

U.S. Still Refusing to Give Any Details on the Bombing

By TERENCE SMITH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29—Despite mounting criticism, the Nixon Administration continued its refusal today to provide any information about the details or duration of the intensified bombing of North Vietnam.

Spokesmen at the Defense and State Departments said they had nothing to add to previous statements that the air strikes would be "limited in time and limited in geography."

Charles W. Bray 3d, the State Department spokesman, refused to amplify that statement at his daily news briefing today, arguing that there were "sound tactical security reasons" for not discussing the details of the strikes. He declined to say what it was the enemy did not already know about the bombing raids, which began Sunday morning Saigon time.

Clifford Is Critical

Meanwhile, the strikes brought additional criticism from Congressional figures and peace groups and from Clark M. Clifford, who was Secretary of Defense during the Johnson Administration.

In a statement Mr. Clifford said that he was vigorously opposed to the renewed bombing "because it is antithetical to the goal of getting out of Vietnam that has been expressed by the American people."

"It is wrong and counterproductive," he said, arguing that it would only serve to prolong the imprisonment of American servicemen held in North Vietnam.

Mr. Clifford, who was in the Defense Department in March, 1968, when an "understanding" was reportedly reached with North Vietnam on cessation of American bombing, said he was at a "complete loss" to understand the reasons given for the current strikes by his successor, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird.

'No Sense whatsoever'

Noting that Mr. Laird said on Monday that the current strikes were being carried out because of recent enemy violations of the 1968 understanding, Mr. Clifford said: "That makes no sense whatsoever."

"Part and parcel of the understanding was that we would not bomb North Vietnam," Mr. Clifford said. He added that the current and past bombing raids in the North had "breached the understanding to the point where there is no agreement left."

"It is ridiculous to pretend

that there could still be an understanding when the Nixon Administration has violated it on a wholesale basis," he said.

Other criticism of the intensified strikes came today from Senators J. W. Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Frank Church the Idaho Democrat who has been a frequent critic of the Administration's war policy; former Representative Allard K. Lowenstein, chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, and former Senator Eugene J. McCarthy.

'Affront to the Intelligence'

Mr. Fulbright said the bombing demonstrated that the Nixon Administration was "as dedicated as its predecessors to a hopeless quest for a military victory" in Vietnam



The New York Times, Dec. 30, 1971

Hanoi said the air raids were concentrated in the three shaded provinces.

He termed Mr. Laird's contention that the strikes were necessary to protect American servicemen in South Vietnam "an affront to the intelligence of the American people."

Senator Church said the strikes represented "further evidence that the President is not ending American involvement in Vietnam, but simply changing its form."

Mr. Lowenstein described the intensified bombing as "a moral outrage" and called for "an immediate and total end to the bombings and all offensive action by American troops in Indochina." This appeal was echoed in a statement issued by SANE, the peace organization.

Former Senator McCarthy, who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1968,

as an antiwar candidate and recently declared his candidacy for next year's nomination, said the Nixon Administration was pursuing a "bankrupt war policy." He suggested that a Constitutional amendment might be necessary to check the Administration's war policies and to prevent future administrations from carrying out "illegal or extralegal wars."

Pope Deplores 'Bombings'

Special to The New York Times

ROME, Dec. 29 — Pope Paul VI implicitly condemned the United States air strikes against North Vietnam in an address

during his weekly general audience in the Vatican today.

At the end of a sermon devoted almost entirely to the significance of Christmas, the Pope said that he had to note and deplore that the world was again saddened by "irreparable conflicts, vengeful reprisals, bombings and violence, almost as if such proceedings might serve to prepare peace."

The Pope reminded his listeners of the "sufferings of innocent populations."

Vatican sources said that although Pope Paul had not mentioned Vietnam, he clearly had the American bombing raids there in mind.