

# ENEMY'S SUPPLIES SEEM UNCHECKED

growing Mortar and Rocket  
Fire Indicate Laos Drive  
Failed to Stem Flow

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By IVER PETERSON  
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, June 4—Allied military intelligence officers are paying close attention to the heavy mortar and rocket fire that the enemy has been using since the close of the South Vietnamese thrust against the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos in March.

Although that thrust was intended to choke off enemy supplies reaching the south, all evidence is now said to point to the conclusion that the enemy has all the war supplies it needs.

Yesterday, for example, the enemy shelled five allied command and artillery bases just south of the demilitarized zone, which straddles the border between North and South Vietnam, with an intensity unknown before the beginning of this year.

At Fire Base Fuller, 208 rounds of 120-mm mortar fire yesterday killed six Government soldiers and wounded 12, according to informed military sources.

At Charlie 2, a nearby American base in the same area of northeastern Quangtri Province from which the demilitarized zone is visible, 65 rounds of

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## Growing Enemy Fire Indicates Flow of Supplies Is Unchecked

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the heavy, long-range 122-mm rockets reportedly killed some American soldiers yesterday. The number was not disclosed.

Charlie 2 is the base where 31 G.I.'s were killed and 50 wounded by a single 122-mm rocket late last month.

An American battalion commander at Charlie 2 said recently that not only was the enemy using mortar and rockets freely but that he also appeared to be building up new supply caches.

"He doesn't seem to care if we find the stuff or not," the officer said. In the past, these caches were vigorously guarded.

South Vietnamese marines operating north of the Ashau Valley, almost due west of Charlie 2, took more than 500 rounds of mortar fire Wednesday night.

Allied intelligence sources say the explanation for the enemy's apparent wealth of supplies, which may have been the deciding factor in the capture of the eastern Cambodian town of Snoul Monday, is that the Ho Chi Minh Trail network down through Laos is in better shape than it was before.

Government military sources now concede that South Vietnamese losses were heavy at Snoul. Earlier this week a spokesman said only six South Vietnamese had been wounded during the task force's withdrawal from the town.

Today reliable military sources said that from the time the enemy completed an en-

circlement of the task force at Snoul on May 26 to the time of the pullout, 120 Government soldiers were killed and 288 wounded. In addition, 74 were reported missing after the retreat.

The enemy's recent successes against Laotian Government troops on the Boloven Plateau in Southern Laos has secured the enemy's routes, the analysts say, well to the west of the South Vietnamese border, where they are not so vulnerable to attacks from South Vietnam.

Foe is Reported Well Supplied

Although this new route is well to the west of the former trail network, and therefore means a longer trip, it has left enemy troops in the area where the frontiers of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia meet well supplied with fresh men and material.

This abundance has been demonstrated in the enemy's sustained pressure against the Central Highlands and particularly against Fire Bases 5 and 6.

To the south, the supply network ends in Cambodia and the Government's retreat from Snoul apparently has lifted one of the defenses against infiltration of men and goods into the former enemy base areas to the north and northwest of Saigon. Saigon officers say the enemy is now closer than ever before to reoccupying the base areas along the border from which they were ousted during the allied drive into Cambodia just over a year ago.