

Thieu Assails Peace-Plan Terms, Asks Guarantee, Hanoi Pullout; U.S. Limits North Vietnam Raids

# SIGNAL TO ENEMY

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## Bombing Curb Called Act of Appreciation for Concessions

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By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24—The White House has ordered a temporary cessation of all bombing north of the 20th parallel in North Vietnam, Administration sources disclosed today.

They said, without elaboration, that North Vietnam had made some concessions in recent secret negotiations. The curtailment of bombing, the sources declared, was ordered last weekend as a signal to the leadership in Hanoi that Washington appreciates the concessions and that the principal stumbling block to an Indochina cease-fire at this point lies in Saigon.

But the bombing restriction, officials said, probably will not be announced for the following two reasons:

First, if President Nixon publicly announced a partial bombing halt as President Johnson did in March, 1968, the United States would lose the threat of resuming air strikes in the far north if this should appear valuable in some future stage of negotiations.

Second, if the North Vietnamese should take advantage of the curtailment to pour tanks, artillery and surface-to-air missiles from China into the Hanoi-Haiphong area, the United States wants to remain free to resume bombing against the two rail lines from China and against supply depots in the northern half of North Vietnam.

### Thieu's Position

Officials here said the signal to Hanoi also should not be lost on the South Vietnamese President, Nguyen Van Thieu.

Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, returned last night after five days of talks with Mr. Thieu on what the officials described as tentative arrange-

ments hammered out between the United States and North Vietnam in Paris. But President Thieu had some strong reservations to portions of the proposed arrangement, the officials said, without going into specifics.

The bombing limitation, Administration officials said, should serve to show good faith

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toward ending the bombing entirely if a satisfactory agreement can be worked out while retaining the option of resuming full-scale bombing.

In a White House new conference on Oct. 5, Mr. Nixon said that "if we can make the right kind of a settlement before the election, we will make it."

"If we cannot," he went on, "we are not going to make the wrong kind of settlement before the election. We were around that track in 1968 when well-intentioned men made a very, very great mistake in stopping the bombing without adequate agreements from the other side."

There were two United States moves to limit bombing in 1968. On March 31 of that year, President Johnson announced a cessation of bombing north of the 20th parallel in the hope that it would lead to constructive peace negotiations. Shortly thereafter Hanoi agreed to talks with Paris ultimately chosen as the site.

On Oct. 31, 1968, Mr. Johnson announced a total bombing halt in return for an understanding that substantive negotiations would follow and that Hanoi would not take military advantage of the new situation.

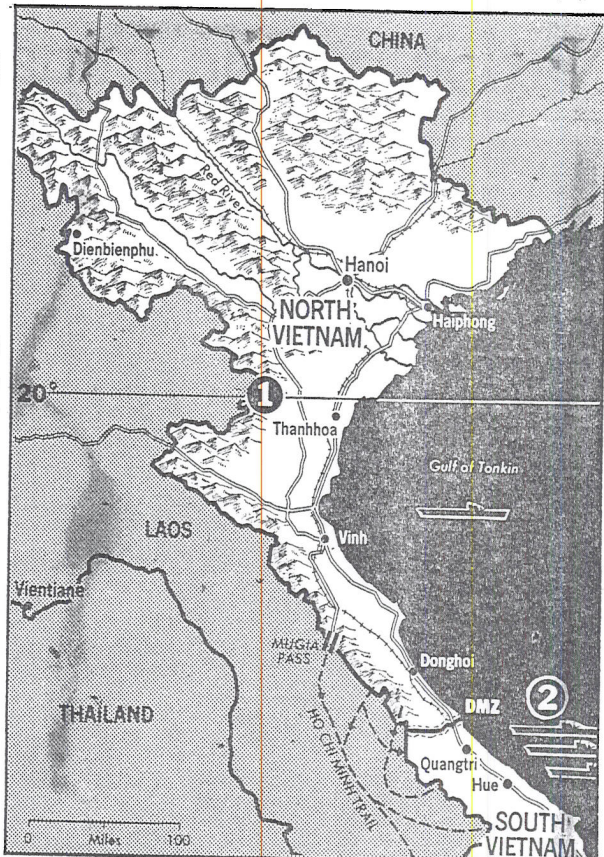
Officials tried today to distinguish between these actions and Mr. Nixon's recent order.

"Hanoi has finally made some genuine, substantive concessions which we should recognize in some way," one official said, declining to give any details.

"But we retain all our options," he added.

Officials conceded that at least one raid occurred over the weekend about 20 miles south of Haiphong above the 20th parallel. But they said that reporters should watch the daily Saigon reports on air raids.

"You'll notice no strikes north of the 20th parallel," one source said.



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U.S. bombing of North Vietnam north of 20th Parallel (1) has been ordered halted. Bombing of enemy targets in South has reportedly increased, and three of four U.S. carriers off Vietnam have shifted southward (2).

### Giving Strong Signal

Administration sources said that the United States could have taken the course of barring raids in the immediate vicinity of Hanoi and Haiphong instead of limiting the bombing to below the 20th parallel. But North Vietnam's leaders might not have the signal, the sources said, and might have felt the United States had acted because of bad weather.

The informants here said that a concentration of air strikes over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam and along the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos should hinder the flow the war material closet to the combat zone and thus most likely influence the course of battle in the near future.

Two Administration sources said a good deal of air power, additionally, would focus on North Vietnamese and Vietcong units attempting to cut roads and capture hamlets and villages in South Vietnam.

"If we are successful in achieving a cease-fire within the next few weeks, we'll stop all bombing anyway," one official declared. "In that case, a

holddown over the far North now won't make any big difference."

### 2 Views in Saigon

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Oct. 25—The curtailment of bombing is seen here as both a gesture of goodwill to the North Vietnamese and as a form of pressure on President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam.

American military officers said privately here that President Nixon had ordered the curtailment of bombing in the Hanoi-Haiphong area, but spokesmen for the United States command refused comment.

However, as spokesman reported at the regular briefing for newsmen last night that fewer than half the daily average of strikes over North Vietnam were flown in the previous two days.

The daily average has been about 300, but on Monday the number was said to have been 120 and on Sunday 140.