

# Saigon Reports Fighting 20 Miles North of City

OCT 7 1972

**Clashes May Signal New  
Phase in Foe's Drive  
—B-52's Hit Area**

**NYTimes**

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Saturday, Oct. 7—Newly infiltrated enemy forces reportedly clashed with Government troops yesterday along Route 13 only 20 miles north of Saigon in what may signal the beginning of a new phase in the six-month-old Communist offensive.

Government military spokesman said that fighting along the highway—in lower Binhduong Province between Bencat and Phucuong—began at 4:30 in the morning and continued through the day in at least three places northeast and northwest of Phucuong.

The spokesman said that travel along the highway was cut but that he had no further information of the progress of the fighting, which was said to involve at least several enemy companies.

B-52 raids in Binhduong Province have been heavy in recent days as allied commanders sought to cut off attempted infiltration toward Saigon, where the senior South Vietnamese commander, Lieut. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh, has



The New York Times/Oct. 7, 1972

said that he expects the enemy to "make a lot of noise" before the American Presidential election.

The B-52 raids were making noise in Saigon yesterday morning, rattling windows and shaking buildings with low, rumbling detonations in groups of three—as the B-52 missions usually come in groups of three planes each dropping 24 to 30 tons of bombs.

According to the United States command, 11 B-52 missions were flown in Binhduong

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## Peace Rumors Denied

New reports of movement in the Vietnam peace talks were denied by the United States and North Vietnam yesterday. Details on Page 6.

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and Bienhoa Provinces just north and east of Saigon between noon Thursday and noon yesterday, Saigon time. One of these missions was 25 miles northwest of the capital, and the one in Bienhoa was 27 miles east, the command said.

In addition, B-52's flew one mission in Binhlong Province 15 miles north of the ruined town of Anloc and two in Tayninh Province, which is also part of the capital's outer defenses.

Thursday afternoon, a United States Army observation helicopter was shot down in Binhduong Province only 38 miles from Saigon, the command said, and one crew member was wounded.

The possibility of large-scale infiltration toward Saigon has loomed ever since the summer, when fighting around the besieged town of Anloc tapered off but Government forces stayed in their positions on Route 13, leaving wide areas of countryside and woods to the east and west open.

Bencat, the first major district town south of Anloc, was shelled Thursday, and fighting started a few hours later, according to the Saigon command.

Fighting elsewhere appeared to be at relatively low levels but American planes flew more than 300 air strikes on North Vietnam between 5 P.M. Wednesday and 5 P.M. Thursday, according to the United States command.

During one of the missions, an Air Force F-4 Phantom jet shot down a North Vietnamese MIG-21 aircraft, the 60th enemy plane to have been shot down this year, according to the command.