

U.S. Discloses a 4th Area In the North Was Raided

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WASHINGTON, May 5—The Defense Department, which announced yesterday that it had terminated large-scale air raids against three areas of North Vietnam, said today that a fourth area had also been attacked.

Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, said that he did not know why it had not been disclosed earlier. He said at a news briefing that he heard this morning about the fourth raid, and he expressed the belief that Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird also had not known about it until today.

In any event, Mr. Henkin said, the so-called reinforced protective reaction raids, conducted over the weekend, have been terminated. Yesterday he said strikes by 50 to more than 100 planes each had been conducted against three target areas and they were the only such missions planned. Today he apologized to newsmen at the Pentagon.

"I am now informed that a fourth protective reaction strike was conducted," he said.

The raid, by 75 to 90 planes, he said, was against air defense targets in the area of Mugia pass, about 75 miles north of the demilitarized zone along the Laotian border.

Mr. Henkin said he believed that Defense Secretary Laird was unaware of the air strike yesterday when he told the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee of three raids.

Emerging from the closed

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4TH AREA IN NORTH WAS RAIDED BY U.S.

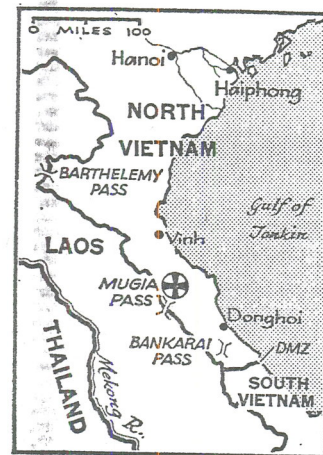
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In a hearing room, Mr. Laird told reporters: "There were three areas that were hit where substantial anti-aircraft fire had been involved: the Barthelémy Pass area, the Ban Karai Pass area, and the route just west of the DMZ between Laos and going into North Vietnam."

This morning, Mr. Henkin said, Mr. Laird cited the fourth raid as well at a White House briefing for members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees.

Mr. Henkin said he learned of the Mugia raid when "I saw a report." It was possible, he added, that "an event could be authorized and reported back" to Washington immediately.

Later in the day, Ronald L. Ziegler, White House press secretary, said President Nixon had given "over-all authorization" for the raids, to be not mean the President reperiod of time." But this did



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not mean the President required reports on precisely when each of the air strike was carried out, Mr. Ziegler said.

The disclosure raised a number of questions:

Are such activities so closely guarded that even the Secretary of Defense may not be fully informed?

Did a subordinate commander neglect to report a mission or was there a failure of communication?

Did the Administration plan a longer series of raids and terminate them only after word leaked out?

Both official and unofficial sources were unable or unwilling to clear up the confusion.

Mr. Henkin disputed a North Vietnamese report that the United States had lost 13 planes in the four raids. He said the total was "greatly below that figure. But until search and rescue operations have been concluded, he said, he did not want to go into specifics.

Hanoi Reports New Aid

HONG KONG, May 6 (Wednesday) (Reuters) — Hanoi radio said today that the United States continues its air attacks on North Vietnam yesterday. A total of 11 planes were shot down in the days of raids, the North Vietnamese press agency said.