

# Heavy Raid Reported On Hanoi

From News Dispatches

Western and Communist news dispatches from Hanoi yesterday reported that Tuesday night's raids on the North Vietnam capital by U.S. bombers were the heaviest of the war.

Agence France-Press reported from Hanoi that the assault continued Wednesday afternoon with waves of tactical bombers sweeping low over the city shortly after 1:25 p.m. on a clear, sunny day.

The French news agency said Tuesday night's massive raids, which it described as "the heaviest of the war so far," left several central areas of the city in ruins. It said several apartment houses and many houses were destroyed.

AFP said the number of people killed and injured in Tuesday night's attacks was unknown.

The Swedish Broadcasting Corp. reported from Hanoi that U.S. planes attacked Hanoi's international airport Tuesday and leveled the surrounding Gialam residential district.

"Civilian dwellings around the airport were totally demolished," the Swedish radio's Hanoi correspondent, Hans Grankvist, reported. He said the area looked like "an earthquake had struck it."

The Hungarian news agency MTI said the Hanoi offices of the Soviet news agency Novosti were totally destroyed and those of the East German news agency ADN seriously damaged in the raids.

MTI's correspondent reported from Hanoi that the capital's railway station and the Kim Lien bus terminal were also hit in Tuesday's raids.

The Polish News Agency PAP reported that U.S. planes dropped bombs Tuesday night two-thirds of a mile from the center of Hanoi.

MTI reported from Hanoi Wednesday that "tens of thousands of inhabitants, in every conceivable means of conveyance," were fleeing the North Vietnamese capital.

The Soviet news agency Tass said, "Every passing night of barbarous raids on Hanoi leaves behind more streets and residential districts razed to the ground by bombs."

# 20 B-52s Said Downed or Damaged

By Michael Getler  
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About 20 U.S. B-52 bombers have either been shot down or badly damaged by North Vietnamese air defenses in the past 10 days of massive bombing around Hanoi and Haiphong, according to some U.S. officials.

The figure represents about 10 per cent of the nearly 200 eight-engine B-52s that are taking part in the heavy raids that began Dec. 18, Vietnam time.

As of Dec. 27, the U.S. military command in Saigon had officially acknowledged the downing of 12 B-52s.

The command, however, does not announce losses in cases where there may still be search and rescue attempts underway to find downed crewmen from additional planes, and it also does not announce the number of planes which make it back to their bases even though sustaining what is called "major battle damage."

In some cases, heavy damage may lead to a decision not to repair a badly hit aircraft, thus increasing the toll taken by enemy air defenses on the U.S. bomber fleet without actually losing a six-man crew or showing up as a statistic of the war.

Pentagon sources indicate that about a half-dozen of the big bombers, which had never before flown into the heavily defended areas around Hanoi, have suffered major battle damage but have managed to make it back to bases in Thailand.

Radio Hanoi yesterday claimed that it had shot down 18 B-52s since Dec. 18.

The Pentagon has officially portrayed the B-52 loss rates

thus far as within the levels expected when sending the big planes into an area in which more than 100 surface-to-air missiles day are fired at the attacking bombers.

Precise information on the number of planes involved in the attacks, their targets, and the extent of damage to both military targets and neighboring civilian areas has been impossible to report because of a virtual news blackout on the bombing campaign.

The Pentagon had let it be known, however, that about 100 B-52s were being used daily in the raids, and that roughly two of the bombers a day were being lost during

the first several days of operations, averaging out to a 2 to 3 per cent loss ratio.

Yesterday, in releasing for the first time a list of 68 targets hit and preliminary bomb damage assessment, the U.S. Command also listed as 147 the number of B-52 "missions" flown against the North between Dec. 18 and the 36-hour Christmas bombing pause beginning Dec. 25. Normally, each mission consists of three planes, and this would indicate that about 65 B-52s—rather than 100—were used on the average over the first seven days, indicating a loss rate higher than 2 to 3 per cent.

By the Christmas pause, the U.S. command had reported the loss of 10 B-52s, which would push the loss rate to about 4.5 per cent based on roughly 440 individual B-52 flights. Allowing for the possibility that some other planes may be downed or others knocked out of action by severe damage from exploding SAM missiles, the actual percentage could be even higher. In releasing the target information yesterday and confirming that the vast majority of the targets aimed at were clustered around the Hanoi-Haiphong region, the Pentagon may have been indicating that

the raids will soon shift to other areas of North Vietnam or at least diminish in intensity around those two principal cities.

Prior to releasing the target information, the Pentagon had claimed it was withholding such data to protect U.S. air crews, presumably on the basis that they may have to keep going back to some of those same targets.

A shift away from Hanoi, where Communist air defenses are heaviest, could cut down on B-52 losses, but there was no official indication yesterday that the administration was basing its moves on the losses of planes or airmen.