

Heaviest Aerial Strikes in
Months

U.S. Unleashes Bomber
Blitz

SAIGON (AP) — U.S. planes gave North Vietnam's southern panhandle its hardest pounding in months Tuesday and today, hitting at the supply buildup there with more than 300 fighter-bomber strikes and more than 30 B52 missions.

It was the largest number of fighter-bomber strikes against North Vietnam in a 24-hour period since Oct. 14. But the 320 strikes flown then were spread over much of the country, while those on Tuesday were concentrated in the southern third because of the suspension on Oct. 22 of bombing above the 20th parallel.

The escalation of air attacks on the panhandle began Nov. 9 and in six days U.S. fighterbombers have made more than 1,290 strikes in the region, an average of more than 200 a day.

"THIS IS to let North Vietnam know that as long as the war is not over, as long as it has troops in the South, we're not going to hold back," said one American official.

Officials said North Vietnam is making a "substantial" supply push southward through the panhandle to stockpile material for its divisions in the South before a cease-fire, and U.S. bombers are making "a greater response."

"We are trying to get every logistical point that is directly connected with the movement of supplies toward their forces in the South," said one official. "They are trying to increase their supply flow to their forces in the South."

The U.S. Command reported heavy damage to North Vietnam Tuesday, with 38 supply trucks, 11 warehouses, 15 bridges, 20 railroad cars, and nine artillery guns destroyed or damaged.

U.S. military sources said the B52 raids in the panhandle have been "real effective." One source said a mission two days ago set off 60 secondary explosions, indicating that a big ammunition dump was destroyed.

NORTH VIETNAM'S Foreign Ministry claimed that in the last three days American planes had heavily bombed the Do Luong dam and hydroelectric plant in Nghe An Province and had carpet-bombed towns and villages in civilian areas across five North Vietnamese provinces.

The statement, broadcast by Hanoi Radio, said damage and casualties were particularly heavy in the town of Ha Tinh.

Meanwhile, the United States used its own...
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