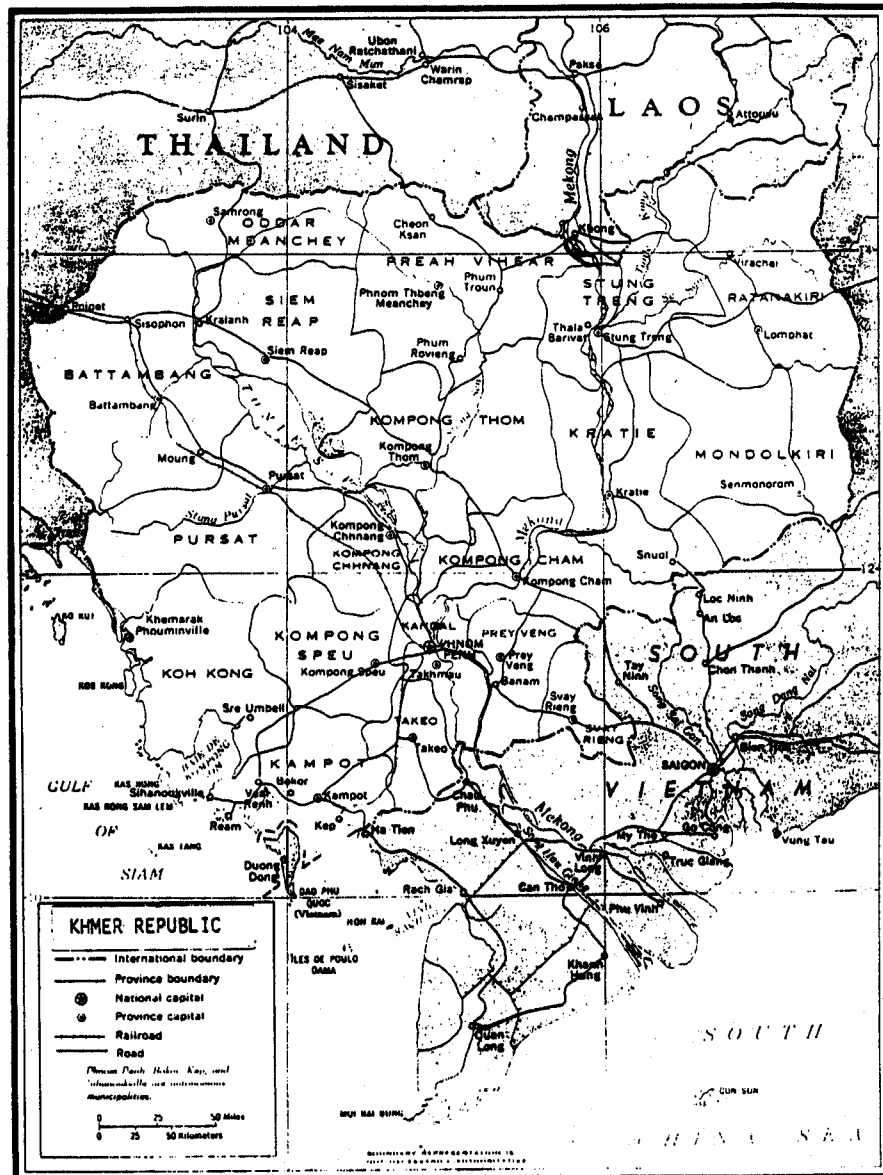


The Cambodian Campaign

29 April - 30 June 1970

HQ PACAF
Directorate, Tactical Evaluation
CHECO Division



Base 56600 6-67

Prepared by:

Major D. I. Folkman, Jr.

& Major P. D. Caine

Project CHECO 7th AF, DOAC

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS PACIFIC AIR FORCES
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96353



PROJECT CHECO REPORTS

The counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare environment of Southeast Asia has resulted in USAF airpower being employed to meet a multitude of requirements. These varied applications have involved the full spectrum of USAF aerospace vehicles, support equipment, and manpower. As a result, operational data and experiences have accumulated which should be collected, documented, and analyzed for current and future impact upon USAF policies, concepts, and doctrine.

Fortunately, the value of collecting and documenting our SEA experiences was recognized at an early date. In 1962, Hq USAF directed CINCPACAF to establish an activity which would provide timely and analytical studies of USAF combat operations in SEA and would be primarily responsive to Air Staff requirements and direction.

Project CHECO, an acronym for Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations, was established to meet the Air Staff directive. Based on the policy guidance of the Office of Air Force History and managed by Hq PACAF, with elements in Southeast Asia, Project CHECO provides a scholarly "on-going" historical examination, documentation, and reporting on USAF policies, concepts, and doctrine in PACOM. This CHECO report is part of the overall documentation and examination which is being accomplished. It is an authentic source for an assessment of the effectiveness of USAF airpower in PACOM when used in proper context. The reader must view the study in relation to the events and circumstances at the time of its preparation--recognizing that it was prepared on a contemporary basis which restricted perspective and that the author's research was limited to records available within his local headquarters area.

