

The U.S. command in Saigon said today that a Navy fighter plane attacked a gun position in North Vietnam last Friday [8 Jan], in response to hostile action by the anti-aircraft position. The command said that the fighter plane, which was escorting a reconnaissance plane, fired a Shrike missile at the gun site. The Shrike is designed to home in on radar signals, but the U.S. command said that it missed its target and "was observed to impact off the coast into the sea."

Last Saturday [9 Jan] an Air Force plane fired a Shrike missile at an anti-aircraft site in North Vietnam near the border with Laos, after the radar at the site was observed to be monitoring the plane's flight.

President Nixon has said that American planes will fire at any North Vietnamese position if the planes detect they are being tracked by radar. There was no fire directed at the American planes in either of the last two incidents.