

SAIGON DENIES ROUT BY ENEMY AT SNOUL

By Iver Peterson  
Special to The  
New York Times

Saigon, South Vietnam, Wednesday, June 2 - The South Vietnamese task force that withdrew from the eastern Cambodian town of Snoul on Monday is still inside Cambodia, a Saigon spokesman said yesterday.

The spokesman, Lieut. Col. Le Trung Hien, denied reports that the Government troops had been driven under heavy attack from the rubber plantation town, which is 10 miles from the South Vietnamese border and 90 miles north of Saigon.

He described the pullout as a "realignment" caused by the coming rainy season and not enemy pressure.

He estimated that during the withdrawal more than 700 North Vietnamese troops had been killed by American and South Vietnamese planes

and helicopter gunships and by South Vietnamese tanks. The enemy, he said, was attacked along Routes 7 and 13, which were also the lines of the South Vietnamese withdrawal.

**Loses Put at 6**

Colonel Hien put the South Vietnamese losses during the pullback at six men wounded. [Reports from the field, The Associated Press said, quoted South Vietnamese troops as saying that about 200 of their men had been killed or wounded Monday as they fought the North Vietnamese Fifth Division while retreating from Snoul.]

"The withdrawal was part of the whole plan of operation in Cambodia during the rainy season," Colonel Hien said through an interpreter. He later said that the withdrawal had been "preplanned," adding that Government troops had similarly been pulled back from Snoul at this time last year as the summer monsoon season got under way.

Snoul lies on the southernmost line of enemy penetration in Cambodia along Routes 7 and 13. Everything northward to the Laotian border is considered to be in enemy hands, while the South Vietnamese and Cambodian forces are deployed to the south.

The South Vietnamese army's principal interest in the area surrounding Snoul lies in preventing the enemy from infiltrating into old base areas just across the border in South Vietnam.

Col. Hien said that there would be further realignments of the South Vietnamese Army positions in Cambodia in preparation for the rainy season.

[While he stressed that the Government troops who had left Snoul were still in Cam-

bodia, The Associated Press said that, according to reports from the field, they had pulled back across the border to Loc Ninh.]

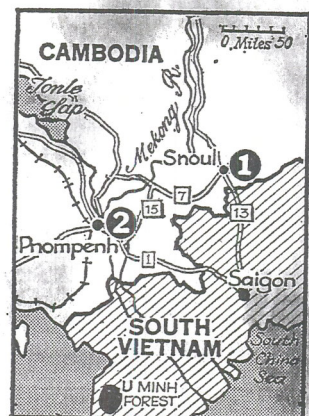
Colonel Hien said it was possible that some battle-damaged South Vietnamese armored personnel carriers, tanks and trucks had been destroyed by Government troops in Snoul as the pullout began rather than

let them fall into enemy hands. [Reports from the field, quoted by The Associated Press, said 80 tanks, armored personnel carriers, jeeps and trucks had been left behind by the South Vietnamese, who also reportedly destroyed 12 artillery pieces.]

U.S. Comments on  
Pullout

Washington, June 1 (AP) - Jerry W. Friedheim the Pentagon spokesman, said today that the South Vietnamese had intended to withdraw some

main combat units from Cambodia with the onset of the rainy season. The withdrawal, he said, "appears from here to be orderly and according to their plan."



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**Saigon said its troops were still near Snoul (1). Fighting flared east of Phnompenh (2).**