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### Researcher Says Invaders Drove Out Anasazi

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Aspen Daily News, Volume 9, Number 37, August 12, 1986  — Researcher Says Invaders Drove Out Anasazi [ARTICLE]

## Researcher Says Invaders Drove Out Anasazi

PAYSON, Ariz. (AP) — Invaders drove the ancient Anasazi from the Four Corners area about 600 years ago, not disease or drought, according to an Arizona archaeologist.

Richard Ambler, a Northern Arizona University professor, told the yearly Pecos Conference on the prehistoric Southwest here last week that the nomadic Paiutes forced the sedentary but superb merchants and road builders to flee their large sophisticated settlements.

In the years before they vanished, the Anasazi increasingly fortified such cities as Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and Mesa Verde in Colorado. To Ambler, that means they were threatened.

As conquerors, the Paiutes would have been the best candidates because neither the Navajo nor the Apache had yet arrived in the region.

UNTIL NOW, scholars have discounted warfare as an explanation because the Anasazi were so strongly rooted on the parched plateau.

Ambler, however, pointed to modern parallels where more mobile forces have overwhelmed others more mighty. He cited the communist guerillas in Vietnam.

His colleagues at the conference were not quick to endorse his theory. Peter Pilles, Coconino National Forest archaeologist, reserved judgment.

Ambler and Pilles were among some 20 scientists announcing they will focus on filling a sparse span in the Southwestern chronology. Little is known about the years between about 1300 and 1600.

That was the period between the blossoming of the area's old cultures and the entrance of Europeans. When Spaniards came in the 1600s, Chaco and Mesa Verde were ghostly vestiges.

The Hohokam had disappeared from southern Arizona and the Sinagua from the Verde Valley.

BY THEN, the tribesmen "were less organized than they had been," Pilles said. "Why? What was the organizational complexity before abandonment? What was being traded? These are things we want to know."

Pilles questioned whether the large towns were emptied almost suddenly — about 1400 — and the people absorbed into Indian societies that still exist. There simply were too many of them, he said.