
Record Escalation In U.S. Bombing

SAIGON — (CDN) — Targets in North Vietnam have now been hit more times by U.S. fighter planes this month than in all of 1970, U.S. Command figures show.

So far 22 "protective reaction raids" have been announced in January with any raids staged today not likely to be reported for another day.

It was the second consecutive month in which the number of U.S. air raids against North Vietnam exceeded 20 compared to an average of slightly more than seven per month in the first 11 months of 1971 and only 20 for all of 1970.

In fact, with the exception of this month and last, only once before has the United

States staged more than 20 protective reaction raids in a single month. That was in December, 1968.

Yesterday the U.S. Command said an Air Force F-105, flying a mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail, detected it was being tracked by surface-to-air missile radar in North Vietnam about two miles northeast of the Ban Karai Pass. The plane fired its own missiles at the site for the 22nd protective reaction raid this year.

U.S. sources continue to say the increased protective reaction raids are a direct response to escalating activity by North Vietnamese anti-aircraft artillery, surface-to-air missiles and defensive radar sites.
