

(Morgan Gandy)

SAIGON 30200 (UPIS) North Vietnamese pilots are being trained during the American bombing pause to operate the Soviet-made, double-the-speed-of-sound MIG 21 repeat MIG 21 jet interceptors, authoritative sources announced today.

The ~~is~~ announcement came amid growing fears by American military commanders and South Vietnamese government officials that the bombing pause has dragged on too long—and in fact may not be resumed.

"I would not even guess whether or not the bombing pause will be resumed at all," one authoritative source explained. "It's up to President Johnson—and I'm in no position to read his mind."

The training program for the North Vietnamese jet pilots is known to be conducted north of the capital city Hanoi—the planes have been flying about in daylight hours—but not in the southern portion of the Communist country, these sources reported.

"It's very logical that during the stand-down in American airpower, the North Vietnamese have got more airspace to practice in without their neophytes getting shutdown," one source explained.

(More Malloy---BD)

first add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x the source explained x x x

The MIG 21s--"their first line aircraft"--are capable of carrying air-to-air missiles, but it is currently known whether the ~~these~~ ^{the} planes in North Vietnam are carrying such lethal weapons. A dangerous interceptor even without missiles, the ~~fast~~ speed of the MIG 21 is roughly equal to that of America's fastest jet--the ~~Phantom~~ droopy-nosed Phantom, which the Unistates Airforce, Navy and Marines have previously used to ramm sow bombs and rockets over North Vietnamese ~~military~~ military targets before the "stand-down" began on Christmas Even last year. The MIG 21 ~~is~~ is roughly equivalent to the Unistates Air Force FFF-104 repeat onehundred four "Starfighter" interceptor, which is being phased out of the American inventories.

(More Malloy--BD)

second add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x american inventories x x x

There is not yet evidence that Chicoms or Soviet pilots are flying the MIG2 MIG 21s, these authoritative sources reported, nor is there any evidence that the planes are bearing Chicom ~~markings~~ ^{still} insignia. Intelligence sources report that Communist China is believed to be ~~still~~ unable to manufacture such sophisticated aircraft as the MIG 21s.

The sources said that the number of aircraft within North Vietnam still numbers roughly seventyfive planes, but "there has been an increase in the quality of the aircraft when the MIG 21s came in to replace other planes,"

(More Malloy--BD)

In related developments, the sources reported:

1. During the ~~BEBI~~ bombing pause, the North Vietnamese ~~insurgents~~ are believed to have made ~~repair~~ repairs ^{on} to all the main road and railroad lines of communication--including the two lines leading into Communist China. ~~Repair material~~ Necessary material for future repairs is believed to be already stockpiled.

"Trucks convoys are moving in daytime conditions in North Vietnam, roads have been bypassed or repaired, mobile pontoon bridges are being used and all the main lines are trafficable, thus improving Hanoi's logistical network," the source said.

2. Aye "relatively small number" of truck convoys have been traveling--both day and night--on roads in southern Laos which lead directly into northern ~~provinces~~ provinces of South Vietnam.

"We ~~know~~ see these truck convoys from time to time," the source said. "But, of course, it's very difficult to locate ~~in~~ infiltration by foot."

(More Malloy--BD)

3. ~~if~~ ^{is} "significant change" in North Vietnamese anti-aircraft capabilities is expected within the next three months as the result of ^{to Hanoi BY} visit ~~of~~ Soviet delegation ^{led by} top Kremlin aide Alexander Shelepin in ^{EARLY} early January.

"Shelepin probably gave Ho Chi Minh another hand-out-- and most of ~~that~~ this will probably be anti-aircraft equipment, but there hasn't been enough time to move the equipment in yet," the source said.

The ~~source~~ ^{is} official ~~is~~ said ^{the} number of "active, manned and equipped" surface-to-air ~~is~~ missile sites remains at between fifteen and twenty with "many more" potential sites already laid out to move more equipment into.

"They can ^{the missile equipment} move ^{adds} to these potential sites in a short period of time and that ^{adds} to the complexity of attacking the missile sites," the source said.

(Cabling this since other specials also have it).

Edn (Endit--Maloy Malloy--BD)