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roads 1 (normass/deepe)

~~SECRET~~

SAIGON, APRIL 18--<sup>Highway LEADING</sup> Communist forces have built sections of an asphalt road from Cambodia directly into South Vietnam, only thirty miles north of this capital city, informed sources report.

Further north in the Ashau Valley near Laos, the Communists are continuing to bulldoze and spread gravel to make all-weather ~~road~~ roads half-way between the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos and the narrow coastal cities of Danang and Hue.

These remarkable engineering feats are considered significant--and exceptionally worrisome to Allied commanders here--for three ~~two~~ reasons:

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roads 2 (normass/deepe)

for the first time

1. The Communists now have all-weather roads for truck traffic through-out the year, including during the monsoon rainy season, which varies in time from region to region. In the past, Communist trucks were used only in the dry season, with bicycles, oxcarts, human porters--and sometimes a few elephants--moving supplies during the heavy rains.

2. The Communists <sup>one</sup> have established two supply routes into South Vietnam--the traditional way of moving men and supplies from North Vietnam into the northern half of the ~~sa~~ South--and second, supply movements from <sup>in Cambodia</sup> Cambodia into the southern half of the South. "Most of the supplies in the southern half of South Vietnam ~~(Corps Three and Corps Four)~~ <sup>including</sup> (the southern half of South Vietnam), ~~that is~~ the heavy weapons and munitions used against Saigon during the Tet offensive, have come directly over the high seas from Red China to Sihanoukville ~~(Cambodian port)~~ <sup>(Cambodian port)</sup>--and then ~~into~~ directly into the South," one informed source explained.

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roads ~~4~~ 3 (normass/deepe)

A third supply route that appears to be becoming more pronounced is seaborne infiltration along the ~~miles of~~ South Vietnam's swampy or jungled ~~coastline~~, ~~the~~ but the scope of this method is ~~still~~ has yet to be established.

3. The Communists' "time-space factor" has improved considerably. North Vietnamese troops can now be trucked from Hanoi into South Vietnam--halfway down the length of the South--in one month, one reliable source reported. Before it took them at least three months by foot.

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roads 4 (normass/deepe)

"By building roads ~~ins~~ inside the South and bring larger forces near the Vietnamese cities, it means time and ~~spe~~ space-wise, the Communists are in ~~a~~ a position to make surprise attacks against the urban cities," one reliable source said.

"The Communists have a better time factor; they have an ~~im~~ improved logistical system...and they have enough military aid (from Communist bloc countries) to overcome their logistical ~~and~~ difficulties."

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roads 5 (normass/deepe)

Thirty miles north of Saigon towards and around the little village of Song Be, the Communists have built strips of asphalt highways leading into the South from Cambodia, reliable ~~source~~ sources report.

"The Communists were moving truck traffic along these roads--now it's diminished somewhat since the Allied units spotted the road," one source explained.

Further north, along and in the Ashau Valley, "the Communists have ~~devlo~~ developed what I call a standpipe through Laos, and are now pushing roads into South Vietnam. They are building a logistical system ~~y~~ that can support larger forces--they are putting gravel on these these roads, making them all-weather.

"In some cases, the Communists have done this through heavy jungle. The Americans first spotted the roads by ground reconnaissance and ~~heclit helicopter~~ low-flying helicopter flights. The aerial photos did not pick up the roads under the triple-canopy of jungle. The Communists are using bulldozers to surface these roads with gravel. In the ~~Northern~~ northern part of the country, they haven't gone into asphalt yet."

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roads 6 (normass/deepe)

During 1967, the U. S. Marines and ~~See~~ Special Forces launched a number of unannounced raiding ~~operatin~~ operations into the Ashau Valley complex, but presumably had little sustained impact on the road-building projects. In 1968, General William C. Westmoreland had planned to build a number of Special Forces camps in the area to block the roads on the ground, but the Tet offensive has stalled if not eliminated these projects, reliable sources report.

In the past several weeks, the Ashau Valley complex has <sup>been</sup> under intense bombardment by B-52 SAC bombers--sometimes several missions a day. But, military sources here believe these heavy bombloads will only slow-down, rather than ~~stop~~ stop, the Communists.

