

BOMBERS SHIFTED FROM U.S. BASES

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20 Are Ordered to Reinforce Air Armada to Counter the Offensive in Vietnam

NYTimes

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, April 4—President Nixon has ordered more B-52 bombers to the western Pacific as part of the United States air armada being assembled to counter the latest Communist offensive in South Vietnam, it was learned tonight.

Informed sources said that about 20 of the eight-jet bombers had been ordered to reinforce other B-52's now in Thailand and on Guam.

A Pentagon spokesman, Jerry W. Friedheim, refused to comment on the report, saying: "We don't discuss operational matters concerning B-52's. We are prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to assure that General Abrams is able to protect the remaining Americans in Vietnam."

The planes were ordered from three bases in the United States; the locations were not disclosed.

White House spokesmen, who have said the President is keeping all his options open on a course of action in Vietnam, emphasized that stepped-up air

Continued on Page 16, Column 7

Nixon Sends More B-52's To Meet the Offensive

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

attacks were the main recourse left for the United States forces.

Two months ago, when United States officials were predicting that the Communist offensive would come in mid-February, the President ordered 30 to 40 B-52's from United States bases to Guam to reinforce its fleet of giant bombers in the western Pacific. At that time, the United States had only about 40 of the big planes to use in bombing supply routes through Laos in an effort to cut the flow of men and supplies from North Vietnam.

Each B-52 can carry a 30-ton bomb load.

The United States now has more than 50 of these planes in Thailand and about 30 on Guam. The newest reinforcements will raise the total in that area to about 100.

In addition, there are nearly 300 Air Force F-4 Phantom fighter-bombers in South Vietnam and Thailand, plus about the same number of attack planes aboard four Navy carriers.

U.S. Aides See 'New Factor'

By TERENCE SMITH

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 4—The State Department asserted today that what it said was North Vietnam's extensive use of Soviet supplied tanks and heavy artillery in its five-day-old offensive had added "a new factor to the battlefield situation in South Vietnam."

The department spokesman, Robert J. McCloskey, said that Soviet equipment had permitted the North Vietnamese to wage "conventional warfare rather than their traditional guerrilla-style attacks."

Mr. McCloskey's stress on Soviet equipment appeared to be an effort to provide additional public justification in

case of a decision to renew the bombing of North Vietnam.

He specifically said the United States was still holding open all its retaliatory options, including resumed air strikes deep into North Vietnam while it continued to review the military situation.

Privately, Administration officials said that while President Nixon might order heavy bombing of North Vietnam he had not made a decision.

At the White House, the deputy press secretary, Gerald L. Warren, said that Mr. Nixon was keeping in close touch with the Vietnam fighting through his advisers.

For the second consecutive day, Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, presided at a meeting of the Washington Special Action Group to discuss the retaliatory options available to the United States.

The group, which is composed of senior officials from the State and Defense Departments and the Central Intelligence Agency, meets during emergencies. The officials conferred for an hour and 15 minutes today and are expected to meet again tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the President was receiving conflicting advice from Congress on what the American response to the enemy attacks should be.

The Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said that he opposed the use of American air power or combat troops.

"Bombing the north will not bring about a settlement," he said. "I mean, we would just lose more planes, increase the number of prisoners of war and decrease the chances for a negotiated settlement."

He repeated his call for a complete American withdrawal from Vietnam, adding: "This is a time for Vietnamization to fish or cut bait."