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BLACK SHIELD ASSESSMENT

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SC No. 10384/67

6 November 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Assessment of Black Shield
Photography of 28, 29, and 30 October

Summary

Three double-pass Black Shield missions flown over North Vietnam on 28, 29, and 30 October provided cloud-free photographic coverage of about 55 percent of the country, including the Hanoi, Hai-phong, Pinghsiang and Dong Dang areas. All of North Vietnam's six major airfields, more than half of the SA-2 sites, over 75 percent of the rail network north of the panhandle, and 42 priority bridges and rail yards for bomb damage assessment were photographed. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence.

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1. Three double-pass Black Shield missions flown over North Vietnam on 28, 29, and 30 October provided cloud-free photographic coverage of about 55 percent of the country, including the Hanoi, Haiphong, Pinghsiang and Dong Dang areas. Both Mission 6732 (28 October) and Mission 6734 (30 October) flew two passes each over the area of North Vietnam north of the panhandle. One of mission 6732's passes was along the China border area. Mission 6733 (29 October) flew one pass primarily over the panhandle and the other pass along the China border area. No evidence of surface-to-surface missile deployment was noted.

2. Surface-to-Air Missile Sites: Over half of the nearly 260 SA-2 sites in North Vietnam were photographed by the three missions. Two new sites were detected. The 28 October mission alone covered 120 SA-2 sites. Fourteen of these sites were occupied, 70 unoccupied, and 16 could only be identified. The 29 October mission covered 61 SA-2 sites. One of these sites was occupied, 30 unoccupied (including one new site), and 30 could only be identified. The 30 October mission covered 92 SA-2 sites. Thirteen of these sites were occupied (including one new site), 74 unoccupied, and five could only be identified.

3. Airfields: Good coverage of all six of North Vietnam's major airfields was provided by the 28 October mission. With the exception of Haiphong/Cat Bi--which has a cratered runway--all the airfields appeared to be serviceable.

4. At Phuc Yen Airfield, the bomb craters on the runway had been filled in and the airfield seemed to be capable of supporting at least limited fighter

[REDACTED] Other visible bomb damage from the 24 and 25 October air strikes included: bomb craters on the two main parking aprons and the parallel taxiway; interdiction of the taxiway to the northern aircraft revetments by one bomb crater; two MIG-15/17s probably destroyed

and two other aircraft possibly destroyed; and seven damaged aircraft revetments.

5. At Hoa Lac Airfield, all bomb craters on the runway had been repaired, and the runway appeared to be serviceable. At Haiphong/Kien An Airfield, all bomb craters on the runway had been repaired, making it serviceable. Other bomb craters could be seen on the half-loop taxiway, in six parking revetments, and adjacent to the parallel taxiway.

6. Photography from the 29 October mission showed continuing construction at Yen Bai Airfield in the northwestern part of North Vietnam. Concrete appears to have been laid for part of the runway and parallel taxiway. Three parking aprons, 13 aircraft revetments, and a dispersal taxiway were identified. This is the first sign of progress at this airfield since 20 June. Photography taken at that time showed that preparations had been made to surface the runway. After four months, the Chinese engineers still have not completed the runway, although they have apparently made progress on some of the adjacent facilities.

7. Air Order-of-Battle: The 28 October photography of the six major airfields showed very few aircraft. At Phuc Yen Airfield, ten aircraft could be seen: two small swept-wing aircraft, four possible aircraft, two probably destroyed MIG-15/17s, and two possibly destroyed aircraft. 

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8. At Hanoi/Gia Lam Airfield, one MIG-15/17 was observed. Two derelict MIG-15/17s and two dummy MIG-21s were noted at Hoa Lac Airfield.

9. Naval Order-of-Battle: The 28 October mission photographed the normal complement of naval vessels in the Haiphong area. Identifiable vessels included three SO-1 class submarine chasers, three or

four Swatow-class gunboats, six P-6 class motor torpedo boats, and two P-4 class motor torpedo boats.

10. Bridges: The 28 October mission provided good coverage of the most important bridges. The Paul Doumer Railroad and Highway Bridge over the Red River was shown to be unserviceable. One span had been dropped into the river and the two adjoining spans had been severely damaged.

11. The Canal des Rapides Railroad and Highway Bridge also was shown to be unserviceable. One span at the south end of the main bridge had been knocked out of position. The alternate rail bypass bridge was also unserviceable.

12. In the Haiphong area, the three main bridges--the railroad and highway bridge and two highway bridges--were observed to be still unserviceable. Ten highway bypass bridges there were serviceable.

13. Transshipment Points: Photography of 28 October showed normal levels of activity at the Pinghsiang and Dong Dang railroad transshipment points. About 390 pieces of rolling stock, including flatcars carrying 42 unidentifiable objects, were noted at Pinghsiang. Approximately 120 pieces of rolling stock and 14 locomotives were observed at the nearby Dong Dang transshipment point.

14. The 28 October photography also showed a probable rail-to-road transshipment point under construction near Ho-Kou, China, just across the border from Lao Cai, North Vietnam. The installation is served by two rail spurs off the Kunming-Hanoi rail line. Construction of such an installation may pre-
sage an increase in supply shipments via truck to
northwestern North Vietnam. Chinese engineers have
been developing the road network and logistical fa-
ilities in the border area for the past two years.

15. Railroad lines: The 28 October mission covered 100 percent of the Haiphong-Hanoi rail line,

75 percent of the Dong Dang-Hanoi line, 35 percent of the Kep-Thai Nguyen-Hanoi line, 20 percent of the Lao Cai-Hanoi line, and 10 percent of the Hanoi-Dong Hoi line.

16. Hanoi Thermal Power Plant: Photography of 28 October showed damage at and near the plant. A hole in the generator hall roof indicated a penetration and a possible internal detonation. Another hole in the generator hall roof--which had been repaired after the 21 August strike--has been reopened. A possible hit immediately north of the coal conveyor, entered the new boiler-house section. (This possible hit apparently did not detonate.) A crater was visible on the north boundary of the plant. About 35 civilian structures in the area surrounding the plant have been destroyed and 40 damaged. No smoke or steam from the plant was evident.