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We Admit US Bomb At Hanoi

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The United States today admitted responsibility for the bombing of the French mission in Hanoi, saying it "was inadvertent."

The Pentagon blamed "failure of the ordnance to release properly."

This was the first formal admission of the Oct. 11 incident, which killed six persons, including the mission chief, Delegate General Pierre Susini, who died of burns in Paris last night, and five Indochinese employees.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State William Rogers cabled French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann "profound regrets and personal condolences" over the death of Susini.

State Department spokesman Charles Bray said he had no information on whether the United States would be offering to pay compensation.

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird tried to suggest last week that the French build-

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ing could have been damaged by a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft missile falling back to earth.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry Friedheim told newsmen investigators have not been able to identify the plane which dropped the bomb and that "there is no intention here to engage in reprisals or recriminations."

Friedheim said no changes are being made in the rules under which American bombers operate. And he indicated strongly that the episode will not deter American attacks on military targets.

The Pentagon's formal statement read by Friedheim said:

"All information now available to us from a variety of sources indicates that the French Mission in Hanoi was inadvertently struck by a U.S. bomb.

"When the accident occurred, U.S. aircraft were attacking authorized military targets, including a railroad yard and transshipment point across the Red

River approximately three miles from the French property.

"One possible cause of the accident is the failure of the ordnance to release properly. We have not been able to identify any specific U.S. aircraft that was involved in this regrettable accident.

"It continues to be our policy to target only military facilities.

"The U.S. government has expressed its regrets to the government of France."

Ahead of the official statement, sources in Saigon indicated that interviews with Navy pilots who flew from the carrier Midway pointed to a "hung bomb" as the probable cause. A "hung bomb" is one that fails to drop as it is supposed to; instead, after a jet pulls up and away, it slips out on a wild course.

Friedheim said judgments were reached by the U.S. government after analysis of post-strike photography and reconstruction of the incident from pilot accounts and what he termed "a few other sources." He did not identify the latter.

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