

N. Viet plans 'wrecked'; Laotians mount offensive

SAIGON—U.S. sources said Tuesday operations by American and South Vietnamese forces in Laos and Cambodia have wrecked Communist plans for a dry season offensive. More South Vietnamese troops joined the Laos campaign, and Laos opened its major offensive against North Vietnamese invaders.

Dispatches from the Laotian capital of Vientiane told of a secret meeting between two high-ranking South Vietnamese commanders and Premier

Souvanna Phouma and members of his military staff.

The Vientiane talks led to the speculation that the South Vietnamese might be seeking Laotian support for Saigon's troubled offensive against the Ho Chi Minh Trail or permission to strike elsewhere in southern Laos.

U.S. military sources claimed great success for the drive in Cambodia dating back to last May and the 23-day-old thrust into southern Laos, reporting that

the twin campaigns had deprived Communist units of huge supplies of stockpiled war material and inflicted extremely heavy casualties.

The Laos offensive along Highway 9 was singled out by one source as particularly important in "preempting plans for an enemy offensive." This would also speed the withdrawal of American troops from Indochina, a big goal of the Nixon administration.

American sources said U.S. warplanes, including eight-engine B52s, attacking the Ho Chi Minh Trail in coordination with the South Vietnamese drive had cut Communist truck traffic on the network of roads and jungle passes by 50 per cent in the past four days.

U.S. reconnaissance pilots reported that 500-600 North Vietnamese trucks were moving along trail arteries in comparison with 1,000-1,200 last week.

UPI correspondent Kim Willenson, reporting from Vientiane, said Laotian military troops backed by substantial numbers of U.S.-trained special guerrilla units and several battalions of Thai regulars launched a major offensive northeast of the Plain of Jars.

Spy file disclosed

WASHINGTON—The Defense Department said Tuesday it keeps records on 25 million persons from the President on down in a vast domestic intelligence network which has snooped on one out of every eight Americans.

The Pentagon told Congress that such surveillance was necessary to cope with the possibility of civil violence requiring the presence of federal troops.

It assured the Senate Constitutional Rights subcommittee that steps were being taken to assure that the computerized operation does not trespass on the right of privacy. But it

acknowledged that the operation has already grown so big that it will be impossible to purge the files of erroneous or unauthorized material.

Assistant Defense Secretary Robert F. Froehke testified that 25 million index cards on individuals containing vital statistics and a reference number for more extensive written dossiers were kept by the department's Defense Central Index of Investigations.

No clues in Capitol blast

WASHINGTON—An Army explosives expert testified Tuesday the blast that shook the U.S. Capitol could have been caused by a 20-pound dynamite time bomb carried unnoticed into the building in a brief case.

But authorities reported no clues as to who set off the explosion in an unmarked, out-of-the way rest room used

mostly by senators, causing some \$300,000 damage—but no injuries—to the Senate side of the Capitol early Monday.

Speculation increased it was an "inside job" by someone thoroughly familiar with the complex layout of the building.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell told reporters Tuesday, however, there had been "no indication as yet" that the

Voting amendment passes committees

WASHINGTON—With little argument and practically no opposition, the House Judiciary Committee approved a proposed constitutional amendment Tuesday that would lower the voting age to 18 for all elections, including state and local ones.

The proposed amendment would end the conflict in various voting age laws left by a recent Supreme Court decision on the 1970 Voting Rights Act, which

attempted to lower the age to 18 for all elections.

The committee adopted the proposal, 32 to 2, after a closed meeting of less than an hour. Only Republican Reps. Wiley Mayne, Iowa, and Charles Wiggins, Calif., opposed it.

The court said Congress had the power to set the voting age for presidential and congressional elections, but could not do so for state and local elections without changing the Constitution. Most states limit voting to citizens aged 21 and over.

The new amendment would have to be approved by two-thirds majorities of both the House and Senate and be ratified by 38 of the 50 state legislatures. It would be the 26th Amendment to the Constitution if ratified.

Later in the day, the Senate subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments unanimously approved the 18-year-old voting age for all elections.

Mideast deadlocks

Official Egyptian sources said Tuesday U.N. mediator Gunnar V. Jarring's peace seeking mission had reached a "dead end" and it is now up to the Big Four powers and the United Nations to "intervene without delay."

The Middle East cease-fire is scheduled to expire on Sunday and Egypt has said it will not agree to another extension unless progress had been made at the Jarring talks.

The indirect peace talks in New York have bogged down over Egyptian insistence that Israel promise to withdraw from all Arab territory occupied in the 1967 War and Israel's refusal to make any such blanket commitment in advance of a peace agreement.

The deadlock touched off a flurry of diplomatic activities in the Israeli and Arab capitals and elsewhere around the world.

Diplomatic sources in London said the Big Four are trying to extend the cease-fire by a joint appeal to Egypt and Israel not to resume hostilities while the peace talks continue.

The Soviet Union was reported stepping up pressure on the United States to get Israel to back down from its present position in order to open the road to further talks. The Israelis have said will not return to pre-1967 borders.

But Israel, while welcoming U.S. resistance to Soviet pressure in the Middle East diplomatic maneuvering, warned Washington not to expect any change in its opposition to total withdrawal.

In Cairo, the semi-official newspaper Al-Ahram said Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad told representatives of Big Four Monday that Israel's refusal to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory had "closed the door to a peaceful settlement."

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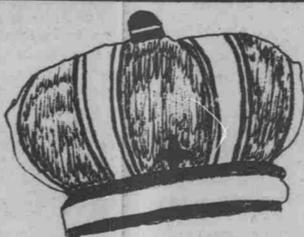


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