

# North Viet Bombed Again; We Clam Up on U.S. Role

By Beverly Deepe  
A Special Correspondent

DA NANG,  
South Viet Nam.

Twenty-six South Vietnamese Skyraiders, at least two of them piloted by Americans, yesterday rained 60 tons of bombs and rockets on a North Vietnamese island naval

base. They were accompanied by American jets which pounded defending anti-aircraft batteries.

United States spokesmen, following a new security policy, refused to disclose how many American planes were involved in this fifth air attack on North Viet Nam in the last five weeks. They also

would not say what bases the U. S. jets flew from, although it was believed they were Navy planes operating from carriers in the South China Sea.

The target was Tiger Island, a square-mile speck 15 miles off the North Vietnamese coast and 18 miles above the North-South Vietnamese border. Military installations there were "totally destroyed," a South Vietnamese spokesman said.

The island, described as a source of seaborne supplies for the Communist Viet Cong guerrillas, was the site of a radar station, which could spot planes approaching from the south, supply depots and barracks, the spokesman said. It was defended by 12 heavy gun positions and 49 automatic weapons positions.

North Viet Nam claimed one of the attacking planes was shot down in the sea. But both U. S. and South Vietnamese spokesmen said no planes were lost although some were hit by anti-aircraft fire.

The refusal of U. S. Embassy and military spokesmen to give details on the Amer-

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ican role in the raid was a departure from previous policy. In the past, the spokesmen have revealed the approximate though not exact number of U. S. planes involved and their bases.

The Embassy spokesman said that henceforth these details, and the amount of bombs or rockets expended by the U. S. planes, would not be disclosed when the attacks are made jointly with the South Vietnamese. But when attacks are made solely by U. S. planes, he said, the number of aircraft will be given out.

He said the new policy was made necessary for military security reasons "which I myself do not understand."

The spokesman said the policy was outlined in a six-page compilation of messages on security received from the Pentagon. He emphasized that the loss of any American planes will be disclosed, whether or not they are flying with the South Vietnamese.

"We have not encountered any explanation of this that makes any sense," commented one U. S. official.

Brig. Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky, South Vietnamese Air Force commander who led the at-

tack yesterday, said the ground fire was fairly heavy but the defending guns had been softened up by the American jets before the Skyraiders went in.

He added that the attacking planes doubled back on the island after first passing it in a feint at the port city of Dong Hoi, which was hit on Feb. 7 in the first of the current air strikes.

One of the Skyraiders was flown by Col. Ralph Newman of Lafayette, Ind., director of operations for the U. S. Air Force advisory group at Da Nang. Another was flown by another U. S. colonel, who could not be identified.

As in the last raid against North Viet Nam on March 2—when more than 160 U. S. and South Vietnamese planes pounded a naval base and a border supply depot—yesterday's attack was described not as retaliation for a specific Communist assault but rather as defense against overall Red aggression.

At Da Nang, the 3,500-man U. S. Marine force moved in to guard the U. S. air base there suffered its first casualties last night when a Marine guard fired on a returning patrol in the belief they were Red guerrillas. One Marine was killed and two others wounded.