As I am sure you are aware, the Department of Defense has no personnel on the ground in the combat areas in Laos, Cambodia or North Vietnam and, consequently, has no reliable basis to make estimates of the casualties of the conflict. As we have previously reported, our attacks upon enemy targets are and have been limited to military objectives. Any damage done to civilian areas adjacent to these targets are unintended.

The Department of Defense, represented in this opinion by the Offices of General Counsel, and the Judge Advocates General of the Army, Navy and Air Force, does not accept the resolutions adopted by the Institut de Droit International at its Session at Edinburgh, 1969, as an accurate statement of international law relating to armed conflict.

The law between States applicable to armed conflict reflects the willingness of States to accept legal restraints on their conduct or the weapons to be used in such conflicts. A substantial body of the laws of armed conflict is to be found in the widely accepted Hague Conventions of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and in customary international law (i.e. rules that are accepted as law in the practices of States in armed conflict). Particular emphasis for present purposes must be accorded the Annex to Hague Convention #IV of 1907, referred to as the Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.

A summary of the laws of armed conflict, in the broadest terms, reveals certain general principles including the following:

(a) That the right of the parties to a conflict to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited;

(b) That it is prohibited to launch attacks against the civilian population as such; and

(c) That a distinction must be made at all times between persons taking part in the hostilities and members of the civilian population to the effect that the civilians be spared as much as possible.

These general principles were recognized in a resolution unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution dated 23 January 1969 (Resolution 2444 (XXIII)). We regard them as declaratory of existing customary international law.

The principle in (a) restates the humanitarian principle codified in Article 22 of the Hague Regulations. The principle in (b) is to be found in the universally accepted customary international law of armed conflict to the effect that attacking forces are to refrain from making civilians as such the object of armed attack. They are not, however, restrained from attacking military targets necessary to attain a military objective even though there is a risk of incidental casualties or damage to civilian objects or property situated in the vicinity of a legitimate military target.

The principle in (c) addresses primarily the Party exercising control over members of the civilian population. This principle recognizes the interdependence of the civilian community with the overall war effort of a modern society. But its application enjoins the parties controlling the population to use its best efforts to spare the civilian population to the maximum extent feasible so that civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects, incidental to attacks on military objectives, will be minimized as much as possible.

In the application of the laws of war, it is important that there be a general understanding in the world community as to what shall be legitimate military objectives which may be attacked by air bombardment under the limitations imposed by treaty or by customary international law. Attempts to limit the effects of attacks in an unrealistic manner, by definition or otherwise, solely to the essential war making potential of enemy States have not been successful. For example, such attempts as the 1923 Hague Rules of Air Warfare, proposed by an International Commission of Jurists, and the 1956 ICRCP Draft Rules for the Limitation of the Dangers Inured by the Civilian Population in Time of War were not accepted by States and therefore do not reflect the laws of war either as customary international law or as adopted by treaty.

However, by way of acceptable analogy, reference can be made of the Hague Convention #IX of 1907 concerning Bombardment by Naval Forces in Time of War. Articles 3 and 2 of that Treaty would, prima facie, be applicable to air warfare as well as to naval bombardment, providing, in part, that bombardment of "undefended ports, towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings is forbidden," but that:

"Military works, military or naval establishments, depots of arms or war material, workshops, or plant which could be utilized for the needs of the hostile fleet
or army, and the ships of war in the harbor are not, however, included in this prohibition," and the commander of an attacking force "incurs no responsibility for any unavoidable damage which may be caused by a bombardment under such circumstances."

An additional example of a customary rule of international law, applicable by analogy to air warfare, appears in Article 8 of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of May 14, 1954. Under that Article the Contracting Parties recognize that points vulnerable to armed attack in the event of armed conflict include "any large industrial center or... any important military objective constituting a vulnerable point, such as, for example, an aerodrome, broadcasting station, establishment engaged upon work of national defense, a port or railway station of relative importance or a main line of communication."

The test applicable from the customary international law, restated in the Hague-Cultural Property Convention, is that the war making potential of such facilities to a party to the conflict may outweigh their importance to the civilian economy and deny them immunity from attack.

Turning to the deficiencies in the Resolutions of the Institut de Droit International, and with the foregoing in view, it cannot be said that Paragraph 2, which refers to legal restraints that there must be an "immediate" military advantage, reflects the law of armed conflict that has been adopted in the practices of States. Moreover, the purported legal restraints in paragraph 7 and 8 on weapons per se and on the use of weapons do not accurately reflect the existing laws of armed conflict nor can they find support in the practices of States from which that law might be said to be emerging.

The existing laws of armed conflict do not prohibit the use of weapons whose destructive force cannot be limited to a specific military objective. The use of such weapons is not prescribed when their use is necessarily required against a military target of sufficient importance to outweigh inevitable, but regrettable, incidental casualties to civilians and destruction of civilian objects.

The major preambular paragraph of the Resolution proclaiming that recourse to force is prohibited in international relations is incorrect, and is inconsistent with the United Nations Charter as well.

As in other branches of international law, the law applicable to armed conflict develops only to the extent that Governments are willing to accept new binding restraints. In the search for such a consensus which is now in progress by the International Committee of the Red Cross as well as by the United Nations, resolutions such as those of the Institute of International Law form a valuable basis for discussion and consideration. But, as indicated here, it cannot be said that all of the provisions of these resolutions reflect the practice of States under the belief that international law demands such practice.

These, like many similar statements, ignore the variable factors of military necessity. Real protection of civilians and the civilian population in time of armed conflict will come from realistic restraints, widely accepted and practiced by the world community, reflecting in their formulation informed analyses of military and political strategies, tactics and technology.

With reference to your inquiry concerning the rules of engagement governing American military activity in Indochina, you are advised that rules of engagement are directives issued by competent military authority which delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States Forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with the enemy.

These rules are the subject of constant review and command emphasis. They are changed from time to time to conform to changing situations and the demands of military necessity. One critical and unchanging factor is their conformity to existing international law as reflected in the Hague Conventions of 1907 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949, as well as with the principles of customary international law of which UNGA Resolution 2444 (XXIII) is deemed to be correct restatement.

The draft proposals prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross were submitted for consideration and are presently being considered in the ongoing process of debate, discussion and conference which has taken place in two major conferences of governmental legal experts in Geneva in 1971 and 1972 and by a separate panel of independent experts in 1970. The positions of the United States delegations to these conferences take into account the position of other governments as they are presented.
The fragmentary information relayed through you by Mr. Clark from the North Vietnamese purporting to identify locations where collateral damage is alleged to have been done to other than military targets is generally too vague and imprecise to facilitate a meaningful search of records of air operations in North Vietnam. For example, the "map" provided by the North Vietnamese through Mr. Clark to you is in fact no more than a free-hand sketch, with the alleged damage areas shown by splotches measuring about 10 kilometers across. It is indicated in the letter from Mr. Clark to you, we note, that he has provided to you so far only partial data in his possession. Under those circumstances, particularly in view of the patently propagandistic character of the allegations by the North Vietnamese with reference to bombing of dikes, as noted above, it would appear to serve no useful purpose on the basis of such fragmentary data to further pursue an extended study of photography, which for military security reasons, would mostly not be releasable to the public even if identified.

I would like to reiterate that it is recognized by all states that they may not lawfully use their weapons against civilian population or civilians as such, but there is no rule of international law that restrains them from using weapons against enemy armed forces or military targets. The correct rule of international law which has applied in the past and continued to apply to the conduct of our military operations in Southeast Asia is that "the loss of life and damage to property must not be out of proportion to the military advantage to be gained." A review of the operating authorities and rules of engagements for all of our forces in Southeast Asia, in air as well as ground and sea operations, by my office reveals that not only are such operations in conformity with this basic rule, but that in addition, extensive constraints are imposed to avoid if at all possible the infliction of casualties on noncombatants and the destruction of property other than that related to the military operations in carrying out military objectives.

Sincerely,

J. Fred Buzhardt.

II. TEXT OF CHAIRMAN'S LETTER TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MELVIN R. LAIRD

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,

Hon. Melvin R. Laird,
Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary: I appreciate receiving the Department of Defense's response of November 8, 1971, to my letter of May 10, 1971. However, the Department's response, by Mr. J. Fred Buzhardt, General Counsel, neglects several items raised in my letter. I suggested in this letter, that, as responses are prepared to individual items, they be forwarded to my office. Because nothing has been received since early November, and in the light of the growing Congressional and public concern over the kinds of items raised in my letter, I am writing to you again, and would appreciate the Department's comments on the items below.

