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**Communists Leave
 Talks in Vientiane
 For Consultations**

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE
 Special to The New York Times

VIENTIANE, Laos, Jan. 16—

In a development evidently related to reports of progress toward a Vietnam cease-fire, five leaders of the Communist delegation at peace talks here left today for consultations in their headquarters at Samneua.

It was the first time in the 14 weeks of the talks that the leadership of the Pathet Lao delegation had left Vientiane.

The Pathet Lao spokesman, Sot Petrasay, declined to say what had prompted the trip and said that cessation of the American bombing of North Vietnam was not sufficient to bring peace to Laos.

In response to questions, Mr. Sot Petrasay seemed at pains to avoid giving the impression that talks in Paris between Henry A. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had any special bearing on Laos. Government officials appeared to share that view.

To Pass Through Hanoi

The Pathet Lao leaders will pass through Hanoi going to and returning from Samneua in northern Laos and will presumably be briefed extensively by North Vietnamese officials.

Today's negotiating session was marked by the usual recriminations on both sides, with no fresh proposals.

The Pathet Lao particularly objected to the absence from the talks during the last two weeks of most of the senior Government negotiators, who are understood to be boycotting the meetings in protest against especially harsh language used by the Pathet Lao three weeks ago.

"The absence of key members of the Vientiane delegation proves that Vientiane is still not interested in sincere discussions," Mr. Sotpretrasy said.

River Town Shelled

The Communist officials who left today for Hanoi aboard a flight operated by the International Control Commission were led by Gen. Phoune Sipraseuth, head of the Pathet Lao delegates. They plan to return to Vientiane by a special commission flight in time for next Tuesday's session of the talks.

Whatever the prospects of a peace settlement in Laos, the war itself appears to have entered a critical phase, with Communist forces threatening many towns and the few remaining overland supply routes connecting them.

According to reports reaching Vientiane today, the important Mekong River town of Thakhek has been subjected to repeated attacks and a rocket barrage against its airport yesterday demolished six civilian houses. Refugees have been leaving in large numbers by crossing the river into Thailand and some have begun arriving in Vientiane via Thailand.

U.S. Reports 87 Fighter Strikes and 4

By FOX BUTTERFIELD
 Special to The New York Times

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Wednesday, Jan. 17—In the final hours of the bombing of North Vietnam on Monday, 87 fighter-bomber strikes and four missions by three-plane formations of B-52's were flown against targets south of the 20th Parallel.

This report, given yesterday

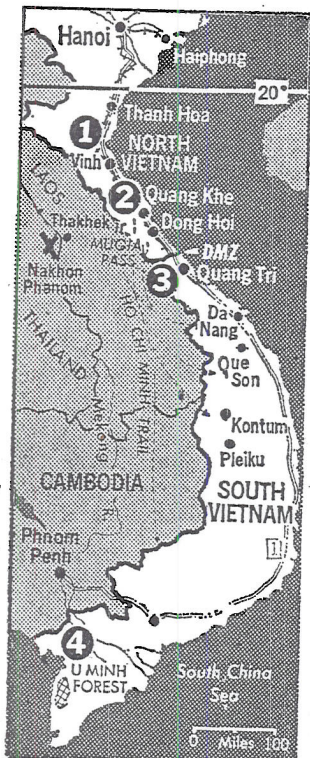
by the United States command, covered the period between 8 A.M. and 11 P.M. (10 A.M. Monday, New York time) when President Nixon's directive halting all offensive action against North Vietnam went into effect.

After the final raids on the North United States Air Force and Navy fighter-bomber pilots reported that they had destroyed three bridges near the coastal city of Vinh and knocked out a number of trucks and started a large oil-

field fire near Quang Khe.

While the raids against the North ended, United States air strikes on targets in South Vietnam continued yesterday, with 199 fighter-bomber raids and 24 B-52 missions, the United States command reported.

The fighter-bombers carried out 134 raids in northern Quang Tri Province, where elements of five North Vietnamese divisions are still dug in near the ruins of devastated Quang Tri City. On Monday Communist gunners fired 50 rounds of artillery and mortar fire into Government



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Areas near Vinh (1) and Quang Khe (2) were among targets of the last U.S. raids on North Vietnam. Fighting was reported in Quang Tri region (3) and near U Minh Forest (4).

paratroop positions 15 miles southwest of Quang Tri, the South Vietnamese command said.

Government troops also reported killing 50 Communist soldiers in Chuong Thien Province in the Mekong Delta in a major battle Monday. Chuong Thien, which includes part of the U Minh Forest, a Vietcong sanctuary, has been the scene of heavy fighting since the Communist offensive began last spring.

President Nixon's order halting the bombing of the North

terminated the raids he began last April in retaliation for North Vietnam's invasion across the demilitarized zone into Quang Tri.

In the 10 months of air strikes, according to official reports, 160 American planes were shot down by the North Vietnamese, 22 of them by MIG fighters and 34 by Soviet-built surface-to-air missiles. American pilots claimed the downing of 62 MIG's.

Since the United States command has stopped providing of-

ficial data on the number of pilots shot down in operations over the North, there are no accurate figures on the total lost in the 10 months. Unofficial lists compiled in Saigon indicate that in the two weeks of intensive raids at the end of December as many as 90 American pilots may have been lost. In the air war since 1964, according to American data, 1,646 American planes have been shot down, 1,085 of them being hit over North Vietnam.

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B-52 Missions in Last Hours of the Raids