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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
19 June 1967

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Importance of the DMZ to the Infiltration of Men and Supplies

Summary

1. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) has become an important element in frustrating North Vietnam's efforts to spread Allied forces thin in South Vietnam. The threat posed by North Vietnamese units south of, in, and just north of the DMZ has caused the US to divert considerable military assets from other areas of South Vietnam to defend northern Quang Tri Province.

2. The DMZ affords North Vietnamese units quick access into northern Quang Tri Province and a safe haven into which North Vietnamese units can flee when faced with superior Allied forces. Finally, the DMZ provides North Vietnam with an extremely short, direct, and relatively secure logistic network to provide food, weapons and ammunition to its forces in Quang Tri Province.

3. The DMZ is also uniquely valuable to the North Vietnamese because men and supplies can be trucked as far south as the DMZ in both wet and dry seasons. Moreover, the infiltration routes through the DMZ are almost exclusively trails, supplemented partly by waterways. The capability to infiltrate men and supplies along these trails and waterways is affected only slightly by changes during the wet and dry seasons.

4. At present there are about 15,000 NVA troops in northern Quang Tri Province. This large force is over one-fourth of the total NVA forces currently situated in South Vietnam. Denial of access to the DMZ would deprive these forces of safe-haven areas and seriously complicate the ease with which North Vietnam infiltrates replacements personnel and maintains the flow of supplies in northern Quang Tri Province.

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