Robert E. Hiller

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FOREWORD

United States and South Vietnamese forces entering Cambodia on 1 May 1970 seriously weakened the enemy posture as they captured large quantities of his supplies and inflicted heavy casualties on Viet Cong/ North Vietnamese Army forces operating in Cambodian sanctuaries. This movement of troops supported by airpower is profiled here in "The Cambodian Campaign, 29 April - 30 June 1970," a special CHECO Report, as one of the most significant actions of the Southeast Asia conflict. The quantity of supplies contained in the caches captured in Cambodia during May - June 1970 exceeded the total supplies contained in all the caches captured in RVN for the 15 months from February 1969 through April 1970.^{1/}

Airpower was employed in two ways in the Cambodian campaign; first, in tactical air support of friendly ground operations and second, in an interdiction campaign. The interdiction campaign consisted of three phases: (1) a period of limited interdiction in northeastern Cambodia; (2) an extension of interdiction in northeastern Cambodia; and (3) a retrenchment back to a limited area.

The establishment and development of the air interdiction campaign and tactical air and ARC LIGHT missions in support of the operations in Cambodia are detailed in this report, along with a statistical summary of airlift operations.

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ALLIED OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA, 29 APR - 30 JUN 70

OPERATION	DATES	COMPOSITION OF FORCE AT MAX STRENGTH	SELECTED OPERATIONAL RESULTS									
			Enemy		Captured/Destroyed				Friendly			
			KIA	POW	Indiv Wpns	Crew Served Weapons	Ammo T	Rice T	KIA GVN	KIA US	WIA GVN	WIA US
TOAN THANG 42 III Corps	29 Apr - con. on 30 Jun	9794 GVN 1590 US	2752	767	1893	478	360	1042	283	9	1290	65
TOAN THANG 42 IV Corps	29 Apr - 6 May	Not Available	1202	0	1146	174	63	46	67	3	329	5
TOAN THANG 43	1 May - 30 Jun	8000 GVN 13400 US	3099	73	4680	731	316	2699	149	141	656	863
BINH TAY I	5 - 25 May	2463 GVN 8016 US	276	8	842	37	13	602	16	30	98	72
TOAN THANG 44	6 - 14 May	2700 US	283	12	297	34	4	217	-	21	-	174
TOAN THANG 45	6 May - 30 Jun	10900 US	1189	12	3069	449	804	1584	-	126	-	332
TOAN THANG 46	6 May - 30 Jun	3160 GVN 32 US	70	9	325	41	10	79	27	0	147	0
TOAN THANG 500/B16/645	7 - 11 May	900 GVN 900 US	Results included under TOAN THANG 42 III Corps									
CUU LONG I	9 May - 1 Jul	11696 GVN 2364 US	1431	61	2738	157	23	41	148	6	473	5
BINH TAY II	14 - 26 May	4593 GVN 392 US	73	6	476	136	27	89	7	2	34	0
CUU LONG II	16 - 24 May	10260 GVN 346 US	613	40	792	84	65	44	36	0	122	0
BINH TAY III	20 May - 27 Jun	3615 GVN 272 US	141	1	587	133	40	412	26	0	67	7
CUU LONG III	24 May - con. on 30 Jun	3727 GVN 147 US	433	36	3299	80	40	27	50	0	270	1
TOTALS			11562	1025	20074	2534	1764	6879	809	338	3486	1524

SOURCE: OB Logistics, MACV

FIGURE 1

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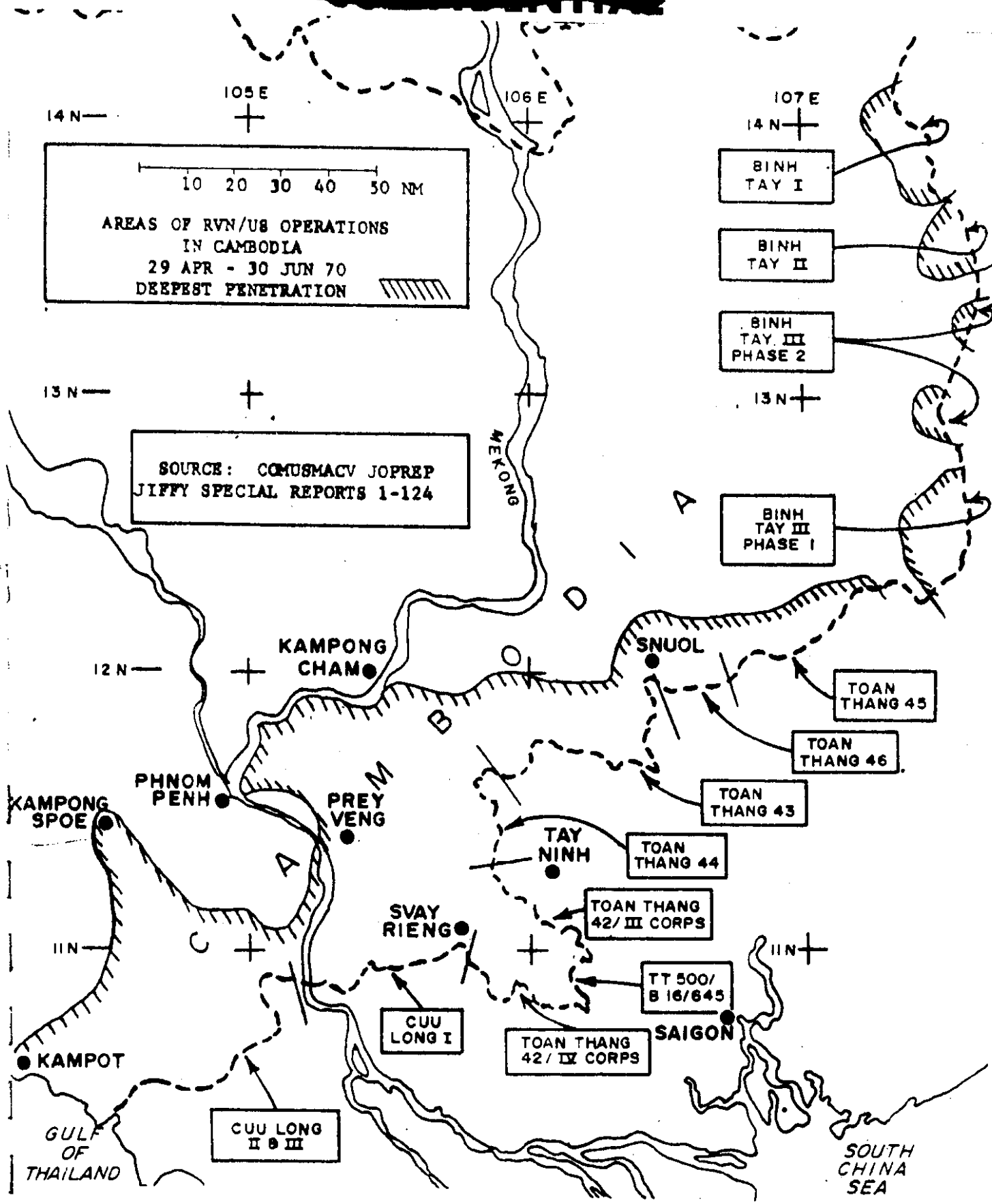