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roads 7 (normass/deepe)

The improved Communist logistical system has both allowed and been necessitated by the escalation of Communist weaponry in South Vietnam--all the way up to field artillery howitzers.

Since the ~~sur~~ surprise Tet offensive American commanders and officials have been both appalled and mystified by the Communist supply system.

"The Communists have ~~not~~ performed the outstanding logistical feat of all time," one informed source explained. "It's the most amazing thing I've ever seen. It will be fascinating to dig into this after the ~~war~~ war--how the Communists maintained their guerrilla and main force units dispersed in enemy territory. It will make a fabulous book."

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roads 8 (normass/deepe)

In late 1967, officials here estimated the Communists required two hundred tons a day to supply for combat their force of 350,000 men in the South (100,000~~00~~ political infrastructure; 100,000 guerrillas; 40,000 administrative troops, <sup>140</sup>100,000 regular and regional forces). This would have averaged two pounds per man per day--but many troops lived off the land, off the peasantry, or their own ricefields and jobs. Then, the ~~offici~~ officials estimated the Communists could not sustain combat ~~for~~ for more than thirty ~~days~~ consecutive days, because units were not given more than 30-day supply of combat necessities.

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roads 9 (normass/deepe)

Since the Tet offensive, this logistical estimate has presumably jumped, but has not been released publicly.

For the Viet Cong, controlling the war in the southern ~~one~~ <sup>one-third</sup> of the country, the logistical command structure is controlled directly by COSVN (Central Office, South Vietnam). This supreme headquarters, has an "economic and finance" section which controls the whole network of supply, transport, taxation <sup>of</sup> ~~from~~ the people and production in the areas that are Communist-dominated. Under this ~~section~~ section operates several "councils", which were created in 1965, but which began to operate ~~fully~~ <sup>fully</sup> in 1967. ~~One of~~ <sup>One of</sup> One of these is the "forward supply council" <sup>to move supplies</sup> ~~to move~~ <sup>to move</sup> supplies to their tactical units. A second is the "rear service council" <sup>to mass the supplies</sup> ~~to mass~~ the supplies, organize the taxation of the population, systematize their transport system, and expediting the goods battle-wards.

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roads 9 (normass/deepe)

The logistical command structure for all Communist troops ~~oper~~ operating under the direct control of Hanoi in the ~~norther~~ northern two-thirds of South Vietnam is still unknown, reliable sources report.

Once inside South Vietnam, the supplies move from the ~~bora~~ border areas generally eastwards towards the major population centers-- and these lateral logistical lines are in turn connected with each other by vertical corridors.

Starting from the northernmost provinces of the South, the following pattern emerges.

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roads 11 (normass/deepe)

*Criss-Cross*

The supply trails ~~moving~~ directly across the demilitarized zone, mostly clandestinely, or else "around the hook" from North Vietnam through Laos by truck into the Ashau Valley, south of Khe Sanh, From Ashau Valley, the Communists are building or re-constructing three roads--one directly ~~towards~~ towards Danang, one road east and northeast towards Hue and one road to ~~end up~~ <sup>terminate</sup> north of Hue. Two of these roads are being gravelled and all are about 25-30 miles <sup>a</sup> deep inside South Vietnam--roughly half way between the Laotian border and the South China seacoast. In the third case, the Communists are thought to be simply rebuilding and widening a ~~direct~~ dirt provincial road between Laos and Hue that was built by the French years ~~ago~~ ago.

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roads 12 (normass/deepe)

This logistical corridor system supplies the four North ~~Vietnam~~ Vietnamese Army divisions ~~so~~ along the demilitarized zone--324B, 341, ~~325~~ 325C, 304--plus two Viet Cong divisions and two Viet Cong autonomous regiments, ~~p~~ as well as many sapper and commando units along the coastal cities of the five northern provinces.