1. The Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees again requests a complete glossary of terms which have been used, officially and unofficially, to describe various American or American-supported military activities in Indochina. Although it was helpful to receive a copy of MAOV Directive 525-18, "Rules of Engagement for the Employment of Firepower in the Republic of Vietnam", the glossary of terms contained therein was minimal. Moreover, Mr. Buzhardt's letter failed to comment on the projected impact upon civilians of the military activities associated with those terms.

2. I would also like to request again, for use by the Subcommittee, a copy of the full text of the "Report of the Department of Army Review of the Preliminary Investigation into the My Lai Incident", commonly referred to as the Feers report.

3. The intensity and the impact on the civilian population of the American-sponsored air war over all of Indochina has evoked much public controversy and concern. The recently increased bombing, especially, raises again the kinds of questions I included in my letter of May 10. What is the history of the air war over Indochina, as measured by annual bomb tonnages and the annual number of aircraft sorties over each of the countries in the area, including North Vietnam? In separate calculations for northern and southern Laos, and for North Vietnam, what is the monthly rate of sorties, identified by the kinds of aircraft
employed, since January 1968? What is the monthly tonnage of ordnance for each
area, and over the same period of time? How would the Department characterize
the kinds of ordnance used? And what are the Department's estimates of civilian
casualties, resulting from aerial bombardments, for each country in Indochina?
The Subcommittee is particularly interested in available estimates on war dam-
age to the civilian population in North Vietnam.

4. At a hearing on May 7, 1970, the exchange below took place. In the absence
of a satisfactory response at that time, or since then, it would be helpful to re-
ceive the Department's full comment now, but in the context of all of Indochina
and of developments throughout the area subsequent to May 7, 1970. In this con-
nection, my reference to "confidential materials" obviously applies only to open
sessions of the Subcommittee, such as those in which Mr. Doolin has participated.

Mr. Doolin. In terms of our air attacks, Senator, I believe my statement is as
far as I can go in open session; it accurately reflects the operating authorities. As
I indicated, all air strikes, except some, are validated by the Ambassador to Laos
and to my knowledge maximum care is taken to avoid the causing of civilian
casualties... .

Senator Kennedy. Well, are these limitations really any different from
Vietnam... .

Mr. Doolin. I can only say on the basis of the information available, the max-
imum care is taken to avoid civilian casualties wherever possible.

Senator Kennedy. I'm sure maximum care is taken. I want to know what the
results are.

Now, you must know from aerial photography how many villages have actually
been destroyed—what the size was of villages where you take pictures one day
and then again the next day; you can tell where buildings were, whether they
are up or down; and you can make some estimation as to whether there had been
people in the village or not. Have you done any kind of work like this?

Mr. Doolin. Mr. Chairman, there is some information available and I will be
pleased to prepare a report on the subject and submit it to you and correlate it
with the rules of engagement which I will go into in much more detail either in
executive session or private correspondence.

Senator Kennedy. I don't think any of us are looking for confidential materials
here. I think we are trying to find out whether there are procedures used in
bombings, and whether you follow those procedures to the best of your ability. We
are interested in what the results of these procedures are in terms of civilian
casualties and the creation of refugees.

Mr. Doolin. Well, as I indicated in my statement, Mr. Chairman, the air activi-
ties are with the approval of the Forward Air Guides. These men are Laotian,
English-speaking; they avoid towns and these strikes are validated by the U.S.
Embassy in Vientiane.

Senator Kennedy. That, of course—

Mr. Doolin. They might put them as close to the scene as possible.

Senator Kennedy. Well, now I'm interested in the performance chart as well
as what the procedure chart shows. I'm sure we have outlined carefully prescribed
procedures to avoid the creation of civilian casualties and refugees. But I'd be
interested in what the results of those procedures have been as seen from aerial
photography and from other kinds of intelligence activities you have access to and
whether you are sufficiently concerned about these problems that you are taking
these precautions.

Mr. Doolin. I'll see if I can provide that to you, Senator.

5. There are currently in existence manuals on rules of land warfare and on
rules of naval warfare. What is the status of proposals on a similar manual
relating to the rules of air warfare? Also, what program of instruction pertaining
to the protection of civilians in air warfare is currently in use at the Air Force
Academy? Does the Department accept the statement of the Institute of Inter-
national Law on the nature of military targets (resolutions at Edinburgh, 1969)
as an accurate restatement of international law? Does the Department accept
the "Rules for the Limitation of the Dangers Incurred by the Civilian Popula-
tion in Time of War"—prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross
and accepted as standards for the protection of such populations, and, if not, are there
specific changes the Department would suggest? Are the classified
rules of engagement governing American military activities in Indochina
fully compatible with the general rules established by the ICRC and the general
standards set by the Institute of International Law? And what is the Depart-
ment's attitude toward the draft protocol on aerial bombardment and other
matters which was submitted on May 3, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to the Geneva Conference of Government Experts on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts?

6. Finally, on the basis of the Subcommittee's hearings and study over recent years, on April 29, 1971, I recommended that the President create a permanent Military Practices Review Board to advise the Joint Chiefs of Staff on standards and procedures designed to keep American military policies and practices within the bounds of simple humanitarian and international legal obligations, and to monitor the implementing of the rules of engagement governing American armed forces in active combat. I further recommended that the Review Board be appointed by the President at an early date in consultation with the appropriate committees of the Congress; that it be composed of high level officials in government as well as recognized non-governmental experts on humanitarian problems and international law; and that it be attached to the National Security Council. The recommendation has generated much positive response among persons in government and elsewhere, and, again, I would appreciate very much learning the Department's views on this matter.

In conclusion, let me say once again that I fully appreciate the lengthy nature of these inquiries. But, in view of the widespread Congressional and public interest in the issues raised by these inquiries, I strongly feel that meaningful responses will contribute to greater understanding and will be beneficial to all concerned. I am extremely hopeful that it will be possible to include a good deal of the responses in the public record. I would also like to suggest that, as responses are prepared to individual items, they be forwarded to my office.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy.
APPENDIX II

SELECTED PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARY ON THE SITUATION IN NORTH VIETNAM

I. EYE-WITNESS REPORTS

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 22, 1972]

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: HANOI HAS ADJUSTED TO BOMBING

(A Series of Reports by Richard Dudman for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch)

North Vietnam has learned to a striking degree to live with some of the history of warfare. A drive down Highway 1A from Hanoi southward tells how.

A half dozen or more big Czech, Chinese or Soviet trucks were standing parked every few miles under the branches of the roadside line of trees in the late afternoon sunlight, ready to start rolling again when the sun went down. Each group of trucks was hardly big enough for a decent bombing target, even if it could have been seen from the air.

Stacks of olive drab shell cases lined the road for a half-mile at a stretch. These ammunition dumps were separated, so that a lucky hit would detonate only a few.

One stretch of highway was a roadside truck repair depot a quarter mile long. Rusting, crumpled hulks of bombed trucks had been pulled out of the way, and their engines and wheel assemblies had been cannibalized to patch up other trucks and keep them moving.

Another section of the roadside was a strung-out tractor station. A dozen tall rubber-tired Czech tractors, apparently brand new, stood under the tree line ready to be hitched to four-wheel trailers to keep civilian and war goods flowing southward.

"Are these tractors used on the Ho Chi Minh Trail," I asked, wondering if my government-assigned escorts would deny that they were sending men and supplies through Laos to South Vietnam.

"No, we need the tractors for the flooded roads here in the rainy season," replied one of the five escorts without hesitation. "The Ho Chi Minh Trail is really a series of parallel highways. Our trucks can drive it."

From time to time, we passed the burned-out carcasses of railroad tank cars or freight cars and stretches of railroad track twisted by bombing hits on the right-of-way that runs alongside the highway.

But new track already was in place, laid on a fresh gravel roadbed where the craters had been neatly filled.

Extra rails were stacked every few miles beside the track. A group of women were casting new concrete ties in forms under a tree. Each was two short lengths of concrete joined by angle iron to save cement. Finished ties were stacked along the tracks ready for emergency repairs.

One railroad bridge was still standing, although a half dozen bomb craters around the approaches showed that it had been a target.

"You see, the laser-guided smart bombs hit only the rice paddies and not the bridge," said one of the escorts.

The next railroad bridge had been hit squarely and destroyed. But some of the I-beams stockpiled along the right-of-way had been used to lay a replacement bridge across the canal.

Huge power shovels stood ready to help with repairs, as did lines of truck-mounted cranes parked under the broad branches of the trees. Drums of asphalt could be seen along the highway to provide a new hard surface within hours of a bombing strike.

But much of the work is 17-century style hand labor. A man with a sledge hammer was breaking big stones into little ones for the roadside stockpiles of various-sized rock for quick highway repairs. Women with pairs of baskets on their shoulders were carrying earth and mud for the repair jobs. Other women packed stone into place to fill a hole by hand.

