

U.S. Air Support Lauded

SAIGON (AP)—A top South Vietnamese field commander Friday credited U.S. air support with turning the tide of battle along the Cambodian border and said it demonstrated the need for such support to continue.

"I think the U.S. air support has made the difference," said Lt. Gen. Nguyen Xuan Thinh. "The tide of battle has changed because of the actions of the Air Force."

Thinh was referring to heavy aerial bombing attacks and logistical support given his troops in turning back a North Vietnamese offensive along the Vietnam-Cambodia frontier in the last two weeks.

Informed sources said U.S. tactical fighter bombers have flown as many as 700 combat strikes since the North Vietnamese launched their drive.

Air Force B-52 bombers have logged another 100 strikes against Communist troop concentrations and supply bases, while helicopters have flown thousands of sorties on troop lift and supply missions.

Despite heavy U.S. support, the South Vietnamese Air Force is flying about 50 per cent of the tactical air strikes, 40 per cent of the troop and supply missions and 25 per cent of the helicopter gunship missions, field commanders said.

"Our Air Force is still very weak," Thinh said. In two of three years it will become bigger but right now we need very much U.S. air support."

He said helicopter support was vital, especially for resupply. South Vietnam has only one squadron of heavy supply helicopters and is to acquire its second squadron next month.

Reds Kidnap 68 in Raid

SAIGON—Terrorists kidnaped 68 persons from a western Quang Tin Province refugee camp in a single raid, National Police spokesmen said Friday.

The refugees were kidnaped Sept. 29 in a Viet Cong foray into Son Binh Village in Hiep Duc District, according to the delayed police report.

Police also reported 41 terrorist incidents in which 25 civilians were killed, 30 wounded and 101 kidnaped.

Ninety of the abduction victims were taken from villages in Quang Tin Province, and terrorists also killed two persons and wounded two in the province, spokesmen said.

7 U.S. Aircraft Lost in Week

SAIGON—Three U.S. planes and four helicopters were shot down over Southeast Asia during the week ended Oct. 5, the U.S. command said Friday.

An RF4 reconnaissance Phantom was downed Oct. 1 in Vietnam and an A1 Skyraider was lost Sept. 30 in Laos. Military spokesmen did not identify another U.S. plane lost over Laos during the week.

All four of the helicopters were downed over Vietnam, spokesmen said.

The United States has lost 3,350 planes and 4,623 helicopters in Southeast Asia.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE TANK CREWMEN WATCH A B52 STRIKE NEAR KREK, CAMBODIA. UPI Radiophoto

Allied Strikes Kill 50 As ARVN's Battle Reds

SAIGON — Fifty Communists were killed Thursday when artillery and air strikes battered a North Vietnamese force battling South Vietnamese Rangers and armored cavalymen two miles east of Krek, Cambodia, the South Vietnamese command said Friday.

Air strikes inflicted most of the Communist casualties, and no ARVN soldiers were wounded or killed, spokesmen said.

Allied firepower also destroyed eight antiaircraft gun sites in the clash near the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon.

Meanwhile, Communist gunners hit U.S. Fire Base Pace with 50 82mm mortar rounds in 10 shelling attacks between noon Thursday and noon Friday, the U.S. command said.

The shelling reportedly caused no American casualties at the base, which is 75 miles northwest of Saigon in Northern Tay Ninh Province near the Cambodian border.

North Vietnamese soldiers also shelled ARVN positions in northern Tay Ninh Province and around Krek six times Thursday, spokesmen said. One of the indirect fire attacks inflicted light casualties.

In fighting five miles south of the Cambodian border along Highway 22, South Vietnamese infantrymen killed four Reds Thursday, spokesmen said. Six ARVN soldiers were wounded.

Seventh Air Force fighter-bomber pilots flew 26 missions in support of ARVN units operating in northern Tay Ninh Province, 7th AF spokesmen said Friday.

Communist pressure along the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon reportedly has eased considerably since NVA units launched an offensive with shelling attacks Sept. 25.

Overall action was light and scattered in Vietnam Thursday, but South Vietnamese Rangers backed by helicopter gunships reported killing 18 Reds near the Cambodian border about 75 miles west of Saigon. The Rangers took no casualties, spokesmen said.

Popular Forces militiamen killed eight Communists without suffering a casualty Thursday 15 miles northeast of Saigon.

In the Central highlands, Communist gunners fired 20 82mm mortar rounds at a Ranger base camp 22 miles west of Pleiku, but there were no casualties, spokesmen said.

Jackson Urges New Viet Vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Henry M. Jackson said Friday South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu is "serving under a cloud" and President Nixon should use a little leverage to get a new and contested election called there.

"We have the responsibility to intervene in behalf of 15 million people," Jackson said at a news conference.

"In light of what happened last week" when Thieu won over 90 per cent of the vote in an uncontested election, "Mr. Thieu continues under a cloud," the Washington Democrat said.

Jackson, who is expected to announce later this fall his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination, said he has written Nixon and has talked with high White House staffers urging the administration use its influence to have a new election called in South Vietnam.

Jackson indicated the United States could threaten to cut back on military and economic aid to the Southeast Asian nation in order to get the legislature there to call for an election that would include a choice of candidates.

Jackson leaves Saturday on a four-day campaign trip to Florida, site of a presidential primary election next March 14.

Viet Senators Seek Probe Of Thieu's Election Victory

SAIGON (AP) — Senate opponents of President Nguyen Van Thieu began efforts Friday to create a special committee to investigate rigging allegations in last Sunday's presidential election.

Sen. Vu Van Mau, leading Senate spokesman for the anti-government An Quang Buddhists, told the Senate: "The Vietnamese people don't believe the results."

"If the committee finds the elections to have been dishonest, then President Thieu should resign to pave the way for a new election."

Sen. Truong Tien Dat, another opposition leader, reported

22 of the Senate's 59 members had signed a proposal to establish the special investigation committee.

Charges that the election was rigged arose after the vote counters reported that Thieu, running unopposed, collected 94.3 per cent of the votes cast.

The move for a special investigation came as the Senate met to select a president and chairmen of its 12 standing committees.

Pro-government Sen. Nguyen Van Huyen was reelected Senate president by a 55-5 vote. Chairmanship of the important Foreign Relations Committee went to Mau.

3 Flying Units Start Standdown

SAIGON—The 389th Tactical Fighter Sq. at Phu Cat AB began standdown Friday, U.S. 7th Air Force spokesmen said.

Two units of the Army's 1st Aviation Brigade also began standdown, Army spokesmen said.

The 389th TFS will be the first F4 Phantom fighter-bomber

Squadron to leave Southeast Asia under the current U.S. withdrawal program, spokesmen said. There will be 650 space reductions.

The unit designation (389th TFS) will be transferred to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

The squadron arrived in Vietnam in March 1966, flying more

than 13,000 combat missions since moving to Phu Cat AB in June, 1969.

The two Army units that began standdown Friday were the 132nd Aviation Co. (CH-47 medium helicopters) and the 176th Aviation Co. (UH-1 assault helicopters). The number of space reductions is 555.