

5/2/70
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CHIPUH, Cambodia — Three columns of South Vietnamese tanks, armored person- nel carriers and in- fantry pushed through North Vietnamese Army base camps and quiet villages Thurs- day, 25 miles inside Cambodia.

Along the way the
columns—the equivalent of
three brigades—built artil-
lery positions and rear

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guard posts as this action
inside Vietnam's neutralist
neighbor crashed farther
and farther up the Parrot's
Beak 60 miles northwest
of Saigon.

Two American advisers are on
the ground inside Cambodia
with each battalion involved in
the battle, according to the U.S.
Command and American heli-

copter gunships are providing
support.

Two American advisers have
been wounded in the fighting,
the U.S. Command in Saigon re-
ported.

The decision to allow Ameri-
can soldiers across the border
came from President Nixon, the
command said.

Vietnamese troops are meet-
ing little resistance from the
enemy, said Lt. Gen. Do Cao
Tri, III Corps commander, who
held an impromptu press confer-
ence Thursday afternoon at a
demolished bridge on Highway 1
about five miles west of here.

The largest clashes since the
invasion began Wednesday have
been with North Vietnamese
Army company-sized units, Tri
said. The battles left 250 enemy
killed in the sweep Thursday
while 30 Vietnamese Army troops
were killed and 70 wounded.

A Vietnamese Army spokes-
man in Saigon said 332 enemy
soldiers had been killed as of
Wednesday afternoon.

One of the costliest incidents
for the ARVN came Thursday
north of here when an American
helicopter gunship strafed a
friendly position, wounding 55
ARVN soldiers, Tri said.

In their drive up the Parrot's
Beak—a long narrow stretch of
Cambodia that pokes into Viet-
nam northwest of Saigon and
has served for years as a North
Vietnamese Army base area—
Vietnamese soldiers have
unearthed almost 100 tons of
rice in bags with Red Chinese
markings, Tri said.

Tri said the rice had probably
been imported to Cambodia
through the port of Sihanoukville
before the neutralist regime of
Prince Norodom Sihanouk was
toppled in March.

Asked how far his troops
would plunge into Vietnam's
neutral neighbor, Tri smiled and
waved his hand westward up
Route 1.

"I decided to have my oper-
ation here," Tri said. "It is up to

the government to handle the
politics."

He added that he knew of no
agreements about the Vietnam-
ese thrust between the Saigon
and Phnom Penh governments,
but he added that local agree-
ments "were probably made."

As Tri spoke, his 318th Task
Force column churned west on
the highway, hoping to make
Prasot by dusk. North of Route 1

was the dust kicked up by Tri's
333rd Task Force along with
smoke and fire of air strikes
supporting the column.

Further north, Tri said, the
225th Task Force moved for-
ward parallel to the others.

The plan, Tri explained, is to
turn the Parrot's Beak into a
huge "envelope," sealed by
Vietnamese troops inside Cam-

bodia and other allied troops on
the Vietnamese side of the bor-
der. The Communists, he pre-
dicted, will be caught inside.

Despite a statement by the
U.S. Command in Saigon that
said American aircraft would fly
medical evacuation missions
during the operation, Tri said
the Vietnamese Air Force has
flown all evacuation missions to
date.

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