

Waves of B-52's Hit Red Buildups

SAIGON — (AP) — More waves of U.S. B-52 bombers pounded North Vietnamese troop and supply buildups today along a 200-mile stretch of South Vietnam's western border, from the demilitarized zone to the central highlands.

They were the heaviest raids there in four months.

About 20 of America's biggest bombers unleashed more than 500 tons of explosives on North Vietnamese positions inside the southern half of the demilitarized zone, at the northern entrance to the A Shau valley and west and northwest of Montum, in the central highlands, which U.S. advisers say may be one target of the anticipated offensive.

The South Vietnamese command reported that its air force destroyed three North Vietnamese tanks yesterday just inside the border, about 32 miles west-northwest of Kontum.

On the DMZ front, North Vietnamese forces bombarded South Vietnamese bases along the zone. More than 200 rockets and mortar shells, and four ground clashes were reported.

The South Vietnamese command claimed 54 North Vietnamese troops were killed and said government losses were nine killed and 22 wounded.

U.S. military sources said thousands of fresh North Vietnamese troops, including a division usually held in reserve in North Vietnam, are on the move across the DMZ into northern Quang Tri province as well as down the Ho Chi Minh Trail toward the central highlands.

In Vientiane, the Laotian capital, informed sources said half of a Laotian battalion is missing after being routed from positions 20 miles north of Luang Prabang, the royal capital.