

Saigon troops force North from capital

SAIGON, South Vietnam (AP) — A South Vietnamese provincial capital 40 miles east of Saigon came under attack today for the second successive day, military sources said.

Fighting had been reported throughout the day yesterday in the area of Xuan Loc, and the Saigon command said North Vietnamese forces were pushed out of the town by nightfall. The second attack came just after dawn today, the sources said.

It was the first drive on a major city in the Saigon region since a five-week-old offensive gave the Communist-led side control of three-fourths of the country, with demoralized government troops withdrawing without a fight from central, northern and coastal areas.

The Xuan Loc fighting is being watched closely as an indicator of whether the South Vietnamese army has the will to fight.

The Communist-led forces struck at Xuan Loc for the second time soon after daybreak today, the sources said, opening up first with about 1,000 rounds of artillery, rocket and mortar fire. They said tank and infantry assaults followed, but there was no immediate word on casualties or a trend in the fighting.

An unofficial source claimed as many as 300 North Vietnamese were killed in Wednesday's fighting at Xuan Loc, but there was no confirmation and the figure generally was felt to be high. Four North Vietnamese tanks reportedly were destroyed.

In Saigon, a Viet Cong spokesman said the pilot who bombed President Nguyen Van Thieu's palace Tuesday had landed his F5 fighter-bomber at a Viet Cong-held airfield. Thieu, who is widely blamed for the military losses, was not hurt, but at least two persons were killed.

Air force officials said the flier had acted alone, but political sources said more opposition politicians went into hiding to avoid a new police crackdown on dissent.

France President Valery Giscard d'Estaing told his Cabinet in Paris the South Vietnamese government must be in the hands of persons willing to resume political negotiations with the Viet Cong, a statement interpreted by French political observers as a demand for Thieu's resignation.

French officials reportedly have held talks with neutralist South Vietnamese in search of ways to reopen negotiations. The Viet Cong repeatedly has said it will not negotiate an end to the fighting as long as Thieu heads the Saigon government.

Thieu says he will not quit and will not form a coalition with the Viet Cong.

In neighboring Cambodia, Communist-led Khmer Rouge insurgents penetrated Phnom Penh's northern defense line at Stung Kambot seven miles north of the city, but field reports said government forces had driven the rebels from the market at the center of Kompong Speu, 30 miles to the west.

The reports said rebels drove defenders from a former combat police fort and an abandoned refugee camp at Stung Kambot, then dug in and were under counterattack by government troops. Soldiers also reported that the Khmer Rouge massacred or abducted 100 recruits at a training center overrun two days ago southeast of Phnom Penh.

The Viet Cong spokesman at the Joint Military Commission in Saigon said the flier who bombed Thieu's palace—identified in South Vietnam as Nguyen Thanh Trung—had been promoted from lieutenant to captain and given the Liberation Distinction Service Order Second Class after landing his plane. He did not give the location, but there was speculation it may have been the former U.S. air base at Da Nang, now held by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

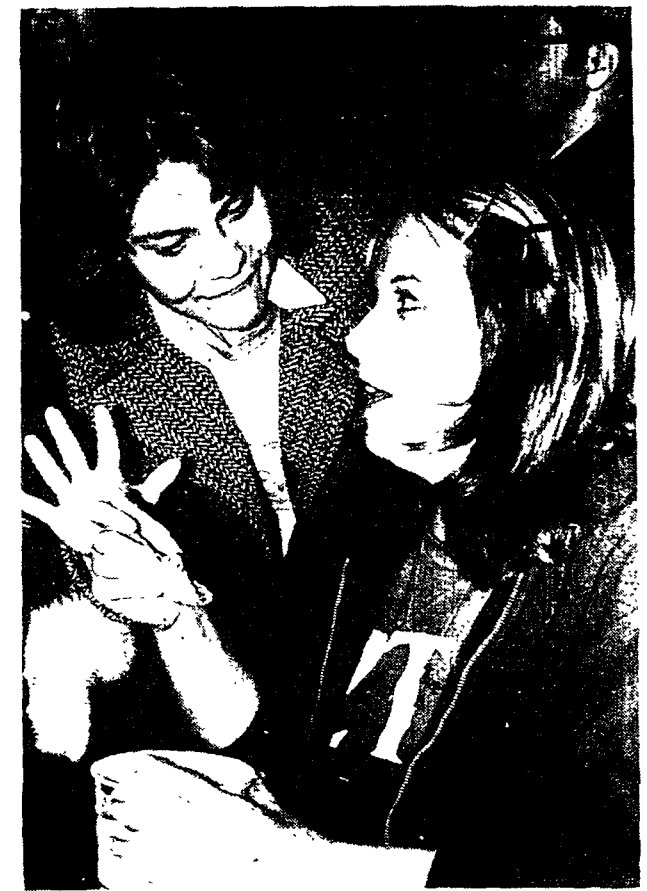
A Viet Cong radio broadcast said the pilot assailed the Thieu government for seeking to "enrich itself over the blood and bones of the people," and denounced what he called an invasion of the country by "American colonialists."

Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin voiced criticism of the Thieu government, telling guests at a Kremlin dinner that the "Saigon clique" is responsible for the continued fighting.

"The Saigon regime commits a new crime by forcibly driving away, on a mass scale, civilians of South Vietnam from the territory surrendered by the puppet army," Kosygin added. "The so-called refugees are needed by Saigon to continue the war."

North Vietnam, in an editorial in the party newspaper Nhan Dan, demanded that the United States give up its efforts at "forcible evacuation" of refugees and "abduction" of children, and remove its ships, planes and Marines from waters off Vietnam.

Announcements of humanitarian aid to Vietnam continued. The West German Cabinet approved \$4.5 million for South Vietnam, bringing its 1975 total to \$11 million. The British government announced \$1.8 million for three international agencies helping both sides in the war, and set aside another \$600,000 for later decisions.



Photos by Jim Caprio

Ice Cream Eating

WMAJ DISC JOCKEY Todd Jeffers (left) warms his tongue before ice cream eating contest. Contestant Roxanne Leonardi (3rd-Liberal Arts) at right is cheered on by Peg Thompson (9th-Elementary and Kindergarten Education). See story page 12.

Secrecy charges denied

WASHINGTON (UPI)—President Ford assured Congressmen yesterday that no "private agreements" exist between the United States and South Vietnam, Rep. John Anderson, R-Ill., said after a conference with Ford.

Anderson's summary appeared to sharpen the White House response to Sen. Henry M. Jackson's charge that the United States entered into "secret agreements" with Saigon in an apparent effort to induce it to sign the Paris peace accords.

In the first White House response to that charge, press secretary Ron Nessen disclosed earlier yesterday that former President Richard M. Nixon had confidentially promised Saigon the United States would "react vigorously" to any major Communist violations of the peace accords.

But Nessen stressed these confidential assurances merely reflected public U.S. policy, often stated by Nixon.

In a nationally broadcast address on March 29, 1973—two months after the accords were signed—Nixon said, "We will continue to comply with the agreement," and "we shall insist that North Vietnam comply with the agreement and the leaders of North Vietnam should have no doubt as to the consequences if they fail to comply with the agreement."

On Capitol Hill, Jackson called the White House explanation "obviously not satisfactory." He demanded disclosure of "the specific language of the communications" between Nixon and Saigon officials.

Shortly after Nessen's news conference, Ford conferred with a group of congressional leaders, including Anderson.

"We were assured that there are no private, off-the-record assurances on the part of this government to the government of South Vietnam" regarding the 1973 Paris accords, Anderson told reporters.

In response to questions, Anderson said Ford had assured the group "there are no private agreements" with Saigon, and

"no hidden chapters yet to be revealed." He said Ford assured the congressmen specifically that there was no commitment for U.S. military intervention under any circumstances.

"There are no secret, as yet undisclosed, agreements between this government and the government of South Vietnam that would in any way require or obligate us to make a military response to the invasion by North Vietnam," Anderson said.

Nessen said the "confidential exchanges" between Nixon and President Nguyen Van Thieu, who was balking at signing the accords, merely reflected known U.S. policy commitments.