FIGURE 2

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Air Support of Ground Forces

The flexible operating capability of the Tactical Air Control System met the requirements of the Cambodian operations with routine efficiency. Even though Seventh Air Force received instructions to begin definitive planning only two days before the ARVN entry into the Parrot's Beak, all tactical air assets were ready on schedule. Forward air controllers and fighter pilots followed normal in-country Rules of Engagement and operating procedures, exercising special care to avoid dropping ordnance on the noncombatant populace.

Because intelligence estimates indicated that heavy enemy resistance could be anticipated, extensive airstrikes were used to suppress enemy resistance prior to combat assaults. Both preplanned and immediate airstrikes supported operations on the ground. Many preplanned airstrikes were diverted from the preplanned targets to support troops in contact and to hit significant targets of opportunity. After the initial assaults, ground forces turned to searching the areas for supplies and evacuating the caches discovered. During this phase, airstrikes were preplanned to furnish air cover and to aid in the discovery and destruction of storage areas.

Although approval for use of Thailand-based forces was received, tactical air support for ground forces came entirely from in-country resources, except for three C-130 flareships deployed from Ubon to Cam Ranh Bay and four A-1 aircraft deployed from Nakhon Phanom to Pleiku and

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later to Bien Hoa for SAR efforts. The attack sortie rate for in-country forces peaked during the second week in May to 4,336 with the inclusion of 1,936 sorties in Cambodia. USAF fighter aircraft utilization rates increased from pre-Cambodian levels of .75 - .80 sorties per day per aircraft to peak levels of 1.13 for F-4s, 1.38 for A-37s, and 1.44 for F-100s. USAF aircraft flew 5,189 preplanned and 1,675 immediate airstrike sorties as well as 193 gunship and 44 flaeship missions. The delivery of 20 COMMANDO VAULT weapons created 16 usable helicopter landing zones. The VNAF flew 2,691 strike sorties and 184 gunship missions. Bomb damage included 926 confirmed and 1,358 probable enemy killed, 6,269 structures and 5,270 bunkers destroyed, and 50 bridges destroyed.

B-52 ARC LIGHT missions flew 653 sorties in support of six of the 12 distinct ground operations in Cambodia. ARC LIGHT airstrikes provided massive firepower for landing zone and objective preparations prior to initial combat assaults. B-52s also struck suspected Central Office of South Vietnam (CCSVN) headquarters elements and other enemy locations beyond the 30-kilometer limitation for U.S. ground forces.

Except for some initial heavy contacts in a few areas, the entire ground campaign was characterized by contacts with scattered enemy units. The retreat of the main enemy forces into the interior of Cambodia allowed friendly ground forces to sweep through the base areas with 1,147 killed in action, compared to 11,562 enemy losses. These odds would likely have been much less favorable had tactical air not been available to coerce the enemy from his fortified defenses. The threat as well as the employment

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of airpower contributed to the ground forces' ability to advance rapidly enough to uncover the numerous caches and then to be able to exploit these caches relatively unmolested.

Among the supplies captured were: (1) rice to feed 37,798 enemy soldiers for one year at reduced ration (1 lb. per day); (2) individual weapons to equip 55 full strength VC Infantry battalions; (3) crew-served weapons to equip 33 full strength VC Infantry battalions; and (4) mortar, rocket, and recoilless rifle rounds to sustain 18,585 enemy attacks by fire. The Logistics Section of the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam (CICV) estimated that Allied forces had captured the following percentages of the enemy's food and ammunition stockpiles required by him to operate for a six months' period:

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>AREA</u>	<u>CAPTURED (Tons)</u>	<u>PERCENT OF STOCKPILE</u>
Food	No. II Corps	683.6	65
	So. II Corps and III, IV Corps	6,193.0	129
Ammo	No. II Corps	40.6	09
	So. II Corps and III, IV Corps	1,761.4	81

CICV concluded that the cross-border operations had severely impaired the enemy's logistic system for southern South Vietnam and he would feel the effects for at least six to eight months as evidenced by more than a six-month stockpile of food being captured in Southern II Corps and III and IV Corps.

