

# Saigons' Troops Advance Within Two Miles of Anloc

NYTimes

By FOX BUTTERFIELD MAY 18 1972

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Thursday, May 18—South Vietnamese troops transported by helicopter moved yesterday within two miles of the besieged and battered city of

Anloc, senior American officials here said. The advance, by paratroopers and units of the South Vietnamese 21st Division, was said to have met only sporadic opposition.

Allied officers said they believed the month-long siege of the provincial capital, 60 miles north of Saigon, would be lifted in the next day or two.

The advancing Government troops were supported by five B-52 strikes early yesterday that reportedly killed 300 enemy soldiers in the area just south of Anloc, the South Vietnamese command announced. However, North Vietnamese gunners on the northern side of the devastated city continued their heavy shelling, firing 1,600 artillery rounds into Anloc during the day.

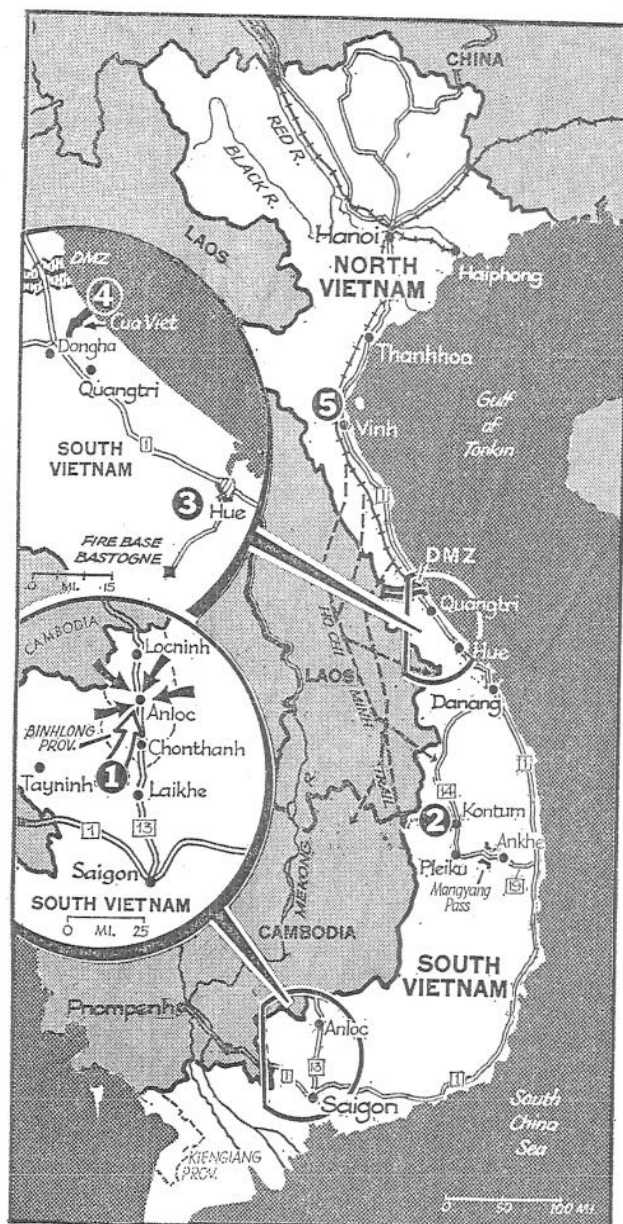
## Other Fronts Are Quiet

No major battles were reported from the other fronts as the Communists still appeared to be regrouping and maneuvering for position. One American officer commented: "We have reached that indeterminate situation where nobody really knows what will happen."

The day's developments included the following

Seven Americans were killed when an enemy rocket struck a C-130 cargo plane unloading ammunition at Kontum city in the Central Highlands, a United States military spokesman said.

Continued on Page 16, Column 1



The New York Times/May 18, 1972

Saigon relief unit moved by copter within two miles of Anloc (1 on lower inset). An American cargo plane was struck by missile at Kontum (2). Aggressive probes in Hue area (3 on upper inset) were carried out by Saigon troops. U.S. cruiser near DMZ (4) sank 10 supply boats. U.S. planes flew 250 strikes over North Vietnam (5).