(61)
Ox carts carried repair materials, sacks of rice and drums of oil and gasoline, as much as two tons to the load. A modern touch was the use of salvaged truck wheels. The rubber tires and ball bearings made the loads easier to pull, and the big yellow oxen sometimes even trotted.

At the Dao River, actually a broad canal one third the width of the Mississippi River, one of the highway bridges has been wrecked by well-placed bombs. An excellent pontoon bridge already had been built in its place. Our old Russian Volga sedan crossed at 15 miles an hour, after a wait for a women sentry to get a telephone call that the one-way traffic had been reversed.

The bridge rested on a line of scow-shaped barges, formed from two sheet-metal halves, each about the size and shape of the back of a dump truck, bolted together end to end. These were anchored by steel cable against the six or seven-knot current. Parallel steel beams ran across the row of pontoons and were topped by crosswise boards to form the bridge surface.

At each end were spare pontoons and stacks of steel beams and boards, ready to build a substitute bridge if this one was knocked out. Roadside construction of these pontoons was a common sight, where a gang of men and women could be seen with a stack of sheet steel and a welding torch, putting them together one at a time.

At another collapsed bridge, one of North Vietnam's simple ferries took trucks and cars across six or eight at a time, with a horde of pedestrians and bicyclists filing in empty places.

The ferry was a steel barge, with a hand-operated, counter-weighted ramp at each end. It was powered by a small diesel riverboat chained to one side.

Night fell, and modern fork-lifts began to load crates and oil drums aboard the trucks. Drivers gunned their engines, and the trucks began pulling out into the highway to begin the trip south.

Chinese-built jeeps and buses began to appear on the road. Before long, motor traffic in each direction was moving at the rate of three or four a minute, going 30 to 40 miles an hour.

Most ran with shielded headlights or by the dim glow of special green headlights. Palm branches covered metal racks extending out over most of the windshields to prevent a stray beam of light from being reflected up to a U.S. bomber. Buses were painted with elaborate camouflage patterns.

A whistle sounded, and there was the chug of a steam engine. The night train from Namdinh pulled into sight, carrying 18 passenger cars to Hanoi. "The train is hidden out in the countryside during the day," said one of the escorts. "We wouldn't want it in the station in the daytime."

After dark, he said, it goes into the ruined train station, picks up its passengers, and makes the trip to Hanoi. He said that another train ran all the way to Vinh, 185 miles south of Hanoi, with occasional interruptions when the bombs find their mark.

He said that this main line used to run all the way to Saigon but that the stretch south of Vinh had not operated since the Communist Viet Minh forces tore up the tracks in the war against the French in the early 1950s.

The occasional huge SAMs that had been seen parked under the trees also had been pulled out and were being hauled up and down the highway. The big-finned rockets, two feet in diameter and perhaps 20 feet long, were on light two-wheel mobile launchers fitted with some sort of fuel tank and were hauled by truck or even a jeep.

The SAM launchers appeared surprisingly mobile, as well as surprisingly cheap. The simple steel frames could be put together for a few hundred dollars apiece at the side of the road, just as the pontoons were.

These and other observations in Hanoi and in traveling 750 miles on trips south and east of the capital led to the clear impression that North Vietnam has learned to live with the bombing.

The North Vietnamese response involved first of all the dispersal of everything essential to operating the economy and carrying on the war. Arms, food, industry, schools, essential services—all were spread out along the roads and through the villages. The country is one vast warehouse and factory. It affords a poor target, unless the entire country is to be considered a target for saturation bombing.

Camouflage and shelter were another part of the response. An official said that the trees that line every highway and back road were mostly planted since 1954.
for two purposes—to conceal trucks and supplies from the air raids that some
day would come, and to provide lumber for new houses once the war was over.
Another official doubted that the bombing was foreseen and said not all the
trees would have to be cut down, but he conceded that they served both purposes.
Bomb shelters are everywhere. Huge caves lined the bases of the strangely
shaped mountains that jut up from the rice paddies, many with industrial ma­
chinery visible inside.
Offices and shops and hotels have big group shelters—vaulted concrete rooms
10 or 15 feet below surface.
And there are probably millions of individual bomb shelters, manholes dug in
the sidewalk and parks of the cities and along every roadside through the country.
They were made of plain dirt in the country. But in the city they were lined
with concrete lids—enough to protect the occupant from anything but a direct hit.
An official said there were at least two shelters for each person in the country—
one at his home, another at his place of work, and sometimes more en route.
Still another part of North Vietnam’s response to the bombing was a make-do
system of continually improvising to solve problems. Stacks of four-inch or five­
ingh pipe seen along the highway were probably parts of one of the pipelines
that are used to carry oil and gasoline from China now that U.S. mining of
North Vietnamese ports cuts off sea shipments.
There was no sign of a gasoline shortage or even of any efforts at conservation
of fuel.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 23, 1972]

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: HANOI NO HURRY TO UNIFY COUNTRY
(By Richard Dudman)

North Vietnam’s Premier Pham Van Dong has ruled out any negotiated settle­
ment of the war as long as the United States continues to support the Saigon
regime of President Nguyen Van Thieu.
The North Vietnamese leader’s firm position, when taken together with Presi­
dent Nixon’s equally firm support of Thieu, contradicts widespread speculation
that a negotiated peace is likely before or shortly after the U.S. presidential elec­
tion Nov. 7.

At the same time, in a 90-minute interview Sept. 14 in Hanoi, Dong expressed
flexibility on other negotiating issues. He said that he was in no hurry to reunify
North and South Vietnam, and suggested that the South would not necessarily
be a Communist society after eventual reunification.
Finally, he said he wanted to emphasize that North Vietnam had no desire to
humiliate the United States. On the contrary, he said, the Vietnamese people
hoped for friendly relations with the American people.
“We know very well the history of the American people, beginning with your
revolution for independence and freedom,” he said.

Dong, a longtime associate of the late President Ho Chi Minh, greeted this
reporter in his private bomb shelter under the presidential palace, which until
1954 was the residence of the French governor general. The air-raided siren had
sounded a few minutes before the 10 a.m. appointment.
Only one guard could be seen in the area, a soldier with a rifle standing across
the street from the main entrance to the block-square grounds surrounding the
ornate mansion. The scene was in contrast to President Nguyen Van Thieu’s
palace in Saigon, which is surrounded by barbed wire and has a sand-bagged
machine gun nest at each corner and a helicopter for a quick getaway in the
event of attack.

Premier Dong is said to spend much of his time outside Hanoi, in one or
another of the secret evacuation strongholds for key officials, intended to dis­
perse them and protect them against U.S. air attack.
The 64-year-old revolutionary leader had been out of sight for two months,
until Independence Day observances two weeks earlier. There had been reports
that he was ill, and that was the excuse that had been given when he failed to
meet Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny when Podgorny visited Hanoi in August.

Dong smiled and spoke animatedly as he motioned his guest to a chair beside
his emergency bed, hung with mosquito netting, and ordered tea. He appeared in
good health. Unlike most Vietnamese, he wore shoes and socks instead of sandals
with his white sport shirt and trousers.
Several distant explosions were heard, but it was not clear whether they were American bombs or the catapult take-offs of North Vietnamese MiG fighters. When the all-clear sounded after half an hour, he led the way upstairs to this big sitting room.

His remarks about a negotiated peace came in the context of comments on a new policy statement by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, the political arm of the Vietcong. The PRG's Sept. 11 statement reiterated the Communist side's proposal for a tripartite transitional government in Saigon that would include representatives of the PRG, the Saigon regime without Thieu and neutralist groups.

The PRG said that it was prepared to accept a provisional government that would be dominated by neither side so that "Neither a Communist regime nor a U.S. stooge regime shall be imposed on South Vietnam."

"The new element," Dong said, "is that they have explained that there must be a coalition government, and they have proved that the creation of a coalition government is necessary because of the political situation in South Vietnam, from the point of view of its usefulness."

Dong gave this position his firm backing, saying: "It is impossible not to form a coalition government if we want to have a solution of the South Vietnam problem. This is the realistic, just and honorable way to end the war and open a way for healing the war wounds and rehabilitating and developing South Vietnam."

He asked what it meant when the United States and the Saigon regime opposed coalition government.

"It means that they want to prolong the war," he said. "There can be no other explanation. It is not possible to say that the formation of a coalition government means the imposition of a Communist government."

One of his principal aides elaborated on his hard line in a separate private conversation, saying that the heart of the problem was the nature of the government in Saigon after the war is ended.

The aide contended that President Nixon's eight-point proposal of last Jan. 25 was a formula for keeping the Thieu regime in power. He reasoned that Thieu would remain in control for the first five months of the six months leading to supervised elections and that a Thieu supporter, the chairman of the Senate, would take charge for the final month.

Dong described the sending of American troops to South Vietnam as "the root cause of the war."