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Interdiction

While withdrawing in the face of the Allied advance in eastern Cambodia, the enemy repeatedly attacked key towns on the major lines of communication in the interior of the country; he threatened to isolate Phnom Penh and so fragment the nation that the government could not effectively control it. The towns in northeast Cambodia fell one by one: Kratie on 5-6 May, Stung Treng on 18 May, Siem Pang on 19 May, Lomphat on 31 May, and finally Labansiek and Bakiev were evacuated by the government on 23-25 June 1970 with the aid of USAF transports and fighter protection. This gave the communists control of the entire northeastern section of Cambodia.

In response to the Secretary of Defense, the JCS outlined a plan for an interdiction campaign in northeast Cambodia similar to the STEEL TIGER operation in southern Laos and forwarded it to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) on 16 May 1970. The MACV reply to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) noted that because there was neither an identified enemy line of communications (LOC) network nor a corresponding logistics flow in northeast Cambodia, the initial requirements for tactical air beyond 30 kilometers would be to support Vietnamese and Cambodian ground units with some interdiction. Since existing authorizations precluded such actions, a plan was developed for air interdiction of lucrative targets developed through reconnaissance.

After being directed to implement the plan, Seventh Air Force activated a Tactical Air Control Party at Pleiku and divided the interdiction

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area into forward air controller/visual reconnaissance (FAC/VR) sectors. Forward air controllers flying OV-10s and O-2s, and fighter pilots qualified as FACs flying F-4s and A-37s began visual reconnaissance between 25 and 29 May.

Cambodian, Vietnamese, and MACV representatives met on 29 May and established Rules of Engagement similar to those for in-country operations including the provision that all targets had to be validated by the Cambodians. On 4 June 1970, two Cambodian Air Force officers joined the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) at Tan Son Nhut to validate targets, and three went to Pleiku to fly as observers and to validate targets. In addition, the rules allowed motorized vehicle or boat traffic to be struck on certain LOCs after the populace had received warning.

The lack of an extensive intelligence file on Cambodia created an initial targeting problem. On 21 May, an Intelligence Task Force was organized at Headquarters Seventh Air Force for targeting in Cambodia. Also on 21 May, Seventh Air Force received authority to reconnoiter Cambodia east of the Mekong plus some areas to the west. Airborne Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) activities were extended on 26 May. On 30 May, six targets were struck, inaugurating the interdiction campaign.

The FREEDOM DEAL Operations Order of 6 June stated the interdiction mission: to maintain surveillance of enemy activities in Cambodia, east of the Mekong River and to attack these activities as necessary to protect U.S. forces in the Republic of Vietnam. Daily interdiction sorties

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began on 4 June. MK36 mines were sown in the Se Kong and Se San Rivers to curtail supply movements.

On 9 June, the JCS authorized tactical reconnaissance in all of Cambodia on a recurring basis. Reconnaissance sorties over Cambodia increased from 315 in May to 324 for the first 20 days of June. An important part of the reconnaissance effort was to photograph national shrines, monuments, and cultural sites. These photographs were sent to FACs, gunship, and strike units flying in Cambodia to assure the protection of these historic areas.

During the period of 1-20 June 1970, tactical aircraft flew 414 preplanned and 224 immediate sorties in the interdiction campaign. After 7 June, the target emphasis shifted from the LOC complex to the area around Lomphat, Labansiek, and Bakiev where it remained for the remainder of the campaign.

The absence of an organized enemy resupply network within the interdiction area became increasingly apparent as the campaign progressed. In addition, concern that loss of major population centers would undermine the Cambodian Government indicated that interdiction should be applied in its broadest sense to protect major Cambodian positions. A JCS message of 17 June became the authority for an expanded interdiction campaign throughout Cambodia called FREEDOM ACTION.

Seventh Air Force divided that part of Cambodia, outside the FREEDOM DEAL area, into six sectors to be covered by FACs based in Thailand

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and Vietnam. Prospective targets obtained from monitoring LOCs, major towns, and provincial capitals for possible enemy activity were reported to the TACC for validation and possible strike. Communications ran through the Vietnamese Air Force Direct Air Control Center at Phnom Penh to the TACC at Tan Son Nhut. Backup communications for immediate airstrikes were available through III DASC in South Vietnam. Instructions on how to use air support were distributed to Cambodian ground units and USAF French speaking officers flew with U.S. FACs to facilitate communications.

On 20 June, interdiction sorties struck known enemy locations around Kampong Thom. During the ten days of the expanded interdiction effort, 226 sorties were flown outside the limits of the FREEDOM DEAL area.

On 30 June, the area of operations for the interdiction campaign was limited to the FREEDOM DEAL area plus a small southern extension. Within the southern extension, strikes were authorized on only highly lucrative targets that posed a substantial threat to Allied forces.

The establishment of interdiction operations in northeastern Cambodia compounded the enemy resupply problems. Any enemy effort to develop a LOC system in Cambodia would be costly.

