

Air War on North Judged 'Effective'

Associated Press

Washington

The systematic American bombing of North Vietnam and the mining of its ports has seriously affected Hanoi's ability to wage war in the South, U.S. military officials said yesterday.

Reporting one month after President Nixon ordered North Vietnam sealed off from outside supplies, two senior military leaders portrayed the U.S. air and naval campaign as "pointing towards success." They said it is crippling Hanoi's transportation system and reducing the flow of war goods to the South.

Both Vice Admiral Wil-

liam P. Mack and Lieutenant General George Eade stopped short of predicting victory by the South Vietnamese or guessing how much longer Hanoi could sustain its offensive.

But Eade, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for plans and operations, said: "We believe our air campaign in the North, working in concert with the mining and naval patrol operation, has effectively reduced North Vietnam's transportation and power resources and his potential for receiving aid from outside."

Although the long-range

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effects on the Communist offensive have yet to be realized, Eade told newsmen. North Vietnam is faced "with extensive logistical problems." He said the invasion has been blunted and the South Vietnamese have had time to regroup.

Mack, who until last week commanded the U.S. Seventh Fleet off Vietnam, described the mine field as "very effective" in completely blocking efforts by the Russians or anyone else from bringing in fresh supplies by sea.

As a result of the heavy application of bombing power, Mack said, U.S. pilots are receiving less anti-aircraft and anti-aircraft missile fire every day and also are seeing results of their bombing in fewer North Vietnamese trucks on the road and less oil supplies to power them.

"We're fighting a pretty good war out there and we don't have the casualties we used to have," said Mack who is to become the new superintendent of the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

Both the admiral and Eade attributed the lower American casualties to better training and tactics, as

well as improved radar jamming equipment and the new "smart" bombs which use Laser beams and television cameras to guide them to their targets with great accuracy.

RESULTS

The two officers refused to discuss specific results of the U.S. bombing - mining campaign but other defense analysts reported these effects:

- Rail traffic within North Vietnam has been brought to a virtual standstill.

- Coastal shipping of war material from the North for the South is reported at zero compared with 18,000 tons a week at the beginning of the offensive in April.

- More than 3000 trucks destroyed since April 1.

- U.S. warplanes have knocked out about 72,000 kilowatts of electric power, representing about one third of North Vietnam's total power capacity. Officials said this could effect Hanoi's ability to operate its air defense system, switch supply trains and seriously hamper war - related industry.

- The movement of fresh war supplies into the lower North Vietnamese panhandle has been slashed from about 300 tons a day early in the offensive to only about 18 tons a day.