"We did not invite them," he said. "On the contrary, we demand that they go out. We have been fighting against them for more than 10 years."

The premier spoke emphatically about eventual reunification of Vietnam, a goal that is marked by the names Reunification Lake and Reunification Hotel, the principal accommodation for foreign visitors in Hanoi.

"For the Vietnamese people, reunification of the country is a supreme demand," he said. "You cannot understand all we feel about this. We can say that every Vietnamese lives in the belief that the country must be unified."

But the timing, he went on, could not be stated precisely, and certainly it would be a matter of years rather than months.

"Generally speaking, we are not in a hurry," he said. "We have the utmost respect for the aspirations of our countrymen in the South. "We have the utmost respect to their aspirations. Reunification will be accomplished in a very democratic, peaceful and equal way."

Asked whether reunification meant economic as well as political integration, he replied that the form would depend on discussion by the two sides.

He was asked directly, "Will South Vietnam be a Communist society after reunification?"

"That is covered in the spirit of my first answer," he replied. "We will discuss that among ourselves. We will not do anything to impose our will. That is why, even if I have some ideas of my own, I cannot carry out those ideas by myself."

He added that "the Vietnamese people in the North" would never forget the sacrifices of their countrymen in the South in 30 years of fighting. He said both groups would bear in mind those sacrifices.
The premier described the American air bases in Thailand as a "constant menace," saying that those and other U.S. military bases in the Pacific, and the ships and planes of the U.S. 7th Fleet, would require future vigilance.

He said that despite "a lot of propaganda about the withdrawal of U.S. troops" from Vietnam, the fact was that the United States had been waging a very big war in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia for several months, using some 200,000 men including those at the bases and in the fleet.

He declined to discuss the precise means by which North Vietnam apparently continues to import military and other supplies despite the U.S. blockade. Nor would he discuss private talks between the U.S. presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger and Hanoi's special envoy to the Paris peace talks, Le Duc Tho. He said he had promised to say nothing about the private talks.

As for whether he had an interest or preference in the outcome of the U.S. presidential election in November, he replied:

"I think I cannot answer that question. But I think that the war in Vietnam and Indochina will make some contribution to this."

At another point, Dong alluded to his hopes to influence the U.S. government through the American people. He said that the American people did not yet realize that his people wanted peace, not continuation of war, and were fighting simply for their independence and freedom.

"When the American people realize this, such a peace will come," he said. "Up to now, they do not understand it. Whether the American leaders understand it or not depends on American public opinion."

"This is something very new in the political life of the American people."

ADAPTING TO BOMBING

A final question was how it was that the people of North Vietnam could function so effectively under bombing and shelling by the most powerful military force in the world.

"This you will have to answer for yourself—you have been here two weeks," he said. "My answer on your behalf will have no value. But since you have asked it, I will answer.

"We have been able to do so because we—all the Vietnamese people—have always thought in terms of what President Ho Chi Minh said, that nothing is more precious than independence and freedom.

"When people think in these terms, they can do everything. They can do what other people cannot understand, and they may even surprise themselves. And they can do it in the required time. We can continue to fight for many years, and we can grow stronger and win more victories. We can achieve our objective—peace, independence and freedom. If I wanted to make a longer explanation, I would have to talk to you from now until tomorrow."

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 24, 1972]
The first explosions were North Vietnamese catapaults that sent MiG interceptors into the air to try to drive off the American planes.

A few minutes later came the first F-4 Phantoms, a flight of four silver bombers flashing in the morning sun. The pounding of artillery mingled with the rattle of machine guns as Hanoi's formidable antiaircraft defenses went into action.

The planes wheeled across the blue sky, dodging the brown puffs of exploding shells. One antiaircraft crew could be seen firing from the roof of the National Bank building a block from the hotel.

For an American, finding himself under the bombs being dropped by his own country, the sensation was a special one. There was no sign of fear or panic among the people of Hanoi. Instead, there were exclamations of excitement as each new flight of bombers wheeled into sight and new bursts of flak threatened them.

The bombs this time were at a distance. The government later reported that the nearest casualties were nine persons killed in a northern suburban district called Donganh—the mother, father and four children in one family and three children in another.

After the planes sped off and the all-clear sounded, Hanoi returned to the calm of a Sunday morning that had begun with the tolling of the Roman Catholic cathedral bells for 4:30 and 5:30 a.m. masses.

Three hundred persons had attended the first mass and 500 the second including many children and young men and women as well as the elderly. Their chanting and singing indicated that they knew the service well. Many parked their bicycles in the side aisles.

After the raid, while the morning was still cool, families strolled in Reunification Park, eating ice cream on a stick purchased from a vendor or stopping at a terrace cafe beside a 7-acre lake for strong, sweet, iced coffee.

Little boys swam and fished in the lake. Looking at them, one of my escorts said with mild disapproval. "It's against the regulations now, but we don't always bother to stop them." Boating has been discontinued for the duration of the war.

A dozen older boys practiced soccer on an expanse of dirt under the trees. School was to start Sept. 11, and many boys and girls had remained in Hanoi for the rest of the summer vacation before going out to their evacuation villages.

Two women used hand shears to trim the grass, saving the cuttings in big baskets for feed for the oxen used to haul much of the freight in Hanoi and the countryside.

Quiet and cleanliness are what strike the visitor first in Hanoi. Saigon has similar French colonial architecture, and its older districts could have the same charm except for the blue fumes and roar of motorbikes, the garbage and waste that litters the streets, and the slums, the sidewalk poverty, and the hundreds of beggars and prostitutes.

No prostitutes and only one beggar—an old man seeking alms at the cathedral entrance—were seen in two weeks in Hanoi.

BIKE TRAFFIC

On weekdays, especially on the business streets, things are livelier. An occasional Chinese or Russian-built jeep or a heavy truck breaks the quiet of the usual, bicycle traffic. A train of streetcars, said to have been built in North Vietnam, winds around Redeemed Sword Lake and past the French embassy.

There is constant truck, bicycle and oxcart traffic in and out of the capital. Camouflaged buses and trains appear to carry commuters.

The Paul Doumer Bridge across the Red River in Hanoi, a target of American bombs, was operating only one day in two weeks. The first day repairs were completed and one train had crossed it, then a guided bomb wrecked it again.

Traffic continued to cross the river, regularly but more slowly, by ferry or by a pontoon bridge that was completed the day I left.

Shops of all kinds operate in the morning and late afternoon. There are watch repair shops, photographic studios, sporting goods stores, toy stores and barber shops as well as the more essential food markets, clothing stores, hardware stores and drug stores.

A big downtown department store sells clothing, both custom and ready made, and a wide range of other merchandise including toys and vacuum bottles. Cloth is sold both rationed and, at three times the price, unrationed. A fast-moving line of about 75 persons was at one counter where a clerk sold two boxes of wooden matches to a customer.
Street vendors sell ice cream, sugar-coated crullers, limeade, lottery tickets, packages of tea, combs made of metal from downed American warplanes, soap, toothbrushes and padlocks. They range from a boy with a hand pump and a few tools who will pump up one's tires for 5 xu (about 1 cent) to a stand with spare parts and a hot-patch vulcanizing device.

Nhan Dan, the Communist Party newspaper, goes on sale early every morning at stands around the city. It sells fast, just like the latest edition on an American street corner on a day when a big story is breaking. The price is 5 xu a copy.

**FLOOD PREPARATIONS**

Still, there are reminders of the war. On a side street, men and women weld sheet steel to make little black two-man boats, which an escort says is in preparation for possible widespread floods. The big intersection at the National Theater is covered with concrete pipe sections just cast as liners for the manhole bomb shelters.

Inside the National Bank, tellers painstakingly count and recount currency as they exchange some travelers' checks. The transaction takes a half hour, because the serial number of each bill must be recorded, together with the name of the teller who handled it.

"Foreigners often complain about our banking methods," says the North Vietnamese escort. "We call it the handicraft system."

And for some reason a common sight in the city is the feather duster salesman, with his wares hung on a bamboo pole across his shoulder.

Hanoi is a strange mixture of war and peace.

[From Washington Post, Sept. 25, 1972]

**POW INTERVIEW IS A SET PIECE**

(By Richard Dudman)

Two recently captured U.S. prisoners of war, interviewed in Hanoi, demonstrated good health and spirits despite the formality of a carefully stage-managed meeting with an American reporter.

The men, Air Force officers captured last June, were interviewed by me the evening of Sept. 12.

They are Capt. George Alan Rose, 30, of Fayetteville, Ark., and Lt. Richard Joseph Fulton, 25, of Mesa, Ariz.

They were presented in partial response to a request for a visit to a prisoner camp not yet visited by foreign representatives and for interviews with 10 or more prisoners not yet interviewed or photographed by foreign representatives.

