

# U.S. continues bombing of Ho Chi Minh trail

WASHINGTON UPI — North Vietnam has sent of tanks and several thousand fresh troops down the Ho Chi Minh trail in the past three weeks, and some of these movements have been attacked by U. S. warplanes, Defense Department officials said Tuesday.

Part of the North Vietnamese activity appears to have been in support of Communist fighting on the Bolovens Plateau in the southern Laotian panhandle, said Pentagon spokesman Jerry Friedheim. He said this activity had been the target of American bomber strikes.

But the bulk of the movement, including the troops, with South Vietnam as the apparent destination, started before the Jan. 27 cease-fire, military sources said. They said so far there has been no indication whether these forces would keep going or would turn around.

Sources said there were about two thousand North Vietnamese troops on the trail, the traditional Communist supply route for South Vietnam, Southern Laos and Cambodia which winds through the mountains on the eastern side of the Laotian panhandle.

"These were all in the supply route system at the time of the cease-fire," one source said. "Since the cease-fire we don't see any evidence of additional people coming into the system."

The cease-fire prohibits North Vietnam from adding new troops to its forces in South Vietnam and from replacing any that are there now. For this reason, the United States is closely watching troop movements on the trail. But there is no way to enforce the cease-fire terms.

Sources said the North Vietnamese also have sent about 250 tanks and numerous supply truck convoys, artillery pieces and armored personnel carriers down the trail since the cease-fire.

They said the primary purpose for this movement might be to get military hardware into place on the South Vietnamese border so it could be swapped for worn out or battle damaged equipment North Vietnam now has in the South. The cease-fire allows both sides to replace hardware on a one-for-one basis.

Asked whether any of the troops sent down the trail already had crossed into South Vietnam, Friedheim replied: "We don't really know for sure. We don't think so."

He refused, however, to discuss the volume or the exact nature of movement on the trail.

Pentagon sources indicated that only a few of the 380 air strikes U. S. B52s and fighterbombers daily in Laos have been directed against Ho Chi Minh trail activity. They said these few strikes were for the most part, directed against truck convoys bearing supplies.

## Butz predicts largest retail food price jump in 20 years

WASHINGTON UPI — The government's Consumer Price Index for January will show the biggest one-month retail food price jump in 20 to 25 years and some big city papers will mislead consumers by distorting the figures, Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz predicted Tuesday.

Butz, speaking to his department's annual National Agricultural Outlook Conference and denouncing newspapers which "ought to know better," provided an unusual preview of the January CPI report which will be released by the Labor Department in a few days.

He said the report would show a "rather substantial" increase over December, and "probably is going to show an increase in retail food prices of 2 to 3 per cent or something like that...the biggest monthly rise in the past 20 to 25 years."

Agriculture Department experts have already predicted that retail food prices for 1973 as a whole will run 6 per cent or more above 1972, the biggest one-year jump in 22 years. But Butz charged some reporters would

sensationalize January's 2 to 3 percent CPI food figure by multiplying it by 12 and reporting an annual-rate food price increase of 24 to 36 per cent.

"The use of statistics like this is grossly unfair...phony," Butz said. He declared that seasonal winter hikes in farm prices due to weather and transportation shortages had been converted in some news stories into "preposterous" annual increases which ignore the fact that farm prices fluctuate widely.

"For instance, a 4.8 per cent rise in wholesale prices in January was treated by the urban press as if there would be a 57.6 per cent rise in wholesale farm prices over the next...that is like saying that if you have a cold this week, it is at the annual rate of 51 colds a year," Butz said.

Urban newspapers, he said, "ought to know better," and should "get out beyond the city limits and learn the facts of life about volatile farm prices."

Unlike most retail prices, Butz said raw farm products fluctuate from month to month. Other

administration officials predicted Tuesday, for example, that the currently record-high prices of beef cattle and hogs would decline as supplies rise in 1973, thus easing pressures on retail food prices. The economists said much of this year's big food price jump has already taken place.

