

U.S. Order Points to Rise In Raids on North Vietnam

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Jan. 24—United States fighter-bomber pilots flying over Laos have been given instructions that foreshadow increased American attacks on antiaircraft missile installations in North Vietnam.

Informed sources reported today that in effect, the instructions, issued last month, directed pilots to take "more aggressive actions" when electronic devices on their planes detected that the radar of antiaircraft missile sites in North Vietnam had "locked on" the planes. Although officials in Washington disclosed the essence of the instructions last month, the impact of the policy has only been seen here within the last 10 days.

The instructions appear to represent a subtle shift in policy for the pilots flying escort

missions for the B-52 bombers carrying out concentrated attacks on the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos. The sources said that in the past the pilot was told to flee if possible, when he felt threatened.

"The emphasis now is clearly to attack at the slightest hint of a threat," said one source here. "Unless the North Vietnamese keep their radar off, we'll see more cross-border raids."

The shift policy was cited here to explain the recent series of "protective reaction" strikes by United States Air Force F-105's. In a three-day period last weekend, five warplanes crossed from Laos into North Vietnam to fire Shrike air-to-ground missiles at North

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Vietnamese antiaircraft installations. Before last weekend, only three such actions had been reported in four months.

Some military sources suggested tonight that the North Vietnamese might have "got the message" after last weekend's series of attacks. It was reported that there had been no significant threats by enemy radar within the last week.

More Missiles Reported

Underlying the policy shift is the concern expressed at the military command here of a growing threat to the eight-engine B-52's and smaller bombers and fighters attempting to slow enemy supplies moving through Laos into Cambodia and South Vietnam. Officers said that intelligence reports indicated that more ground-to-air missiles had been placed in positions in the southern provinces of North Vietnam and along the Laotian border.

Pentagon spokesmen in Washington have said that missiles have been fired recently at B-52's flying over

Laos, but they have not said when. The command here has not officially confirmed the Pentagon report.

No B-52, however, has been lost in the Laotian operations, which involve about 1,000 sorties a month by the big bombers, as well as thousands of sorties by the smaller bombers and fighters. American warplanes, including helicopter gunships, also fly close combat support for Laotian troops.

The decision to encourage more attacks on the radar sites came shortly after President Nixon pledged on Dec. 10 to take any action necessary to protect the American troops remaining in South Vietnam.

"If our planes are fired upon," he said, "I will not only order that they return the fire but I will order that the missile site be destroyed and that the military complex around that site

which supports it also be destroyed by bombing."

It is obvious, however, that the pilots flying over Laos do not have to wait until they are fired at. In the view Military spokesman here said that quick action was vital at the time of a "lock-on" because only a few seconds remain before the missiles are fired.

Air Activity Increasing

Accordingly, the decision was made to provide the pilots the authority to operate in a "more permissive atmosphere" against the missile sites. It is justified by sources here as necessary at a time of intense American activity over Laos.

Officials have acknowledged

in recent days that American air activity throughout Indochina has widened in scope. As the situation in Cambodia appeared to worsen, American officials disclosed that they were using a broad range of United States airpower there, including logistical support and helicopter gunships. B-52's hit southwest of Pnompenh for the first time and helicopter carriers moved into the Gulf of Siam, off the Cambodian coast.

Mansfield Assails Air Actions

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 (AP)—The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said today current United States Government was "contrary to

the intent and spirit" of Congressional restrictions on United States involvement there.

The Democratic leader said that he would vote for legislation restricting or prohibiting the use of United States air support to the Cambodian and South Vietnamese troops in Cambodia.

Senator Mansfield appeared on the Columbia Broadcasting System's television-radio program "Face the Nation."

Congress has voted to bar use of United States ground troops or advisers in Cambodia and has stated its position that the United States is not committed to defend the Cambodian Government.