Instead of permitting a visit to a camp even to the so-called Hanoi Hilton visited by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the North Vietnamese authorities arranged that the interview be conducted in a downtown government office two blocks from my hotel.

Neither Rose nor Fulton had been interviewed before. Both had been listed as missing in action until Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) was given a list Aug. 24 of 10 Air Force and Navy officers identified as having been captured in June and July 1972 and held in North Vietnam. The names of Rose and Fulton were on that list.

North Vietnamese authorities asked that the questions be submitted in advance in writing for their approval. They eliminated one of them: "What is your weight, normally and at present?"

The officials observed that Westerners are not used to the Vietnamese diet, possibly with the thought that some loss of weight might be taken as an indication of poor treatment.

Several North Vietnamese were in the room throughout the interview. The three Americans entered the room and sat in three straight chairs that had been placed for them at a table covered with a white cloth and set with flowers, beer, Vietnamese Dien Bien Phu brand cigarettes, and a bowl of cookies.

Two of my government-assigned escorts sat beside me, and a representative of the prisoner camp administration sat at one end of the table. One of the escorts spoke English and could monitor the interview.

The officials permitted the interview to be tape-recorded.
Both pilots first were asked whether they were in good health. Each said he was. Rose said he was not injured when he was shot down June 21, 1972, except for a small cut on the jaw.

"It's healed up now, and I've had no further injuries that have come up as a result of the ejection," he said.

Fulton said he had received some facial cuts and wrenched his shoulder slightly when ejected from his damaged plane June 13, 1972. His captors treated the injuries, and he has had no further trouble, he said.

Rose said he parachuted into a large open field and saw a number of persons running toward him but still some distance off.

"I took off for a heavily wooded area," he said. "But when I was probably halfway there—don't know what the distance was—I heard some voices coming down the trail, and I had to jump into a thicket of brush or bushes, whatever you want to call them," he said.

"I was able to hide for approximately an hour while the people were searching for me. They were moving away from my position and then, as fate would have it, one individual just happened to spot me somehow, and at that time they came and found me."

He said he was taken to a village a mile away, where a truck later came for him.

Fulton said that he was found by a small child after parachuting down and biding for a time.

"Then the village militia came up," he said. "Well, actually the small child was with the village militia. They were about 10 people in all, I guess. And they took me to a nearby village where they fed me and gave me a lot of tea and generally took excellent care of me. And from there I went to another village where I received transportation into Hanoi."

Neither had received any letters or packages from home yet, although they had been permitted to write to their families. Both noted that they had been held for only three months and said they expected mail soon.

Their wives, Rebecca Rose of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., and George Ann Fulton, of Chandler, Ariz., have each received one letter from their husbands through the office of Sen. Kennedy, they said Friday.

Since there was no possibility of taking a private message from the two prisoners, each was asked if he had anything to say to his family, which also would be published.

Rose said, "I just want to assure them that I am in good health, that the treatment's been very good, very fair, and I encourage them to vote for peace, and I love and miss them very much."

Fulton said, "Just tell my wife I love her, and that I'm in very good health and not to worry about me too much."

The pilots then were told that, since they were under detention, they would not be asked any political questions. They were invited, however, to say anything they wanted for publication in the United States.

Rose said: "I would like for all the Americans to ask themselves where this country has gone in the last four years, in the war, in the economy, and in the eyes of the world, and ask them if they can tolerate another four years of this, of this type of leadership.

"I'm sure if they'll—if they read about the war and all the problems that are facing America to come together and time for a change, to change our course, towards peace and good will to all mankind."

Fulton said: "Well, I heartily agree with what Al says there. I'd just have the American people study this war in all its varying aspects and then just become—just become knowledgeable of the situation that we're in over here, that the United States has gotten itself into."

The pilots were asked whether they could say anything about the health, condition and treatment of other U.S. prisoners, who had not been interviewed by visitors from home.

Rose said he could speak only about the group they were in, two of whom had met recently with a Swedish delegation.

"The men in the group are all in good health," he said. "Their treatment has been the same as Dick and I have received. It's been very kind and generous."

"We had one man in the group who broke his arm, either during election or at some point prior to hitting the ground. They had to put it in a cast, and it was taken off last week, and I must say that they did a very good job of repairing the arm—of repair's a good word."
Fulton said he had nothing to add, that Rose had covered the matter.
At the end of the list of questions, the Vietnamese were asked whether the
group of Americans could go on and chat for a while.
"I think keep to the procedure," one of them replied. He permitted time to
make a few pictures and terminated the interview.
Rose said, "Sir, you don't know how happy we were to talk to you. It's great
to see an American."
The pilots were conducted to a Chinese-built jeep in a courtyard outside and
were driven off.
Other efforts to obtain information about Americans missing in Indochina
were unsuccessful.
When a representative in Hanoi of the Communist side in Laos was asked about
any pilots detained and not yet reported in Laos, he said that the U.S.
Air Force had been killing Laotians day and night since May 16, 1964. Every
village and sometimes even a single house is a target, he said.
Our Hevane Phousavath, deputy director of the Lao Patriotic Front Informa-
tion Bureau, went on to say that nonetheless, the front follows a humane policy,
burying the dead, treating the injured and caring for the survivors.
Almost 300 pilots are listed as missing in Laos, and estimates range from 30
to 50 for the number who may still be alive. The official said that 200 to 300
would be too high a figure for the number held by the Lao Patriotic Front.
After telling of the difficulties of reaching the downed pilots in rugged moun-
tain country, he said: "However, a number of American pilots were shot down,
were captured and are detained by us. The problem of U.S. detainees will be
settled after the war. In the present situation, when the United States is stepping
up the air war against our country, it is not favorable for us to announce any-
thing about the captured pilots."
He said that the American people should understand that "The problem of the
captured air pirates was not caused by the Laotian people," but by the Nixon
administration.
"When the U.S. administration is willing to settle the war, to end the war,
this problem will be settled immediately," he said.
North Vietnamese authorities did not respond to a written request for, any
information on newsmen or other U.S. civilians who might be held and, if they
were alive, for authority to interview them.
Particular reference was made to Welles Hangen of NBC News, Sean Flynn
and Dana Stone of Time magazine, and Terry Reynolds of United Press Inter-
national, all missing in Cambodia; Alex Shimkin of Newsweek, missing in South
Vietnam, and Philip Manhard, a State Department official captured in South
Vietnam in 1968.
Ambassador Xiong An of the Cambodian government headed by Prince Noro-
dom Sihanouk now in exile in Peking, offered to make further inquiries.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 26, 1972]

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: HANOI OFFICIALS EMPHASIZE CIVILIAN BOMB CASUALTIES
(By Richard Dudman)

A five-man staff met me at Hanoi's Gialam airport with a huge bouquet of
lotus blossoms.
That reception was followed up next morning at the Thongnhat (reunification)
Hotel with a greeting by their superior, Vu Quoc Uy, vice chairman of the com-
mittee for cultural relations with foreign peoples:
"Welcome to our country. I know that you come as a friend." To keep the
record straight from the start, I replied that I came as an objective reporter.
"We hope that many more objective reporters will come," he said. "We think a
great many Americans do not understand our situation. We believe that the
more the American people learn about the aim of our struggle the more they will
understand us and support us."
In Washington, before my departure for Hanoi, a senior State Department
official had mused: "I wonder how they'll play you—how they'll handle you."
With a careful, arm's length beginning, the answer, in a word, was as a pro-
fessional news reporter—within the limits imposed by wartime secrecy and the
Vietnamese officials' ideas of how to put their best foot forward in the American
press.
At the end of the two weeks, they presented a reasonable bill for room, board and travel (1 dong per kilometer, which comes to about 25 cents a mile).

Although they were addicted to long speeches, the North Vietnamese seemed sometimes to get the point when they were told that the motto of the state of Missouri is "show me."

It soon became clear that North Vietnamese officials were intent on emphasizing civilian bomb casualties and damage, and the allegedly widespread use of antipersonnel weapons.

Another major theme was the line that President Nixon's stubbornness and heartlessness is keeping the war going, whereas the Communist side is willing to make peace if only it can be assured the freedom and independence of all Vietnam.

They also stressed North Vietnam's will and capability to fight or indefinitely if necessary. But they were unwilling to display much evidence to prove that assertion. Such as details on how imported goods move despite the U.S. blockade.

By the time my five government-assigned escorts arrived for our 8 o'clock appointment the first morning, I already had broken one of the security laws they were to lay down. I had taken an hour's pre-breakfast walk alone through downtown Hanoi, taking pictures of street scenes until a man in uniform touched me lightly on the elbow and motioned that I should not photograph the crowd around a cruller vendor's cart.

Unescorted walks were permitted—even encouraged—but use of a camera was provided except when one of the escorts was present.

