

Bombing Increases Casualties

My Tho, Vietnam (DNSI) - U. S. B-52 bombers are flying regular missions over the heavily populated Mekong Delta for the first time in the war, resulting in sharply increased civilian bombing casualties.

The giant bombers have flown 125 missions there since early July, three planes to a mission.

Before the July raids began, most B-52 strikes occurred further north in less densely populated areas in the Central Highlands and Quang Tri province. The Delta had been avoided due to its heavy population. Dinh Tuong province is about a third the size of Rhode Island, but its well-worked fertile lands support a population of 600,000 Vietnamese.

The bombing policy was changed, say military observers, due to increased North Vietnamese activities in the area, coming at the time of American troop withdrawals.

The B-52s' five and seven hundred pound bombs are aimed at an estimated 5,000 North Vietnamese who have infiltrated into Dinh Tuong during the past two months.

But wounded civilians say that more villagers than soldiers have been killed by the bombs. Several bombing victims claim that entire hamlets have been wiped out.

-A 58 year old rice farmer, Bui Van Si, was cutting rice with nine other men near their hamlet in Dinh Tuong province a few weeks ago when suddenly bombs rained in upon them. Instantly, all but Bui Van Si and one other were dead.

-Le Thi Biet, a 48-year-old peasant mother, just returned to her straw hut in Long Thanh hamlet when bombs began thundering nearby. She was knocked unconscious. When she woke up she found ten villagers had been killed and many others wounded.

--A 42-year-old pregnant woman cracked her hip as she dived for shelter when bombs exploded on My Trinh hamlet "flattening many houses" and killing many civilians. Her own house was crushed, but a bomb shelter beneath it saved her life.

-Three days after some heavy fighting near 12-year-old Le Van Du's My Trung hamlet, his father sent him to the fields to walk some water buffaloes. Suddenly bombs fell nearby and Du, who is now bandaged from head to foot, suffered head injuries and internal bleeding.

One Vietnamese military officer who deals with war casualties said he was aware of at least 20 to 30 civilian deaths weekly as a result of the American bombing. He added that probably many other deaths have gone unreported.

"The North Vietnamese mingle with the villagers," one ARVN officer said. "We try not to call bombs in on villagers but sometimes they get mixed up with the Vietcong."

A U. S. military officer said that precautions were taken to avoid civilian bombing deaths, but admitted that "peasants keep moving in and out of contested areas." He said the bombing was based on "excellent intelligence" but a few minutes later added that the North Vietnamese had broken contact and that government forces had "no idea" where they would show up next.

The officer said that he was aware of "no B-52 bombing casualties", but said that no one had checked the province hospital just across the street from military headquarters.

A spot check of only two wards there revealed eleven separate civilian bombing casualties. The patients said that in nearly each incident in which they had been wounded, several civilians had been killed and many wounded.

UNIVERSITY PARK (APS) - Calling for an immediate end to U.S. involvement in Indochina, anti-war activist Jane Fonda, speaking to an estimated crowd of 5,000 here last week, said the United States, "is waging a cultural and ecological genocide on the people of Vietnam."

The noted actress, speaking in behalf of the Indochina Peace Campaign, stated that the U.S. policy of saturation bombing and the use of various methods of defoliation has, "raped the land of its life sustaining elements and has driven the people from their ancient ancestral homes...B-52's flying at 30,000 feet drop 90 tons of bombs on an area one-half mile wide by one and one-quarter miles long, wiping everything in that area off the face of the earth."

She stressed the fact that the Pentagon Papers clearly indicate the United States is responsible for the military aggression in Vietnam, "although the struggle for independence in Vietnam is centuries old...we know from the Pentagon Papers that the United States invaded Vietnam in 1965. It is clear that the United States is the aggressor in Indochina," she said.

Condemning the Saigon Government for its corruption, she stated that the South Vietnamese people have grown intolerant of the abusive Theiu regime, "Theiu is recognized around the world as a dictator. It is important to remember that the war is a war of the people against Theiu."

She also cited the fact that Theiu's sister, Madame Nuyegn Bien, has been discovered trafficking in heroin and that her connection is a high ranking official of the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company in Bientiene, Laos, a corporation for which President Nixon worked as a lawyer from 1962 to 1965.

Miss Fonda charged the Nixon Administration with failing to bring an end to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. She stated that two years ago Nixon was informed that the pacification program was a failure but that, "Nixon needed to buy time through pacification." She condemned the Administration for its indiscriminate bombing tactics, charging that these tactics have, "forced the people from their homes in the countryside into the city where they live in filth."

She condemned the administration for using the "starvation policy" in the bombing of North Vietnamese dikes, which she claims rupture and flood fertile lowland rice producing areas, "Nixon is trying to bring the North to its knees...he's trying to buy peace through the sale of food to a nation he himself is starving to death."

She said the Administration has dulled the minds of the American people through its propaganda facades, "I cry for us (the American people) for not being able to understand what's going on in Vietnam...for a long time I didn't realize what was happening in Indochina, I am no longer a dead leaf on a branch...We have a chance to end the war in Vietnam, at least we can put a spine back into the anti-war effort. We must educate ourselves about Vietnam and than vote to end this war."

Accompanying Miss Fonda on her tour were, former P.O.W. George Smith, singers Holly Near and David Martin, and Tom Hayden, former SDS leader. The group planned to make Maryland the next stop on their seven state speaking tour.

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