

### Battle holds fate for Saigon

# Fighting for Xuan Loc continues

United Press International

SAIGON — South Vietnamese forces Monday expanded their territory around the battered province capital of Xuan Loc in the sixth day of a battle which may hold the fate of Saigon.

But Communist gunners, striking 14 miles from Saigon, blew up an ammunition dump near the vital Bien Hoa airbase which houses what remains of the South Vietnamese air force.

The explosion, one of several blasts felt in Saigon Monday night and early Tuesday, shook buildings in the capital. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage at the sprawling, American-built airbase.

Field officers said government troops had

enlarged their defense perimeter around Xuan Loc 38 miles northeast of Saigon. North Vietnamese forces had the devastated city surrounded and rained rocket, mortar and artillery fire on the defenders.

Xuan Loc was vital to the government as a key point on one invasion route to the nation's capital and as a morale boost to a nation hungry for a victory.

In Washington State a State Department official told Congress Monday a plan would be ready in two days for evacuating what one congressman estimated to be as many as 400,000 South Vietnamese whose lives would be endangered by a Viet Cong victory.

Phillip C. Habib, assistant secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, refused to give a total of persons the State Department was considering for evacuation, congressmen present said, but the panel's own estimates range from 150,000 to 400,000.

Habib repeated administration requests to evacuate Americans and their dependents, third country nationals who worked for the U.S. government in South Vietnam and high and middle echelon South Vietnamese officials who would risk reprisal by the Communist if they stayed in South Vietnam after it fell to communist control.

The Communists already control 19 of South Vietnam's 44 provinces and two-thirds of its territory.

In addition to Saigon itself, the battle for Xuan Loc was important to the defense of

Bien Hoa. Should Xuan Loc fall, Bien Hoa could be next on the Communist target list in any preparations for an assault on Saigon.

President Nguyen Van Thieu, seeking to calm his frightened and panicky country, presented a new 30-man war cabinet in ceremonies Monday and vowed he would never surrender. He called for negotiations with the Communists on the basis of the 1973 Paris agreements.

Xuan Loc was cut off by land and could be reached only by helicopters. Communist gunfire shot down one A37 Dragonfly jet bomber and endangered scores of government helicopters resupplying South Vietnamese units with food, ammunition and medicine.

Helicopter crewmen also tossed loaves of bread and cases of instant noodles to homeless civilians left behind with only the

clothes on their backs. Thousands of the refugees were Roman Catholics who had fled from northern-most Quang Tri Province, now under Communist control.

Nine miles to the west, a force of North Vietnamese soldiers cut vital Highway 1 near Trang Bom.

South Vietnamese Air Force F5 Freedom Jets and 105 mm artillery batteries pounded the village of Hung Loc, five miles south of Xuan Loc where at least 200 North Vietnamese troops had built deep bunkers and installed anti aircraft guns.

The Communists also were sending mortar fire from the Hung Loc area into a government camp atop a nearby hillside. Refugees said the North Vietnamese seemed to be holding out in good shape despite government air and artillery strikes.



A government soldier (left) sits on his tank and watches airstrike bombs exploding on suspected Communist positions near Xuan Loc. Above, a South Vietnamese helicopter picks up soldiers and refugees after dropping off supplies to government troops in the area. Fighting has raged around the key provincial capitol for six days.

## Connally denies accepting bribe

United Press International

WASHINGTON — John B. Connally emphatically denied at his bribery trial Monday that he accepted \$10,000 to help milk producers win a price support increase in 1971 while he was Treasury secretary.

"I did not," Connally replied to repeated questions from defense attorney Edward Bennett Williams, who put him on the stand after presenting an array of character

witnesses including Lady Bird Johnson and evangelist Billy Graham.

Did he at any time, Williams asked Connally, request money from chief prosecution witness Jake Jacobsen, a former lawyer for milk producers who testified Connally solicited, accepted and help cover up a bribe.

"I did not," the former Texas governor replied. "No such conversation ever took place...I never asked him for anything at any

time.

Did Connally accept \$5,000 from Jacobsen in May, 1971, and an additional \$5,000 the following September?

"I did not," Connally replied.

"Did he give you any money at any time while you were Treasury Secretary?"

"No sir, he did not."

Connally did testify that Jacobsen approached him on June 25, 1971, and told him the dairy industry had \$10,000 available for him to use for any political candidate or campaign he designated.

"I told him I did not think I could do that at all in good conscience," Connally said. "I did not think I should participate in fund raising as a Democrat in a Republican administration, which is somewhat delicate, and I did not want to be raising money for Democrats while in a Republican administration."

"I thanked him very much, and that ended the conversation."

Connally said Jacobsen came to talk to him again in August, 1972, when the former governor was setting up an organization of Democrats supporting President Richard M. Nixon's re-election.

## Civil rights commission opposes any anti-abortion amendments

United Press International

WASHINGTON — Proposed anti-abortion constitutional amendments would create chaos in the legal system and begin a process of undermining civil rights guarantees, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission said Monday.

The commission, in a 111-page study, called on Congress to reject the proposed amendments and to repeal legislation already on the books that prohibit the use of federal funds for abortion.

"The commission takes no position on the moral or theological debate which presently surrounds the issue of abortion," said Dr.

Arthur Flemming, commission chairman.

The commission's report was based on a study by Dr. Mary Berry, provost of the division of behavioral and social sciences and a professor of American constitutional history at the University of Maryland.

In the report, the commission criticized the proposed constitutional amendments. It said they would be inconsistent with the 1st Amendment because "they would give governmental sanction to one set of moral and religious views and inhibit the free exercise of any other views on the issue of when life begins."

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AW, ZACH...