

Hanoi's Charge -- 'Asphyxiation Bombs'

Tokyo

North Vietnam said yesterday that the Saigon government has used "ultra lethal asphyxiation bombs" and termed it "an extremely barbarous crime."

The charge was in a statement issued by the North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, Hanoi's Vietnam News Agency reported.

The statement said the Saigon government used the bombs in Xuan Loc, about 40 miles east of Saigon, on Monday. 24 APR

Hanoi did not describe the bombs beyond saying they asphyxiated victims. There are bombs called CUB-55s — Cluster Bomb Units — that are used to clear helicopter landing zones in areas of heavy brush cover and that suck oxygen from the air. The bombs were used by Cambodian government forces last February after being supplied by the U.S. Navy.

(According to Reuters, government military sources in Saigon confirmed that cluster bombs were used in the battle for Xuan Loc. Victims die without a mark on their bodies. There have been reports that hundreds died that way in Xuan Loc.)

The North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry said "the crime perpetrated by the U.S. and its stooges in using a weapon banned by international law is comparable only to the crimes committed by Hitler war criminals in the past."

It is said the North Vietnamese government "earnestly calls on the governments and the peoples of the fraternal Socialist countries . . . all international organizations and all people of conscience in the world to raise their voice in protest and take firm actions to stay the criminal hands of the U.S. government and its stooges in Saigon."

Associated Press