

U.S. MISSION TO LAOS

INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

THIS BULLETIN BASED ON PRESS REPORTS
for circulation to mission staff only

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NEWS ROUNDUP

INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS:

President Thieu told a television and radio audience that the North Vietnamese have thrown at least 54,000 men into their offensive in the northern part of South Vietnam and that the fate of his country is at stake. He appealed for more U.S. aid.

He said, "This is a decisive fight which will decide whether our country will survive or not."

In the fighting, the communists are threatening the city of Quang Tri from three sides and have begun closing in on Hue, 32 miles to the south.

Another communist force of 5,000 troops has attacked the town of An Loc, 60 miles north of Saigon in what military sources said could be the second phase of a general offensive against South Vietnam, according to UPI,

The news agency also reported that a third attack by the communists is expected at any time in the Central Highlands 200 miles north of Saigon and intelligence reports earlier this week said the North Vietnamese were bringing in tanks and armored vehicles from Laos and Cambodia.

U.S. fighter-bombers hit nine radar sites and missile bases just north of the DMZ and B-52s raided south of the dividing line.

LAOS (USINFO)--The overall military situation in Laos remained basically unchanged Tuesday and Wednesday, but a number of sharp engagements took place throughout the Kingdom.

Fighting around the Lao defense base at Long Tieng in the north central part of Laos continued at about the same level as in the past several days, with North Vietnamese and Lao troops clashing frequently all along Skyline Ridge, just northeast of the base, and both sides supporting their ground units with mortar and artillery fire.

A Lao task force, operating east of the Plain of Jars against North Vietnamese lines of communications, reported sporadic contacts with North Vietnamese troops. In one engagement, at least 30 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed, mostly by Lao fighter-bombers flying close support for government forces.

In northern Laos, government units occupied two new outposts some 32 kilometers northeast of Luang Prabang against stiff North Vietnamese opposition. One of the outposts was subsequently lost when the North Vietnamese counter-attacked in strength.

In the south, Lao troops continued their advance eastward into the Bolovens Plateau against North Vietnamese delaying actions consisting mainly of artillery and mortar shellings.

Sporadic and widely scattered clashes took place in other regions of Laos.

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EUROPE:

The French Cabinet announced that it has chosen April 23 for a nationwide referendum in which voters will decide whether they want Britain to become a Common Market member.

Swedish Foreign Minister Krister Wickman said his government is prepared to let Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn receive his 1970 Nobel literature prize in the Swedish Embassy in Moscow. The Soviet Union on Tuesday denied a visa to Dr. Karl-Ragnar Gierow, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, who was to go to Moscow to present the prize at an informal ceremony April 9.

The Danish government is expected to decide soon whether to expel three Soviet Union diplomats alleged to have tried to buy secrets from other foreign envoys in Copenhagen. Reuter reported that the government's security committee will consider on Friday reports on the three diplomats by the police intelligence service.

The Berlin Wall closed again after an estimated 500,000 West Berliners streamed through the barrier during the Easter holidays to reunite with their relatives in East Berlin. The East Germans promised to reopen the wall for the Pentecost holiday May 17-24.

French police said combined action by them, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Narcotics and the West Germans has broken up a major ring of international drug traffickers responsible for smuggling heroin into the United States and led to the arrest Saturday of three of the gang's operators. The leaders of the ring were still free, they said.

ELSEWHERE:

U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim named Tang Ming-chao, of the Chinese delegation to the General Assembly, as Under Secretary General for Political Affairs and Decolonization--the first representative of the People's Republic of China in the U.N. Secretariat.

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman welcomed U.S. recognition of Bangladesh and expressed hope that it would lead to friendly cooperation between the two nations.

ON THE HOME FRONT:

The Price Commission gave the go-ahead for four of the nation's largest petroleum companies--Standard Oil Co. of California, Standard Oil Co. of Ohio, Humble Oil and Refining Co. and Continental Oil Co.--to increase prices an average of two percent.

The Harrisburg Seven jury found the Reverend Philip Berrigan guilty of smuggling three letters out of the Lewisburg Federal Prison but said it was hopelessly deadlocked on charges that Berrigan and six other antiwar activists conspired against the government. The jury also found Sister Elizabeth MacAlister, another defendant, guilty of three counts of letter smuggling.

Federal Judge R. Dixon Herman dismissed the jurors and declared the trial ended. Defense lawyers indicated they would appeal any convictions.

NEW YORK--The stock market closed with its sharpest gain and heaviest turnover in weeks. Advances were ahead of declines by about a 2 to 1 margin among the more than 1,760 issues crossing the tape. Volume was 22,960,000.

Dow Jones Closing Averages:	30 Indus	954.55	up	11.14
	20 Transp	270.59	up	3.77
	15 Utils	111.71	off	0.29
	65 Stocks	329.85	up	3.39