

U.S. BOMBS IN LAOS FOR 2D DAY IN ROW

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Richardson Terms Air Raids
a Response to 'Flagrant'
Violation by Hanoi

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By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

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WASHINGTON, April 17—

United States B-52 bombers struck at what were identified as North Vietnamese forces in Laos today for the second consecutive day in response to what Defense Secretary Elliot L. Richardson this morning called "a flagrant violation" of the Laotian cease-fire by Hanoi.

The American air strikes in Cambodia and the resuming of bombing in Laos provoked a new outburst of criticism on Capitol Hill from the Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield, and other opponents of the Administration's Indochina policy.

One critic, Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, Democrat of Missouri, focused his scorn as well on what he called the "public unconcern" about the bombing that has taken place since the Vietnam cease-fire agreement was signed on Jan. 27 in Paris.

Calling the lack of a public reaction "dangerous business," Mr. Eagleton said in a floor speech:

"How short our memories!
How still our voices!

"Gone are the peace rallies;
gone are the sacks full of mail;
gone are the earnest college
students walking up and down
the hallways of the Senate
Office building lobbying Sena-
tors to vote for peace."

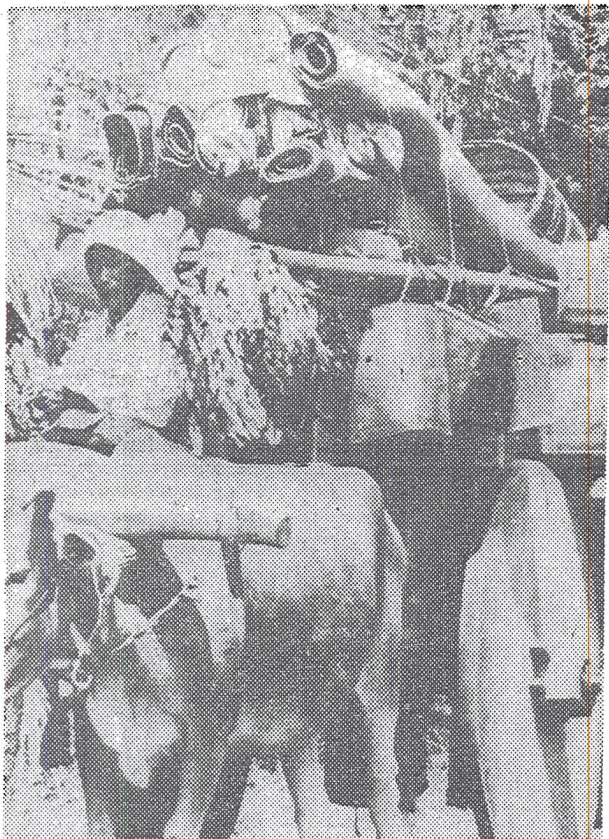
"Maybe it's because the draft
calls have ended," he continued.
"Maybe it's a stupefying cyni-
cism about the whole govern-
mental process as being
incapable of responding. Maybe
we are so emotionally drained
that we simply no longer have
the ability to care. Maybe our
national elation at the news of
March 30 so saturates our
thoughts as to preclude a
dream-interrupting doubt."

March 30 was the day the
last prisoner and last service-
men left Vietnam.

News of the second day of
bombing in Laos came in a
terse statement issued by the
Pacific headquarters at Hono-
lulu and also released at the
Pentagon. Referring to the raids
over Cambodia as well, it said:

Premier's Warning Reported

"At 1000 local time April 17,
1973 [10 P.M. yesterday East-
ern standard time] at the re-
quest of the Cambodian Gov-
ernment, United States aircraft,
including B-51's, conducted op-
erations over Cambodia. At the
request of the Royal Laotian
Government, United States
B-52's, April 17, Southeast Asia
time, conducted operations over
Laos."



United Press International

Refugees from the fighting in Cambodia south of Phnom
Penh are using oxcarts such as this to flee the area.

cease-fire went into effect on
Feb. 22.

