

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The Nixon Administration, concerned about reports that the new U.S. bombing and mining in Vietnam has had little effect on life in the north, says splits are starting to show in Hanoi's leadership.

A White House official who would not be identified by name told a group of newsmen yesterday that "the stress in the regime is much more intensive" than it was before President Nixon ordered his new military policy two weeks ago.

The six reporters were called to the White House in the wake of a series of stories by New York Times reporter Anthony Lewis describing life in Hanoi since the U.S. military escalation. The Times was not represented at the briefing, but in today's editions identified the White House official as Brig. Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. of the National Security Council staff.

Lewis reported in today's Times that the consensus of diplomats and other foreign observers in Hanoi is that American mining has effectively closed North Vietnamese ports. He said direct evidence is difficult to obtain.

Lewis last week quoted officials in Haiphong as saying U.S. mines were being cleared and ships were moving into and out of the harbor.

The White House official said "reliable sources indicated the combined effect of Hanoi's invasion of the south and the U.S. retaliation had created a bleak situation in North Vietnam of a dividing leadership, poor morale among the citizenry, a disrupted economy and weakened battlefield status below the demilitarized zone.

The official referred

throughout the session to a pile of top-secret documents, but he declined to name his sources, saying their disclosure would jeopardize them and tip off the other side to the extent of U.S. knowledge.

In discussing Hanoi's political structure, the official said there already is a dispute between "moderates" and "hardliners."

The moderates were described as "wanting to scale down the ambitions of the regime to impose" domination on the south and "to draw back from the blood-letting," concentrating instead on domestic problems.

As evidence of the deteriorating homefront situation, the official cited "reliable reports of a drastic rise in prices of basic commodities, in some instances 200 and 300 per cent." He also said a flourishing black market exists in Hanoi.

The bombing, the official went on, has "suddenly snuffed out" 90 percent of all the goods imported annually into North Vietnam, military and nonmilitary items alike.

SF Examiner

MAY 23 1972

See also Nix Ad, same date.

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Nixon Retort

U. S. Claims a Split in Hanoi