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Lt Col Stevens' Briefing Notes: THOR Critique, UDORN ABCCC, 13 Jul 68

General (None present) _____, a brief map orientation for Operation THOR. The 3rd Marine Division AO, located in northern Quang Tri Province, is bordered on the north by the southern boundary of the DMZ. The large area shown red extending from this southern boundary of the DMZ, north to this point and thence eastward to the Gulf of Tonkin, is known as the Cat Mui Lai Sector (CMLS). The smaller sub-division of this sector is known as the Cat Mui Lay Coastal Sector. The primary supply route in northern I CTZ is the Cua Viet River, with the port of Cua Viet at its mouth.

Prior to Operation THOR, the major concentration of NVA artillery facing the 3rd Marine Division was located in the CMLS. Also in this area were large numbers of anti-aircraft installations which had succeeded in denying the area to effective air observation and had limited the accuracy of our air support. This nearly impenetrable counter surveillance screen of AA installations, coupled with the enemy's expert use of camouflage and constant, covert movement of his artillery had drastically limited our knowledge of his Arty deployment in the CMLS.

In the CMLCS, shore batteries had forced Naval Gunfire (NGF) ships well off shore (10-16 km) resulting in a substantial reduction in effective NGF range in the northern section of the 3rd Mar Div AO and in the eastern portion of the CMLS. Because of the immunity from ground attack which the enemy enjoyed north of the Demarcation Line, he was able to displace his heavy Arty well forward, enabling him to bring fire to bear south of the Cua Viet River and allowing him to interdict this important port and supply line.

The NE Monsoon Floods close Wonder Beach, cause silting of the Cua Viet Harbor and restrict landing-ships such as LSTs from marrying at the ramp, which in turn forces exclusive use of lighterage to get supplies into the port unless dredging operations are conducted. Meanwhile, Cua Viet must meet the port demands for the 1st ACD as well as all units to the north. Intense enemy interdiction of the Cua Viet complex during the NE monsoon season could have a serious effect on our logistic posture. Based on this severe threat we made an intensive effort to develop targets. This overlay depicts the results of that effort.

Reduction of the enemy threat in the CMLS would result in immediate and substantial relief for friendly units in northern I CTZ. Access for friendly observation, once obtained, could deny the enemy further exploitation of the political boundary which had protected him in this area. To this end, Operation THOR was conceived, with the following mission:

(Charts depicting intended Air, Arty and NGF support.)
(Charts showing preliminary BDA as seen by RCV.)

PROJECT CORONA HARVEST

DO NOT DESTROY

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