

IV. 7 Jan 75

S O U T H V I E T N A M

W C / SUBJ.
DATE 1/75 SUB-CAT.

VIETCONG CONTROL PHUOC LONG, TAY NINH RADAR SITE ABANDONED

Radio Contact Lost 6 Jan

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0400 GMT 7 Jan 75 SG

[Text] Following is a report on the communists' peace-sabotaging activities: At 2300 last night, communist troops, supported by tanks, launched attacks on the headquarters of the Phuoc Long provincial military sector. Our combatants stationed there, supported by the air force, vigorously counterattacked and repulsed many frenzied waves of assault by the communist troops, inflicting heavy losses on them.

The battles continued until 0100 this morning, and then all radio contact with the headquarters of the Phuoc Long provincial military sector were interrupted. However, our aircraft continued to maintain radio contact with our units stationed outside the headquarters.

Reports by our air force indicate that at least six more communist tanks were destroyed around the headquarters of the military sector and that many bodies of communist troops were seen. Various reports also indicate that the battles continued until this morning in many areas inside Phuoc Long provincial capital between our combatants and the communist troops. Our pilots have seen many fires.

7 Jan Communist Seizure

Hong Kong AFP in English 1043 GMT 7 Jan 75 OW

[Excerpts] Saigon, Jan 7 (AFP)--National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese forces are now in control of Phuoc Long Province after the government command post in the province's capital Phuoc Binh 120 kms (75 miles) north of Saigon fell to the joint forces today, a government communique said.

It said that at 9:30 am planes lost contact with defence units in the military sector and that the command of the Third Military Region had lost all contact with Phuoc Binh.

Meanwhile in Tay Ninh Province, 90 kms (56 miles) northwest of Saigon, government forces abandoned a radar and communications post on Black Virgin mountain, 11 kms (7 miles) from the provincial capital of Tay Ninh.

The communique said communists made a heavy artillery attack on the post Monday night destroying almost all of the communications equipment. Government forces and telecommunications personnel were ordered to evacuate the post and pull back to another position. The fall of the Black Virgin mountain post was also serious because government forces can now expect communists to train their artillery on the city of Tay Ninh. The military situation was regarded as all the more serious for the government because Phuoc Long and Tay Ninh are neighboring provinces. Both provinces also share borders with Cambodia where the North Vietnamese and NLF forces reinstalled supply bases after the American-South Vietnamese offensive in Cambodia in 1970 against "Viet Cong sanctuaries".

Defeated Troops Flee, Now Trapped

Hong Kong AFP in English 0825 GMT 7 Jan 75 BK

[Excerpts] Saigon, Jan. 7 (AFP)--The bulk of government forces defending the provincial capital of Phuoc Binh have fled the city itself and are now trapped just north of the city between the Song Be River and attacking communist forces, according to military sources here.

A military spokesman said that Colonel Nguyen Thong Thanh, who is in charge of the province and sector, was maintaining radio contact with the high command. He said reinforcements had been sent to the area but that the enemy had greatly increased its potential in tanks, artillery and anti-aircraft defence.

He added that a cargo C-130 plane had been destroyed when it attempted to land at Phuoc Binh since fighting began in that area, but that no other aircraft had been lost.

VIETNAM PRESS 7 Jan Report

Saigon VIETNAM PRESS in English 7 Jan 75 Evening Edition SG

[Excerpts] Saigon, (VP) 7 Jan--Radio contact with Phuoc Long sector command was reported lost at 1:00 am Tuesday 7 Jan after communist troops, led by tanks, attacked the command post.

Fighting in Phuoc Long city has been continuing. Only radio contact between VNAF pilots and a government unit outside the sector command is available now.

Military sources said Tuesday that at 11:00 pm Monday, elements of the 141st and 165th Regiments of the VNA 7th Division and the 271st Red Independent Regiment, supported by a tank battalion, launched a series of attacks on Phuoc Long sector but were driven back by government defenders supported by airplanes until the loss of radio contact at 1 am Tuesday.

Fighting between government forces and the enemy in Phuoc Long city was reported by VNAF airplanes as continuing with many flames in many places in the provincial capital. VNAF pilots reported that at least six enemy tanks were destroyed around the sector command.

Military spokesman Lt Col Le Trung Hien said contact with the sector commander had been available until radio contact was lost. Lt Col Hien said the situation in Phuoc Long was critical because the communists tried to occupy the provincial capital at any cost, even if they had sustained heavy losses.

He said government forces in Phuoc Long were not short of ammunition and food.

Since the battles in Phuoc Long broke out, 26,000 inhabitants were reportedly trapped in the provincial capital.

The spokesman said reports on casualties of government forces, civilians and enemy forces were not available yet.

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It is impossible to say how long Phuoc Long garrison forces could hold on, Lt Col Hien said and described government combatants' efforts as "marvelous" since they are facing communist forces four times superior in number to them.

Lt Col Hien said Phuoc Long defenders met with more difficulties in comparison with the An Loc situation in 1972. According to the spokesman, while communist troops had tanks, there was no government armored cavalry unit in Phuoc Long. Moreover, the enemy have used a division in full strength and supported by an independent regiment, a tank battalion along with many artillery and anti-aircraft units for the offensive against Phuoc Long.

