

MAR 24 1973

SFChronicle MAR 24 1973

## Bomb Blamed In Viet Crash Killing 59

### Saigon

The Air Vietnam passenger aircraft that crashed last week killing 59 persons was blown apart in mid-air by a bomb, authoritative civil aviation sources said here today.

Furthermore, these sources said, Air Vietnam officials had failed to fully follow up an anonymous bomb threat which was made by telephone the night before the plane took off on the fatal flight.

The anonymous caller had told airline clerks that a bomb was already aboard one of their aircraft.

The airline ordered a search of two three - engined jet planes sitting on the Tarmac a few hours before departing on international flights.

The old four - engined propeller - driven transport, used on domestic flights, was parked alongside the jets but it was not searched. Within a few hours it took off on a flight to Ban Me Thuot in the central highlands and blew up shortly before reaching its destination.

The crash killed all aboard, including the American pilot and co-pilot.

Authorities are hesitant to ascribe any motives for the bombing at this time. Press reports have claimed that one of the passengers aboard was supposedly flying with a valuable package of diamonds. Another passenger was supposedly carrying the equivalent of \$10,000 in cash.

*L.A. Times Service*