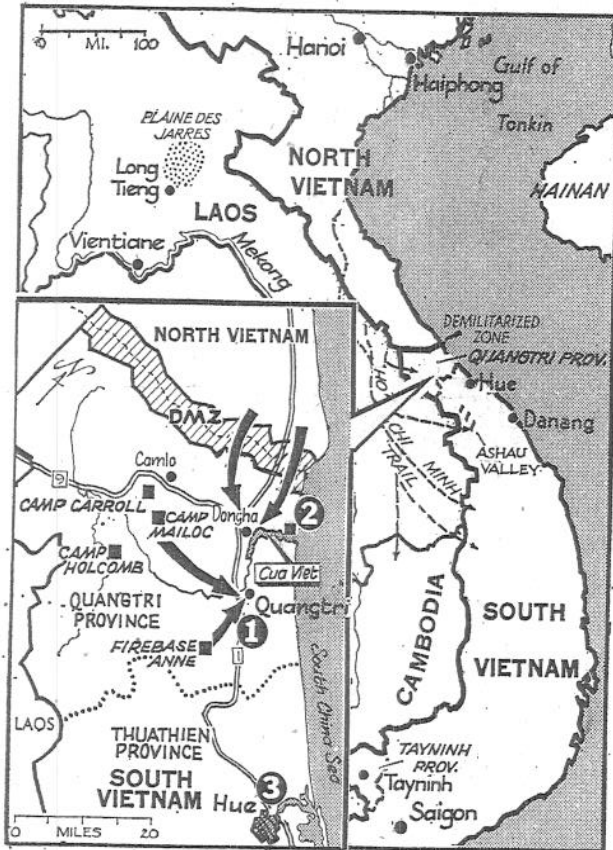


SAIGON FORCES FALL BACK AS FOE MOVES ON QUANGTRI; NIXON SENDING MORE B-52'S



The New York Times/April 5, 1972

Enemy drive on Quangtri city (1) was believed imminent as the South Vietnamese pulled out of naval base (2). To the south, Hue (3) was also reported under pressure.

PRESSURE ON HUE

APR 5 1972
U.S. Jets Stage 145
Raids Near DMZ
as Clouds Lift
NYTimes

By CRAIG R. WHITNEY

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, April 5 — South Vietnamese troops abandoned one of their remaining defense points on the north bank of the Cua Viet last night and North Vietnamese tanks were reported moving south toward the embattled city of Quangtri, capital of South Vietnam's northernmost province.

The next major city to the south, the old imperial capital of Hue, was also said to be coming under heavy pressure as the North Vietnamese troops that swept down from the demilitarized zone over the last six days stepped up attacks on Government positions in the hills to the west. Officers in Hue said they expected an attack on the city soon.

As low clouds over the area lifted somewhat yesterday, American warplanes flew 145 strikes against North Vietnamese positions in a 10-mile strip below the southern edge of the demilitarized zone, which straddles the border between the two Vietnams. At the same time, five United States Navy destroyers fired at North Vietnamese troop positions and at Route 1 in the same area, which was controlled by Government forces until the North Vietnamese struck there over the weekend.

Weather Still a Problem

But the weather, according to American commanders here, had not improved enough over North Vietnam to allow fighter-bombers to begin striking at troop positions and artillery emplacements there. The United States command is known to have planned major strikes from air bases in Thailand and South Vietnam and from three aircraft carriers offshore, but the weather continues to prevent them.