"If you judge that a photograph is in your interest and it is also in our interest, you may take it," one of them said.

Another rule was that all photographic film would have to be developed before being taken out of the country. They said they would request a waiver for me, and eventually it was granted. I took more than 700 pictures and brought all my film out undeveloped with no difficulty.

Most of the photographic restrictions, it soon was evident, were intended to avoid helping provide the United States with additional bombing targets. Pictures of trains, lines of trucks, ferries and bridges were out. So were any general views that might give locations of camouflaged factories, mobile hospitals or temporary shops and offices of evacuation bays.

It seemed pointless to ask to make pictures of the big SAM missiles in their launcher-trailers along the highways. But close-ups of two anti-aircraft gun crews were permitted.

Members of one of the crews told how they disassembled their 14.5-mm Soviet machinegun and carried it on their backs every few days to a new site together with ammunition, bedding, food and cooking utensils.

Two young women in the crew said they were 19 years old and had been in the militia three years. They make rush mats and baskets when off duty to pay the crew's expenses.

Occasionally, a restriction on camera use seemed intended to avoid giving an impression of poverty or backwardness of the country. On the walk beside Redeemed Sword Lake, it was suggested that the view be shot to include two pretty women in black pants and clean white shirts rather than an old woman in brown carrying two baskets on a pole across her shoulder. Either would have been a typical scene.

In 750 miles of driving around Hanoi and to outlying provinces in an old Soviet-made Volga sedan, I almost always was placed in the middle in the back seat. They may have been for my own protection.

It also served to prevent any spontaneous use of the camera from the car window.

At the officials' request, I submitted a sheet of written proposals the first day. They were more than enough to fill my two weeks.

Several requests were ignored entirely. Among these were inspection of repair operations on roads, bridges and the rail lines from China and a visit to a school with a look at its air raid shelter.

Instead of being shown a new prisoner-of-war camp and being permitted to interview at least 10 captured pilots, as I had requested, I was allowed to interview two under restrictive conditions in a downtown office. My specific request for information about missing newsmen and about a U.S. State Department official missing in South Vietnam was ignored.

On the other hand, officials showed flexibility in arranging an exclusive interview with three pilots who were to be released, even though I was to leave
before the release ceremony, Premier Pham Van Dong granted my request for an interview.

Other requests that were granted the government's heavy emphasis on its main charge against the United States: that the Nixon Administration is violating the accepted rules of humane warfare by bombing civilian targets and making widespread use of antipersonnel weapons.

I was taken to only one damaged dike, although I had asked to see many. The flood crest this year was the lowest in six years. North Vietnamese officials apparently no longer considered alleged U.S. efforts to destroy the dike system and flood the fields and homes of the Red River Delta a major issue.

The one bombed dike I saw was about six miles southeast of Namadlnh. A local official pointed out a new earth fill where he said a U.S. bomb had hit the dike squarely on July 6. He said a second bomb dropped at the same time had made a crater visible a quarter-mile away in a rice paddy. He said 2,000 men and women had worked two days to repair the break.

Open paddy-land and a broad river extended in every direction for at least a mile. There was no supply dump, factory, gun or missile site or military target in sight.

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark earlier had made a lengthy report on his visits to many such places.

Foreign visitors usually are given a tour of the U.S. war crimes museum in Hanoi, a permanent exhibition of U.S. weapons including various bombs and a sample of the plastic jungle tree intended to conceal electronic sensors dropped on the Ho Chi Minh trail to detect passing troops or trucks.

An official of the government's Commission to Investigate U.S. War Crimes said that North Vietnam has shot down 400 planes since the Communist offensive began last March 30. The official Pentagon figure at the time was just short of 100.

He was asked to reply to President Nixon's charge that North Vietnamese regular army units were fighting in South Vietnam and that the offensive thus was an invasion of South Vietnam by North.

The official said that Vietnam is one people and one country.

"We do not send our troops to attack the United States," he said. "If the United States commits aggression against our country, the Vietnamese people have a right to fight aggression in every part of our country and at any time. No one has a right to question this."

The exhibition included a 1953 photograph of Mr. Nixon visiting what now is North Vietnam to encourage one of the last of the French efforts to destroy the insurgency. There also were pictures of American troops laughing and holding up the heads of decapitated Vietcong soldiers and a model of the "Tiger Cages," where political prisoners were reported tortured at the South Vietnamese prison on Conson Island.

Another official showed samples of antipersonnel bombs that shot out metal or plastic fragments, steel pellets or small steel arrows. He said that they had been widely used in civilian areas. Physicians in several clinics and hospitals displayed samples of such weapons that they said had been removed from civilian patients injured far from any military target.

Efforts to obtain samples of such weapons, even a few of the arrow-like flechettes, were unsuccessful, however. Recovered samples did not appear to be abundant.

Tours of damaged areas of the capital included Bach Mai hospital. A single bomb in the center of the large complex had wrecked one wing, damaged several others and left a big crater in a courtyard. The medical director said the bomb had struck last June 27. He expressed the opinion that the bomb had been dropped deliberately, in an effort to weaken morale among the medical staff and patients.

Officials also showed wrecked two-story apartment buildings in a southeast section of Hanoi where they said 16 persons had been killed and 28 injured the same day.

Another wrecked area was in the midst of a group of four-story workers' apartment houses. Officials said a bomb that struck last July 4 had killed 4 persons and injured 15.

Most visiting newsmen are shown these and other sites as regular showplaces. Those in the country at the time included Swedish, Japanese and Chinese television teams and 12 Cuban Journalists.

An official was asked how American newsmen were selected for visas and, for example, why was Daniel DeLuce, assistant general manager of the Associated
Press, admitted in 1970. The official laughed and said that DeLuce's application happened to arrive at a time when there was an empty hotel room in Hanoi.

North Vietnamese are accurately aware that their small and backward nation is locked in war with the most powerful nation on earth. And they tend to classify Americans as either friends or enemies.

Vice Chairman Uy noted that this reporter was waiting to write until after he had returned to Washington.

"When we have read your articles, we will have the means of appraising your concrete contribution to our cause," he said.

(From the Washington Post, Sept. 27, 1972)

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: FACTORY CENTER SURVIVES BOMBINGS

(By Richard Dudman)

The ruined city of Namdinh is an object lesson in how not to destroy an enemy industrial center.

American bombs have wrecked most of the city, once the third largest in North Vietnam, not only the big textile mill that supposedly was the principal target but also commercial shops, schools, houses, apartment buildings, most of the civic center and parts of a 300-bed hospital.

But the mill continues to operate, at least on a reduced scale. So do the shops, the schools and the hospital.

All have been moved out into the villages and hamlets and along the city roads of the surrounding countryside, together with most of the city's population.

The U.S. bombing policy has brought pain and misery to many civilian bystanders in and around Namdinh and has provided an anti-American show-place to which the North Vietnamese take foreign visitors.

But it has been a substantial failure in its apparent chief objective; to halt the operation of the textile industry there. In a dispersed and largely bomb-proof fashion, the industrial community continues to operate. Even the passenger train to and from Hanoi continues to run, slipping in and out of the bombed-out Namdinh station after nightfall.

Namdinh, built under the French in 1900, lies in the midst of the rice-paddies of the Red River delta, 45 miles southeast of Hanoi in Namha province. Its normal population of 120,000 now is 90 percent evacuated, officials said.

The factory was designated a military target in the Johnson administration and again in the Nixon administration. North Vietnamese officials said its 13,000 workers produced canvas, poplin, blankets, as well as sheeting, tablecloths, silk goods and cotton materials for civilian clothing. Canvas is needed for covers for the guns and supply trucks moving down the Ho Chi Minh trail and across the Demilitarized Zone into South Vietnam. Poplin is needed for military uniforms. All armies need blankets.

U.S. bombers did a thorough job on the factory. The five-story main building was gutted, with gaping holes in its roof and brick walls. Some of the floors had collapsed. Wreckage of nearby sheet metal factory sheds was torn and twisted among the rubble of what used to be brick walls.

Shattered textile machinery could be seen in the wreckage of what officials said had been a vocational school for training textile workers.

Within a block or two of the factory, officials pointed out the wreckage of what they said had been a municipal cultural center, a workers' club, an open-air bandstand, a Buddhist pagoda, an exhibition hall, a post office and a library. They said those buildings were destroyed by bombing attacks May 13, June 11 and June 20 of this year.

A three-story building several blocks away, described as part of a workers' housing project, was wrecked by a bomb which they said hit it July 28 of this year.

Farther from the factory, at a distance of perhaps half a mile, stood the remains of the hospital. Two buildings described as the pediatrics department were wrecked, one of them apparently by a direct hit. Officials said it was struck by one of 10 bombs dropped on the area June 20.