"Assurances to the Republic of Vietnam as to both U.S. assistance and U.S. enforcement of the Paris agreement were stated clearly and publicly by President Nixon," Nessen said.

He said there were confidential communications between Nixon and Thieu at a time in late 1972 and early 1973 when Thieu was balking. But he maintained Nixon publicly stated many times the same assurances he gave Thieu.

"The publicly stated policy and intention of the United States government to continue to provide adequate economic and military assistance and to react vigorously to major violations of the Paris agreements reflected confidential exchanges between the Nixon administration and President Thieu at the time," Nessen said.

He declined to say whether Nixon's original concept of vigorous reaction might have included renewed U.S. military intervention or bombing.

He said, however, the August, 1973, congressional ban on further U.S. military involvement in Indochina "of course ruled out the possibility of American military reaction to violations of the agreement."

Pa. jobless rate rises to 9.3%

HARRISBURG (AP)—Pennsylvania's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 9.3 per cent in March, a percentage that could deplete the unemployment compensation fund by the year's end and force the state to borrow from the federal government.

Labor Secretary Paul J. Smith said, however, that if the fund is exhausted the state could borrow needed funds interest free to pay unemployment benefits.

The 9.3 per cent figure is up from 8.4 per cent in February. The adjusted figures exclude persons who normally would be unemployed now because of seasonal layoffs.

Smith estimated 481,000 Pennsylvanians looking for work were unable to find employment. The rate was the

highest since June, 1961, when the unadjusted rate was 9.6 per cent. Adjusted statistics were not kept then but officials said the adjusted rate would have exceeded that of last month.

The national adjusted rate for March was 8.7 per cent.

"As has been the case for the past three or four months, the unemployment increase resulted from the general stagnation throughout the economy," Smith told a news conference.

"Layoffs and the lack of available jobs continued in the durable and nondurable goods sector of manufacturing and in retail trades."

Smith said the most serious problems were in the construction and apparel industries and plants that make supplies for automobiles, such as carpets and

windows. "When Detroit is down, Pennsylvania gets the ripple effect," in its auto-related industries, he commented.

Smith said he will ask a U.S. congressional committee to keep unemployment benefits in effect for 65 weeks. Benefits currently last that long, but the maximum term will revert to 52 weeks unless Congress restores the extra 13 weeks.

Pennsylvania's maximum benefits are \$119 weekly. Average benefits are \$71 weekly.

Smith said the unemployment fund, financed solely by a tax on employers, began the year at \$520 million, dropped to \$356 million a month ago and now stands at \$256 million.

Mideast views debated

By LAURIE PEACHER
Collegian Staff Writer

Participants in last night's Arab-Israeli panel discussion offered four diverse solutions for a negotiated peace in the Middle East.

The discussion, sponsored by the Undergraduate Student Government, went fairly well despite the controversial nature of the subject, according to moderator Kenneth Frandsen, a speech professor.

The participants, who spoke to an audience of about 100 in the HUB Assembly Room were: former Young Socialists president, James Cory and Lebanese student Adnan Al Rubae for Palestine; graduate student Douglas Falk and physics professor T. E. Feuchtwang, for Israel.

In his closing remarks, Falk said it was "evident that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) does not intend to seek peace with Israel. For Israel to deal with this organization would be fruitless," he said.

Earlier in the evening, Falk called the PLO an "umbrella organization for several terrorist groups." It was created to be a political tool in the hands of the Arab governments, he said, and was "wrought with irony and contradictions."

PLO's arguments about their participation in Israeli talks Falk said, included the fact they could "only exist in an atmosphere of continuous struggle."

Cory said the Zionist movement was the main problem in the Middle East. "Only until Zionism as an ideology is destroyed politically and broken down, can any type of peace come about," he said.

"The olive branch is only being extended by the PLO," Cory said, adding that he gave all his encouragement to the organization so that a "secular democratic Palestine" could be created.

"To be Jewish is not necessarily to be a Zionist," he had said earlier in the evening. Cory said Zionism is the far right wing of Judaism.

"The first step to finding peace, according to Al Rubae, is to recognize the Palestinian people.

