

# U.S. B-52'S STRIKE FOE'S LAOS BASES AROUND THE CLOCK

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to Speculate on Any Allied  
Attack Across Border

NEWS EMBARGO STILL ON

Vietcong Radio Denounces  
Expected Drive as 'Bold  
Intensification of War'

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 —

United States B-52's continued to bomb enemy supply bases in southern Laos around the clock today, but officials at the State and Defense Departments refused for the third consecutive day to comment on speculation that an allied attack at or across the Laotian border was imminent or under way.

The speculation has become so widespread that it is being played back by the clandestine Vietcong radio, which today cited Western news reports that South Vietnamese troops, backed by American aircraft, were about to invade Laos. The radio denounced the expected invasion as a "bold intensification of the war" and warned that the Vietcong would respond with "appropriate blows."

The United States military command in Saigon has continued to impose an embargo on all news reports from the northern part of South Vietnam. The embargo was first imposed on correspondents in Saigon on Friday evening.

## Confusion in Vientiane

The confusion over what is actually happening extended today to the Laotian capital of Vientiane, where Premier Souvanna Phouma was reported trying to determine whether South Vietnamese or American forces had in fact launched an operation into the southwestern part of his country.

The supply lines that make up the Ho Chi Minh Trail, across the South Vietnamese border in south-central Laos, have become increasing important to the North Vietnamese since last spring when they lost the use of the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville,

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now Kompong Som, as a major entry point for supplies for their troops in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Military planners in Saigon have long contended that the Ho Chi Minh Trail could be severed permanently by a division-sized force, and that the war to the south would wither away as a result.

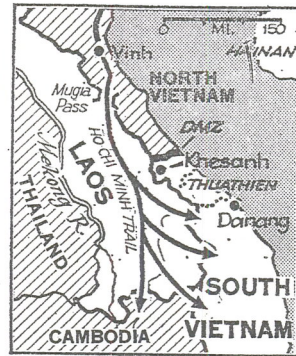
Additionally, the North Vietnamese are believed to have concentrated troops and supplies in the jungled, mountainous terrain west of the old Marine base at Khesanh, in the extreme northwestern corner of South Vietnam. In the past, sources have said that the United States has become increasingly concerned about the threat these fresh, well-equipped troops could pose to the densely populated coastal lowlands of Quangtri and Thuathien Provinces.

Before 1 A.M. today, the Pentagon issued an advisory it said has been given to newsmen in Saigon. The advisory asserted that at least three unspecified news organizations had breached the embargo and that in the event of further violations the Defense Department would "seriously consider" discrediting the Saigon correspondents involved.

The advisory emphasized that the embargo had been imposed to deny intelligence information to the enemy that might endanger United States

Finally, the Pentagon intimated that not even that advisory should be published or broadcast.

Although no formal censor-



The New York Times Feb. 1, 1971  
Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos  
(shown by arrows) was  
hit again by B-52 bombers.

ship is applied by the military in South Vietnam, a reporter whose accreditation has been revoked is denied the use of military aircraft, which effectively bars him from the combat zone.

In addition, Secretary of State William P. Rogers pointed to southern Laos at a news conference here on Friday as a source of major concern to the Administration. He declined to rule out the possibility of an allied strike against the enemy supplies and communication facilities he said had been placed in the region in recent months.

An amendment to the defense appropriations act prohibits the use of American ground combat troops, but not air power, in Laos or Thailand. There is no such restraint on Americans in South Vietnam.

The White House also refused to shed any light today on operations in Indochina. Ronald L. Ziegler, the press secretary, told reporters, "The President is aware of what is





United Press International

**EXHORTS 'HERO UNIT' IN NORTH VIETNAM: Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap addressing members of an Air Force unit during Tet in Hanoi. The Deputy Premier, who is seldom**

**photographed, urged them be "combat ready . . . to win still bigger victories." Photographs and caption, monitored in Warsaw, are from Communist sources.**

going on. That's not to say there is something going on.' Caneel Bay Plantation on St John, W. I.

The Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, said in a telephone conversation today that he sensed "a feeling of apprehension" along his colleagues.

"The fear is that we are over-extending ourselves and that the troop withdrawal program will have to be slowed as a result," he said. "The people of this country want out of Southeast Asia—lock, stock and barrel. I doubt that many of them think the way to do that is to go into Laos."