

News Summary and Index

NYTimes MONDAY, MARCH 31, 1975 MAR 31 1975

The Major Events of the Day

International

A North Vietnamese force moved quickly into chaotic Da Nang yesterday and met little opposition from demoralized and fleeing Government troops, according to Western and South Vietnamese military sources in Saigon. The city's streets were said to be jammed with refugees and frantic families. The loss of Da Nang, the second largest city in South Vietnam, is regarded as perhaps the biggest single reverse the Saigon regime has suffered. There were reports that the North Vietnamese were advancing south along the coast and that the cities of Qui Nhon and Tuy Hoa were seriously threatened. [Page 1, Column 8.]

The Ford Administration gave elaborate assurances that the United States Navy ships ordered to assist in the evacuation of refugees from South Vietnam's coastal cities would not become involved in hostilities. [1:6-7.]

A major question in Saigon was how Vietnamese Communist forces could accomplish in three weeks, almost effortlessly, what had been far beyond their reach for a quarter of a century. The Communist gains in the last three weeks were far greater than the worst fears of the Saigon leaders and their American allies. Even the American officials who believed consistently over the years in an ultimate victory over the Communists are suddenly letting it be known that they feel defeat is near. [1:5-7.]

Israeli-bound cargo aboard ships of other nations as well as Israeli ships will be barred from passage through the Suez Canal when it is opened to international shipping in June, Egyptian officials said. They explained that one of the main objectives in barring Israel's use of the canal was to "isolate Israel diplomatically" and rebut Israeli charges that Egypt was not ready for peace. [1:5.]

National

Grim disclosures of misery and profiteering in the care of aged Americans are being made with increasing frequency around the country. While those last year have focused on the New York metropolitan area, reports from a score of states indicate that the scandal in the nursing-home industry has reached nationwide proportions. [1:2-3.] Deceptions and errors are draining away

hundreds of millions of dollars budgeted to feed hungry Americans under the Federal food stamp program. This is the conclusion of the Department of Agriculture's latest and, according to most observers, most accurate statistics on the rapidly growing food stamp program. Losses resulting from "errors"—deceptive practices and simple mathematical mistakes—are estimated at \$740-million a year. [1:3-4.]

Metropolitan

Neglect and abuse of patients are characteristic of the "profit-motivated" nursing-home industry, Assemblyman Andrew J. Stein said in the third installment of his draft report for the Temporary State Commission on Living Costs and the Economy. He cited cases of poor medical care, inadequate and indifferent nursing, bad food and physical and mental mistreatment, and charged that the State Health Department had knowingly permitted these conditions to persist and had even rewarded offending operators with Medicaid rate increases. [1:3-4.]

Linden General Hospital, a 78-bed private health facility in the East New York section of Brooklyn, has lost its accreditation and has been declared hazardous, unneeded and irretrievably obsolete by state inspectors. The hospital, nevertheless, continues to function because of an unabated flow of Medicaid payments that are its main source of support. Government handling of the Linden General case "indicates a total breakdown of the inspection process," the head of a consumer watchdog group said. [1:1-2.]

Over the next three years, the Ford Foundation plans to lay off about 300 professional and other employees, approximately half its staff, as the nation's largest foundation continues with a 50 per cent cut in philanthropic programs, caused by investment losses. The possibility of renting out space in the foundation's headquarters at 320 East 43d Street to save on costs is also being considered. [1:1-3.]

Earl W. Brydges, the former New York State Senate Republican leader who was regarded as one of the most powerful and effective leaders in the Legislature, died of cancer in Lewiston, N. Y., at the age of 69. He retired as Senate majority leader in 1972. [3:4:1-2.]

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Quotation of the Day

"Our vessels will not enter the combat areas or participate in any hostilities. This humanitarian effort is not designed to become involved in hostilities." — Ron Nessen, President Ford's press secretary, about sending naval vessels to Da Nang. [1:6.]

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CORRECTION

An article in The New York Times last Thursday reported incorrectly that the State Office of the Welfare Inspector General had been abolished last month. The agency was extended in that 1975-76 budget.