

BRIEFING NOTES ON PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES RESULTING  
FROM BOMBING OF NORTH VIETNAM

The closest approximation to an official North Vietnam total of casualties -- presumably both military and civilian -- is 75,000. This

Only a few official statements give casualty figures for specific incidents. They indicate total casualties of 692, of which 316 have been specified as killed and 214 as wounded. The North Vietnamese also claim that 124 schools and 30 medical installations have been bombed.

A careful analysis of all materials available

yields a minimum hard estimate of 823 casualties of which 667 were killed and 156 were wounded.

indicates that civil defense measures may be effectively limiting civilian casualties.

At this stage in our analysis we are not ready to attempt a general estimate of total casualties. The evidence available does indicate, however, that the official North Vietnamese claims are patently overdrawn.

Most of the air attacks in North Vietnam have concentrated on an area including only 25 percent of the population, or 4.3 million persons. Within this area a total of 450 strikes -- excluding armed reconnaissance missions -- have been flown against 90 military and 62 economic targets.

These targets are located at 100 geographic points of which 10 are in uninhabited areas, 54 are in rural areas, and 44 are in urban areas. The total population of these points, and consequently the population actually exposed to air attack is 700,000 persons, predominately in urban areas.

Photo-analysis of 5 sample areas -- 2 rural and 3 urban -- indicates bomb damage to civilian buildings surrounding the immediate target area of 1 to 1.5 percent of total buildings in the area. If this damage can be applied to all bombed target areas and if physical damage can be directly equated with casualties, then the maximum estimated civilian casualties would range from 7,000 to 10,000 persons. This estimate does not allow for prior warning of an air attack or other civil defense measures.

The above estimate excludes armed reconnaissance missions. If they were included the number of persons exposed to air attack would increase significantly. A preliminary appraisal of the damage resulting from armed reconnaissance missions also makes it probable that estimated civilian casualties would ~~also~~ increase significantly.