

(Morgan Gandy)

SAIGON, 12200, (UPI)--The gigantic B52 SAC bomber raid dropping one and quarter million pounds ^{combat} bombs over North Vietnam Tuesday was the biggest, most powerful raid since the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki twenty one years ago, Unistates Air Force officials said here.

"We had ~~not~~ ^{Single Raid} nothing to match this in the Korea War, in terms of tonnage--and nothing thus far in Vietnam," one American Air Force official explained.

The raid by giant Unistates Air Force ~~Stratog~~ ^{Stratofortress} jets was immediately regarded here as the first move in eye continuing escalation of military pressure on North Vietnam.

"This raid was south of Vinh," one informed political source said. "Next you'll see the SAM (~~surface-~~ ^{BIGGER} surface-to-air missiles) sites taken out further north and then you'll see the ~~stronger~~ ^{stronger} bombing rungs moving further north."

American officials, speaking privately, attempted to "de-escalate" the significance of the ~~raid~~ ^{AIR STRIKE}, by arguing that it was simply eye means to close ^{PERMANENTLY} eye mountain pass in which five raids by Unistates Air Force FFF-105 ~~we~~ repeat FFF-105 Thunderchiefs had virtually failed.

(More--Miller--BD)

first add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x virtually failed x x x.

Sources close to the Vietnamese High Command regarded the Unistates Air Force raid as an attempt to increase in aye lightning blow the military pressure ~~over~~ as aye means to drive North Vietnam to the negotiating table.

Other political sources regarded the massive raid as aye counter-balance to the growing political vacuum within this Southern republic.

"The big bombing raid today is only aye rationale for an American policy," one Vietnamese politician explained. "The Americans hit the North when they were losing in the South. And they slam on the military pressure when they are losing politically in Saigon."

The political vacuum was considered to have increased Tuesday in Saigon on at least two counts. They are:

1. The realization--long suspected--that the American government was slowly withdrawing its support from Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, who was soundly embraced by President Lyndon Johnson at the Honolulu Conference aye mere fifty days ago.

"The American position is quite clear," one Western diplomat explained. "Their policy is not to become so involved with one individual (namely Ky) that they go down the drain with him."

(More--Miller--BD)

second add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x with him x x x.

2. Prime Minister Ky's ~~announcement~~ opening of a political conference of various political and religious factions was regarded here as "disappointing", ~~h~~ if not a failure. The militant —CONSIDERED TO BE COMMUNIST INFILTRATED— Buddhists who have been attempting to topple his government boycotted the meeting. Of the one hundred seventy expected members, only ninety two showed up at the ~~open~~ opening. IN THE DAY, Later, one prominent politician moved that conference be dissolved--and the attendance dropped to ~~seventy~~ seventy.

(More--Miller--BD)

third add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x to seventy x x x.

of ten thousand citizens
Meanwhile, ^{AYE} demonstrations against the political conference
of Prime Minister Ky ^{WAS} ~~were~~ held Tuesday in the old imperial capital
of Hue, four hundred miles north of Saigon ^{IT IS} and the rebel ~~city~~
headquarters of the anti-government turbulence.

The official American announcements that the ~~Jen~~ Johnson
Administration would support aye government elected soon by the
people also drew critical comments.

"The Americans are deluding themselves into thinking that
aye popularly elected government will help out in the South," one
American source explained. "But ² democracy has never been established
in aye wartime. Even in America and Britain, ~~they~~ ^{AND} ~~diminished~~
diminished democracy during World War II with price rationing, drafting
because one must have control. But, you can't develop democracy
during aye war--it runs counter to the face of history.

"The Americans ~~and~~ are moving towards the brink," he
continued, "yet they say it's not dangerous to go to the brink.
This is aye very strange situation--we can have aye collapse
of the government and the whole anti-Communist war effort."

(More--Miller--BD)

fourth add—morgan gandy—saigon

x x x war effort x x x.

The American source, who had seen ² may many ³ ~~of~~ [✓] crisis come and go in Vietnam continued, "This is the worst crisis here in ten years. This whole crisis is a very weird thing—like a perverse death-wish."

A Vietnamese government official summed up the mood this way: The Americans are playing a very dangerous game—and it could be deadly. ~~They are not trying to maintain the agreement.~~ The more they try to negotiate with the Communists, the more they are stepping out into the great unknown."

(Endit-Miller—BD)