

viet Jetliner Lands in N.Y.

PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES

AN AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF THE
U.S. ARMED FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

10¢

Vol. 24, No. 197

Wednesday, July 17, 1968

Threat to Saigon Eases As Some Reds Pull Back



AP Radiophoto

SHAKING BY DIGNITARIES MARKS THE ARRIVAL OF RUSSIAN PLANE IN NEW YORK.

SAIGON (AP) — U.S. sources said Monday that some enemy units believed poised for an attack on the capital have pulled back and "there is no immediate major threat to Saigon."

"The enemy has backed off," said one highly placed U.S. official. "They don't have the capability to attack except in a very small way. There isn't any forward movement at all."

"Some elements of the major units have physically pulled back. All of them didn't pull back. It is not a general withdrawal. But if you are going to mount a major attack you don't pull back anybody."

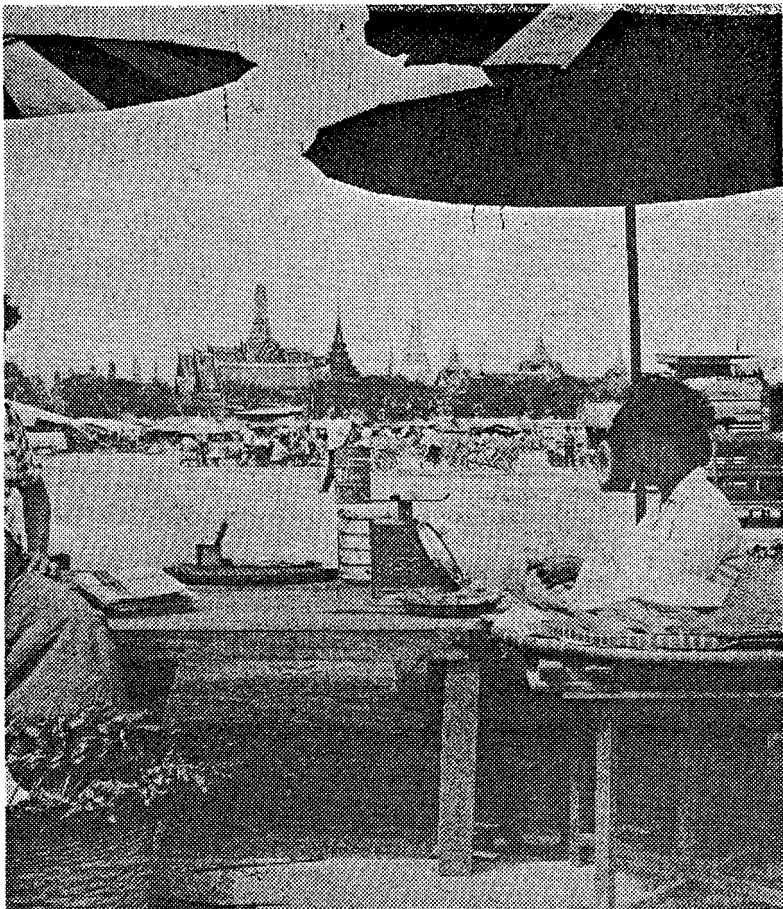
Although he said there was no immediate threat, the source qualified this by noting that the situation could change rapidly.

The new U.S. assessment contradicted South Vietnamese intelligence reports of a continuing enemy buildup along the Cambodian border and in Hau Nghia Province west of Saigon, where the North Vietnamese 9th Div. has its headquarters.

Meanwhile a patrol from the

(Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

France Tests



Crew Maneuvers 'Unflyable Plane' To Belly-Landing

TUY HOA, Vietnam (Special) — "The only reason we're alive today is that for eight minutes our pilot flew an unflyable aircraft."

That was the way Air Force navigator 1st Lt. Jon R. Alexander described his and four other crew members' escape from their C130 Hercules which stayed in the air for eight vital minutes despite a disintegrating wing, an engine on fire, an inoperative hydraulic system and several shattered control surfaces.

They were 3,000 feet above the jungle, three miles from the landing strip at Katum, a U.S. Army Special Forces camp 60 miles northwest of Saigon. After delivering a new tire to another C130 at Katum, the Task

Force Alpha plane had taken off and was climbing for altitude when a burst of .50-caliber machine-gun fire erupted from the jungle and ripped into the left wing. The left engine burst into flames.

Aircraft commander 1st Lt. Fletcher A. Hatch and loadmaster Airman 1.C. Jerry T. Willard spotted the fire spreading along the wing. Hatch and copilot 1st Lt. Lee B. Blaser tried to smother the flames by shutting down the engine and discharging the fire extinguishers in the engine compartment, but to no avail.

The strip at Katum was too short for an emergency landing, so Hatch turned the aircraft toward nearby Tay Ninh.

With the hydraulic system out of commission, Hatch sent Willard and flight engineer S. Sgt. Joseph R. Basilisco into the cargo compartment to lower the landing gear by hand. As the plane was nearing Tay Ninh and time was running out, the two returned to the flight deck and strapped in for a crash landing with only the left landing gear locked into position.

The left landing gear hit — then the right side of the fuselage and the nose of the aircraft dropped to the runway. Propellers snapped as the right wing struck.

The plane was engulfed in flames as the crew burst from the cockpit escape hatches and ran from the plane.

"We were lucky to get away with minor cuts and bruises," Hatch said.

3 Clark NCOs Get Bronze Stars

CLARK AB, R.P. (Special) — Three sergeants assigned to the 1st Mobile Group have been awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for heroic achievement.

S.Sgts. Donald R. Easter and Charles S. Gerrior, and Sgt. James J. Nieland, all ground power specialists, were performing maintenance on two navigational aids units while under heavy barrages of rocket, mortar, artillery and small arms fire in Vietnam.

E IN BACKGROUND AS THE WEEKEND MARKET OPENS.

Market Perfect



If you're in the market for a pet, even a baby gibbon is available, as this pet shop owner shows in the weekend market.



An eagle draws awed glances from young Thais wandering through the market.