"If you deny the existence and rights of people in an area," he said, "you won't have any security. I'm talking about both sides—the Arabs and the Israelis."

Everytime Israel expands in the aftermath of a war, Rubae said, the problem is still present because Israel is not secure.

Feuchtwang offered a fourth proposal, saying he didn't think the Middle East problem was urgent because "we have lived with it for 27 years." There is a slow tangible progress in Palestine now, he said, and "time will cure all."

"We have human needs, human attributes, are not the devil incarnate and can live together," he said. "They have to realize that they cannot dislodge or destroy Israel."

"It would be much better for both sides to stop the wars and learn how to live together," he said.

Another discussion earlier in the evening centered around Israel's land. Falk answered an audience question about the opposing identity of Palestinians and how they had originated. In describing what another had seen on the land, he said, there was "no consciousness among the people living on the land to actually work it."

Cory disagreed, saying "it is the height of chauvinism to say that Zionism came to Palestine and made the civilization bloom."

"It's not the height of chauvinism," Feuchtwang said, "but the height of the damaging truth. Palestine was created by the sweat, blood, and toil of the Jewish worker. What the Arabs have done is to systematically erode and destroy it," he said.

But the audience applauded after Al Rubae's statement: "This implies we have the right to slaughter people and move them away because we feel we're better than them. This is purely racist."

Weather

Mostly cloudy and cool today. High 45. Showers and a few flurries tonight. Low 34. Chance of light rain or snow Friday. High 40.



James Cory



T. E. Feuchtwang



Douglas Falk



Abnan Al Rubae

Photos by Kathy O'Donovan

Budget Committee recommends deficit

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The Senate Budget Committee recommended last night that Congress adopt a budget of \$366.1 billion with a deficit of \$71.6 billion—far higher than President Ford says he will tolerate.

The Senate committee reached its tentative conclusions during a 13-hour work day.

The Senate-proposed alternative budget is close to a \$368.2 billion budget recommended Tuesday by the House Budget Committee which would entail a deficit of \$73.2 billion.

Ford, in signing the tax cut bill Mar. 29, said he would tolerate a deficit of \$60 billion but no more.

However White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen described Ford as "gratified" the House measure was as low as it was but hopeful it would be reduced by the full House.

Democratic leaders of both Congressional committees contended that recession, by draining off tax revenues and increasing expenditures for unemployment compensation and welfare, would automatically swell Ford's deficit to about \$67 billion.

They said their proposed deficits would carry a measure of economic stimulation to help the country get out of the recession.

The chief difference between the Senate and House committee's recommendations was in the size of proposed cuts in Ford's \$94 billion Pentagon budget.

The Senate committee rebuffed Democratic attempts to cut from \$4 billion to \$11 billion from the Defense budget and settled on a cut of only \$2.1 billion.

But the House committee agreed to a \$4.3 billion reduction in Ford's proposed defense budget for the fiscal year which begins July 1.

In the 11-4 vote, opposition to holding the defense cut to only \$2.1 billion came from four Democrats who wanted a deeper cut—Chairman Edmund S. Muskie, Me., Frank E. Moss, Utah, James D. Abourezk, S.D., and Walter F. Mondale, Minn.

Although these proposals are not binding, they could be influential in floor debate when the committees which oversee the defense budget—usually friendly to Pentagon requests—make their recommendations.

The Budget Committee defense decision was made after more than four hours of wrangling in a crowded committee room which became so overheated some senators shed their suit jackets.

In the debate, Mondale and Sen. Alan Cranston, D-Calif., complained they could not make "responsible decisions" because the administration had refused to reveal how much of the defense budget was used to conceal the budget of the Central Intelligence Agency and other intelligence activities.

Mondale proposed that the proposed cut in defense spending specify that the overall amount spent on intelligence be reduced by \$500 million. His plan was defeated.

Said Mondale: "I don't know how we can go to our people and tell them we could not get more money for jobs or school lunch programs or human needs when we don't even know how much we're giving to secret intelligence activities."

Although the Senate panel did not specify what cuts it would like to see in reducing Ford's proposal by \$2.1 billion, several areas were singled out in debate.