

Bombing Criticism Mounts

U.S. Rebuffs Sweden for Condemning Raids

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The United States has told Sweden not to send a new ambassador to Washington at the present time as a rebuke for Swedish condemnation of the American bombing of North Vietnam, it was disclosed yesterday.

This unusually severe strain in American-Swedish relations was acknowledged as protests intensified around the world over the continued massive B-52 raids on North Vietnam. The displays of indignation frequently escalated into anti-American actions.

Leaders of nations allied with the United States are facing rising public demands to denounce American policy and to bring open pressure on the Nixon administration to halt the bombings.

So far, Western leaders generally have resisted the public clamor. But the strain became more visible yesterday in Britain, Italy, Holland and in other nations that experienced bombing devastation in World War II.

Until yesterday, only part of the strain in American-Swedish relations was known. Last week, Swedish Premier Olof Palme de-

plored the constant attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong region as "a form of torture and an outrage similar to those linked to names like Guernica, Lidice, Babi Yar, Sharpville and Treblinka.

The comparison of U.S. actions to the massacre of populations during the Spanish civil war and in atrocities committed by the Nazis and others stung the Nixon administration into a triple reaction.

Acting Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson last Saturday called in the present Swedish ambassador in

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Washington, Hubert de Besche, for a vigorous protest.

De Besche was notified that the acting U.S. charge d'affaires in Sweden, John C. Guthrie, now vacationing in the United States, would delay his return to Sweden. In addition, it developed yesterday, Sweden was asked to delay the arrival in the United States of the ambassador slated to replace De Besche, Yngve Moller, a noted Swedish journalist.

Sweden was informed that "under the circumstances" Moller should postpone his arrival in the United States: De Besche, who has served in Washington since 1964, is scheduled to leave here Jan. 8, and Moller was to have replaced him on Jan. 25 or Feb. 1, according to differing dates given yesterday by Swedish officials.

In Stockholm yesterday, in response to inquiries about the unusual U.S. demand, an American embassy spokesman said, "Yes, the reports are true." State Department officials also confirmed the report later, but avoided formal comment on them.

Sweden is not a member of a U.S. defense alliance, and long has been critical of

U.S. policy in Vietnam, which may help explain the unusually stern American reaction. Also, no Western leader was so outspokenly critical as Palme.

From Western Europe to Tokyo to Australia, however, a tide of dissent was rising over the prolonged mass bombing of North Vietnam.

The Nixon administration, nevertheless, maintained silence on demands to amplify the reasons and the strategic rationale for the admittedly extraordinary amount of bombing.

At the White House, deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren, when asked if President Nixon is aware of the criticism from foreign capitals, replied that the President receives daily reports "covering a great number of matters."

State Department spokesman Charles W. Bray refused to discuss any of the protests, repeating only that "The road to negotiations is open and, we would hope, promising." He declined comment, however, when asked if there have been any promising diplomatic contacts with North Vietnam since the breakdown of talks on Dec. 13 between presidential envoy Henry A. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Defense Department spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim declined to discuss a published report from Hanoi that "carpet bombing" there caused heavy civilian damage along a major street, Kham Thien. Friedheim repeated that only military installations are targeted, and "I have no way of knowing what that correspondent was shown."

The boycott of American shipping announced Thursday by the Australian Seamen's Union as a protest against the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, was spreading in that country and aroused similar interest in other nations.

A stevedores' boycott of all U.S. shipping was reported already under way in Genoa, Italy. It was voted by workers without official authority of their union. Danish dockworkers proposed a similar ban on handling all American cargo, and unionists were discussing plans for joint boycott action across national boundaries in Europe.

Danish Foreign Minister Knud B. Andersen said it will soon dawn upon the U.S. government that the Vietnam conflict cannot be settled through military means—unless the intention is totally to eradicate essential parts of Vietnam.

Italy said Foreign Minister Giuseppe Medici has been instructed to "renew his insistence for the bombing to be stopped and peace negotiations to be resumed." An Italian government statement said this instruction was "interpreting the common feeling of the Italian people."

That explanation showed that the Italian government was still trying to avoid direct criticism of its American ally, but was signaling Washington that public dismay is mounting.

Belgium's acting foreign minister, Henri Fayat, similarly told the U.S. ambassador there that there is "deep

emotion and public shock over continuing reports of the death toll in North Vietnam.

The British government of Prime Minister Edward Heath is receiving attacks in many British newspapers for its lack of condemnation of the U.S. bombing.

Roy Jenkins, former Labor Party chancellor of the exchequer, in an "open letter" to Heath, covering the whole front page of the mass circulation London Daily Mirror demanded that Heath speak out against the "wave of terror" in which he said President Nixon has launched "one of the most cold-blooded actions in recent history..."