

U.S. Planes Resume Full-Scale Bombing

Suburbs of Haiphong, Hanoi Hit

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Saigon

Hundreds of United States B-52s and fighter-bombers resumed attacks above the 20th Parallel of North Vietnam last night.

United States officials said the planes made the heaviest raids of the war against the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

Officials said some targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong heartland were attacked for the first time in the war. Some raids were in the suburbs of the North Vietnamese capital, they added.

The eight-engine B-52s had not struck above the 20th Parallel since last April. Bombing by all kinds of planes had been stopped in the area in October as an assist to peace talks.

The U.S. command indicated the number of B-52s involved was substantial but would not give a figure. More than 100 of the giant bombers are available for use in Indochina.

PILOTS

North Vietnam said its forces shot down "many" American planes and killed or captured a number of pilots. A statement broadcast by Hanoi's foreign ministry said the raids hit Hanoi, Haiphong and the provinces of Ha Tay, Ha Bac, Vinh Phuc, Yen Bai, Nam Ha and Quang Ninh.

The statement said nothing of casualties or damage.

Hanoi called the raids "rabid acts" of the Nixon administration to "force on the Vietnamese people, by means of bombs and shells, a solution to the Vietnam issue on U.S. terms."

"This, of course, is only a vain attempt," it added.

The U.S. command said it had no plane losses to report immediately. The command does not announce aircraft

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losses while search and rescue operations are under way.

MINES

Military sources here said U.S. planes with fighter escorts renewed the mining of Haiphong harbor Sunday night. 17 DEC

Radio Hanoi reported that the planes put down new mines and fired rockets into Haiphong's suburbs.

The mines originally laid down last spring are programmed for certain lengths of time and then become ineffective. They must be "re-seeded" with freshly programmed mines.

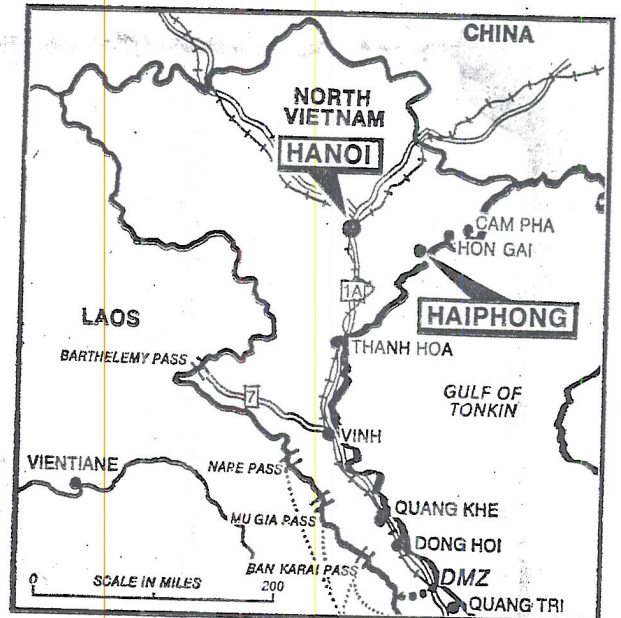
After the new mines were dropped, Hanoi announced that despite what it termed war acts to compel it to accept a peace agreement, the Communist side, including the Viet Cong, would declare unilateral cease-fires of short duration for the Christmas and New Year holidays. Saigon sources said South Vietnam would do likewise and would make an official announcement Thursday.

In announcing that limited cease-fires would be declared, North Vietnam again rejected a proposal made last week by President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam calling for an indefinite cease-fire and release of American and Vietnamese prisoners while Saigon, Hanoi and the Viet Cong negotiate directly for a permanent settlement.

NEWSPAPER

The official North Vietnamese Communist party newspaper Nhan Dan declared:

"Only after the U.S. signs the peace agreement reached with the Democrat-



Target areas of the resumed attacks

ic Republic of North Vietnam will there be a real cease-fire and negotiations between the Provisional Revolutionary government and the Saigon administration. The captured U.S. military men will be released after the agreement is signed and correctly implemented."

In a statement from the North Vietnamese foreign ministry broadcast over Radio Hanoi, a strong protest was lodged against the remaining of Haiphong harbor and the bombing attacks between the demilitarized zone and the 20th Parallel.

The Foreign Ministry claimed that the attacks below the 20th Parallel hit population centers, killing and wounding civilians.

BOMBERS

About 60 U.S. B-52 bombers continued their heavy attacks on North Vietnamese troop positions and supply lines on both sides of the DMZ during the 24-hour pe-

riod ending at noon yesterday.

The U.S. command announced that fighter-bombers carried out more than 30 attacks in the southern half of North Vietnam during the 24-hour period ending at 5 p.m. Sunday.

Heavy fighting was reported for a third successive day in South Vietnam's northernmost Quang Tri province just below the DMZ, where many of the B-52 raids were concentrated.

The Saigon command said that 151 North Vietnamese troops were killed with U.S. air support in three fights Sunday north and south of Quang Tri city, which is 19 miles below the DMZ. South Vietnamese losses were reported as six men killed and 38 wounded.

The U.S. command reported that American troop strength in Vietnam dropped by 300 last week to 24,900, the lowest in nearly eight years.