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SUBJECT  
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U.S. WRITER ASSESSES POSITIVE RESULTS OF ALLIED  
OPERATION (560)

LOS ANGELES -- NORTH VIETNAMESE INFILTRATION INTO MOST OF SOUTH VIETNAM CAME TO ALMOST A TOTAL HALT THREE MONTHS AGO, AND IT MAY TAKE THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS ANOTHER 14 MONTHS TO RECOVER FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE ALLIED THRUSTS INTO CAMBODIAN SANCTUARY AREAS, A SAIGON-BASED AMERICAN JOURNALIST REPORTS.

IN AN OCTOBER 4 DISPATCH TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES, GEORGE MCARTHUR POSES -- AND ANSWERS -- THE QUESTION, "HOW MUCH HAS THE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM CHANGED SINCE PRESIDENT NIXON'S WATERSHED DECISION SIX MONTHS AGO TO MARCH INTO HANOI'S CAMBODIAN SANCTUARIES?"

THE LEADERSHIP IN HANOI NOW IS IN DISARRAY, ACCORDING TO MR. MCARTHUR'S SOURCES, AND THE TRIUMVIRATE OF PARTY BOSS LE DUAN, THEORETICIAN TRUONG CHINH AND PREMIER PHAN VAN DONG "SIMPLY CANNOT MAKE UP ITS COLLECTIVE MIND."

AS EVIDENCE OF THIS, MR. MCARTHUR CITES THE "RELIEF IN AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS THAT INFILTRATION INTO MOST OF SOUTH VIETNAM CAME TO ALMOST A TOTAL HALT THREE MONTHS AGO. ONE RANKING MILITARY THINKER HOLDS THAT IN THAT TIME NO NORTH VIETNAMESE REPLACEMENTS HAVE COME INTO THE TITAL III CORPS AND IV CORPS AREAS--THE 25 PROVINCES OF THE NATION'S SOUTHERN HALF WHICH CONTAIN MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF THE POPULATION."

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MEANWHILE, MR. MCARTHUR WRITES, "ONCE-PROUD AND TOUGH MAIN FORCE UNITS IN THE SOUTH ARE WITHERING AWAY." ONE OF THE OLDEST VIET CONG REGIMENTS, WHICH ONCE NUMBERED 1,000 COMBAT TROOPS, NOW IS DISBANDED INTO THREE INDEPENDENT BATTALIONS, THE STRONGEST OF WHICH HAS ONLY 80 MEN, HE NOTES.

THE 54 COMMUNIST MANEUVER BATTALIONS IN THE CENTRAL II CORPS AREA INCLUDE MANY SKELETAL ORGANIZATIONS, SOME WITH ONLY 30 MEN, HE CONTINUES.

THE CAMBODIAN OPERATION, AND CAMBODIA'S CLOSING OF THE MAJOR PORT AT KOMPONG SON (SIHANOUKVILLE) HAS BADLY DISLOCATED COMMUNIST UNITS, ACCORDING TO MR. MCARTHUR'S SOURCES.

NORTH VIETNAM'S FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION HAS DISPLACED 100 MILES (160 KILOMETERS) WEST INTO CAMBODIA FROM ITS FORMER LOCATION ASTRIDE THE CAMBODIAN BORDER IN THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS AREA SOUTHWEST OF SAIGON, LEAVING ONE REGIMENT BEHIND IN THE MEKONG DELTA "HOLED UP IN THE SEVEN MOUNTAINS AND U MINH SWAMPS, LOSING STRENGTH DAILY."

THE REMAINDER OF THE DIVISION, MR. MCARTHUR REPORTS, NOW HAS THE MISSION OF INTERRUPTING HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BETWEEN KOMPONG SON AND PHNOM PENH.

THE COMMUNIST CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM (COSVN)--ANNOUNCED BY PRESIDENT NIXON AS ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE MAY-JUNE THRUST INTO CAMBODIA -- HAS PULLED BACK 75 MILES (120 KILOMETERS) INTO CAMBODIA FROM ITS FORMER POSITION IN THE "FISHHOOK" AREA SOME 75 MILES (120 KILOMETERS) FROM SAIGON.

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ANOTHER VIET CONG DIVISION WHICH HAD BEEN STATIONED JUST ACROSS THE CAMBODIAN BORDER FROM TAY NINH PROVINCE 80 MILES (140 KILOMETERS) NORTH NORTHWEST OF SAIGON) NOW IS SCATTERED AS FAR AS 100 MILES (150 KILOMETERS) FROM VIETNAM'S BORDER, "FIGHTING WITH DIMINISHED SUPPLIES IN THE SPORADIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST CAMBODIAN FORCES NORTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH," MR. MCCARTHUR REPORTS.

TWO ADDITIONAL COMMUNIST DIVISIONS, THE TIMES REPORTER'S SOURCES SAY, ALSO HAVE PULLED BACK FROM VIETNAM'S BORDER INTO THE JUNGLES OF NORTHEAST CAMBODIA.

ONE MAJOR RESULT OF THESE COMMUNIST DISLOCATIONS, MR. MCARTHUR WITES, IS A "STRIKING DROP IN WHAT AMERICAN BRIEFING OFFICERS TERM ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS."

"THIS STRIKING DECLINE," MR. MCARTHUR POINTS OUT, "HAS TAKEN PLACE IN A SIX-MONTH PERIOD WHEN AMERICAN TROOPS STRENGTH DROPPED FROM 454,000 IN MARCH TO 391,000 AT PRESENT." THAT FIGURE, HE NOTES, WILL DROP BY ANOTHER 107,000 BY MAY 1, 1971.

AMERICAN AERIAL AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE, MR. MCARTHUR SAYS, INDICATES THAT HANOI WILL HAVE TO STRAIN ITS RESOURCES IF IT WISHES TO BUILD UP THE FLOW OF SUPPLIES ALONG THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL TO THE LEVEL NECESSARY FOR RENEWED FULL-SCALE WARFARE IN EITHER CAMBODIA OR SOUTH VIETNAM, AND PERHAPS WILL BE UNABLE TO DO SO BEFORE JANUARY 1973. ITEM

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