

2 B-52s AND F-111 DOWNED
IN HEAVY ATTACK ON NORTH;
HANOI CALLS RAIDS 'INSANE'

North Vietnam Is Scornful;
In Saigon, Gloom and Joy

NYTimes DEC 20 1972
SHIPS POUND COAST

U.S. Sources Report
Third Big Bomber
Lost in Action

By JOSEPH B. TREASTER

Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Dec. 20—Two B-52 heavy bombers and an F-111 swing-wing fighter-bomber have been lost since the United States resumed full-scale bombing of North Vietnam Monday, an American military spokesman said last night.

Other official sources said that a third B-52 went down during raids that were believed to have been the heaviest of the war. These raids, which reportedly lasted from Monday night until yesterday morning, were accompanied by bombardment from American ships.

[Heavy attacks by waves of B-52 bombers and fighter-bombers continued through the day Tuesday, military sources reported, as quoted by The Associated Press.]

Crew of One Plane Rescued

Reporting on the plan- losses, the American military spokesman said that seven men — the crew of one B-52 plus a military passenger — had been rescued in Thailand, where the plane crashed after its bomb- ing run over North Vietnam.

Eight other airmen were listed as missing — the six-man crew of the other B-52, which reportedly crashed 30 miles west of Hanoi, and the crew of the F-111, which was said to have gone down 50 miles south- southwest of Haiphong. [In Hanoi, six American airmen, several of whom were said to be B-52 crewmen, were pre- sented at a news conference, Agence France-Presse re- ported.]

First B-52 Downed in North

Before this, it was reported, no B-52 had crashed in North Vietnam, and the North Viet-

namese had had no opportunity to study the plane's compli- cated electronic defensive sys- tems.

The American military spokesman said that the two B-52's he reported down had crashed as a result of battle damage but that what had happened to the fighter-bomber was not known. He declined to comment on the report that a third B-52 had been lost.

The United States command was unusually uncommuni- cative about the new raids. It acknowledged in a terse state- ment that American planes were striking above the 20th Parallel in North Vietnam for the first time since Oct. 22. But, contrary to its daily practice for years, the command yester- day refused to disclose even in general terms the number of planes involved in the strikes or the general areas where the strikes took place, or to give any indication of the damage inflicted.

Informed American military officers estimated that more than 100 B-52's and several hundred fighter-bombers had participated in the raids.

Many Planes Based on Guam

The spokesman was reluctant to discuss any aspect of B-52 operations, including whether any of the eight-engine bombers had been used elsewhere in Indochina during the previous 24 hours or whether all of those available had been sent over North Vietnam.

American officials in the northern region of South Viet- nam, where B-52 activity has been heavy in recent months, said that none of the big bomb- ers were used in that area Monday or yesterday. Previous- ly the biggest attack against North Vietnam had been mount- ed with 16 missions, or about 48 planes.

There are about 200 B-52's assigned to operate in Indo- china, with three-quarters of them based at Guam in the Pacific and the rest at the Utapao air base in Thailand. They require a great deal of maintenance, and Air Force of- ficers said that only a few more than 100 were available for combat at any time.

The planes routinely carry more than 20 tons of bombs each and drop them in a carpet pattern roughly half a mile wide and a mile and a half

long. Most often they operate in flights of three.

The Hanoi radio, which made the first public disclosure of the raids Monday, said in a broadcast monitored here that all through Monday night and early yesterday American planes made repeated raids on "many areas" of Hanoi, the capital, and Haiphong, the chief port, and on six other pro- vinces around the two major cities. The radio gave only sketchy details of damage.

Later in the day Monday it was officially announced in Washington that the United States had resumed the bomb- ing and mining of North Viet- nam above the 20th Parallel, and the White House warned that the attacks "will continue until such time as a settlement is arrived at" for ending the war.

a seventh person was aboard the B-52 that crashed.

Although 11 B-52's had crashed in accidents since the big aircraft began flying over Indochina in 1965 American officers say none were lost to enemy fire until four weeks ago, when a bomber hit during a raid on North Vietnam on Nov. 23 crashed in Thailand on its way back to base.

The aircraft carry elaborate electronic jamming devices that work on several frequencies and had proved to be an almost foolproof defense against the radar-guided surface-to-air mis- siles of the North Vietnamese.

Recently, however, the B-52's have been flying over North Vietnam in greater numbers and the North Vietnamese, instead of aiming at a specific plane with a missile, as they used to, now often fire barrages—some-

Both here and in Washington, United States Government of- ficials have also suggested that the latest raids were intended to disrupt North Vietnamese plans to mount a new offensive in the South. But military men here say they have seen no indication that the North Viet- namese were preparing for such a strike.

B-52's are bigger than Boeing 707 airliners, but they have only seven seats—six for the crew and a seventh that is sometimes occupied by a tech- nician assigned to evaluate flight operations or even at times just an airman who goes along for the ride so as to meet the minimum require- ments of time in the air set by the Air Force for collecting flight pay. The military spokes- man said he did not know why

thing like a hunter using a shot- gun to kill birds. They hope for a lucky hit as the missiles ex- plore into hundreds of pieces of jagged metal.

The B-52 that went down last month was damaged in that way, and that is most likely what happened to the two the spokesman reported lost today, although he said he had no immediate details on what bat- tle damage they had suffered.

Now that a B-52 has crashed in North Vietnam, American of- ficers believe the United States will be forced to devise new electronic defensive systems for the big aircraft. Despite its tactical role in Vietnam, they point out, it remains the prin- cipal strategic plane of the United States—the aircraft de- signed to deliver nuclear weap- ons in any all-out war.

The F-111 lost in the latest raids was said to be the fifth of the controversial fighter- bombers to be lost since they returned to combat in Vietnam nearly three months ago.

Hanoi Displays 6 Prisoners

HANOI, North Vietnam, Dec. 19 (Agence France-Presse)—Six United States airmen, some of whom were said to be crew members of a B-52 bomber, were presented to the press here today. They were said to have been captured last night.

They were identified as Maj. Fernando Alexander, aged 43, and five captains, Robert Glenn Certain, 25; Richard Thomas Simpson, 31; Hal Wilson, 34; Harry Charles Barrows, 26, and Charles Arthur Brown Jr., 26.

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