

U.S. Ends Viet Minesweeping

Washington

The Pentagon yesterday announced the end of U.S. minesweeping operations in North Vietnamese waters.

"Operation End Sweep is over and everybody is out," spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim told a briefing.

He said the 18-ship minesweeping force has left North Vietnamese waters where it has operated off and on since late February.

Defense officials have reported the detonation of only one mine out of the 11,000 which were dropped by U.S. planes between May and December last year.

PRESET

Officials have described the minesweeping as pre-

cautionary, saying the devices were preset to deactivate the detonator in a specific period of time after they were laid.

The minesweeping which was required under the January 27 U.S.-North Vietnamese peace agreement, cost about \$18 million, Friedheim said.

It was concentrated in the approaches to Haiphong and seven other North Vietnamese ports.

SHIPPING

Communist shipping has been moving in and out of Haiphong for more than four months, even though the main channel was not officially declared cleared until June 22.

The United States disclaims responsibility for

the mines dropped by U.S. planes in inland waterways in North Vietnam, including rivers.

"We are not going to do that," Friedheim said. "If they want to do that, they'll have to do it themselves."

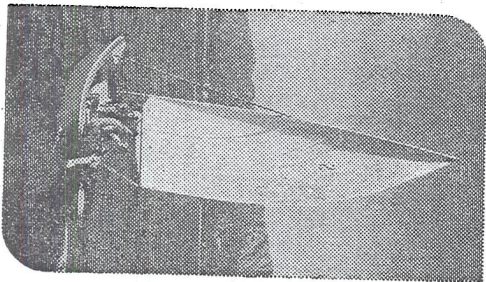
BOATS

The United States has supplied the North Vietnamese with minesweeping equipment including ten fiberglass boats and have trained North Vietnamese seamen in mine-clearing techniques.

The U.S. mine-clearing operations in North Vietnamese coastal waters were suspended for two months starting April 19 because of what the Pentagon called then "continued cease-fire violations . . . in South Vietnam and Laos."

The work resumed June 19 after Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's security adviser, and North Vietnam diplomats reaffirmed the cease-fire agreement in Paris.

Associated Press



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