"The staff and the patients had already been evacuated two days before the bombs hit," a member of a 20-man hospital militia unit said. The group, armed with rifles, was all that had remained behind.

"We went into the shelter when we heard the planes. No one was injured," he said.

The nearest antiaircraft artillery had been outside the hospital grounds, he said. None could be seen inside the compound.
The chief of the foreign affairs bureau of the provincial administrative committee, Tran Hung, said that the factory and the city had been bombed 40 times in the Johnson administration, starting June 8, 1965.

“After Johnson stopped, we began to rebuild,” he said. “But we were always on guard and did not concentrate all the machinery back in the factory.

“On May 6, 1972, Nixon sent his planes to attack the city of Namdinh as well as the factory. Since then they have attacked the city on 20 different days. On only three of those days were the attacks against the factory.”

He said that the city was 60 per cent destroyed by the Johnson bombing, partly rebuilt, and then 70 per cent destroyed by the Nixon bombing campaign.

“Nixon is crueler,” Hung said. “In only four months he has caused more destruction and suffering than Johnson did in four years.”

A drive through the battered city showed the 70 per cent figure for destruction to be a reasonable estimate. Although total casualties appeared to have been relatively light, whole areas were levelled. Many buildings still standing had cracked walls and boarded-up broken windows.

Across the street from where one bomb had destroyed a house, a man and his niece stood in the doorway of the damaged house. She said that a bomb struck last June 20. Most of the neighborhood already had been evacuated, and only seven persons were injured, she said. She said that she continued to work in the silk department of the mill. Her uncle is a construction worker.

Under the ruins of another building, three clerks operated a makeshift basement store, their rifles hung on the wall behind them among a display of washpans. The sparse stock included cotton yard goods, rationed and unrationed, fountain pens, plastic snow slippers, candles and toiletries.

Another underground establishment was a one-chair barbershop. The barber said a shave and a haircut was 40 xu (12 cents).

Many of the wrecked buildings were stripped of rubble. Salvaged bricks were stacked along the street ready for rebuilding. Ten-inch iron pipe was laid out along the streets—ready for installation whenever the bombing halted, an official said.
At one of the wooden looms, a woman worker held her 5-month-old baby with one arm while running the machine with the other hand on a seven-hour shift. An older daughter stood behind her to hold the baby part of the time and operate the machine when it was time for her mother to nurse the baby. The 400 employees were making patterned Turkish towelling. If they had time for that, it seemed probable that other sections of the dispersed mill were making more essential fabrics.

The Namdinh hospital had been converted into a mobile hospital and was quartered temporarily in peasant houses in another village. Its location also was secret.

“Our staff of eight doctors, three assistant doctors and 18 nurses can look after 60 bombing victims at one time,” said Dr. Nguyen Tich Y the medical director. “We rely on the peasants to carry the wounded on stretchers and do the cooking and washing. It takes only two of our hospital workers to wash the medical linen.”

Dr. Y said that the staff and patients had been evacuated from Namdinh on two hours’ notice two days before the hospital was bombed. In the short time, they removed all the patients, much equipment, and even French doors and flagstones, which had been installed in the village houses to provide daylight and clean flooring.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 28, 1972]

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: U.S. INFlicting CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

(By Richard Dudman)

The case of Mrs. Hoang Thi Them is a reminder that more than steel and concrete is being hit as the United States continues to bomb the port city of Haiphong.

Mrs. Them, 23 years old and five months pregnant with her first child, was slicing vegetables in her kitchen on Aug. 26, 1972. An American bomb fell in her neighborhood. She was thrown to the floor and suffered multiple injuries. She suffered a miscarriage, liver damage and a wound in the left leg that required amputation just below the knee.

Another victim was a 6-year-old girl named Tran Thi Lan. She was playing in a kindergarten near her home when an antipersonnel bomb struck on Aug. 27. Her father and an older brother were killed and three others in her family were injured. Bomb fragments inflicted 10 major wounds and 100 small wounds on her back, arms, and knees. She will require extensive skin grafts.

These and a dozen other civilian casualties, some injured only two days earlier, were observed at the Vietnamese-Czechoslovakian Friendship Hospital in Haiphong. Dr. Vu Van Vinh, the deputy director, conducted a tour of the wards and described the circumstances of the injuries. He displayed steel cubes and jagged splinters that he said were antipersonnel bomb fragments taken from patients’ bodies.

An automobile trip to Haiphong starts at 3 a.m. these days. The reason is that where one of the bridges has been bombed out, the pontoon bridge in its place is dismantled at dawn and not swung back into place until dusk. It makes a more difficult bombing target in the dark. A ferry handles daytime traffic.

At a check point at the edge of Hanoi, an officer stopped us to examine our identification papers and travel permit and to make sure there was room on the ferry across the Red River ahead.

The Paul Doumer bridge was down again and had been repaired for trains only. Two pontoon bridges had been strung across the Red River, but a third at the point we wanted to cross, was still under construction.

Our Soviet-built Volga sedan had been given a priority certificate. At the ferry, our driver showed it to police officers and was permitted to leapfrog into second place ahead of a long line of waiting trucks, buses and jeeps.

One reason for going to Haiphong was to try to learn whether, and how, North Vietnam continued to bring in imported goods despite the blockade of North Vietnamese ports.

One of the government-assigned escorts told of having accompanied a Swedish reporter to Haiphong in late May and being told by the captain of a Soviet freighter that the ship had steamed into the harbor two weeks earlier. It was a report worth checking.
The 60-mile drive provided signs that the good times were indeed, moving in large quantity. But it threw little light on the question of how.

By the glow of the shielded headlights, a continuous row of war materials could be seen under the branches of the trees along the road. There were many heavy trucks from China, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, and an occasional row of big SAM missiles resting in their light trailer-launchers. Then came five brand-new Chinese cranes and some antiaircraft guns.

At one point, there were 18 railroad tank cars, spaced out in groups of three on the tracks that paralleled the highway. The twisted hulls of other tank cars and freight cars had been dragged off the right-of-way after a bombing and the tracks had been repaired.

The strung-out, open-air warehouse contained heavy machinery, scores of big crates, stacks of ammunition boxes, clusters of oil drums, heavy transformers, piles of five or six-inch pipe, and an occasional fork lift for loading the goods on and off trucks.

Closer to the port city, more effects of the bombing could be seen. The car bumped over five rough patches, where dirt and coarse rock had been used to repair direct hits on the highway.

At the city limits, a big sign told travelers: "All for the complete defeat of the American aggressors and the successful construction of socialism."

DAWN REVEALS BUBBLE

The city itself was a strange mixture of devastation and relaxed normality. The light of dawn showed acres of rubble in the western part of Haiphong, where local officials said B-52s had carpet-bombed a residential area. Smoking remains of hundreds of oil drums and a small mountain of truck tires could be seen among the craters just west of the wrecked houses.

Yet not far away, several hundred boys and girls could be seen marching to school to make a 7 a.m. class. Later in the day, crowds gathered to watch a spirited soccer game and a volleyball game a block from the bombed port area.

A group of young women pulled a cart of saplings along a downtown street, planting them to replace trees that had been destroyed by the bombing.

On a tour of damaged spots, two local officials pointed out what they said was a wrecked rice warehouse and a huge farmers' market, both bombed July 31, of this year at 1 p.m. Brick from the shattered walls of the market already had been hauled away and used for makeshift housing.

Workmen were repairing holes in the roof and back wall of an outdoor theater the officials said was bombed July 12. A school building was hit the same day, they said. Both were empty at the time, and there were no casualties.

The officials pointed out another bombed school near the east edge of the city, where they said only a few teachers were injured April 16, and a workers' housing project where they said 46 persons were killed in the same attack. They said 26 were killed there in later strikes Aug. 26 and Sept. 11, two days before my visit.

A drive to the town of Kienan, eight miles southwest of Haiphong, took us past an open field where 76 peasants in a row were pounding the baked clay dirt with mallets to break it up for the planting of vegetables.

AGRICULTURAL CENTER

Whole blocks had been leveled. Among the ruins could be seen what was left of houses and a restaurant but nothing resembling anything remotely related to military activity. The officials said that the town was chiefly an agricultural center but had some light industry such as the manufacturing of rice huskers and vegetable cutting machines.

Back at Haiphong, they permitted a 15-minute walk along the wharf, past some of the freighters tied up with crew members lounging silently at the rail. The ships included the Ho Fung from Hong Kong, the Al Vogorsk and the Babushki from the Soviet Union, and the Polish ship Monienszko. There was no sign of movement of any ships or of current loading or unloading operations.

About half the warehouses in the two blocks next to the waterfront had been wrecked by the bombing attacks.

