying aerial observers to monitor border activity visually and photography\*\* of the border area to allow closer inspection. Optimally, this coverage should be over all of the major logistics/infiltration corridors out of North Vietnam, on the North Vietnam side of the border, in the DMZ and on the western side of the Laos-North Vietnam border. It should be carried out on a frequent but irregular basis, both during the day and at night.

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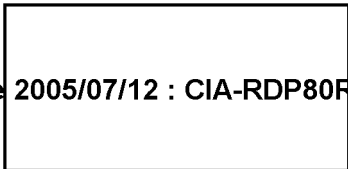


\* All of the pass routes from North Vietnam into Laos, however, have some bypasses adjacent to the main route, and it is possible for more such bypasses to be constructed. Inspection teams would be needed on each bypass as well as on the main routes.

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detecting movements just outside North Vietnam which had gone undetected inside that country.

#### Sea Infiltration

14. In addition to the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and the roads across the DMZ, North Vietnam has in the past attempted to use steel-hulled trawlers\* to provide support for its forces in South Vietnam. Although the enemy's sea infiltration program has been small and relatively unsuccessful compared to their overland resupply efforts, it could play an important part in a covert resupply campaign. Since 1969, there have been at least 50 sea infiltration attempts, only three of which are known to have been successful. About 80% of the known attempts were destined for GVN MR-4 in the Delta, including the three successes (all of which occurred during the period August 1970-March 1971). The importance of seaborne infiltration to the enemy has been attested to this past dry season. Eighteen trawlers were detected attempting to smuggle supplies to GVN MR-4 (all of these attempts were unsuccessful).

#### The Market Time Surveillance System

15. North Vietnamese trawlers have departed for South Vietnam both from the port of Haiphong and from Hsin Hsing Harbor on China's Hainan Island. The U.S. and GVN have relied on extensive air and sea surveillance off both the North Vietnamese and South Vietnamese coasts to detect the trawlers enroute. The outermost barrier (50 to over 200 miles) has been maintained by the P-3 aircraft operating under U.S. Navy control. This air barrier has been extremely effective in detecting enemy trawlers and is the mainstay of the present Market Time operation; almost all the trawlers detected by Market Time forces since August 1969 have been initially sighted by P-3 crews. Once a trawler has been sighted, an effort is made to maintain continuous visual and radar contact with the trawler, and the crew of the trawler normally becomes aware of the surveillance in short order.

16. Since July 1972, the South Vietnamese navy has assumed responsibility for command and control of all surface surveillance operations off the coast of South Vietnam.

\* North Vietnam's inventory of steel-hulled trawlers consists of about 50 SL Class trawlers with capacities ranging from 100 to 400 metric tons each.

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Control of the coastal surveillance organization is now exercised through four coastal zone commanders. Each of these authorities has as his deputy the commander of the coastal flotilla assigned to his area.

Future Requirements

17. To detect sea infiltration during an in-place cease-fire, the following steps are recommended:

- The Market Time outer barrier should be retained, using P-3 aircraft. To be most effective, these flights should occur on a daily basis.
- The coastal surveillance system should be maintained and operated on a 24-hour basis.
- Observers should be placed in the port of Haiphong to monitor the departure of trawlers.

The first two recommendations are essential if effective monitoring is to take place. The latter, while useful, would not be essential and could be given up in the bargaining process. (We believe it to be unnecessary -- and not feasible -- to set up teams for ground visual surveillance along the coast of South Vietnam because of the sheer magnitude of the effort that would be required.)

18. While the steps enumerated above should be effective in detecting sea infiltration attempts, it would be difficult to "prove" any cease-fire violations. In the past, infiltration trawlers which have become aware of airborne surveillance usually have aborted their mission while still in international water and returned to port. Thus, unless a trawler entered South Vietnamese territorial waters, it could not be seized and inspected, and violations would be almost impossible to prove.

19. One other maritime infiltration possibility exists; namely, the Communists could try to move supplies (and manpower) into northern South Vietnam on small fishing boats with a 5- to 10-ton capacity. These boats, which are not able to operate on the high seas, could move along the coast and offload supplies. To prevent this, some type of coastal patrol would have to be maintained near the DMZ

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with the power to board and inspect suspect ships. Even with extensive patrolling, however, small-scale movement probably could take place.

A Special Note on Personnel Infiltration

20. The North Vietnamese personnel infiltration corridor begins in the city of Vinh in Nghe An Province, North Vietnam, and moves along the road network through Ha Tinh and Quang Binh Provinces to the Laotian border and the DMZ. In recent years the two roads most often associated with personnel infiltration inside North Vietnam are Route 1A, which runs along the coast from Vinh to the DMZ, and Route 137, which runs from Route 1A through the Ban Karai Pass into the Laotian Panhandle. As indicated earlier, this area of North Vietnam, especially around the main marshalling point of Vinh, would be one useful location from which to monitor possible preparations for personnel infiltration in violation of the cease-fire agreements. It is in this area that significant numbers of personnel would be concentrated the longest, and it is the area where inspection teams would most likely detect personnel movements.