To date, he said, 29 enemy tanks have been destroyed on Phuoc Long front. Each Red tank unit counts from 25 to 30 tanks, and the tank unit in Phuoc Long was part of the enemy tank brigade in Loc Ninh. Thus, he added, the enemy might have used one more tank unit for the attacks against Phuoc Long city last night.

Communists Continue Advance

Hong Kong AFP in English 0500 GMT 7 Jan 75 BK

[Text] Saigon, Jan 7 (AFP)--The South Vietnamese military spokesman said this morning the government command post inside the besieged provincial capital of Phuoc Binh had been under continuous communist attack since 11 pm last night and radio contact was broken.

The spokesman estimated the North Vietnamese-Viet Cong attacking force at division strength, backed by a battalion with from 25 to 30 tanks. The attacks was preceded by several waves of artillery shelling--a literal rain of shells, he said--even heavier than earlier in the siege.

The spokesman said fighting was so intense it was impossible to say who controlled the city 120 kms (75 miles) north of Saigon.

The communists had decided to take the province, the spokesman said, and we see nothing capable of stopping them for now in their determination.

7 Jan Thieu Statement

Saigon Domestic Service in Vietnamese 1200 GMT 7 Jan 75 SG

[appeal issued 7 January by President Nguyen Van Thieu on the Phuoc Long situation--read by announcer]

[Text] Compatriots and brother and sister combatants and cadres nationwide: This morning, 7 January 1975, our Phuoc Binh provincial capital was overrun after our combatants and compatriots had fought courageously for 25 days under extremely difficult and perilous conditions against the North Vietnamese 7th Division, supported by artillery, antiaircraft units, missile units, tanks and sappers, whose troop strength and firepower were much greater than ours. However, the North Vietnamese communist troops had to pay a very dear price. The Phuoc Long combatants, cadres and compatriots inflicted heavy losses on them in lives, weapons and other materiel, including some 25 destroyed tanks.

Throughout the province, apart from our combatants, there are now more than 42,000 compatriots, including 26,000 compatriots in the Phuoc Binh provincial capital, most of them women and children. Their fate is a source of deep concern to all of us.

As far as we are concerned, the North Vietnamese communist troops' attack on and occupation of Phuoc Long must be considered a transient [fact].

However, to take note of the lofty sacrifices of the combatants, cadres and compatriots who have courageously sacrificed themselves for the fatherland and to demonstrate our sympathy for Phuoc Long, which is looking to us in its grievous and difficult moments, let all compatriots and brother and sister combatants and cadres nationwide join me in turning our complete attention to that heroic land.

I call on compatriots throughout the country to dedicate 3 full days, starting 8 January 1975, to holding memorial services and prayer sessions. Throughout this period of meditation, let all compatriots avoid all forms of luxury and suspend all recreational activities of any kind. To all of us, these 3 days will demonstrate the singleness of mind, unanimity and indomitability of all the southern people, who are determined to oppose the North Vietnamese communist aggressors.

LPA REPORTS ON SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE DENOUNCING 'U.S.-THIEU CRIMES'

LPA From North Vietnam [Clandestine] in English to East Europe and the Far East 1522 GMT
3 Jan 75 BK

[Text] South Vietnam January 3 LPA--The Committee to Denounce the War Crimes committed by the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen in South Vietnam January 1st. 1975 issued a special communique on the crimes perpetrated by the U.S. and the Thieu administration against the South Vietnamese people in the past two years of implementing the Paris agreement on Vietnam. The communique pointed out: "The Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam has come into force for two years now. But in the past two years, in South Vietnam shooting has not yet ended and a real peace is not yet restored. The South Vietnamese people have been still subjected to endless killing, terror and repression. The cause of that situation is that the U.S. Government whose top leader, Nixon formerly and now G. Ford, has refused to put an end to its aggression and military involvement and interference in the internal affairs of South Vietnam. Meanwhile the Saigon administration, abetted, financed, armed and commanded by the United States, has stepped up the war, and seriously and systematically undermined the Paris agreement, particularly the provisions on the cease-fire, the return of captured military and civilian personnel and the guarantee of democratic liberties of the people, thus piling up heinous crimes against the South Vietnamese people."

The communique then provided concrete proofs of the crimes of the Nguyen Van Thieu administration in increasing land-grabbing operations and "pacification" raids and using bombs, shells and toxic chemicals to obliterate villages and kill the people in the liberated area; and trampling underfoot democratic liberties, repressing, terrorizing and exploiting the people in the areas under its control.

The communique said: "In the past two years (up to December 20, 1974) the Saigon administration mobilized almost all its armed forces to carry out over 58,717 land-usurping operations against the liberated zone. Wherever they went, Thieu's troops killed the people, plundered their property and burnt down their houses. In the meantime, Saigon aircraft and artillery carried out extermination raids, and tanks and bulldozers devastated and leveled orchards and paddy-fields and even obliterated hamlets or villages. From January 28, 1973 to November 30, 1974 there were 1,728 hamlets subjected to clearing operations, 300 of them were completely razed to the ground. Bombs of various types, from anti-personnel bombs to 7-ton bombs, from napalm bombs to phosphorous bombs, and shells and bombs containing toxic chemicals have been used against the people. By November 30, 1974 Saigon aircraft flew 40,000 missions dropping nearly 180,000 bombs and Saigon artillery fired more than six million rounds.

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