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CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND

More than two-thirds of the population of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) live in the southern third of the country, III and IV Corps Tactical Zones (CTZs) and the Capital Military District (CMD) surrounding Saigon. Because the war is really a battle for control of the population, the largest Viet Cong/North Vietnam Army (VC/NVA) effort has been directed against this section of the country.

Prior to 1966, arms, munitions, and other logistic supplies for the VC operating in this area arrived by sea from North Vietnam. Sampans and junks hauled some of the supplies, but the majority of them arrived aboard 100-ton steel-hulled trawlers which unloaded directly on RVN beaches. Starting in early 1966, Operation MARKET TIME established a naval blockade of the entire coast of RVN that effectively cut off this direct sea line of communications. The VC/NVA countered by obtaining the tacit approval of the Sihanouk government to ship supplies through the port of Sihanoukville to Cambodian storage areas near the RVN/Cambodian Border. The first shipment of arms arrived at Sihanoukville in October 1966 and opened up the major LOC for supporting the war in III and IV Corps.

Hak Ly Company, a VC/NVA front, trucked supplies from the port via Highway 4 to Kampong Speu, where they were stored in two logistic depots. One of the depots was operated by the VC/NVA and the other by the Cambodian

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army compound at Lovek, northwest of Phnom Penh. The goods were reshipped from the depots on Hak Ly trucks over Cambodia's all-weather road network directly to base areas alongside key infiltration points on the RVN Border (Fig. 3). By 1969, these areas served not only as logistical bases but also as training areas, rest and relaxation camps, hospitals, infiltration camps, and tactical jump-off points for attacks in III and IV CTZs.

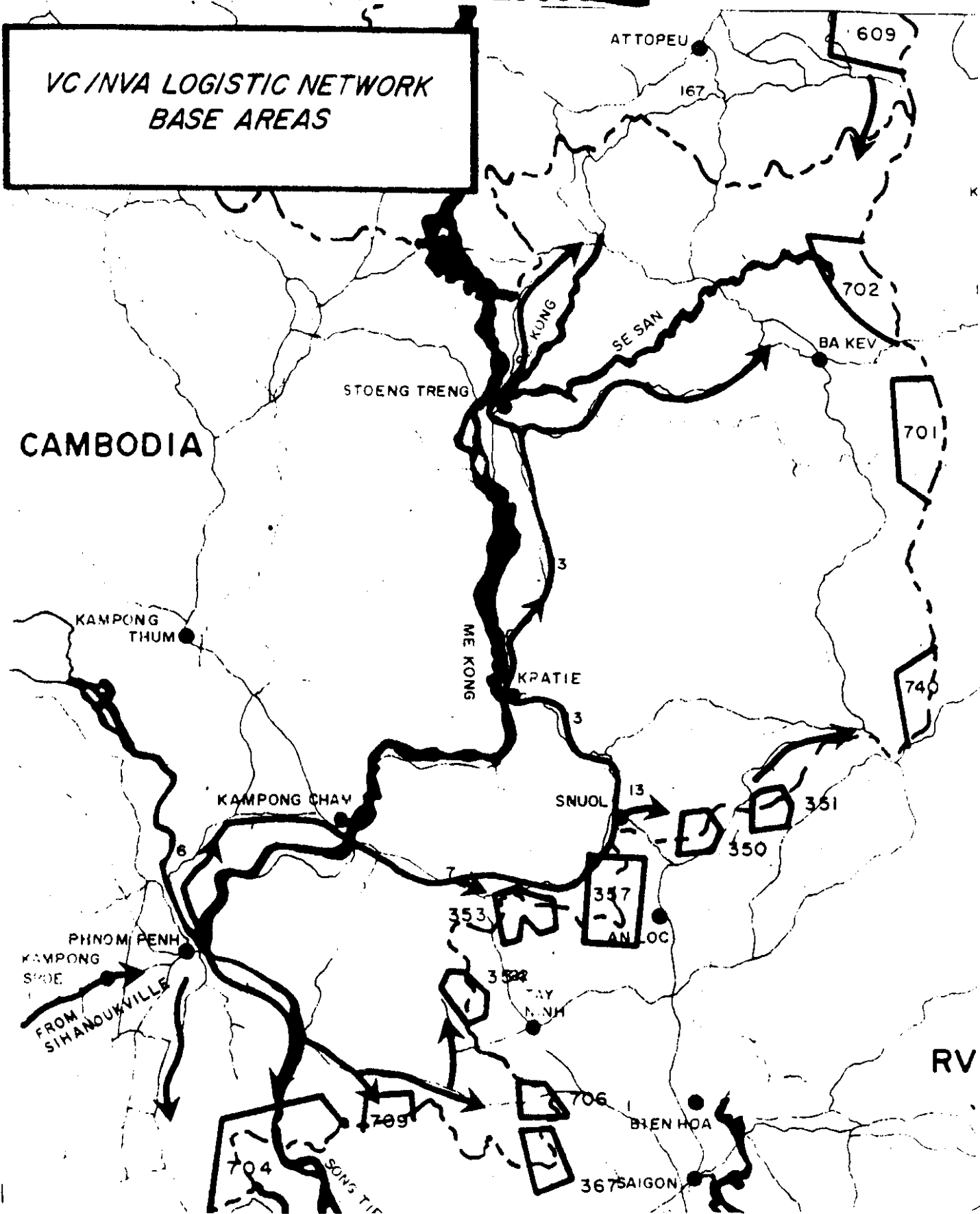
The presence of large VC/NVA forces estimated at 40,000 by Gen. Lon Nol in 1969, slowly created increasing tensions within Cambodia. Many Cambodian officials began to fear the occupation of large portions of her eastern frontier was a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cambodia. These fears were exacerbated by the VC/NVA, who harassed the local inhabitants by collecting taxes, conscripting them for labor, and restricting their movements. The VC/NVA excluded Cambodian government officials from large sectors of the border and exercised de facto control of these areas. They also began to aid the local Communist insurgents, the Khmer Rouge. High prices offered by the VC/NVA led to the development of a black market in rice, a distorted domestic pricing and marketing system, and corruption in government.

