



For U.S. Forces In Viet Nam



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## Military Spokesman Pegs VC Strength At 28,000 To 34,000

A high-ranking military spokesman told a press conference here Wednesday evening that according to the latest reports and analysis there are between 28,000 and 34,000 hard-core Viet Cong presently operating in the Republic of Viet Nam. At the same time the spokesman emphasized that these figures do not indicate that there has been any "rapid recent buildup in VC strength."

A year ago, U.S. sources pegged VC strength figures varying between 25 and 30 thousand.

The spokesman Wednesday went on to define in depth the term "hard-core" as applied to the Viet Cong, saying that only fulltime Viet Cong forces are considered to be "hard-core". He said "we consider this term to apply to the communist framework as a whole, civilian and military."

"Consequently," the spokesman continued, "We do not use it to describe a military unit since the term is not really descriptive or correct if we apply our definition. Actually the hardest core is probably in the political understructure, although there are individuals in the military who fit the definition also."

The same source explained that the VC military organization encompasses three distinct forces — main, local, and guerrilla.

Main force units, he said, operate under direct control of the Central Office of South Viet Nam or Military Region headquarters, and may operate over several provinces.

"These are full-time military units," he said.

On the other hand, he went on, local force units are generally restricted to a geographical area and are subordinate to that area. These are also full-time military units.

The guerrillas or militia are part-time soldiers who supposedly have full-time civilian occupations, but he added "are in actuality a potent military force."

The figures he gave of communist strength entailed only the first two categories of full-time soldiers.

He concluded by noting that "All of the newly confirmed battalion size units in the estimate were organized prior to late fall 1963. We now believe that the Viet Cong military strength in main and local forces lies between 28,000 and 34,000. Again, may I emphasize that a rapid recent buildup in VC strength has not been demonstrated in our analysis."

## U.S. Officer Killed In Communist Ambush

An American army officer was killed in action early yesterday morning in a communist ambush about 25 miles northwest of Saigon.

He was accompanying Vietnamese forces on a relief mission aimed at assisting friendly elements in the district town of Ben Cat when the incident occurred.

The area in which he was killed has been the scene of heavy military activity since July 28, when Viet Cong forces initiated several actions against government forces.

Following the ambush, there reportedly was a heavy engagement which resulted in a number of casualties — both VC and friendly.

## LATE NEWS FLASHES

### Moonshot "Midcourse Maneuver" A-OK

CAPE KENNEDY, July 29 (UPI) — America's Ranger-7 television spacecraft executed its most crucial space maneuver "right on the nose" today, shifting it in a direction for shooting mankind's first close-up pictures of the moon.

Scientists said the feat, called the "midcourse maneuver," swung Ranger-7 with apparent "extreme accuracy" into a new path toward its pinpoint objective on the sunlit face of the lunar body.

The critical maneuver was triggered by a radio signal sent from scientists on earth at 6 a.m. (EDT) to make the spacecraft change direction from its general "moon collision" course into "a trajectory for its precise target."

Although jubilant scientists declined to make a prediction, they indicated they now felt confident that the spacecraft would hit close to its planned impact area in one of the moon's dry "seas," where astronauts of the future are to make landings.

Without the correction which took 1-1/2 hours, the spacecraft would have swung around the left edge of the moon at a distance of 243,000 miles and hit on the far and dark side of the lunar body, where television pictures could not be taken.

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### Lao Right Wing Advances On Reds

VIENTIANE, LAOS, July 29 (UPI) — Right Wing troops advancing in two directions smashed toward an important communist-held road junction Tuesday while new attempts to stage settlement talks met more apparent failure.

Military sources said Right Wing motor units were advancing north on the junction of Routes 7 and 13, 120 miles north of Vientiane, while another Right Wing contingent was fighting southward toward the junction.

The offensive is aimed at flushing out communist forces from the town of Sala Phou Koun where the roads intersect. Route 7 connects Vientiane with the royal capital of Luang Prabang. Route 13 leads east to the Plaine des Jarres region.

In Vientiane, informed sources said it appeared a Soviet-Polish mission to Khang Khay, Pathet Lao headquarters in northern Laos, had failed.

Polish International Control Commissioner Jerzy Dudzinski and Soviet charge d'affaires Antoiy Grigoriev had made the helicopter trip reportedly to seek Pathet Lao agreement to a meeting of Laos' three warring factions — the neutralists and right wing versus the pro-communist Pathet Lao.

When the envoys returned to the capital Tuesday from their northern visit with Pathet Lao prince Souphanouvong, Dudzinski said, "I have no comment."

(Continued on reverse side)

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# Amb. Taylor Reaffirms U.S. Pledge To Can Tho Throng

## Also Tours Vinh Long

**Saigon, July 30 (VP)** — Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor yesterday reiterated the U.S. government's pledge to help the Vietnamese people crush the communist aggressors.

Addressing a welcoming crowd at Can Tho, the Phong Dinh province capital, during a trip to the provinces Wednesday, Ambassador Taylor repeated U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara's statement that the American people will always stay by the Vietnamese in their struggle against red imperialism for national independence and freedom.

The statement was made by Secretary McNamara during his visit to Can Tho early this year. The then Chief of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Taylor had accompanied him.

The American envoy was met on arrival at Can Tho by Maj. Gen. Duong Van Duc, IV Corps Commander, and Mr. Bui Vien, deputy chief of Phong Dinh.

