

Hanoi Charges**'Insane' Escalation***Agence France-Presse***Hanoi**

North Vietnam yesterday accused the U.S. of "premeditated escalation of the Vietnam war and termed the action "insane."

A foreign ministry statement, issued a few hours after the heaviest-ever American bombing of Hanoi and quoted by the North Vietnamese News Agency, said:

"It is clear that the new

war escalation of American imperialism is premeditated and aims at achieving its plot of intensifying its war of aggression and negotiating from a position of force.

"This insane action by the United States will never be able to remedy its desperate situation in South Vietnam. It further unmasks its deceptive statements about its

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desire for peace and 'serious negotiations.'

"The Nixon administration is trying by the use of bombing and shelling to force the Vietnamese people to submit and accept a solution to the Vietnam problem according to American conditions, that is a pure fantasy."

Concerning ^{18 DEC} Monday night's bombings, the statement said that "from 7:15 p.m. on December 18 to dawn of December 19, the aircraft of the American imperialists, using in particular B-52 strategic aircraft, carried out hundreds of sorties to attack without respite several regions of the capital, Hanoi, of the city of Haiphong, and of the provinces of Ha Tay, Ha Bac, Vinh Phuc, Yen Bai, Nam Ha, and Quang Ninh, committing extremely barbaric crimes.

"The peoples armed forces of Hanoi, Haiphong, and the above-mentioned lo-

calities, highly vigilant and fighting in excellent fashion riposted fiercely. They shot down several aircraft and killed or captured a number of American pilots."

The statement said that "the intensification and extension of air raids against North Vietnam constitute an extremely grave escalation of the war."

The statement concluded: "The Vietnamese people are attached to peace, but it must be peace in independence and freedom. As long as American imperialism obstinately prolongs and intensifies the war, the Vietnamese people in the whole country, single-heartedly, will remain determined to overcome all difficulties and to endure every sacrifice to carry out the will of the venerated President Ho Chi Minh: To pursue with perseverance and vigor the struggle against the American aggression, for the nation's safety, until total victory."