

Pentagon Says Drives Disrupted Foe

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In a preliminary assessment of the United States and South Vietnamese troop thrusts into Cambodia, the Pentagon said today that enemy headquarters units had suffered "serious disruption" and had been forced to flee deeper into the interior.

The estimate of damage inflicted on the enemy forces avoided any assertion that the Communist headquarters, known as the Central Office for South Vietnam, or COSVN — had been captured, but it presented a picture of confusion and retreat in the enemy camp.

"Military and intelligence elements have been on the run, have had limited success in command and control between COSVN elements and subordinate echelons and have been endangered by allied military operations," a Pentagon statement said.

The statement avoided predictions on the long-range effect of the Cambodian operation and did not mention some early reports by field commanders that part of the Central Office had been seized.

Some sources said privately that the most significant result of the operation might be the "psychological boost" given the South Vietnamese troops, who moved to the offense from an essentially defensive position in South Vietnam.

The statement was presented at a briefing by Jerry W. Friedheim, a Pentagon spokesman, who said that enemy soldiers were moving westward in Cambodia before the allied attacks began April 29. He added that enemy headquarters forces joined the movement west after that date.

"At least two major COSVN elements moved deeper into Cambodia" during the early phase of the attacks due to allied pressure, the statement said. By last week, it added, "high-level military and political elements had relocated to positions north of Menot, Cambodia."

Mr. Friedheim indicated that the elusive headquarters elements had moved to an area beyond the 21-mile limit set by President Nixon for United States troops in Cambodia, but he added that "parts of it" could lie within striking distance of American bombers.

The limits of American bombing areas in Cambodia have not been made public, and Pentagon sources have indicated that Secretary of De-

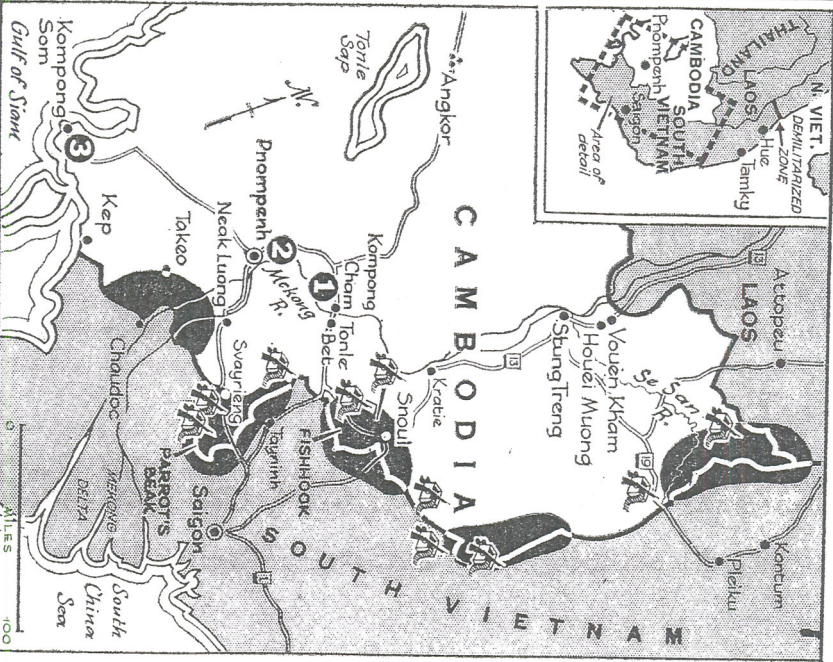
fense Melvin R. Laird would like to keep the limits flexible, depending on the final relocation of enemy headquarters.

While President Nixon has pledged to withdraw United States troops from Cambodia before July 1, Mr. Laird has testified before Congress that he would like to retain authority for bombing Cambodia if enemy activity there endangers United States troops in South Vietnam.

Because of the allied ground and air attacks in Cambodia, the Pentagon reported, "the major political element of COSVN was completely unable to maintain command and control of its elements" in one brief period.

The Pentagon statement quoted a prisoner who said a permanent base for 12 central office staff elements and two support units had been hit by a B-52 strike while it was being evacuated on May 11. Allied forces later found the bodies of 150 enemy soldiers at the base, the Pentagon said.

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PROGRESS OF ALLIED THRUSTS: The arms symbols indicate Communist base areas uncovered during sweeps of sanctuaries (shown in black) along Cambodian border. With main fighting continuing in interior, Kompong Cham (1) was under Communist attack. Road from Phnompenh (2) to Kompong Som (3) was cut in several places, but highway from Phnompenh southeast to Saigon was open.