After a brief talk with Gen. Duc and the local American advisors, Ambassador Taylor left for the second stop on his tour — Vinh Long, 35 kms northwest of Can Tho.

There, Ambassador Taylor received the same enthusiastic welcome from the people. He mingled with the crowd, shook hands, and talked to some of his welcomers. After meetings with Vinh Long province chief, Lt. Col. Nguyen Khac Tuan and other local

## RVN Government Mum On UN Border Plan

**Saigon, July 29 (UPI)** — The Vietnamese government had no official reaction today to the United Nations mission proposal for an unarmed patrol to keep peace along the Viet-Nam-Cambodia border, but officials privately welcomed the plan.

The recommendation was made at United Nations Headquarters in New York City on Tuesday by a three-man Security Council mission that went to the two countries to investigate border violations.

Foreign ministry officials here withheld official judgment of the U.N. team's recommendation, but officials pointed out Viet Nam has said all along it wanted international inspection of its border with Cambodia.

They have said, however, Viet Nam would prefer inspection units to be armed. In New York, the commission turned down a Vietnamese proposal for an international police force for the border area.

officials and American advisors, he boarded his helicopter for the Cho Lach district town.

The American diplomat displayed great interest in the defense installations at the district town.

## Sec. Rusk Urges Aid For SEA

(compiled from UPI reports)

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, with an eye obviously cast toward troubled Southeast Asia, urged the Senate Appropriations Committee Wednesday to vote the full \$3,516,700,000 requested for foreign aid.

The Secretary, speaking to the committee behind closed doors, told the senators that "the program is... a realistic one," and that communist imperialism makes such a program a vital necessity.

In pinpointing the destination for the funds, Secretary Rusk said that two-thirds of the aid would go "to countries along the Sino-Soviet periphery."

Viet Nam, Laos, Korea, and Jordan, the Secretary added, would receive four-fifths of the supporting assistance funds.

Directing attention to Southeast Asia, Secretary Rusk said, that the defeat of communist aggression against South Viet Nam "is essential to the security of Southeast Asia." This, he continued, is the test of the United States' ability to block the spread of communism in these nations.

The Secretary of State then praised South Viet Nam's Prime Minister Gen. Nguyen Khanh adding that he is confident that the effort in Southeast Asian can be successful.

## VC Crushed At Ben Cat

**Saigon, (VP) July 30** —

The communist aggressor forces on Tuesday suffered a crushing defeat when they tried to stop a government relief column heading for the beleaguered Lai Khe post, four kms northeast of the Ben Cat district town in

## News Flashes

(Continued from front side)

### Two Russian Soldiers Ask U.S. For Asylum

**HEIDELBERG, GERMANY, July 29 (UPI)** — Two Russian soldiers who defected to the West from East Germany have asked for political asylum, the U.S. Army announced today.

The two Soviets fled over the communist barricaded border to West German Bavaria near Neustadt on the Saale River last Friday at 2 a.m.

They were unarmed except for knives, but wore their red army battle dress.

"The Soviet soldiers are now in American control," a spokesman at U.S. Army European headquarters here said. "American authorities have received their request for asylum."

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### Rescue Teams Work To Free 14 Miners

**CHAMPAGNOLE, FRANCE, July 29 (UPI)** — Rescue teams today prepared to penetrate the entrance of a chalk mine near here where 14 miners have been trapped more than 200 feet underground since Monday by a massive rock fall.

Late last night they made contact with nine of the 14 trapped men in a pocket 223 feet below ground.

Bulldozers cleared the entry and rescue teams prepared to enter the gallery and shore it up before working their way towards the nine men.

Five other men were known to be trapped in another section of the mine. It was not certain whether they are alive or not.

A second crew of rescue workers were seeking to break through to them also.

The rescue teams toiled throughout the night boring into the foot of the hill where the mine is located. A powerful bulldozer cleared away tons of earth and rock.

At 8 a.m. it was reported to have broken through to the mine gallery where the cave-in occurred.

Before rescue workers could attempt to reach the trapped nine known to be alive they faced a lengthy job of clearing away huge quantities of earth and rubble and shoring up the gallery roof.

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### Justice Dept. Files Suit Against Segregated Restaurants

**BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, July 30 (UPI)** — The Justice Department took its first step against segregated restaurants under the new Civil Rights Law Wednesday by filing suit against 15 eating places in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

The department charged that each of the defendants "follows the policy and practice, in the operation of their respective restaurants and lunch counters, of discriminating against negroes by refusing to sell food for consumption on the premises and to provide service to negroes on the same basis as they sell food and provide service to non-negro persons."

Binh Duong. Some 300 enemy killed and wounded were spotted being carried away, VNAF pilots reported.

The Defense Ministry yesterday reported that the enemy attacked the post at 7 a.m. The Regional Forces and Militia garrison there suffered 19 missing along with their weapons.

The Binh Duong province command sent a relief column

which about 10:30 a.m. encountered approximately 500 of the enemy 1.5 kms north of Ben Cat town. The government forces, supported by artillery and fighter-bombers, suffered 25 killed and 28 wounded; 11 men were posted missing.

The Ministry said that during the battle the enemy fired 18 81mm mortar shells into the garrison at Ben Cat.

## PEANUTS



BY CHARLES M. SCHULZ