

2020 sag

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Khe sanh 1 (normass/deepe)

KIS-

SAIGON, APRIL 12--An escalation towards heavier fighting is expected soon in the battle around Khe Sanh.

But, the form of the fighting by both sides has changed tactically, reliable sources report.

The spectre of a massive Communist ground assault in the setpiece fashion of Dien Bien Phu has vanished at this point, these sources said. First, because of the immensity of American military power and mobility there, second, because the American command is reportedly turning the base shifting the holding power of the base from American Marine to Vietnamese regulars--and even these regulars Vietnamese forces could be withdrawn. Third, The significance of Khe Sanh for the Communists has consistently been measured by official sources as a hinge dramatic hinge to swing the American political party conventions, if not the election, which meant their grand assault should have come in July, when the monsoon rains also began to shift in their favor. But, President Johnson's April 1 eliminated the American conventions and election as the pivot decisive point in the Communist timetable--and hence the political significance of the siege Khe Sanh also vanished ^{for} ~~from~~ the Communist viewpoint, these sources report.

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khe sanh 2 (normass/deepo)

In the wake of the 20,000-man Allied operation around the combat base, the Communists have reportedly shifted from positional warfare, once used to besiege the former Marine base, to mobile warfare of harrassing and briefly contesting the Allied forces. In short, they have shifted to a mobile, momentary frontline, rather than a rigid one encircling the base camp.

American ~~Ma~~ tactics have also shifted from the Marine concept of holding a static, fixed position—a concept ordered by their ~~superior~~ superior headquarters—to the Army concept of highly mobile, heliborne operations covering wide ~~expanses~~ ~~expe~~ ~~x~~ expanses quickly and with more flexibility. The Army ~~concept~~ concept is essentially the classical search-and-destroy operation General William C. Westmoreland has ~~espon~~ *throughout U. S. Vietnam* ~~implemented~~ consistently attempt to employ ~~here~~.

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khe sanh 4 (normass/deepe)

military
The relative mildness of the ~~contacts~~ thus far—relative compared to the spectre of Dien Bien Phu—has lead to the conclusion among many leading ~~Vietnam~~ Vietnamese ~~salon~~ salon politicians *in Saigon* that ~~diplomatic~~ a ~~tacit~~ tacit diplomatic ~~deal~~ deal had been made between Washington and Hanoi to militarily disengage in the Khe Sanh area. This view—while widespread in sophisticated circles here—however appears to be *perpetrated* by pro-French, if not pro-Communist, elements striving to widen the ~~misunderstanding and suspect~~ suspicion and cleavage between the American ~~official~~ officialdom here and the Vietnamese government. The gist of this line is that Washington and the Communists have already made a deal for a pre-cooked peace, in which South Vietnamese would be sold out by the Americans. This line of reasoning appears to be an extension of the *let the ball roll* ~~misleading~~ propaganda circulating in Saigon, Hue and other cities during the Tet offensive, ~~in~~ intimating that the American command had deliberately let the Communist troops into the cities as a means to force the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu to negotiate. The result of this whirlwind of ~~in~~ propaganda ~~has~~ has been a net lack of confidence on the part of Vietnamese leaders in the Americans, *and* a great deal of confusion in the ~~mn~~ minds of pro-American, anti-Communists. Significantly, neither the American command nor mission spokesmen are countering this ~~pre~~ propaganda, saying they are not

Authorized to discuss diplomatic developments.
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khe sanh ⁴ (normass/deepe)

However, more studious and informed sources here believe that no tacit Hanoi-Washington understanding had been reached about Khe Sanh for these ^{four} ~~three~~ reasons:

1. The Communist strategy is not to de-escalate the military war while negotiating—but to escalate it. This position, was clearly expressed in a mammoth G6 captured Communist document, states that "Fighting continues until the emergence of a situation where both sides are fighting indecisively. Then, a situation where fighting and negotiations are conducted simultaneously ~~may~~ emerge. In fighting while negotiating, the side which fights more strongly will ~~compel~~ compel the ~~ad~~ adversary to accept his conditions."