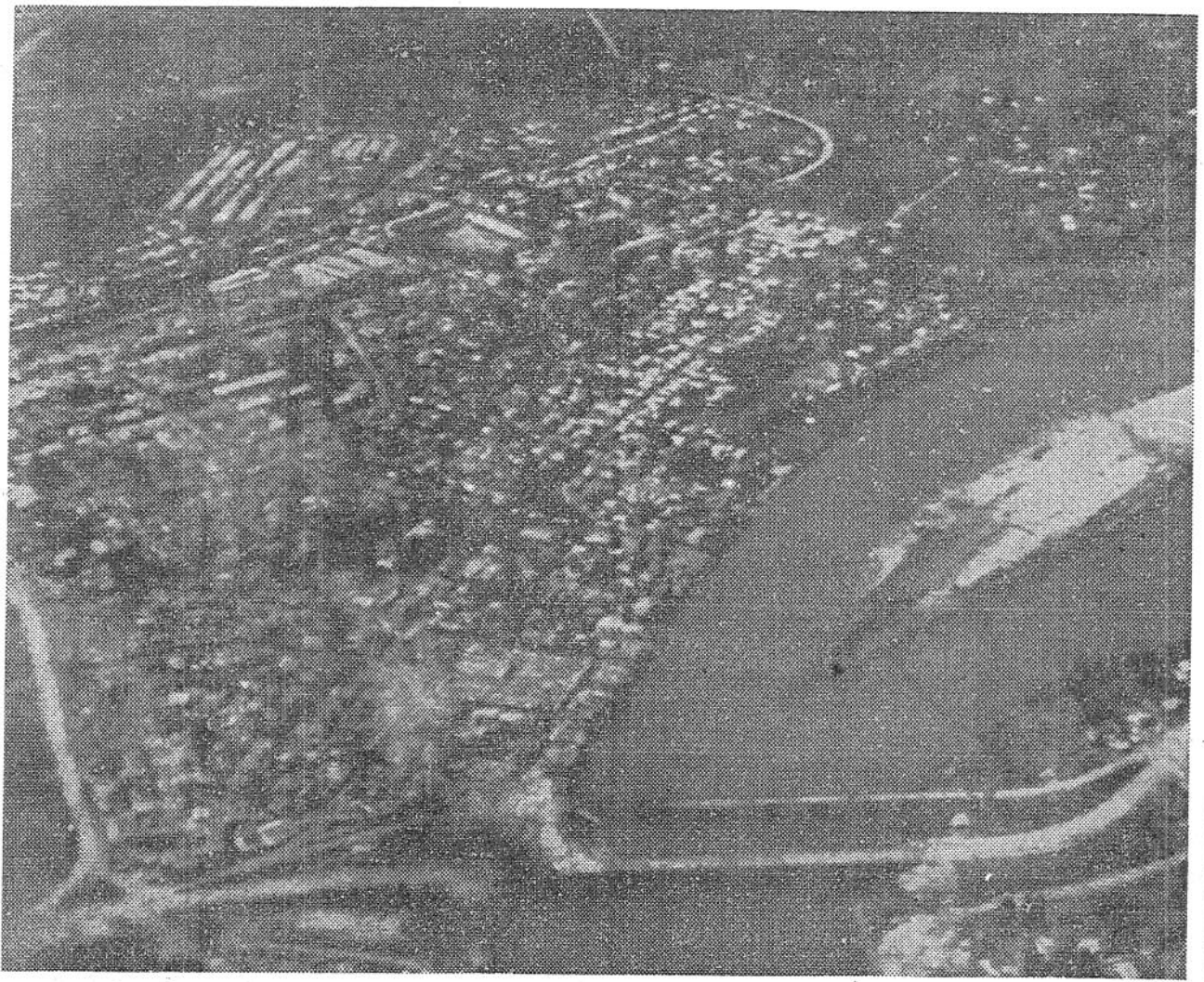
Here in Saigon American officials said that the North Vietnamese were continuing to move troops across the demilitarized zone. "They are coming right across the Benhai River and straight through the DMZ," said one aide. "They have really thrown away the fig leaf that there are no North Vietnamese troops in the south."

Base for Junks Abandoned

President Nguyen Van Thieu, who visited headquarters in Danang Monday, and is also said to have stopped in Quangtri city, told member of parliament yesterday that he had ordered his troops to push the enemy "from every inch of our territory."

