

U.S. Officials in Saigon Reduce Their Hopes in Cambodia Drive

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Red Leaders Elude Sweep

By **TERENCE SMITH**
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 4—Senior United States military and civilian officials here are beginning to scale down their definitions of success for the four-day-old American-South Vietnamese sweep into the Fishhook area of Cambodia.

One of their preliminary conclusions is that the success or failure of the sweep will have to be measured in terms of supplies captured and facilities destroyed, since the top enemy command and the vast majority of the 7,000 Communist soldiers who were believed to have been in the area appear to have fled.

Another preliminary conclusion is that additional forays into other parts of Eastern Cambodia are virtually inevitable if lasting damage is to be inflicted on the North Vietnamese supply system. Strikes into Eastern Laos, the officials say, are not to be ruled out.

The officials consider that substantial withdrawals of United States combat troops from Vietnam will almost certainly have to be deferred to

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Big Base Area Discovered

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LANDING ZONE NORTH

ONE, Cambodia, May 4—American outpost site of Communist military operation for South Vietnam," as President Nixon described it last Thursday in his speech announcing that United States troops had been sent into Cambodia.

diers from this north American outpost against enemy Cambodia

site of the

U.S. AIDES REDUCE AIMS IN CAMBODIA

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the last six months of the time span specified by President Nixon when he announced April 20 that he planned to pull 150,000 more servicemen out over the next year. This would be particularly so if more American troops are committed to operations across the border in Cambodia.

As for enemy reactions to the raids, the assumption here is that the Communist forces are temporarily off balance, and that the North Vietnamese leaders will want to gauge the impact of the cross-border operations on the antiwar movement in the United States before deciding on their own course of political and military action.

Few officials here now expect that the allied sweep into the Fishhook area will find an elaborate installation that can definitely be identified as the "headquarters for the entire

Communist military operation for South Vietnam," as President Nixon described it last Thursday in his speech announcing that United States troops had been sent into Cambodia.

Supply Depots Are Targets

Instead, the officials say, they will be content if sufficient amounts of the enemy's weapons, ammunition, food and medical supplies are seized to seriously impair the effectiveness of the Communist troops operating in the III Corps and IV Corps tactical zones of South Vietnam.

"Our objective is to disrupt their resupply and reinforcement system at a critical time, just when they are trying to exploit the changing situation in Cambodia," a ranking officer at the United States command said today.

"It's not essential to capture or kill the personnel that occupied these base areas and headquarters," he said. "We will be satisfied if we can destroy the facilities they had there and deny them the supplies. With the monsoon coming, they won't be able to rebuild for half a year.

"Our hope is that this will

give the South Vietnamese Army additional time to improve and make it possible for us to get out of here that much sooner," he declared.

If a serious dent is to be put in the enemy's logistical apparatus, officers here believe, additional forays will have to be conducted into other enemy sanctuaries up and down the Cambodian border. There are five such known base areas, in addition to the Parrot's Beak and Fishhook complexes and, in a sense, an attack on one begets an attack on another.

'Halfway Job' Opposed

"It makes no sense to do the job halfway," an American civilian official who originally was appalled by President Nixon's decision, acknowledged today. "We have suffered the political damage already, so we might as well hit all the sanc-

tuaries and do everything we can to get our money's worth."

The enemy's facilities in Eastern Laos present an equally tempting target, in the view of United States officers here, and many are urging that ground troops be sent against them.

Despite the prevalent view that further sizable withdrawal of American troops in present circumstances could endanger the safety of those remaining in South Vietnam, officers in the command expect that a significant withdrawal will be carried out by the fall. "we will have to send some boys home before the elections, we know that much," one American colonel observed.

Despite the flow of angry Rhetoric emanating from Hanoi, intelligence officers here tend to doubt that the North Vietnamese will respond immediately on the battlefield to the Cambodian operations.