Tha Vieng, which is southeast
of the Plaine des Jarres, is im-
portant to the Communist
forces, the State Department
officials said, because it con-
trols Route 4, which runs south-
east from the plain.

It is important to the govern-
ment, they said, because it con-
trols the eastern access to the
Muong De Cha Valley, a major
resettlement area for Meo refu-
gees.

Despite the raids, officials
tended to treat the situation in
a relaxed manner and said that
the B-52 attacks in Laos were
not meant to indicate a wid-
ening of the war but rather a
sign to Hanoi that it cannot ex-
pect to seize ground without a
reaction.

Mr. Richardson, speaking at
a news conference on base
closings this morning, said the
situation in Laos "is one in
which a flagrant violation of
the cease-fire had been
launched by North Vietnamese
troops."

Hanoi Protest Is Noted

"The attack was on a scale
which forced the withdrawal
of the Royal Laotian forces in
that area," he said. "In the
circumstances, the United
Government was requested to
provide air support by the Roy-
al Laotian Government and we
have done this. The action,
beyond that, I think, speaks
for itself."

Also today, the State De-
partment took note of a Hanoi
announcement that it had pro-
tested to the other members
of the International Vietnam
conference over what it called
three violations of the cease-
fire by the United States and
South Vietnam.

Charles W. Bray 3d, the de-
partment spokesman, said this
was "a smokescreen" to cover
up Hanoi's own violations. He
said Hanoi seemed to be follow-
ing the policy that "the best
defense is a good offense."

Senator Mansfield, in re-
marks to reporters, said, "We're
digging ourselves in deeper. I
wonder if the time will ever
come when we get out of Indo-
china lock, stock and barrel."

Senator Hugh Scott, the Re-
publican leader, said that al-
though he would like to see the
raids end as soon as possible,
they were in response to "fail-
ure of North Vietnam to live
up to the peace agreement."

The Administration has said
that it would honor any cease-
fires reached in Laos and Cam-

State Department officials
said the raids were again over
the Tha Vieng area, where they
said the North Vietnamese
335th regiment was leading an
attack on that crossroads area.

The officials said that Pre-
mier Souvanna Phouma and
the acting Defense Minister,
Sisoukna Champassak had
warned the Pathet Lao, with
United States backing, on
March 30 that they would ask
for renewed American air
strikes if the Communists at-
tacked Tha Vieng.

The officials said that the
Laotian Government forces had
been in control of the Tha
Vieng area well before the

bodia, but has reserved the right, under an apparent "understanding" with Hanoi, to use its air power in both countries in the absence of a cease-fire. The bombing had stopped in Laos on Feb. 23, but was resumed again yesterday.

There was also some speculation today that Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's adviser on national security, might go to Paris to meet with Le Duc Tho, a member of Hanoi's Politburo who negotiated the cease-fire agreement with him. But the White House said there were no such plans. A spokesman, however, said he could not rule out the possibility that Mr. Kissinger might go somewhere, sometime, in connection with Indochina.

Pathet Lao Accusation

VIENTIANE, Laos, April 17 (Agence France-Presse)—The Pathet Lao accused the United States today of having resumed systematic B-52 raids against the Plaine des Jarres.

The Pathet Lao radio said that yesterday "as the population of Xieng Khouang was joyously celebrating the traditional Laotian New Year, the aggressive authorities of Washington sent their B-52 strategic bombers, which made three sorties over villages 15 kilometers south of the city of Xieng Khouang, causing numerous losses in human lives and property." The area is about 125 miles northeast of Vientiane.

Several hours later other planes attacked the same region, the radio said, adding, "This is the most barbarous crime committed by the American imperialists against the Laotian people since the signature of the agreement on the re-establishment of peace and realization of national concord in Laos."

The radio called the bombings "gross violations" of the cease-fire agreement, which it said were aimed at "sabotaging peace in Laos and maintaining tension in this country."

The government of Premier Souvanna Phouma did not comment on the Pathet Lao charge. Officials of the American Embassy and some members of the Government, such as Defense Minister Sisouk Na Champassak, said that the bombings could only result from "a decision of Prince Souvanna Phouma" and that therefore only he could comment on them.