

5 HAIPHONG SHIPS SAILED, U.S. SAYS

MAY 12 1972

31 Reported There Still— Spurt in U.S. Outlays for Weapons Is Foreseen

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 11 —

The Defense Department reported today that five vessels, four of them Russian, left the principal North Vietnamese port of Haiphong before American-laid mines blocking the harbor channel became active at 6 A.M., Eastern daylight time.

Mines sown earlier in the week by United States planes at six other North Vietnamese ports became active at the same hour, which was 6 P.M. today, Saigon time.

Thirty-one ships remained in the Haiphong harbor, Jerry W. Friedheim, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, said at a news briefing. For the time being, at least, no confrontation with either Soviet or Chinese minesweepers or other warships seemed to be developing.

No Sign of Movement

Defense analysts reported no sign of movement of such vessels toward the waters off North Vietnam. But they noted that it had been only three days since President Nixon announced the mining of North Vietnamese ports and other measures to prevent the flow of military supplies to North Vietnam.

As a result of the new measures, Pentagon sources estimated the cost of the Vietnam war to the United States might rise by as much as \$1.5-billion over the next 3 months. Mr. Friedheim said the Pentagon expected to recommend a supplemental budget appropriation soon to underwrite the additional costs of the current operations against North Vietnam.

A senior Pentagon official

U.S. Says 5 Ships Have Left Haiphong

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

estimated that upward of \$500-million more might be sought for bombs, shells and aviation gasoline for the current fiscal year, ending June 30, and \$1-billion more in the subsequent fiscal year. The replacement of aircraft lost in the heavy bombing campaign would be required extra funds next year.

Assuming that the White House agrees with the Pentagon and forwards its request to Congress, the supplemental request could become another focus for challengers to the Nixon's Administration's recent military moves. End-the-war proposals envision a cut-off in funds are awaiting action by the Senate and by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Despite the veiled threat yesterday by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird that "all steps necessary" would be taken to prevent military supplies from being landed in North Vietnam, both Mr. Laird and Mr. Friedheim gave the impression today that the vessels bottled up at Haiphong would be permitted to unload their cargo without direct interference.

Mr. Friedheim identified the vessels that left Haiphong before the delayed-action mines were activated as two Soviet

freighters, two Soviet tankers and a freighter that is under Hong Kong registry and is believed to be under Chinese charter.

Those remaining behind, he said, include 12 under the Soviet flag, 5 from China, 3 from Hong Kong, 3 from Poland, 2 from Cuba, one from East Germany and 5 from Somalia.

According to Mr. Friedheim, about three or four smaller coastal freighters appeared to be trapped in some of the six secondary parts that were also mined. Some appeared to be Chinese and most North Vietnamese, he added.

The lesser ports are Hongai, Campha, Vinh, Quangkhe, Donghoi and Thanhhoa. Mr. Friedheim was unable to say which of these harbors contained ships.

'Our Main Concern'

Mr. Friedheim said there had been no air strikes against the ships at Haiphong or on the docks there. Some of the ships were unloading before the mining, he said.

"Our main concern," he added, "is about ships that might try to reach North Vietnam in the future."

About 25 merchant ships that had been heading in the direction of North Vietnam at the time of the mine-laying operation Monday still are on course, he said, except for a Soviet freighter that veered

away from the mouth of the Haiphong channel yesterday and appears headed for a port outside Vietnam.

The possibility of strikes on the ships in the harbor cannot be foreclosed, Mr. Friedheim said. He noted that three cruisers and two destroyers had been firing at a petroleum storage facility at Haiphong and said they had probably destroyed some of the fuel delivered in recent days.

Mr. Laird, at a news conference in Palm Beach, Fla., also addressed the matter of the ships in Haiphong.

The ships that remain in port—this was a decision in which each of the captains and the governments involved had a part," he said. "They decided to go forward with their unloading in the port and will remain there for a period of time, it would appear to me.

"Now these mines are not going to go out and seek these ships. If the ships seek out these mines, then there will be an explosion."

The import of his words seemed to be that unless the ships attempted to sail through the minefields, they would probably not be molested since, once their cargoes are unloaded, they can no longer provide North Vietnam with additional capability to pursue its offensive in the South.

Continued on Page 19, Column 6