South of the five northern provinces, in the zone called the ~~second~~ Vietnamese military corps area, the Communists have established a number of logistical corridors--schemes of trails ~~and~~ and networks of infiltration routes, ~~cutting in from~~ ~~Cambodia~~ Cambodia and Laos into the provinces of Kontum, Pleiku and Quang Duc. Inter-connecting ~~corridors~~ NETWORK have been built hacked out of the jungle to link these three corridors with each other. These three major trunkline corridors in turn link up with "bea" "bridgeheads" or staging areas, moving eastwards towards the ~~coast~~ ~~sea~~ coastal regions, especially Binh Dinh and Phu Yen provinces on the ~~coast~~.

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roads 12 <sup>13</sup> (normass/deepe)

In the Second corps area, these logistical corridors supply four North Vietnamese army divisions--numbers 1, 3, 5 and 10--and a number of sapper and commando units around ~~Pleiku~~ Pleiku, An Khe, Cam Ranh Bay and Qui Nhon.

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roads 14 (normass/deepe)

In the ~~eleven~~ <sup>pr</sup> eleven provinces around Saigon--the Third Vietnamese military corps--the Communists are known to have improved ~~their~~ considerably their logistical system between Cambodia and South Vietnam. They have implemented logistical ~~axis~~ <sup>axes</sup> inside South Vietnam, moving ~~later~~ <sup>laterally</sup> laterally in a west-to-east direction. And, these axes in turn link up with the highland corridors, in a north-south direction, with the second military corps.

Once inside the Third Corps, the supplies are leapfrogged from one base area to another--each base in succession moving closer to Saigon or other major population concentrations. Hence, one unknown pattern leapfrogs the supplies from the Cambodian border area into War Zone C in the northwestern quarter of Tay Ninh province, to D Zone, through the Song Be area, then to the intermediate base of Long Nguyen, to the Boi Loi woods, to the Ho Bo woods and then the Rung Sat, the swampy area southeast of the capital which ~~control~~ controls the ocean-going shipping channel into Saigon.

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roads 15 (normass/deepe)

In the Third Corps area, these supplies are necessary for three main-force divisions--the 5, 7, 9--~~but~~ and innumerable provincial, commando and sapper units.

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roads 16 (normass/deepe)

From ~~Cambodia into~~ South Vietnam to the South Vietnam border, at least two paved highways are open and in a good state of repair. Route 1 repeat 1 runs from the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh to War Zone C in Tay Ninh--and when open directly into Saigon. Route 7 repeat 7 runs from Phnom Penh to Mi Mot, north of War Zone C, in a French rubber plantation ~~spilling over~~ both sides of the ~~unmarked Cambodian~~ ill-marked Cambodian-South Vietnamese border. Mi Mot is considered by many officials to be the headquarters for COSVN.

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roads 17 ~~in~~ (normass/deepe)

In the Mekong Delta provinces of the Fourth Military Corps, south of Saigon, the logistical corridor generally runs ~~east-west~~ and slightly northwards, from the provinces of Ang Gian on An Giang on the Cambodian border and Kien Giang province on the Gulf of Siam, up to the Plain of Reeds area, into Long An province and then into Gia Dinh province, the donut surrounding Saigon. Weapons and ammunition are diverted and distributed along route through feeder trails and sampan routes ~~delta~~ delta-wide.

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roads 18 (normass/deepe)

A short-cut route into Saigon proper is considered to be developing with supplies moving directly from Cambodia at the "eagle's beak," in Kien Thuong province, through the marshy Plain of Reeds into the Saigon defense perimeter. American helicopters, flying special night missions, have recently sunk a number of sampan convoys headed towards Saigon from the direction of Cambodia. Some sampan routes are known to lead from ~~the~~ Cambodia directly into the outer environs and canals of Cholon, the Chinese twin-city of Saigon.

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roads 19 (normass/deepe)

(Hank: While this piece is really a news article, ~~I suggest by~~ because of its length you might want to use it as a zeepager. I don't see how I can split it into two articles. We couldn't see anything to file on the Hanoi shifts that the wire stories hadn't already cabled. Also, in case the Pentagon correspondent is interested, I understand American troops in South Korean, based north of the Imjun River, are now receiving combat pay, which would probably indicate the officials view the situation as worsening significantly there. Regards Bev).

==end reuter