

BS  
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PS	FILE	SUBJ.
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ARMOLD R. ISAACS, BALTIMORE SUN: 12/20/73

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HONG KONG -- NORTH VIETNAM DECLARED YESTERDAY THE UNITED STATES "CONTRAVENED" THE PARIS PEACE AGREEMENT BY FAILING TO WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COMMUNIST SIDE BEFORE SENDING OUT SEARCH TEAMS TO LOOK FOR THE REMAINS OF MISSING-IN-ACTION AMERICAN SERVICEMEN.

IN A STATEMENT RELEASED IN HANOI AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY, THE NORTH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SAID IT "REJECTS THE DISTORTING AND SLANDEROUS CONTENTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATIONPZ ABOUT THE INCIDENT SATURDAY IN WHICH AN UNARMED AMERICAN OFFICER AND A SOUTH VIETNAMESE PILOT WERE KILLED AT A SEARCH SITE.

HOWEVER, THE STATEMENT DID NOT DIRECTLY DENY THAT COMMUNIST TROOPS HAD CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK, WHICH AMERICAN OFFICIALS DESCRIBED AS AN AMBUSH.

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SAID THAT UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT, BEFORE ANY SEARCHES ARE CARRIED OUT "THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES WILL TOGETHER DETERMINE WHICH ZONE OF CONTROL" A SITE IS LOCATED IN ". . . AND ACCORDINGLY THE UNITED STATES WILL KNOW FROM WHICH SIDE IT SHOULD REQUEST ASSISTANCE IN THE SEARCH."

BY FAILING TO APPROACH THE JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION FOR SUCH A DETERMINATION BEFORE SENDING OUT ITS SEARCH TEAM, THE STATEMENT SAID, THE U.S. HAD COMMITTED AN "OBVIOUSLY ILLEGAL ACT."...

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(END FSOATERIAL NOT FOR PUBLICATION) ITEM

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