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khe sanh 5 (normass/deepe)

2. Both Radio Hanoi and the Liberation Radio 1 ~~for the southern~~
Viet Cong have commented at length about Operation Pegasus/Iam Son²⁰⁷
which they call the "Flying Horse" operation. They have claimed
victories there, which seem exaggerated in Western eyes, and
to such an extent that it appears the lifting of the siege around
Khe Sanh has put them on the propaganda defensive. ~~This~~ Their
broadcasts fore forecast more fighting and are especially vitrolie
about General Westmoreland.

The Liberation Front Press, similar to radio broadcasts from
Hanoi, said, "The fighting and victories at Khe Sanh are a s'big
slap in the mouth of defeated General Westmoreland when he left Vietnam
for Washington and boasted the military situation of the Americans in the
South has improved. With our trend of one victory after another victory
(around Khe Sanh), the people and the military forces in Quang Tri province
(along the ~~demilitarized zone~~) will move forward to gain bigger
victories, push the Americans ~~th~~ and their puppets down into an
abyss of comp,e complete defeat."

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khe sanh ⁷ (normass/deepe)

3. The classical Communist military tactic that they have used for years has been to withdraw in the face of ~~superior~~ superior forces or when the military disadvantages prevailed against their staying in some victorious manner. ~~Hence, the withdrawal~~ ^{at Khe Sanh, partial} Communist withdrawal. ~~if in fact they have withdrawn--would suit them~~ ^{militarily without}

~~political~~ ^{engagement} with Washington to militarily disengage.

Just how many Communist troops were ever around the Khe Sanh base was ~~an~~ matter of conjecture ~~as~~ even a month ago--when and if they have withdrawn and why is still a source of ~~speculation~~ ^{speculation} here. The Marines at Khe Sanh consistently maintained that two divisions were ~~near~~ ^{near} the base, including some in Laos, and that they had captured prisoners and defectors who verified this. Others, however, believed that only "elements" of two divisions were in the area.

The Washington statement by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford ~~that the Communist divisions withdrew before President Johnson's April 1 address~~ ^{A month ago} ~~because of overwhelming American firepower is also~~ ^{contradicted here.}

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khe sanh 8 (normass/deepe)

"We know there were two full (Communist) divisions around Khe Sanh by March 30, with enough people to mount an ~~off~~ offensive, whether they chose to assault or not," one high-ranking American officer explained. "We don't know where ~~th~~ they've gone now—or even if they've gone ~~any~~ anywhere. But, if ~~they~~ anyone made them leave, it had to be airpower and artillery. There was certainly no one on the ground to make them leave before that the ~~FI~~ ground First Air Cavalry and Vietnamese moved in."

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khe sanh 98 (normass/deepe)

4. For the Communists, Khe Sanh lost its political significance with President Johnson's April 1 speech. The prevailing view of officials in Saigon was that Khe Sanh was important to the Communists only as a hinge to swing the American political nominations or the elections. Hence, their attack grand ground assault--if actually planned--would have been launched in July or August, for maximum impact within America.

But, on April 1, President Johnson in effect assumed the Kennedy position by undertaking negotiations and proposing a political settlement. And by refusing to accept a reⁿrenomination for the Presidency, Mr. Johnson increased the likelihood for Hanoi it would Hanoi might be faced with a hard-line Richard Nixon as the next president, rather than a soft-line Robert Kenney. Kennedy.

Softline

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khe sanh 16 (normass/deepe)

Richard Nixon is much more important d symbol to the Hanoi leadership than many Americans at home may conceive. The Hanoi leadership now—the ones that fought the ~~16~~ French nearly more than a decade ago—were aware that Nixon as ~~Vice~~ American Vice President in 1954 advocated ~~the us~~ that American atomic bombs be used in support of the French at Dien Bien Phu, reliable sources report.

Hence, as a means to stimulate political agitation, Viet Cong propaganda agents in Hue, ~~are reportedly saying, "We~~ which has already been badly hit ~~by~~ American firepower, are reportedly saying, "We just as well fight in the streets because the Americans are going to drop an atomic bomb on Hue anyway."

(Hank: my apologies for getting this to you so late. There's ~~==~~ very little access to information about ~~Sk~~ Khe Sanh from here. I suggest that next week end I pop up to that operation for several days. ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Even if there's not a spectacular action story by then, we can do a better job following and analyzing it. What do you think? Regards Bev).

--end reuter