

# Heavy American Bombing Of the North Is Continuing

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By IVER PETERSON DEC 28 1971  
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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Tuesday Dec. 28 — Heavy United States bombing raids against North Vietnam yesterday entered their second day while the American command kept its strict silence about details of the enemy targets and allied losses.

About 200 Air Force and Navy planes from the Danang air base, American bases in Thailand and from two aircraft carriers are believed to be participating in the raids.

[American jets attached targets in North Vietnam for the third successive day Tuesday, according to The Associated Press.]

North Vietnam has already reported five F-4 Phantom jets shot down Sunday over three provinces — American Quang-

binh, Thanhhoa and Nghean—and “a number of piratical American airmen captured.”

An undisclosed number of American pilots were reported by Hanoi to have died when their planes were shot down. A late broadcast monitored here said two pilots died when their plane crashed in Thanhhoa.

One communique broadcast by Hanoi called Sunday's attacks “a new and very serious act of war” and warned of “grave consequences” for the American Government.

It said several inhabited areas had been bombed and strafed and that a civilian hospital had been bombed at

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Thanhhoa, 80 miles south of Hanoi, causing deaths and injuries among the patients.

Later yesterday, a man identified as a spokesman for the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry went on the air to say that the raids extended through yesterday.

“Thus in two successive days,” he said, “the insane Americans have attacked many populated areas and blatantly violated the sovereignty and security of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.”

The raids, the broadcast continued, “shamelessly violated the promise by the American Government to stop bombing North Vietnam totally and unconditionally.”

Sustained bombing of North Vietnam was halted by President Johnson in November, 1968. Since then, the United States command has announced 228 small raids of two or three planes each against antiaircraft sites and other military targets inside North Vietnam.

The American command repeated yesterday that it would not discuss the raids until they had been completed and all missions to rescue downed pilots ended.

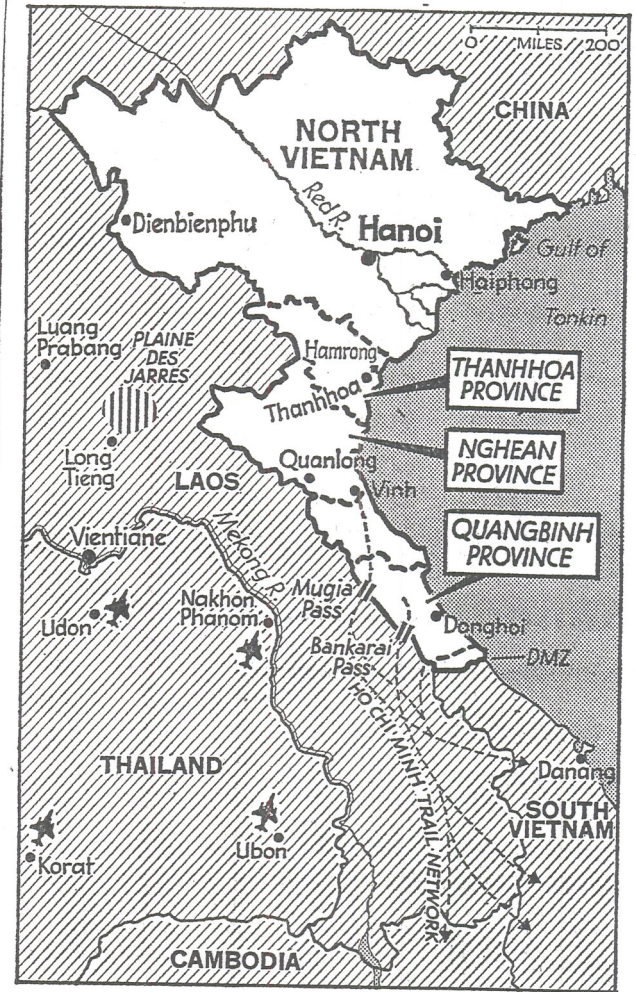
The current raids are the fourth series of two-day bombing assaults against North Vietnam since the United States began strikes officially termed “reinforced protective reaction” against North Vietnam in early May, 1970.

In all but one of these, the

command subsequently disclosed that about 200 attack aircraft had been employed.

Militarily, the raids are believed to have to purposes, to weaken the increasingly aggressive North Vietnamese Air Force and to blunt its threat to American B-52 missions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail network in Laos.

Officials say this enemy air threat has become especially pronounced during the last six weeks. In late November, a B-52 bomber was attacked for the first time by a MIG fighter over Laos. The MIG fired an air-to-air missile, but missed and was chased off.



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U.S. air strikes were reportedly concentrated in Thanhhoa, Nghean and Quangbinh provinces.

Early this month an Air Force F-105 was shot down by an enemy surface-to-air missile while it was protecting B-52's. On Dec. 18 a PhavN jet was shot down by a North Vietnamese MIG—for the first time since 1968—over Northern Laos.

Two other Phantoms were then pursued by MIG's until they ran out of fuel and crashed. On Dec. 19, a fourth Phantom was shot down over northern Laos by ground fire. Only two of the eight crewmen of the four planes were rescued. Four were displayed in Hanoi the following day.

American jets have conducted 107 smaller “protective reaction” strikes against specific enemy antiaircraft sites so far this year, whenever an American plane on a mission was threatened by the guns.

These protective-reaction strikes are rising sharply, indicating a growing threat. Five occurred in October, 14 in November and 24 this month.