

Hanoi Says U.S. Bombers Hit in North

Hong Kong

Radio Hanoi reported that "wave after wave" of United States bombers attacked North Vietnam early today.

Among the places bombed was a prisoner-of-war camp where, the station said, there were "a number of U.S. prisoner-of-war casualties."

Radio Hanoi said at least three U.S. jet bombers and one helicopter were shot down by North Vietnamese antiaircraft gunners during the attack.

It said later reports from other areas might increase the plane toll.

REPORTS

(In Washington; the Pentagon, initially refused to confirm or deny the story. "We do not comment on propaganda broadcasts from Hanoi," a spokesman said.)

Interrupting its regular broadcasting schedule for the bulletin report, the official North Vietnamese radio station said the air attack started at 2:30 a.m., Hanoi time, and lasted more than an hour, with the American planes bombing targets in an area ranging from the port city of Haiphong to Hoa Binh province, southwest of Hanoi.

The Vietnamese-language broadcast, monitored in Hong Kong, did not give the name or the location of the POW camp where it said there were American bombing casualties.

The station also reported that a considerable number of North Vietnamese civilians had been killed in the raids but did not give any damage report.

WARNINGS

Hanoi Radio said "The armed forces general command severely warns the United States that this is a serious act of provocation."

The U.S. halted the bombing of North Vietnam on Nov. 1, 1968, but continues to fly armed reconnaissance missions. Pilots of the armed escort jet fighters can fire on missile and other antiaircraft sites if necessary to protect their aircraft.

According to U.S. Command figures, 13 American aircraft have been lost over North Vietnam since the bombing halt.

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