

B-52's Hit North Vietnam For First Time in 7 Weeks

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Friday, June 9—The United States command announced yesterday that B-52's had bombed North Vietnam for the first time in nearly seven weeks and that the number of raids by fighter-bombers had been increased.

The B-52's, which can carry up to 30 tons of bombs each, struck twice on Wednesday in the lower panhandle of North Vietnam, the command reported.

The targets—at points nine miles and 17 miles northeast of the northwest corner of the demilitarized zone—were said to be units of a North Vietnamese division believed to be moving into South Vietnam to join in the Communist offensive.

There was no report last night on the damage done by the B-52's, which usually operate in flights of three planes.

But a command spokesman said that for the second day American fighter-bombers had hit the northeast rail line out of Hanoi about 20 miles from the Chinese border.

[In Washington, favorable assessments of the progress of the air war over North Vietnam were presented at briefings by an admiral and an Air Force general, who noted that fewer targets were considered off limits now than in 1968. Page 10.]

American pilots in Vietnam said that by using bombs guided to their targets by either television cameras or laser beams, they had scored direct hits on the Lungtruong railroad tunnel, which is about 10 miles southwest of the town of Langson. Air Force officers said that

Continued on Page 10, Column 4

reconnaissance photographs showed the bombs had collapsed the southwest end of the 600-foot-long tunnel.

Again using guided bombs, the pilots were said to have attacked vehicle-maintenance area and vehicle-storage facility on the southwestern outskirts of Hanoi, destroying 2 buildings, damaging 16 and destroying or damaging 8 trucks.

The United States command, which reports air strikes 24 hours after they occur, said that throughout North Vietnam Wednesday there were more than 300 fighter-bomber strikes, as against the 260 to 270 reported in recent days. American military officers attributed the increase to improved weather over most of North Vietnam.

The officers said they believed the B-52's had been called into action for the first time since April 24 because the threat of surface-to-air missiles had diminished considerably in southern North Vietnam and because intelligence agencies had found what were regarded as good targets.

In contrast to the early days of the renewed bombing of North Vietnam, when scores of surface-to-air missiles were being fired, none were reported yesterday.

In the ground war, meanwhile, allied officers in the field reported that South Vietnamese troops had started two new drives in the northern provinces of South Vietnam. Both were aimed at further relieving North Vietnamese pressure on the old city of Hue, which has been girding for an attack since early May.

In one of the operations, five battalions of about 200 marines were reported sweeping the area about five miles south of