

# CLASHES REPORTED AROUND PNOMPENH

MAR 22 1972

Attacks, One 6 Miles From  
Cambodian Capital, Follow  
Shelling That Killed 75

NYTimes

By The Associated Press

PNOMPENH, March 21 — Enemy troops reportedly staged a series of coordinated attacks around this capital city of Cambodia today in the wake of an early-morning rocket and artillery attack that was estimated to have killed 75 persons.

The Cambodian command said that 500 enemy soldiers had entered the town of Takhmau, six miles southeast of Pnompenh, had killed a number of residents and had driven off many others.

Earlier in the day, a Cambodian spokesman reported heavy fighting in the district town of Neak Luong, on the highway to Saigon, 32 miles southeast of Pnompenh, and said it appeared that the North Vietnamese were trying to cut the road and move toward the capital.

## Siege Reported to East

Enemy troops were also said to have laid siege to the district capital of Preyveng, 30 miles east of here. Military spokesmen here said Cambodian forces at the Preyveng garrison were trying to break out southward on Route 15 to link up with other Cambodian troops moving north.

The attacks in the Pnompenh area coincided with an enemy offensive against the big base at Long Tieng in northern Laos,

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where heavy fighting was reported for the fourth day. [Laotian and Thai forces were said to have recaptured one key position on Skyline Ridge, which overlooks the base, The Associated Press reported from Vientiane, but North Vietnamese troops occupying two other positions were said to have kept up heavy mortar attacks on the valley.]

There was speculation that similar enemy attacks might next flare in South Vietnam, where a Communist offensive has widely been predicted in recent weeks.

Cambodia's President, Lon Nol, appealed to the public in a radio broadcast to remain calm

and not panic after the rocket attack, the most devastating on Pnompenh since the war began here two years ago. Officials estimated that besides the 75 dead more than 100 people had been wounded.

However, there was no evidence of panic, as the city's populace appeared to be going calmly about its normal business.

The President said he believed the attack was intended to create public havoc during a politically difficult period in Cambodia. He was speaking of his weeklong efforts to form a new Government after proclaiming himself President and suspending the Constituent Assembly March 10, hours before it was to have finished drafting a new constitution.

Many of the casualties in the rocket and artillery attack were refugees driven from their homes by the war. One refugee shantytown was wiped out, and more than 100 huts were leveled.

A United States Embassy spokesman said there were no American casualties.

Cambodian officials revised downward the number of rockets that had fallen into three sections of Pnompenh during the predawn attack. Spokesmen said they now believed that about 75 rockets, instead of the 150 to 200 reported earlier, had struck the city.

Battle 4th Day at Long Tieng  
VIENTIANE, Laos, March 21  
(AP)—As heavy fighting was

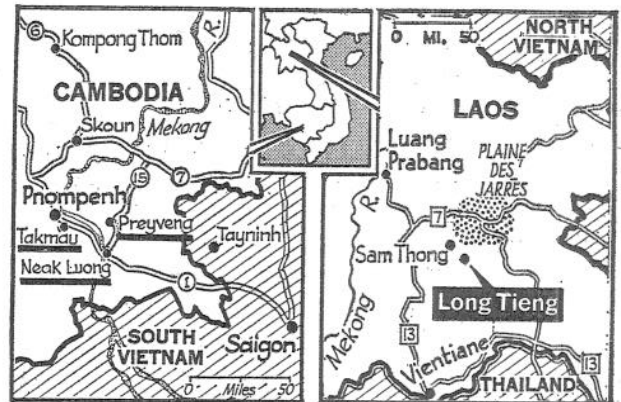
reported for the fourth day at Long Tieng, American officials here said they believed enemy forces had sustained heavy losses because of waves of assaults against entrenched defenders.

Reports from the field said Laotian and Thai forces had succeeded in retaking one key position on the ridge overlooking the base, the headquarters of General Vang Pao and his American supported guerrilla army of Meo tribesmen. But the base itself was said to be under continued mortar attack from two other positions on the ridge still in enemy hands.

Long Tieng, 78 miles northeast of Vientiane, is considered the most important government base in northern Laos. When it

was threatened with capture last December, the United States Central Intelligence

Agency pulled out the extensive electronic equipment it maintained there.



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**RISING ENEMY ACTION:** A series of attacks on towns near Pnompenh (names underlined on map at left) followed shelling of capital. In northern Laos (map at right), heavy fighting continued for Long Tieng base.