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Plastic 200

WASHINGTON AP - A Pentagon spokesman conceded Tuesday that it was possible plastic fragments inadvertently may have injured civilians during recent American bombing raids over North Vietnam. But he denied charges that this was part of a "conscious, devious effort" for killing civilians.

"There may be plastic pieces" that flew around, said spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim. "I'm not going to say that can't happen."

Friedheim's remarks were in response to newsmen's questions about charges made last week by a British physician that the United States was using a new type of plastic-filled antipersonnel bomb on North Vietnam.

Dr. Philip Harvey, who recently returned from Hanoi, said his examination of civilians wounded during a U.S. air attack April 16 showed that they were hurt by plastic pellets that penetrate victims' bodies at 1,300 feet a second, creating such an intense heat that they vaporize the flesh. He said the plastic makes it impossible to locate the pellets by normal X-rays.

The Pentagon has said there are no such weapons in the U.S. inventory which use plastic fragments or pellets nor are there any weapons designed to make X-ray detection of fragments difficult or to make any medical treatment difficult.

Friedheim said some weapons have plastic components which usually vaporize as weapons, such as those used

Friedheim said some weapons have plastic components which usually vaporize in an explosion. He said also the enemy has weapons, such as those used against attacking aircraft, which have rubber, plastic and glass parts.

He suggested some might have fallen to the ground during the air raids and could have "hit somebody."

As to Harvey's charge that a new antipersonnel weapon was being used, Friedheim denied this too.

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