These factors prompted Prince Sihanouk to limit activities of the VC/NVA. After years of denial, in March 1969, Sihanouk publicly admitted the VC/NVA were using Cambodian territory. In May 1969, his government instituted an embargo against the major transshipments of arms from Kampong Speu and Lovek to the border base areas. This embargo lasted until

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**VC / NVA LOGISTIC NETWORK
BASE AREAS**



SOURCE: CIGV OB LOGISTICS

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FIGURE 3

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CAMBODIAN BASE CAMPS
ESTIMATES PRIOR TO OPERATIONS

Base Areas	704	709	367 706	354	352 353	350	351	740	701	702	609
Base Camps/Training	16	6	27	10	12	1	11	5	8	28	1
Hospitals/Dispensaries	4	2	9	1	3			1			
Storage Areas	10		27	5	1	2	8	1		2	
POW Camp	1		4	1	1						
Strongpoints	4	11	17	9	1	1			1	13	1
Other Installations	11	1	8	9	7	1	2	7		4	11
Troop Strength	1250	1050	5830	1300	6996	1550	2200	250	1500	800	1200
Bivouac Areas						1	1	29	1	20	5

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FIGURE 4

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September when Sihanouk apparently offered to release 3,000 to 5,000 tons of supplies in return for a North Vietnamese agreement to: (1) confine their activities to specified enclaves and to move between enclaves only with permission of the Cambodian government; (2) vacate the enclaves as their need for sanctuaries declined; and (3) stop aiding the Khmer Rouge. Sihanouk then created a Special Missions Office in the Royal Army of Cambodia (FARK) to control and monitor all VC/NVA shipments. A FARK officer accompanied all convoys to make certain they arrived at the proper destination.

In August, Sihanouk had established the Salvation Government under Lon Nol as Prime Minister and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak as Deputy Prime Minister to reform the economic system of Cambodia. As past Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Lon Nol had strong military backing. Matak was Sihanouk's cousin and was influential in both business and government bureaucratic circles. Shortly after Lon Nol took office, his wife died and he took a 30-day mourning leave. At the end of October 1969, Lon Nol went to France and did not return to Cambodia until 18 February 1970.

During Lon Nol's absences, relations between Matak and Sihanouk slowly deteriorated, primarily because of Matak's growing influence over domestic issues and his efforts to restrict the VC/NVA to their sanctuaries. While Sihanouk had granted Lon Nol and Matak a strong mandate to solve the domestic problems, he considered the VC/NVA to fall in the realm of foreign policy, which he intended to control himself. Tension also grew

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over the involvement of Sihanouk's fifth and then recognized wife, Monique, her mother, and half-brother in selling protection, weapons, and land rights to the VC/NVA and in smuggling gold, jewels, and drugs. These activities undermined Matak's efforts to stop smuggling and to control the VC/NVA.

Despite these growing tensions, on 6 January 1970, Sihanouk departed for Europe, ostensibly for his health. The first hints of trouble following Lon Nol's return occurred on 8 March 1970, when demonstrations against the VC/NVA presence in Cambodia broke out in several towns along the border.

On 11 March, a large crowd sacked the embassies of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and North Vietnam. Following these actions, Lon Nol announced the government intended to follow a truly neutral policy. He then ordered all VC/NVA troops to be out of the country by 15 March 1970. When Sihanouk opposed these actions from Paris, France, Lon Nol and Matak arranged a deposition. On 18 March 1970, the National Assembly met in secret session and unanimously voted to replace Sihanouk as Chief of State. Sihanouk responded by broadcasting a call for arms over Radio Peking and dissolving the cabinet headed by Lon Nol on grounds of high treason. Sihanouk further aligned himself with the communists in late April by participating in the formation of the Indochinese People's United Front by representatives from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. On 5 May 1970, he announced the formation of the

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Royal Government of National Union and proclaimed it to be the true government of the people of Cambodia.

The VC/NVA reacted to Lon Nol's order by initiating pro-Sihanouk demonstrations, primarily in Kampong Cham Province in the towns of Snuol, Krek, Chup, and Kampong Cham. All of these towns were located near large rubber plantations staffed by North Vietnamese laborers. The demonstrations succeeded in drawing the Cambodian Army units back to protect the urban areas, thereby relieving pressure on the border sanctuaries. VC/NVA units then began moving along the border and by 12 April controlled a corridor 10 to 15 kilometers wide from the FISHHOOK to the Gulf of Siam.

