

Convoy breaks Capital's siege

by Alan Dawson
United Press International

PHNOM PENH—A battered Mekong River ammunition convoy reached Phnom Penh today through a gauntlet of Communist rebel fire to break a 26-day siege of the Cambodian capital. American-piloted cargo planes flew supplies into the Phnom Penh airport despite rocket attacks that closed the field to civilian traffic.

Shipping sources said the convoy of two tugs towing two barges brought in some badly-needed fuel and food with the ammunition but that Khmer Rouge rebels laid down such a heavy barrage of rocket fire from the banks of the Mekong that the rest of the convoy with other food and fuel had to turn back.

Every one of the four vessels had been hit before they reached Phnom Penh at noon today, and they underwent a rocket attack while anchoring. One mortar round landed in the middle of a huge barge loaded with hundreds of tons of American ammunition, but failed to detonate the munitions.



Treasury Secretary William Simon (right) confers with Chairman Ullman of the House Ways and Means committee. Simon asked Congress to increase the national debt ceiling to more than \$600 billion.

Simon asks for higher debt

by Ron Phillips
United Press International

WASHINGTON—The administration asked Congress Thursday to approve a \$109 billion increase in the national debt ceiling—a 17 per cent hike—by June 30, 1976, four days before the country celebrates its 200th birthday.

Treasury Secretary William E. Simon asked the House Ways and Means Committee to increase the present \$495 billion ceiling to \$531 billion through June 30 of this year and to \$604 billion through the end of fiscal 1976.

The debt ceiling was \$362 billion on Jan. 1, 1969 and did not pass the \$400 billion mark until 1972.

Committee members expressed shock at the size of the proposed increase and chairman Al Ullman, D-Ore., told Simon it was unlikely the committee would extend the limit beyond the end of the current fiscal year.

"This is a rather sorry record of budgeting, wouldn't you agree?" asked Ullman. Simon replied, "Yes, I would," adding that the country was paying the price of years of excessive spending.

"That's a great bicentennial present we're giving to the people of the United States," said ranking committee Republican, Herman Schneebeli, Pa.

Simon, calling it an especially sad duty to bring the request to Congress, said the economic sins of the past coupled with a worsening economic situation which forced President Ford to seek a tax cut had caused him to make the request.

He said the estimated budget deficit for fiscal 1975 was \$35 billion, and a peacetime record \$50 billion for the fiscal 1976.

"Some members of the committee may think that the new ceiling is too high and the deficits too big," Simon said. "Let me emphasize that there is no one in Washington today who feels more strongly than either the President or I that deficits of the magnitude we are now facing are horrendous."

Simon said the debt ceiling request

assumes that Congress will pass Ford's tax cuts for individuals and business, but it also assumes that Congress will agree to all \$17 billion of Ford's proposed budget revisions. The request also assumes that Congress follows Ford's demand that it pass no new federal spending programs this year, he said.

While supporting the increased debt ceiling, Simon nonetheless warned that hard times await the housing industry and financially shaky companies if the government continues to drain loan money from the capital markets.

The government announced Wednesday it was planning to borrow an additional \$28 billion before the end of the fiscal year.

"I cannot overemphasize the dangers that may be created by such mammoth deficits at the federal level nor can I urge upon you more strongly a plea for maximum fiscal discipline during the life of the 94th Congress," Simon said.

N.C. Senate bill would end utilities' fuel cost rate hikes

United Press International

RALEIGH—Sen. Livingstone Stallings, D-Craven, Thursday introduced bills to abolish the fuel adjustment clause used by public utilities companies in seeking rate hikes and to allocate \$25,000 for a legislative study of current rate hikes.

The bill calling for doing away with the clause came on the heels of testimony before the Senate Public Utilities and Energy Committee indicating that all electric utility hikes during 1974 were achieved under the fuel adjustment clause authorized by the State Utilities Commission.

A staff researcher for the committee

earlier this week said two-thirds of Carolina Power and Light Co.'s rate increases during the past four-year period were granted last year under the fuel adjustment clause.

The fuel adjustment clause was implemented by the commission at the beginning of 1974.

But a law passed in the last session of the General Assembly which allows utilities to use projected costs in setting their rates has come under heavy criticism but has never been used in seeking rate hikes, the researcher told the committee.

The request for the \$25,000 in Stallings' bill would be applied toward employing an expert staff for the senate committee to study the laws governing the operations of the commission and reporting back to the committee on April 1.

Other legislation introduced Thursday included a bill by Sen. Charles E. Vickery, D-Orange, to require motor vehicles to be equipped with exhaust systems which are in good working order and free from leaks; and a joint resolution by Rep. Thomas B. Sawyer, D-Guilford, calling on President Gerald Ford and Congress to find some other alternative other than raising crude oil fee levels in order to conserve energy and achieve energy independence.

CIA watchdog asked

by Nicholas Daniloff
United Press International

WASHINGTON—Displaying a catalogue of assassination tools, two Republican senators Thursday introduced a measure to create a House-Senate committee to watch over the CIA, FBI and other intelligence-gathering agencies.

Sens. Howard Baker of Tennessee and Lowell Weicker of Connecticut, members of the old Senate Watergate committee, offered a resolution that would create a 14-member panel of House and Senate members.

It presumably would implement recommendations that will be made by a newly created special Senate committee which will investigate the CIA and issue a report by Sept. 1.

The joint committee as proposed in the

Baker-Weicker measure also would be charged with overseeing the Secret Service, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

In introducing the measure, Weicker displayed a catalog of booby-trapped cigarette cases, telephone receivers and flashlights offered for sale to the U.S. government for use abroad and which could be time to explode in the user's hands.

The assassination catalogue, as Weicker called it, was prepared by a laboratory in suburban Arlington, Va., and presented to an unidentified government agency for its inspection.

Weicker said he was astounded that such equipment could be offered a U.S. agency and can be taken as a matter of course.

"This shows," he said, "what happens when we have derelict in our duties."

goat's head

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