But in the north last night, the South Vietnamese were forced to abandon Firebase Anne, a small artillery position in the foothills of the Annamite Mountains eight miles south-

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Associated Press

BESIEGED: Aerial view of Dongha, 10 miles south of the demilitarized zone and north of Quangtri city, showing bridges, at bottom, that were destroyed in an attempt

to prevent North Vietnamese from taking the city. Yesterday, Saigon troops abandoned one of the remaining defense points on the northern bank of the Cua Viet.

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west of Quangtri, along another infiltration corridor being used by the advancing enemy troops.

On Monday Government troops abandoned a small junk-force base 4 miles east of Dongha and 10 miles north of Quangtri city. According to military sources in Danang, some North Vietnamese PT-76 amphibious tanks and infantrymen had moved south of the Cua Viet and toward Quangtri in three separate pushes.

Enemy troops were also ad-

vancing on the city from the southwest.

Military sources said that there were "preliminary indications, not yet confirmed" that a forward element of North Vietnam's 308th Division had crossed the demilitarized zone into the area of the fighting. Officials in Washington have said that if it did, the United States would react by bombing targets of a different nature than it has struck so far in North Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese strength below the demilitarized zone is now believed to range from 15,000 to 21,000 combat troops in the 304th Division and in independent regiment, as well as in three artillery regiments using 122-mm. rockets and long-range 130-mm. artillery, and two tank battalions with about 50 T-34 and PT-76 tanks. The South Vietnamese and the United States Navy destroyers are reported to have struck many of them.

Foe Claims Victories

Last night the enemy radio asserted that "the liberation forces are fiercely attacking throughout the Trithien front [Quangtri and Thuathien Provinces], razing to the ground a series of bases north and south of Route 9 and along route 1."

"The evaluation is as clear as daylight," the broadcast said. "The United States aggressors are losing and being forced to withdraw. How can the Saigon army stand on its own and meet the might of the South Vietnamese People's Armed Forces? The revolution is winning great victories, and the United States and Thieu are losing."

The broadcast appealed to the South Vietnamese troops to surrender to the "liberation command."

After two days of artillery attacks, with more than 10,000 rounds of 130-mm. artillery and 122-mm. rocket fire against 122-mm. rocket fire against more than a dozen well-fortified bases that had constituted South Vietnam's northern defense for the last four years. Government have yielded all their positions under heavy ground attack. They have retreated to a defense line at Dongha city and east along

the Cua Viet to the South China Sea.

Tens of thousands of civilians who lived in resettlement villages in the invaded area from Camlo district just below the demilitarized zone to Dongha have fled southward.

The South Vietnamese force that was defending the area, the Third Infantry Division and a brigade of marines, has been reinforced by airlift with two more marine brigades and tank and artillery units to replace the many guns destroyed or captured by the enemy. The lost guns included 175-mm pieces recently provided by the Americans that can outshoot the North Vietnamese 130-mm guns.

South Vietnamese troop strength in Quangtri Province is now estimated at about 26,000 men.

The big North Vietnamese units are believed to be mostly in the hills and mountains away from the coastal plain, although there have been large movements down Route 1 and toward the Cua Viet. The enemy is beginning to emplace anti-aircraft artillery along the highway and in the hills south of the demilitarized zone, according to observation pilots in Hue, and is said to be firing surface-to-air missiles at attacking planes from 30 positions north of the zone.

The United States command has not reported the loss of any planes to SAM's in the recent fighting but a spokesman said many pilots had reported having been fired on by SAM's. On Monday, American F-105 Air Force planes and A-6 Navy bombers on missions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos and in South Vietnam attacked four SAM sites in North Vietnam just above the demilitarized zone under fire. Results were not known.

Though Americans here are waiting for the clouds to lift so they can carry out retaliation raids, some observers in Danang doubted that such raids would have relieved the mounting pressure on Quangtri and Hue. "They're very methodically preparing the next step," one source said, "and bombing up North isn't going to stop them."