

U.S. JETS ATTACK IN NORTH VIETNAM

SEP 22 1971

200 Plane Loads of Bombs
Dropped in 8-Hour Raid

NYTimes

By IVER PETERSON

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Sept. 22—United States jet fighter-bombers struck inside North Vietnam yesterday in force, dropping 200 paneloads of bombs on military positions in an area extending 35 miles northward from the demilitarized zone.

The United States command said that the raids, continuing for eight hours from dawn to early afternoon, were "in response to recent increased evidence of North Vietnamese anti-aircraft and missile activity" against American planes. These, it said, were unarmed reconnaissance planes flying over the North and fighter-bombers on their way over the North from carriers at sea to bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail supply network in Laos.

[The raids were reportedly supported by 50 other aircraft, according to The Associated Press. These were jet fighters flying protective cover, specially equipped planes to jam the radar guidance systems of anti-aircraft guns and missiles, rescue planes and helicopters and reconnaissance planes to take pictures of bomb damage.]

Yesterday's raid, flown, according to military sources,

Continued on Page 10, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

from bases in South Vietnam and Thailand, were the heaviest since more than 250 planes attacked North Vietnamese targets March 21 and 22.

The targets yesterday were described as "military targets," which would include the anti-aircraft and missile sites as well as North Vietnamese supply and troop concentrations.

In the raids last March, the United States command subsequently acknowledged, such targets were hit.

The command has for some time been reporting that enemy buildups north of the demilitarized zone and troops crossing the buffer zone, along with long-range rockets fired from the North, have put heavy pressure on Government troops in South Vietnam's northernmost province during the last four months.

No bomb damage reports were given out by the command. All of the planes returned safely, a spokesman said. He would not say how many planes were involved in the raid. While the South Vietnamese Government worried about the enemy pressure from across the demilitarized zone, the American command is concerned with the increasing danger to its aircraft, especially the huge B-52 bombers, from enemy gun and rocket sites in the North.

The command statement announcing the raids described the military targets that were hit as "a threat to the safety of United States forces."

The command's tactical air strategists have reported an increase in the number of firings on American plans over North Vietnam and Laos in recent months. Normally, when an American plan is trailed by enemy radar or is actually fired on, the planes attack the emplacement in what the command calls "a protective reaction strike."

There was no indication from the command today that such an initial threat to an American plan took place before today's raids.