Next, the VC/NVA moved to secure all major LOCs leading to their base areas. In Kampong Cham Province, they cut Highway 13 between Snuol and Kratie and by 28 April controlled Snuol, Mimot, Krek, and stretches of Highway 7 leading from the town of Kampong Cham to Krek. In Svay Rieng Province, they pushed up Highway 1, taking the towns of Chi Phu and Presaut and threatening Svay Rieng City. VC/NVA elements also took the town of Saang, approximately 20 kilometers south of Phnom Penh. Similar movement cut Highways 2 and 3 at the cities of Takeo and Ang Tasaom, southwest of Phnom Penh, and harassed Highway 4 in Kampong Speu Province. By 28 April 1970, it was apparent that the VC/NVA were attempting to isolate the capital city of Phnom Penh to apply increasing pressure on the Lon Nol government.

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The movement of the VC/NVA to control the corridor to the Gulf of Siam was the first time they had openly clashed with the National Army of Cambodia (FANK). Lon Nol soon realized the national army was not prepared to stand alone against the enemy. On 13 April, he issued a worldwide appeal for military aid. The following day, he abandoned his strictly neutral posture and appealed directly to the United States for help. While no official U.S. commitment was issued, some captured and extra small arms and ammunition were sent to the FANK.

Immediately after the fall of Sihanouk, officials in Washington and at Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, began shaping plans to exploit the political situation by cleaning out the base sanctuaries of the enemy on the Cambodian Border. MACV proposed a plan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 29 March 1970.^{1/} The President of the United States considered the proposal and as stated in his message of 30 April 1970, he saw three alternatives. First, we could do nothing. The ultimate result of such a course was clear. Second, we could provide massive military assistance to Cambodia; however, he did not see that the Cambodians could effectively use such aid against the immediate threat. The third choice was to go to the heart of the trouble and clear out the VC/NVA sanctuaries. This was the decision of President Richard M. Nixon:^{2/}

"After full consultation with the National Security Council, Ambassador Bunker, General Abrams and my other advisers, I have concluded that the actions

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of the enemy in the last ten days clearly endanger the lives of Americans who are in Vietnam now and would constitute an unacceptable risk to those who will be there after our withdrawal of 150,000.

"To protect our men who are in Vietnam and to guarantee the continued success of our withdrawal and Vietnamisation programs, I have concluded the time has come for action."

Authority to take action to launch the operation reached the field about 25 April 1970. In Washington, on 30 April 1970, President Nixon announced that U.S. forces had entered the FISHHOOK area of Cambodia. This operation under control of II Field Force Vietnam began in the early morning of 1 May, Vietnam time. The Cambodian government was notified of the impending action just prior to its initiation. South Vietnamese troops had moved into the Parrot's Beak on 29 April, but no U.S. troops were involved.

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CHAPTER II

AIR SUPPORT OF GROUND FORCES

Ground Operations

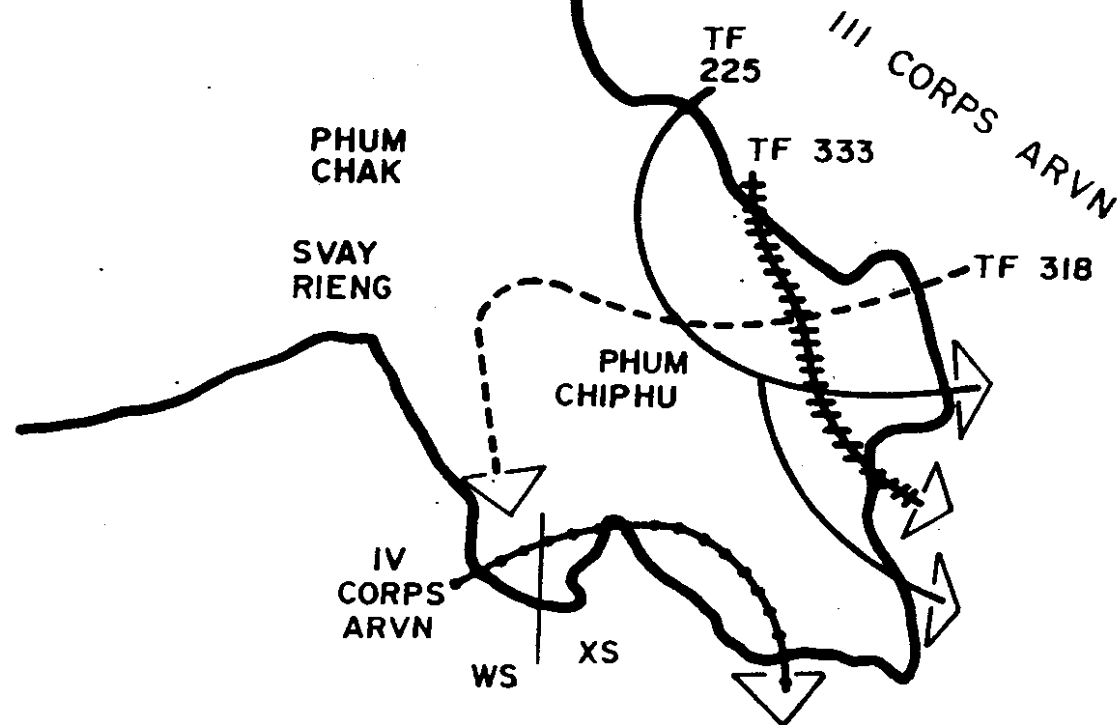
As early as mid-April 1970, some armed forces of the Government of Vietnam were reported to be operating in Cambodia. Certain Vietnamese infantry cooperated directly with Cambodian infantry; in other cases, Vietnamese artillery fired across the border in support of Cambodian forces. However, the Allied Cambodian Expedition officially started on 29 April. In the next two months, 12 different operations spaced along the length of the Cambodian-Vietnamese Border undertook to drive the enemy out of the sanctuaries, destroy or capture his war materials stored there, and disrupt his retraining and reorganization facilities. Although U.S. ground forces were restricted to within 30 kilometers of the frontier, Vietnamese forces went much deeper (Fig. 2), up to 90 kilometers at the city of Kampong Speu. At the end of June, U.S. forces were withdrawn, but the Vietnamese continued one of the operations.

