

PALACE BOMBERS KILLED 3, HURT 20

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Aftermath of Rebel Attack



Troops and tanks move into position at the gate of the burning Presidential Palace in Saigon after the building was bombed and strafed. (AP Radiophoto)

ace in Saigon after the building was bombed and strafed. (AP Radiophoto)

SAIGON (UPI)—Three persons were killed and about 20 wounded in Tuesday's air attack on the Republic of Vietnam Presidential Palace, the Vietnam press said Wednesday. The two pilots accused in the strafing-bombing said were in custody.

The press quoted Vu Tien Huan, prefect of Saigon, as saying 10 of the casualties occurred among the "civil population."

Among the injured was Madame Ngo Dinh Nu, sister-in-law of President Ngo Dinh Diem. One of her maids was among the dead.

Huan said about 10 persons were wounded defending the palace. Diem himself was unhurt.

The two rebellious Republic of Vietnam pilots who executed the attack in American-made AD-4 fighter-bombers were in custody Tuesday. Vietnamese troops captured Sub-Lt. Pham Phu Quoc when his disabled plane crashed in the Khanh Hoi River.

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3 Killed, 20 Injured in Saigon Palace Bombing

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at the edge of Saigon after being hit by antiaircraft fire.

First Lt. Nguyen Van Cu was reported to have crash-landed at Pat Pochentong Airport, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He was arrested. His plane was reported damaged from ground-fire during the attack.

Civic Action minister Ngo Trong Hieu, a high-ranking official in Diem's government, told reporters the pilots, whom Radio Saigon had

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called "discontented," made the attack for personal reasons.

He added, however, that government officials were investigating the possibility the attackers were part of a rebel movement against Diem's regime.

Hieu said the pilots had been sent on a mission in western Vietnam, apparently to attack communists in the Viet Cong guerrilla-infested Mekong River Delta, but had instead bombed and strafed the palace.

Hieu said Madame Nu suffered "superficial" injuries on her forehead when she fell down a stair-

case while jumping her way through the dense smoke in the palace after the planes had set the building on fire.

The entire west wing of the palace burst into flames after the fighters launched rockets, reportedly dropped napalm and 500-pound bombs and strafed the palace with 20mm cannon fire.

Several Western television cameramen, who were in the palace area early Tuesday or watched the attack from the top of the New Caravelle Hotel in central Saigon, said they could swear there were at least three or four planes involved.

The only American casualty was Sidney Ambrose, 58, a native of Ferndale, Cal., who worked as a contractor for a construction firm here.

Ambrose fell from the roof of his apartment house while watching the attack and died later in a Saigon hospital.

The early morning assassination attempt came at 7:05 a.m. Tuesday as the citizens of this tropical city were just getting up to face a new day.

The fighters buzzed the "Independence Palace" in central Saigon under the cover of the early

morning overcast and then, swooped back to attack.

The planes repeated the attack again and again until the entire west wing of the palace, the right wing as one faces the building from the front, was demolished and in flames.

An American construction engineer, Russell H. Erickson of Portland, Ore., said the planes which attacked the palace also dropped two fire bombs on Saigon International Airport, some four miles outside the city, apparently aiming at American cargo transports parked on the aprons.