

# ENEMY REPORTED TO CAPTURE SNOUL

**NYTimes**  
**Saigon's Task Force, Badly  
Battered, Said to Flee  
With Many Wounded**

**JUN 1 1971**

By The Associated Press

SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 31 — North Vietnamese troops reportedly drove a South Vietnamese task force today from the Cambodian town of Snoul, which United States troops captured more than a year ago.

The South Vietnamese apparently were badly battered.

Reports from the field said that the Saigon task force of up to 2,000 men fled Snoul with scores of wounded. As they fought their way south across Route 13 toward the South Vietnamese border 10 miles to the south, they were reported to be disabling artillery guns and destroying some of their own trucks and armored personnel carriers.

Field reports said that the task force had not been resupplied because of heavy enemy antiaircraft fire, which had hampered aerial resupply, and because roads had been washed out by monsoon rains. Many of the vehicles were said to have run out of fuel.

There was no firm count on casualties, but it was reported that more than 100 South Vietnamese wounded, some awaiting evacuation several days, had been lifted out of rear areas by both South Viet-

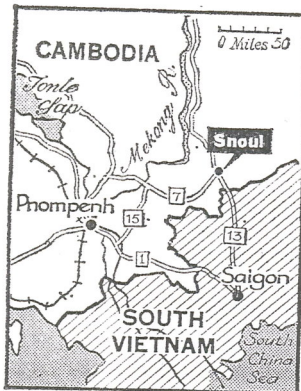
Continued on Page 7, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

namese and United States helicopters.

The retreat from Snoul opens up a supply route for the North Vietnamese, giving them control of portions of Routes 7 and 13 that lead into the northern provinces of South Vietnam's Military Region III. This region includes Saigon and 11 surrounding provinces and shares 231 miles of border with Cambodia. Snoul is 90 miles north of Saigon.

Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh, commander of Military Region II, said a week ago that his forces were affectively blocking the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops and supplies into the region. General Minh also said that the planned to keep his task forces operating along



The New York Times June 1, 1971

## Allies were driven from Cambodian town of Snoul.

Route 7 even during the current rainy season.

Several other task forces still remain along portions of Route 7 to the west of Snoul and along Route 1, the Saigon-Pnompenh artery.

Two North Vietnamese regiments from the Fifth Division, with up to 4,000 troops, are massed in the Snoul area, according to latest intelligence reports. Two battalions of North Vietnamese troops, as many as 1,000 men, were reported to have attacked Snoul last Wednesday in the heaviest attacks in three months against the South Vietnamese defenders. There has been heavy fighting since then.

## Enemy Casualties Reported

Field reports said that the remnants of the South Vietnamese armored column retreating toward the border had been attacked by North Vietnamese troops seven miles southeast of Snoul.

There were no casualty reports available from the field, but a bulletin from headquarters in Saigon said that 54 North Vietnamese troops had been killed and 15 weapons had been captured. The bulletin said that 16 South Vietnamese soldiers had been wounded.

In the northern sector of South Vietnam, Saigon forces claimed a major victory in a sweep through a cluster of villages south of Danang, which North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops reportedly had infiltrated.

Officers in the field reported that 215 enemy troops had been killed in the operation yesterday and today. Six South Vietnamese soldiers were reported killed and 35 wounded. Nineteen civilians died and 30 were wounded when they were caught in the crossfire, United States advisers said.

## Explosion in Saigon

The advisers reported that scores of enemy troops had infiltrated the villages, in Duy-xuyen district, by pretending to be part of a Roman Catholic pilgrimage.

The fighting was part of a pattern of stepped-up action in all four military regions of South Vietnam, ranging from the Mekong Delta in the south to the Ashau Valley in the north.

In Saigon, a massive explosion, apparently triggered by a terrorist bomb, destroyed a downtown building housing tax offices.

Rescue workers reported that five Vietnamese had been killed and a dozen injured. It was the first bomb explosion in the capital in nearly two months.