

HANOI SAYS RAIDS STRUCK AT DIKES

MAY 9 1972

But U.S. Asserts Military
Installations Were Hit in
Attacks on North
NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Tuesday, May 9—United States Navy fighter-bombers struck at North Vietnamese storage facilities, barracks and training facilities in an area about 15 miles west of Hanoi yesterday in the closest strikes to the North Vietnamese capital since April 16, the American command announced.

The command's announcement said the planes attacked "military heartland targets" that "are helping to support the Communist invasion" of South Vietnam across the demilitarized zone.

The Hanoi radio, in a broadcast at noon, said American planes "deliberately struck at the dike system in Namha Province" southeast of the capital.

[The United States command denied that American jets had bombed the dikes, United Press International reported. In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said it was possible that North Vietnamese missiles fired at the American planes had missed and fallen back on the dikes.]

The dikes support an elaborate system of irrigation and flood control in the Red River Delta, the most heavily populated and fertile area of North Vietnam.

The United States command's announcement said that all planes on yesterday's raids returned safely. Military officers in Saigon said that "several"

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North Vietnamese MIG fighters that had attempted to drive off the attacking planes had been shot down, while the Hanoi radio said that North Vietnamese forces had downed two American bombers.

The American command said that no B-52's were involved in yesterday's raids. On April 16 B-52's as well as Air Force and Navy fighter-bombers raided fuel dumps and warehouses near the port of Haiphong, 60 miles from Hanoi.

The fighter-bombers struck near Hanoi that day but no further raids on the city have been reported by the command since then, although for the last month about a hundred missions a day have gone into the southern panhandle of North Vietnam.

The command also reported yesterday that Navy ships continued their bombardment of coastal roads, railroad lines and bridges in the southern panhandle just north of the demilitarized zone.

New Moves Hinted

The new raids on North Vietnam, which has been under constant bombardment south of the 20th Parallel since April 6, came amid indications that the South Vietnamese President, Nguyen Van Thieu, was preparing to take further action.

The official Vietnam Press Agency said last night that "the population needs to be thoroughly informed of the Government's line of actions." This

led to speculation here that Mr. Thieu might be preparing to ask special and far-reaching powers from the national legislature, which is largely controlled by forces favorable to him.

American officials in Saigon have also said recently that the Administration in Washington is considering moving some combat forces, probably Marines, into the northern part of South Vietnam to protect the 65,000 American soldiers who are still here.

Ranger Camp Shelled

Most of the military action yesterday on the major battlefronts was reported in the Central Highlands.

The Poleikleng ranger camp 14 miles west of the threatened city of Kontum was heavily shelled all day long, and an air observer reported seeing a North Vietnamese battalion moving toward the base from the east.

The shelling reportedly caused heavy damage to bunkers and fortifications at the camp, which is home not only for hundreds of Montagnard and South Vietnamese rangers but also for their women and children. One person was reported killed and 20 were reported injured—including, possibly, some of the civilians.

The Benhet camp almost on the Cambodian border farther to the northwest of Kontum also came under intense bombardment yesterday.

Road Remains Cut

Route 14, the only road out of Kontum, remained closed by enemy roadblocks. The Saigon Government has announced that it plans to evacuate all remaining civilians from Kontum by road, beginning tomorrow.

On the northern front, the North Vietnamese did not advance southward toward Hue from Quangtri Province, the northernmost province of South Vietnam, though it has been a week since they drove thousands of Government soldiers out of the area in one of the worst routs of the war.

Government marines were holding a line about 20 miles northwest of Hue along a river marking the southern border of Quangtri. Ranking American officers in Danang said that both sides — the North Vietnamese and the battered remnants of the South Vietnamese Third Division—were reorganizing.

An American general said that United States aircraft had for the last four days been striking hard at the North Vietnamese, who had moved supplies by truck openly during the daytime. He said the planes were destroying "50 to 60 trucks every 24 hours."

The United States command said that seven tanks were among the targets that were destroyed in bombing on Sunday.

But American and South Vietnamese officers said they believed that more heavy fighting would come soon to the front around Hue, the former

imperial capital of Vietnam. American officers said that a surface-to-air missile launcher had been discovered and destroyed in the Ashau Valley, in the Annamite Mountains due west of Hue.

The Movement of SAM's into the area could indicate that the North Vietnamese plan a determined push on Hue from the southwest as well as another from the north out of Quangtri Province.

On the third and possibly the most important front, at Anloc 60 miles north of Saigon, the enemy again bombarded Government forces with 1,000 rounds of mortar and rocket and artillery fire yesterday, but little progress was made by either side in dislodging the other. Anloc has been encircled for a month by North Vietnamese forces and the defenders, mostly from the Fifth Infantry Division, have suffered heavy casualties.

Explosions Heard in Hanoi

HANOI, North Vietnam, May 8 (Agence France-Presse)—For 35 minutes today wave after wave of explosions could be heard at five-minute intervals as United States planes attacked areas near the capital. Unconfirmed reports said

the targets included the small commune of Phuxuyen 20 miles from the city. Rumors that could not be checked said also that United States planes had dropped leaflets over the Hadong commune less than six miles from Hanoi urging the peasants to evacuate their homes before coming under "raids of destruction."

Cambodian Town Falls

PNOMPENH, Cambodia, May 8 (AP)—Government troops today abandoned the town of Tani 58 miles southwest of Pnompenh, reportedly leaving the enemy a corridor more than 20 miles wide from mountain sanctuaries into the Mekong Delta of South Vietnam.

The Cambodian high command's deputy spokesman, Maj. Chhang Song, said Tani's garrison fled northward under "intense enemy pressure."

Tani had been defended by about one battalion until Communist-led forces punched a hole in the Cambodian line last week. With Tani lost, a major part of Cambodia's Kampot Province facing the delta region appears firmly in enemy hands.