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200 Planes in New Air Raids Over N. Viet

By FRED S. HOFFMAN
WASHINGTON (AP) — Close to 200 warplanes took part in a big new wave of air strikes intended to signal Hanoi that the United States intends to continue flying reconnaissance over North Vietnam, Pentagon sources said Sunday.

One of these sources said the prime purpose of the raids was to "remind the other guy what the rules of the game are, whether he understands them or not. Whether he understands them is not particularly important. The signal is the thing."

By this, the Pentagon officials referred to what they regard as an understanding at the time the Johnson administration halt-

ed the bombing of North Vietnam on Nov. 1, 1968.

This understanding, they said, was that the United States would continue to send reconnaissance planes over the North to guard against preparations for a possible surprise assault against allied troops in South Vietnam.

The North Vietnamese have insisted they entered into no such understanding and have declared they will defend their skies.

The Pentagon officially refused to put out any details Sunday about the strikes against anti-aircraft missile and gun positions and related facilities south of the 19th Parallel.

They were awaiting firm and

detailed after-action reports from Southeast Asia. Defense spokesmen indicated they would be ready to talk Monday.

However, knowledgeable sources said the wave of attacks appears to have been smaller than last May, when the United States launched a similar punitive air expedition against the North coincident with allied ground penetration of enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia.

At that time, these sources said, a total of about 300 U.S. aircraft took part in four major raids.

Pentagon sources said the new raids stopped when they were supposed to, by 6 p.m. EST Saturday.

Persistent bad weather over

the North was a complicating factor in assessments of the new raids.

Sources said U.S. aircraft losses in the new raids appear not to be far from the single plane downed in the strikes last May.

The North Vietnamese claim to have shot down five planes and a helicopter this time.

The assigned reason for the new raids was the shooting down of a U.S. RF4 reconnaissance jet over North Vietnam on Nov. 13. The latest previous U.S. reconnaissance plane destroyed by North Vietnamese ground fire was downed on May 2, and this was followed by the big raids of that time.

Pentagon sources acknowl-

edged that the new strikes gave U.S. planes an opportunity to take a swipe at a buildup of supplies and ammunition which has been concerning American commanders.

But the defense sources disputed the idea that the supply buildup was the paramount objective.

They said that the amount of enemy supplies, fuel and ammunition that might be destroyed in a day and a half of raids would amount to what one called a drop in the bucket.

These sources stood by the Pentagon's public statement that the targets were south of the 19th Parallel and far away from the Hanoi-Haiphong region.

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