21. Once the infiltrators leave North Vietnam, they follow a diverse road and trail system -- both through Laos and across the DMZ. In Laos and northern South Vietnam, the personnel infiltration corridor is a maze of narrow footpaths and trails usually not more than 1-1/2 to 3 feet wide. These trails parallel the major road networks used for the transportation of supplies but may be separated from such roads by several miles distance. Many of the trails pass through dense vegetation that limits lateral visibility to 20 feet or less and are under thick jungle canopy, which make observations from the air all but impossible.

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the best means to detect illegal personnel infiltration in the future may be a combination of inspection teams at Vinh and extensive foot-patrolling across the trail

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network from as far west as Muong Phine in Laos east through Tchepone and then along Route 9 through northern South Vietnam to the coast. Even with such measures, we should not be sanguine about our chances of detecting more than a portion of covert infiltration. The prospects for ground patrols observing infiltration as it occurs is not great, though it might be possible to detect areas where infiltrators have already passed. The greater the number of patrols, obviously the greater the chance of detection. Aerial observation  not likely to be effective in detecting personnel infiltration in these areas.

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Here again, extremely active foot-patrolling by inspection teams would provide the best chance of finding such stations.

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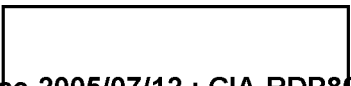
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## ANNEX

North Laos

1. Communist military activity in north Laos is supported almost entirely by supplies provided from external sources via North Vietnam. Three major route systems are presently used, but others could become important if the North Vietnamese undertook to design a logistic system to support a covert buildup.
2. The primary area of interest in north Laos is the Plaine des Jarres (PDJ) region. Activity there is primarily supplied by the Route 7 corridor which leads from the Phu Dien Chau area of North Vietnam (north of Vinh) into north Laos and the PDJ. Just east of the Laos-North Vietnam border, Muong Sen is the focal point for infiltration toward the PDJ. Thus, our objective should be to place inspection teams in the Muong Sen area and on all possible bypass roads over which the Communists could move supplies through that area.
3. Several potential routes to the PDJ region come from the south and west, but they are unlikely candidates for covert resupply routes. Route 811 extends north from the Nape Pass area toward the PDJ, but this route terminates well to the southeast of the PDJ area, and its use would require large-scale portering of supplies.
4. Sam Neua is the second major area of interest in north Laos. Numerous routes cross the North Vietnam-Laos border into the Sam Neua area. These could be used to move supplies both there and eventually to the PDJ. Inspection teams would be required on Routes 127, 154, 6, 13, and 196 to monitor this network.
5. The third major area currently used by the North Vietnamese for logistic staging into north Laos by the North Vietnamese is in the vicinity of Dien Bien Phu. To cover this area, monitoring stations would be needed on Routes 44 and 19, which comprise the most important part of the resupply apparatus directed toward Luang Prabang Province.
6. In addition to the presence of inspection teams on all of the above-mentioned routes, thorough monitoring of North Vietnamese personnel and logistics movements would

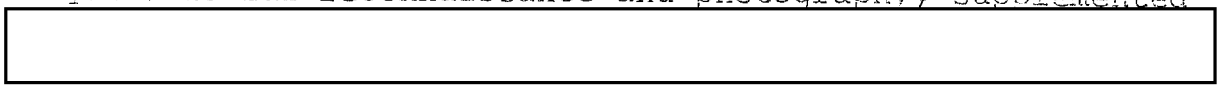
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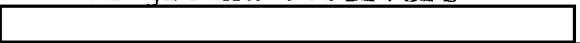
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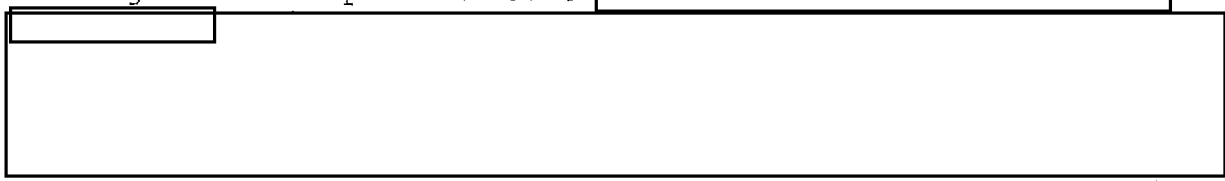
require aerial reconnaissance and photography, supplemented



7. In addition to supply channels from North Vietnam, north Laos is also directly accessible to China via several major routes, notably Routes 49, 412, 4023, and 411. In the past, these routes have carried some supplies for Communist forces (mainly Pathet Lao) in northwest Laos. Since the heavy Chinese presence in the area of these roads may preclude the use of ground observers acting in an inspection role



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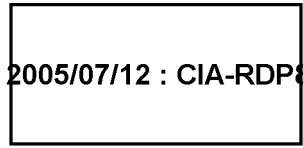


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8. Supplies which enter Laos directly from China have traditionally been used in the northwestern sector. It is conceivable, however, that by using the Route 19/Cam Ou River/Route 4 supply corridor, supplies (and men) could move south toward Luang Prabang or the PDJ, two of the most contested areas in Laos in recent years. Again, aerial reconnaissance and clandestine reporting appear to be the only way to follow such activity.

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