Butz defended current food price levels by noting that despite increases, the percentage of U. S. take-home pay spent on food continued to decline last year. But he conceded that the administration, which has widely publicized its efforts to hold food prices down by stepping up farm production is concerned about public reaction.

## UPI Roundup

### HEW to appeal integration order

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration said today botulism bacteria had been detected in a fifth lot of mushrooms canned by an Ohio firm. Stouffer's Food Co. of Solon, Ohio already had recalled four frozen products which might contain tainted mushrooms and Fabrini Family Food Inc. of Ossineke, Mich., recalled its Poppa Fabrini brand pizza and other frozen foods containing mushrooms.

### Nader hits life insurance industry

WASHINGTON — Ralph Nader, proposing federal standards, testified Tuesday the life insurance industry is duping husbands into short changing their widows and children. "For almost 70 years the life insurance industry has been a smug sacred cow feeding the public a steady line of sacred bull," he said. Nader was the lead-off witness as Sen. Philip Hart, D-Mich., chairman of the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly subcommittee, began four days of hearings on life insurance. The consumer advocate said life insurance was perhaps the last giant industry to come under legislative examination.

### Mire POWs return home

TRAVIS AFB, Calif. — Eighteen American POWs came home 20 minutes late Tuesday because they did a little sightseeing over the Golden Gate Bridge—their first sight of the United States mainland in more than five years. The returning prisoners, Navy and Air Force pilots shot down over North Vietnam in late 1966 and early 1967, were greeted by about 300 persons — including two sobbing wives — as their C141 touched down at this northern California base.

### FDA orders canned food recall

WASHINGTON — A federal court order requiring the government to press 200 school districts in 17 states to comply by June with desegregation provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act will be appealed, an administration civil rights official indicated Tuesday. The HEW official, who asked not to be identified, said a final decision has not been reached, but there is a "strong likelihood" that the Feb. 16 ruling will be appealed. U. S. District Judge John Pratt Court accused HEW of "benign neglect" in enforcing the 1964 law and set deadlines for compliance—two months for elementary and secondary schools and four months for colleges and universities. He acted Friday on a complaint filed by the NAACP.

## Phouma, Pathet Lao reach cease-fire agreement

VIENTIANE, Laos UPI — A Laotian cease-fire will go into effect at noon Thursday midnight EST today, well informed government sources said Tuesday.

Leaders of the Communist Pathet Lao and the government of Prince Souvanna Phouma initialed the cease-fire agreement Tuesday. It was scheduled to be signed formally at 11 a.m. Wednesday, 11 p.m. EST Tuesday, an official government radio announcement said.

In Washington, the United States said it would stop bombing in Laos when the cease-fire goes into

effect. U.S. bombers and fighter-bombers have hit targets along the Ho Chi Minh Communist supply route daily since the Vietnam cease-fire began Jan. 28. The Pentagon said bombing was still going on Tuesday.

A State Department press officer, Charles Bray, was asked in Washington whether the United States expected the Laotian cease-fire to speed release of any American prisoners of war being held in that country. He replied, "We certainly hope so."

Well-informed sources said the cease-fire agreement, initialed late Tuesday after two government cabinet meetings, was the culmination of a successful battle for a written agreement with the Pathet Lao.

The Communists had insisted on an informal cease-fire immediately with terms written later.

The cease-fire agreement is the second such agreement since 1962. Eleven years ago an armistice was declared, but fighting broke out some months later and has continued to the present.

In addition to the Pathet Lao troops, North Vietnamese troops have long occupied the northern part of Laos. A force of mercenary troops financed by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has fought on the government's side and is regarded as the best fighting force in the country.

No terms for a cease-fire were disclosed. Premier Souvanna was reportedly under pressure from U.S. officials to reach an agreement before a Feb. 26 meeting in Paris on Indochina under terms of the Vietnam peace agreement.

### Information and applications

available for U.S.

college-sponsored foreign

study programs.



Applications for financial aid and applications for study programs must be submitted soon on some programs. International Education Center Room 202, EMU; x3721

SELL YOUR  
PET



in  
the Emerald