

French HQ in Hanoi Razed by Air Bomb

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**Protest
 By Paris
 To U.S.**

PARIS — (UPI) — U.S. warplanes were reported to have leveled the French Legation in the heart of Hanoi today and the French government complained officially to the United States.

The U.S. Command in Saigon and the U.S. Defense Department acknowledged there were raids on North Vietnam today and expressed regret at any damage to the French mission.

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, speaking in a Washington news conference, conceded that American bombs may have struck the mission but said he could not be certain whether it was caused by "a faulty bomb drop by a pilot or by a faulty (North Vietnamese) surface to air missile" that missed U.S. planes.

Reports from Hanoi Radio, Moscow, Sweden and Hungary said four Vietnamese employes and an Egyptian woman were killed when the French Legation was hit and that French diplomat Pierre Susini and Albanian diplomat Treman Ramamai were wounded. Ramamai was visiting the French Legation at the time.

Other reports said American bombs fell near the Swedish embassy, a mile and a half from the French mission, creating "extensive damage," and hit the Algerian embassy, blowing off its roof. Hanoi radio said several other persons were injured and said there was extensive damage to schools and other buildings.

Herve Alphand, French foreign affairs secretary general, summoned U.S. Ambassador Arthur K. Watson to tell him of "the strong emotion felt by the govern-

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ment upon learning of the bombardment of last night," ministry officials said.

President Georges Pompidou, informed of the incident which seriously wounded Susini, France's representative general, called the destruction "a deplorable act," a government spokesman said.

In spite of the protest, the French government did not expressly pin the incident on U.S. aircraft.

"We are waiting for more information," a foreign ministry spokesman said. "Communication lines with our Hanoi people, as you can imagine, are interrupted."

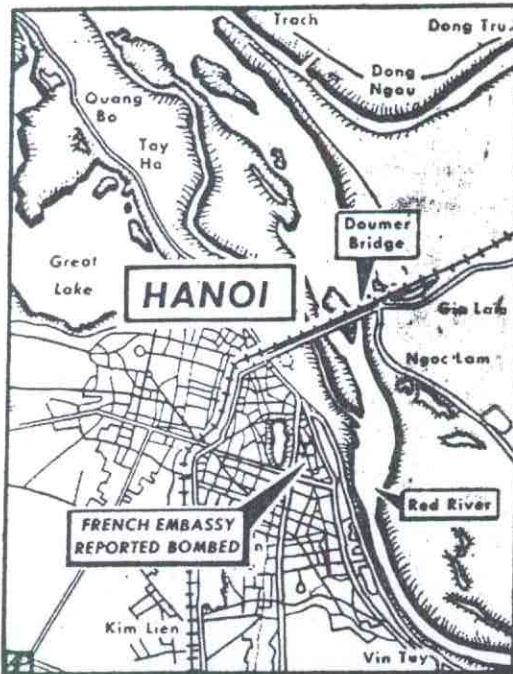
The North Vietnamese delegation to the Paris negotiations said the sudden swoop of 20 U.S. warplanes over Hanoi at noon was "an extremely grave act of escalation. We vigorously condemn the Nixon Administration for these attacks against Hanoi which do not even spare the diplomatic quarter."

The Viet Cong in a similar communique issued to the press said the destruction of the French Legation was "a deliberate act. The Americans cannot pretend it is an error because they know the city."

Despite the bitter Hanoi and Viet Cong statements, Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's personal envoy, conferred with the North Vietnamese today for the fourth consecutive day—the longest the secret talks have been held.

The U.S. Military Command in Saigon said the U.S. planes struck "Across the Red River north of the area in which the French delegation building is located."

Pal Toth, Hanoi correspondent of the Hungarian news agency MTI, said in a dispatch from the North



LOCATION OF THE FRENCH EMBASSY
 Arrow points to building badly damaged by bomb

Vietnamese capital today:
 "During the air raid against Hanoi Wednesday noon, American planes destroyed one building of the French Republic's representation in Hanoi, and also the residence of the leader of the representation.

"A French woman member, four Vietnamese employes, including a car driver, a waiter and the interpreter on duty, were killed in the air raid. The first two employes each left four children, and the third five children fatherless.

"The leader of the representation, Pierre Susini, the Albanian charge d'affaires who was visiting with him, and the Vietnamese driver of the Albanian Embassy were severely injured by shrapnel.

"A bomb weighing several tons totally destroyed an apartment building inhabited by Vietnamese in the vicinity of the French representation. Two young children were killed and several wounded there. American planes bombed other parts of the town as well.