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# B-52s to Keep Bombing

## Hanoi Area

### Washington

Defense Department officials said yesterday that B-52s will continue to be used against heavily defended targets in the Hanoi area despite the heavy losses of the past three days.

"The decision to use the giant bombers for the first

time against targets in the vicinity of Hanoi, according to administration officials, was made by President Nixon with the realization by military officials that some were likely to be shot down.

Asked whether use of the B-52s was being re-examined in view of the losses, Pentagon spokesman

Jerry W. Friedheim said, "The fact that we were flying into the most heavily defended area in the world was not unknown to us."

Friedheim later emphasized that B-52s would continue to fly missions over Hanoi "as long as necessary."

Asked about the Hanoi claim that U.S. planes have bombed a POW camp, Friedheim said, "We have not targeted any vicinity where we think prisoners might be held.

"We also continue to hold Hanoi responsible for proper treatment of prisoners of war under the provisions of the Geneva convention, including the responsibility of not detaining prisoners in or near military target areas.

"If the North Vietnamese allegations are correct," the Pentagon spokesman added, "and we have no information that these allegations are in fact correct, then Hanoi is admitting that it is violating the Geneva conventions."

Chapter two of that convention," Friedheim said, "states that prisoners are not to be interned in areas particularly exposed to the

dangers of war."

### SECRECY

Under instruction from the White House, the Pentagon continued to maintain tight secrecy over the nature of B-52 and all other air operations over North Vietnam, declining to give the tonnage dropped, to supply reconnaissance photographs of the attacked areas or to specify the targets being hit.

Pentagon officials said that they have been informed by the White House that the secrecy over the bombing operations is related to the peace negotiations, although they said that they are unable to explain why the secrecy would enhance the prospects of the now stalemated negotiations.

The secrecy, in contrast to the past Pentagon practice of specifying what targets were hit, appeared to be proving a source of embarrassment to Pentagon officials, particularly since it prevented them from replying to North Vietnamese charges that civilian targets are being attacked.

For the last two days, Friedheim has had to stand on general statements that only military installations are being attacked and that secrecy about targets already hit is necessary to protect the safety of air crews.

### BOMBS

With each B-52 carrying an average of 24 tons of bombs, the planes, which usually fly in formation of three, lay down a devastating swath of bombs about a half mile wide and one and a half miles long.

Previously the B-52's have been kept away from Hanoi, primarily because of the heavy air defenses including Soviet missiles that surround the North Vietnamese capital.

Another reported factor has been a concern that the B-52s, which engage in pattern rather than precision

bombing, might hit civilian targets. Pentagon officials insisted, however, that targets for the B-52s are being selected so that even if their bombing patterns were slightly off they would not hit civilian centers.

For example, they said, the B-52s might be given a large target of a railroad yard, while targets near civilian centers, such as a bridge or power plant, would be left to fighter-bombers using precision bombs.

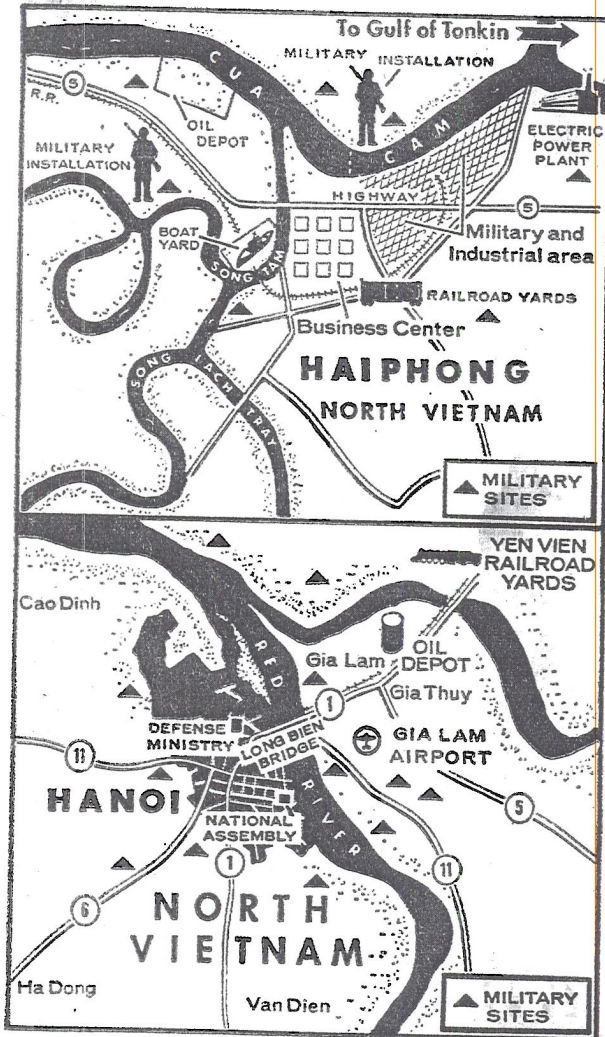
Pentagon officials continued to maintain that the loss of the B-52s could be attributed to the expected vulnerability of the bomber when flying over a heavily defended area rather than to any shortcomings in the bomber or technical advances in North Vietnamese air defenses.

### PLANES

While the B-52s and the planes that accompany them have various electronic devices designed to jam or deceive enemy radar networks, the Air Force has never contended that these measures would be 100 percent effective, particularly when used against a Soviet missile specifically designed to knock down American strategic bombers.

Thus far, Defense and Air Force officials do not view the attrition rate of the B-52's as alarming or unexpectedly high. Instead, they say, they interpret the ability of the B-52's to penetrate the Hanoi's defenses as confirmation of their capability in the primary role for which the plane was designed — as a strategic bomber in an all-out war.

*N.Y. Times Service*



UPI Telephoto

THE CITIES OF HANOI AND HAIPHONG  
Some of the targets in and around the cities