

# Communists Report Mines at Haiphong Swept, Ships Sailing

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HAIPHONG, North Vietnam, May 17—The North Vietnamese say they are clearing American mines from the Haiphong harbor as planes drop them, and moving ships in and out.

Independent sources give support to that claim. They say that at least one ship—the East German freighter Frieden—entered the harbor this week.

[In Washington, Administration officials said categorically that no ships had entered or left Haiphong harbor since the mining, and that reconnaissance showed no minesweeping activity.]

A quick tour of the port today showed about a dozen ships in their berths. There could have been others out of view. Among those seen were ships from the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland and Somalia. One of the ships was the Kingford, which port authorities said operated from Hong Kong. Many packing cases were piled in the dock area.

The port area itself has been hit hard. Rather grotesquely, one undamaged building bears the sign—in English—"Sea-

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men's Club: Hairdressing Salon, Tailor and Shoemaker."

Because more bombing is expected, Haiphong now operates on a divided day. State stores are open from 4 to 7:30 A.M., then again from 5 to 9 P.M.

Officials were reluctant to let a correspondent visit the dock area today. They restricted his visit to 10 minutes and kept urging haste, saying it was dangerous.

This correspondent also saw two Soviet surface-to-air missiles being carried by trucks on the road from Haiphong to Hanoi.

Under President Nixon's orders, American mines were activated last Thursday. Earlier, on the night of Monday, May 8, he told the public that mines were being dropped in North Vietnamese ports though officials here said the first ones were actually laid May 7.

## Daily Action Reported

Khu Nhan Thuy, spokesman for the Haiphong city administration, said American planes had been dropping mines almost every day since May 7.

"And they've been removed," Mr. Thuy said. "Whatever kinds of mines they lay, we have ways of defusing them. Nixon's mining cannot stop foreign ships coming in."

Officials said flatly that no ships had been hit by mines. No damaged ships could be seen in the outlying part of harbor, but conceivably some could have been out of sight.

There is much evidence of the extremely heavy bombing Haiphong has sustained over the last month. A visitor sees areas flattened like German

cities that were subjected to strategic bombing in World War II.

The North Vietnamese called their worst day Sunday, April 16, when heavy attacks were renewed on the Haiphong and Hanoi areas. Haiphong was hit by B-52's and other planes. City officials said today that 244 persons were killed that day, 513 were injured and nearly 2,000 homes were destroyed. After one inspects the damage, those figures seem quite possible.

A large series of apartment blocks called Cau Tre Workers'

## Agnew, Visiting Saigon, Holds Talks With Thieu

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, May 17 — Vice President Agnew spent three hours in Saigon today and conferred with President Nguyen Van Thieu and American officials here.

Mr. Agnew arrived here after a visit to Thailand and returned to Thailand to spend the night. He made no statement and declined to meet newsmen.

An aide said his conversation with the South Vietnamese President lasted an hour and 20 minutes, but he declined to characterize it.

Security precautions at the airport and the Presidential Palace included a cordon of tanks and armored cars whose guns were trained along main streets. Mr. Agnew was flown by helicopter between the airport and the palace to avoid the risk that a motorcade might be involved in some incident.

Housing is almost completely smashed. The best-preserved object is a small dove house still standing on its pole in front of the shattered buildings.

Across the road is the Thai Phien school. It was attended by 3,000 children between the ages of 11 and 17, the visitor is told. The three buildings that made up the school are now a total wreck. There is a large bomb crater in the courtyard.

Because the bombing took place on a Sunday, the officials said, no children were in the school. On a blackboard propped in a doorway is this message: "Starting May 15 the school office will move to Toanthang village. Do not walk in this area as there may be unexploded bombs."

#### Hospital Is Hit

The school and the workers' housing are perhaps a mile from the port. A hospital hit by the recent bombing is not near any visible military target. It is the 600-bed Vietnam-Czechoslovak Friendship Hospital. The director, Dr. Nguyen Duc Lung, said a bomb struck at 9:20 A.M. on April 16, wrecking the staff quarters. He said that fortunately few nurses were there because the hospital was treating victims of a bombing earlier that morning.

The blast of the bomb wrecked a nearby operating room and about 15 rooms nearby. Doctor Lung said that a boy of 13 who had been wounded in the earlier bombing and was being prepared for surgery was killed.

Some North Vietnamese insist that the Americans aimed at hospitals to terrorize the populace. In the renewed bombing of last month, according to highly reliable accounts, bombs fell on this Haiphong

hospital, on one in Hanoi and on one in Thanhhoa.

Two big military targets hit were the oil depot and the rail yards on the edge of Haiphong nearest to Hanoi. Dozens of twisted railroad cars can be seen, although many of the tracks have been repaired.

However, the bombing of this area evidently hit much housing as well as industrial targets. Hundreds of acres are virtually flat with just a wall standing here or there. Officials said the area was subjected to carpet bombing by B-52's.

#### U.S. Denies Port Traffic

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 17 — Administration officials said categorically today that no ships had entered or left Haiphong harbor since President Nixon ordered it mined. They also said that reconnaissance showed no minesweeping activity at Haiphong or other North Vietnamese ports.

Jerry W. Friedheim, the Pentagon spokesman, said: "The East German freighter Frieden was in Haiphong harbor when the U.S. mines were laid. It is still in Haiphong harbor."

Mr. Friedheim speculated, however, that the ship might have been moored to buoys in the outer harbor when the mines were laid and might later have moved to a pier to unload.

He said there had been considerable movement of ships inside Haiphong harbor, with vessels moving to docks to unload, then moving to the outer harbor and anchoring to await orders. He emphasized that these movements did not involve passage through or near



Associated Press

**HAIPHONG UNDER ATTACK:** Caption provided with photo released by the Pentagon yesterday says it shows warehouse and transshipment areas struck during bombing raid. Navy jet pilot from carrier Coral Sea took photo.

the United States mine fields.

"We've not tried to bomb any ships unloading inside the harbor," said one source. "Our aim is to try and avoid hitting

foreign ships and risking casualties among their crews."

Officials reported that if the 13 merchantmen reported proceeding to Haiphong from vari-

ous directions yesterday, six had been diverted in the last 24 hours.

They said the ships diverted included three Soviet vessels.

Those still sailing toward Haiphong are said to include two Soviet ships and two East German, two Polish and one Bulgarian vessel.