The first of the 12 operations was TOAN THANG 42, which was originally called ROCK CRUSHER. On 29 April, ARVN units from III and IV Corps entered the Parrot's Beak where Base Areas 367 and 706 had given the VC/NVA a secure base only 65 kilometers from Saigon. Figure 6 sketches the first week's movements. IV Corps participation ended on 6 May, but the III Corps units, after temporarily withdrawing, returned to the

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PARROT'S BEAK
TOAN THANG 42
29 APR-5 MAY 70

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SOURCE: COMUSMACV JOPREP
JIFFY SPECIAL REPORT 1-12

FIGURE 6

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area. Continuing to operate under the same code name, TOAN THANG 42, III Corps forces before the end of June had been as far north as 12 degrees north latitude, across the Mekong River from Kampong Cham. TOAN THANG 42 was primarily an ARVN operation throughout, with U.S. participation holding to a level of 650-850 troops for most of the period. Figure 1 tabulates selected operational results for all 12 operations. As is shown, TOAN THANG 42 was one of the most significant in several categories, and it was the most costly in Allied casualties.

The next operation, TOAN THANG 43, was aimed at the second sharp Cambodian protuberance into Vietnam, the FISHHOOK, which housed Base Areas 352 and 353. Elements of the 3d ARVN Abn Bde entered by air assault while elements of the 1st U.S. Cav Div marched overland on 1 May; the enemy was apparently caught flat-footed. Although Allied forces worked their way north of Snuol and west into the Dog's Head, this operation was much more localized than TOAN THANG 42. For the full two months, Allied units scoured the FISHHOOK and achieved the most significant results of all 12 operations. For most of the period, troop strength averaged about 3,700 ARVN and 12,500 US.

The northernmost operation was BINH TAY I. Following B-52 strikes, elements of the 4th U.S. Infantry Division and 40th Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Regiment were air assaulted into Base Area 702. The ARVN units met light resistance, but the first U.S. elements found hot landing zones and were diverted, while subsequent assaults were delayed for

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additional preparation by airstrikes. All units had been inserted by D+2, and thereafter ground contacts were light and scattered. On the fifth day, the largest single rice cache of the entire campaign was found--over 500 tons. A large hospital, complete with a laboratory containing X-ray equipment, showed the area to be a major medical rehabilitation center. The number of training sites, base camps, and food production areas further testified to the logistical importance of Base Area 702.

On 6-7 May, four operations began--TOAN THANG 44, 45, 46, 500; of these TOAN THANG 45 was the most significant. Elements of the 1st U.S. Air Cavalry Division were air assaulted into Base Area 351 without opposition. On the second day, a cache estimated at 267 tons was uncovered. The area of operations reached west to 106° 30'E and included about 20 kilometers on both sides of the border. From an initial strength of 2,400 troops, the total rose to above 10,000 for the first three weeks of June.

CUU LONG I was launched on 9 May. Troops ranged to the west bank of the Mekong River, north almost to 12N. A principal objective was seizure of the ferry site northwest of Prey Veng, which was accomplished the first day. Thereafter two sunken ferry boats were located, raised, and repairs begun. Under cover of the operation, Vietnamese flotillas evacuated more than 35,000 refugees from as far north as Kampong Cham. The USN provided most of the U.S. strength in this operation. At the

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end of June, when U.S. participation ended, the Vietnamese merged the operation into their CUU LONG III.

From mid-May, Vietnamese units operated between the Mekong River and the seaport of Kampot, as far inland as Kampong Speu. Originally called CUU LONG II, the operation was renamed CUU LONG III after the first week. U.S. participation was never large and dropped steadily. At the end of June, Vietnamese operations were continuing from the Parrot's Beak to the sea under the name CUU LONG III.

Much of the military equipment captured by U.S. and GVN forces in Cambodia was transferred to the Cambodian forces. By 1 July, 11,688 individual weapons with 2.6 million rounds of ammunition, and 1,292 crew-served weapons with 2.1 million rounds, had been turned over.^{1/}

Air Support

On 27 March 1970, an ad hoc planning group meeting was held at MACV headquarters. During this meeting, 7AF representatives emphasized the need for complete photo reconnaissance and urged that ARVN airborne units and interdiction airstrikes be used to seal the backside of the FISHHOOK. Neither idea was incorporated into the campaign plan which the ad hoc group proposed and the Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command (COMUSMACV) forwarded to the JCS on 29 March.^{2/}

The 7AF did not receive instructions to begin definitive planning until 27 April 1970, two days before ARVN's entry into the Parrot's Beak. Even then, the strict "eyes only" top secret security measures

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