# Saigon's Troops Push Closer to Anloc

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

Seven other Americans were wounded in two rocket attacks earlier in the day on the Kontum airfield, where United States planes have been bringing a daily average of 200 tons of critically needed supplies to the surrounded city. In two small skirmishes three miles north of Kontum, South Vietnamese troops were said to have killed 23 enemy soldiers.

¶After two days of fighting, South Vietnamese forces reported clearing the Mangyang pass on Route 19, the only road linking Pleiku in the Highlands with the coast. But Government engineers were still repairing several destroyed culverts that blocked a large convoy carrying aviation fuel to Pleiku. Two American advisers accompanying the convoy were wounded when their truck hit a mine. Meanwhile in Pleiku, North Vietnamese saboteurs blew up a depot containing 300 tons of ammunition early yesterday, setting off explosions for several hours.

¶On the northern front, South Vietnamese troops continued probing in the jungle-covered mountains southwest of Hue, where they reoccupied Fire Base Bastogne three days ago. Troops of the First Division killed 22 enemy soldiers and uncovered a supply cache containing 10 tons of mortar shells near Fire Base Bastogne, a Saigon spokesman said. There was no fighting reported along Hue's northern defense line, manned by South Vietnamese marines, but Communist guerrillas reportedly blew up a small

bridge on Route 1 between Hue and Danang, temporarily stopping traffic.

¶Three minor clashes were reported in the populous Mekong Delta, south of Saigon, as fighting there continued to taper off. But American intelligence officers said they were very concerned over reports that the North Vietnamese First Division was infiltrating from Cambodia into Kiengiang Province in the southernmost part of South Vietnam, undermining security in the delta.

## More Air Attacks in North

In the air war, American planes flew some 250 strikes against North Vietnam yesterday, as they had for the previous several days, American officers said. No details of the day's bombing of North Vietnam were made public.

United States tactical fighter-bombers also flew 377 missions against enemy positions in South Vietnam, and B-52 Stratofortresses carried out 25 raids, concentrated around Hue, Kontum and Anloc, an American spokesman reported.

The United States Navy announced that the flagship of the Seventh Fleet, the cruiser Oklahoma City, sank 10 small Communist supply boats and damaged 20 others off the mouth of the Cua Viet in Quangtri Province yesterday morning as American destroyers and cruisers continued their pounding of the coastlines of both North Vietnam and South Vietnam.

The fighting during the last six weeks at Anloc, the capital of Binhlong Province on Route 13, north of Saigon appears to have been the heaviest and most

sustained of the entire Indochina war. Two regiments of the South Vietnamese Fifth Division and some paratroops lifted in by helicopter to help them have reportedly been losing about 50 killed and wounded a day as the Communists have poured in more than 30,000 rounds of rocket, mortar and artillery fire.

## Enemy Losses Also Heavy

The Communist forces, evidently from the North Vietnamese Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Divisions, are believed to have sustained enormous losses as they have clung to their positions in the northern part of Anloc and the rubber plantations around it despite daily attacks by hundreds of allied fighter planes and B-52's. At least 40 enemy tanks are reported to have been knocked out as they drove into Anloc.

The South Vietnamese 21st Division, which was originally brought up from the southern Mekong Delta to try to relieve Anloc, had been bogged down on Route 13 since mid-April, harassed by enemy snipers and ambushes. It began to move forward again in the last week, slowly pushing north along the highway.

In yesterday's action, 21st Division soldiers and some paratroops were ferried by helicopter on a series of combat assaults, leapfrogging over Communist positions, American officers in the field reported to Saigon.

The Government troops did not try to consolidate control over the road, but they were said to have reached points within two miles of Anloc by nightfall. American officers with them expressed belief that the remaining enemy troops south of Anloc now would either have to withdraw and break their siege or fight against superior Government forces.