A summary of the results of the Nixon administration raids was given by Hoang Thao, director of information and cultural services for the city of Haiphong.
On the first day, April 16, he said, there were three waves starting with a B-52 attack at 2:15 a.m. that hit Phucloc, an agricultural village 10 miles from Haiphong, killing 63 persons and injuring 61. He said the first wave also hit Thongong street in downtown Haiphong, killing 52 and injuring 94.

At 10 a.m. the same day, he said, Navy tactical bombers hit the port area, and Navy warships shelled the Anhuy district on the coast and Doson, which he described as a seaside resort.

The third attack was at 3 p.m. against street crowds, he said.

From April 16 to Aug. 30, he said, the United States had flown 1,208 sorties in 131 attacks on the Haiphong area. He said the planes had dropped 2,583 explosive and blast bombs and 263 “mother bombs,” which shoot out smaller bombs, which in turn shower an area with pellets of jagged fragments. He said 220 rockets and 1,414 shells from naval guns had been fired on the area.

Total civilian casualties for the period, he said, were 409 killed and 1,127 injured.

He said that Haiphong’s defenders had shot down 35 American planes since April 16, capturing two pilots. He said other pilots had been captured in an adjoining province after parachuting down outside the Haiphong zone. Three planes were brought down on Aug. 6 alone, he said.

As for the blockade, Thao spoke largely in generalities, contending that imports still were coming in but giving no details. He spoke of North Vietnam’s long coastline and its long land frontier with China and said there were “many ways for us to receive military aid and consumer goods from the socialist countries.”

“Mr. Nixon knows there is the port of Haiphong—even that we have five or six more ports,” he said. “But if we define a port as any place where we can unload our goods, we can tell you that we have many such places along our coast.”

“Mr. Nixon’s blockade of Haiphong port can at a given moment create some difficulties for us, but I can tell you at present the blockade does not cause us any difficulties.”

He added that minesweeping operations were very successful and that foreign ships could be brought in and out of Haiphong itself at any time if necessary. Officials raised no objection to the reporter’s asking questions taking notes on the war goods stowed along the Hanoi-Haiphong highway. On the trip back, it became evident that the United States already regarded the route as a target.

Another pedestrian called out that one bomb had struck a village just a quarter mile ahead. But the highway traffic had not been interrupted, and a policeman waved us on.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 29, 1972]

INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: U.S. BOMBINGS BATTER CATHEDRAL

(By Richard Dudman)

Long before it was bombed this year, the Cathedral of Phattdiem was a routine showplace for foreign visitors, North Vietnamese leaders wanted to refute the idea that they suppress Catholicism.

Now the wrecked church complex has become a high-priority exhibit of the horrors of the war for such viewers as the three U.S. pilots released this week and the American delegation that went to bring them home.

A tour of the area on Sept. 4 showed at least four bomb craters within the cathedral compound.

The central Cathedral is in two parts, one of them an ornate stone belfry topped with swooping Chinese-style roofs and human figures as well as crosses. It was undamaged.

Behind it, the huge wooden main building, 250 feet long and 70 feet wide inside, had been battered by a bomb that had struck in a courtyard beside it. Fragments of tile lay in the pews, and the wreckage of carved wooden paneling lay on the floor. Flagstones from the courtyard lay on the roof, where they had been hurled by the explosion.

TWO CHURCHES GUTTED

To the west, across the courtyard, two smaller churches, St. Joseph’s and St. Peter’s, both had been gutted by the blast. A choir hall had been wrecked by another bomb that shattered two walls and the roof.
On the east side of the main cathedral, St. Roco's Church had been smashed by another bomb. Behind it, a small all-stone church said to have been built in 1875 and to be the oldest in the group was undamaged. Its religious statues had been removed for safekeeping.

Some of the churches in the Roman Catholic complex had been damaged by the Johnson administration's bombing raids of the 1960s. Officials said they had been restored by the time regular bombing of North Vietnam was resumed this year. The craters and wreckage observed there this month obviously were fresh.

A local official, Pham Ngoe Ho, vice chairman of the Kim Bon district administrative committee, said that two of the churches were hit July 24, when six bombs were dropped on the area. He said 10 persons were killed and six injured. Ho, who said he was not a Christian, reported that a second attack came on Aug. 15, which he said was a religious holiday—"the day St. Mary went up to the sky." Aug. 15 was the Feast of the Assumption. He said five were killed and three injured.

"The Catholics had several masses that day, but they were in an evacuation church away from here," he said. "Four planes came just before 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They circled overhead for 20 minutes. Then they dropped 10 bombs on the churches and some houses next to them."

SURVIVORS PRESENTED

Several victims and survivors of the two attacks were presented. One of them was a 12-year-old girl named Nguyen Thi Tho, who wore a St. Mary medal on a string around her neck and the customary white cloth around her head for mourning.

"My mother was drying rice in the sun on the stone pavement near the church, on the other side from our house," she said. "When I heard the warning, I got into our shelter. The American planes came, and I heard a bomb explode close by. People said it hit in the churchyard on the other side of the church."

"I knew that my mother had been there. I ran to the place and found her lying there. She was already dead."

"Little Tho," as the Vietnamese call the girl, is the eldest of four children. Their father, a farmer, now builds dikes and digs irrigation canals, she said.

The pastor of three local parishes expressed the opinion that the bombing of the churches was deliberate. The Rev. Vu Hieu Ouc, 75, was interviewed in a parish conference room decorated with a crucifix, a defunct grandfather clock, two sets of water buffalo horns and an elephant's tooth.

A sign on the wall in Vietnamese said, "Deep regrets at the death of Ho Chi Minh."

"I think the Americans have suffered heavy failures on the battlefield and now are trying to threaten us by killing many people," he said. "And now they are trying to kill many Christians and destroy many churches in order to arouse the pagans against the government."

"If that was the intent—to turn a potentially disaffected minority group against the government—he said it had failed in his parishes."

"FIGHTS TO THE END"

"These Christians know very well the crimes committed by the Americans," he said. "They know that they must take up arms, and I know they are willing to fight to the end even if the war drags on for many years."

He said he was advising Catholics to dig bomb shelters at their homes and around the churches. In answer to a question, he said he would shoot down an American plane if he had the opportunity.

Father Ouc said the congregations of his three parishes totaled 1,650. The number of crosses and religious medals worn by townsfolk supported the official estimate that the community was about half Catholic. He said he did not know how many Catholics there are in all of North Vietnam, but he said there were 80,000 in Ninhbinh province, which includes the Phat diem diocese.

Officials in Hanoi said there were 800,000 practicing Roman Catholics in North Vietnam. Some well informed U.S. government specialists consider that figure reasonable.

Whatever difficulties the Hanoi government may have had in the past with its Roman Catholic minority, the Catholics now appear to be regarded as a loyal segment of the population.

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Officials referred to what they called a propaganda campaign by the United States in 1954 to try to persuade all the Catholics to move south of the 17th parallel. They described the campaign as partly successful.

**REPORTS DISPUTED**

Reports that the Hanoi government had executed some 500,000 Roman Catholics in a ruthless land-reform campaign in 1955 and 1956 have lately been disputed. On the contrary, it is said by some students of the episode, this “bloodbath” story was a piece of black propaganda fabricated by persons subsidized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

In any case, many Roman Catholics remain in the North and continue to practice their religion there. Their attendance at daily mass in large numbers and their obvious knowledge of the ritual supported the official line that freedom of religions is permitted.

Whether the Catholics can be considered first-class citizens in a Communist society is another question. One bit of evidence suggested that they are not.

At a rice-growing cooperative in the same province, the chairman of the managing board predicted a good October crop of 4.5 to 5 tons per hectare (2½ acres) despite bombing that had killed and injured many of the farmers, including Christians.

“The people in our village and the Christians in particular denounce these crimes,” he said.

Through a government-assigned interpreter, the chairman, Pham Van Tu, was asked whether he, himself, was a Christian. He said he was not. Under further questioning, he was quoted by the interpreter as saying that not one of the 11 members of the board was a Christian.

Another man in the crowded room stepped forward and said that, although not a board member, he was a Christian.

“I denounce the crimes committed by Nixon to progressive people of the United States and all the world,” the man said.

“These attacks are not weakening our resolve to fight. On the contrary, they have heightened our will to continue fighting until final victory, to kick out the aggressors from our country.”

**LAUGHTER AND ASSENT**

Later, driving away from the village in a packed Chinese-built jeep, I observed that it seemed best not to be a Catholic if one wanted to get on the board of the cooperative. When that was translated, there was a good deal of laughter and what appeared to be general assent.

The editor of the provincial newspaper, Vu Anh Tuan, said afterward that he knew for a fact that five of the 11 board members were Catholics. He said there may have been a misunderstanding.

That is possible, but his own discussion indicated that the Catholics may not have been such solid supporters before the churches were bombed. He said that the Christians formerly had believed that only the French would destroy their churches. Now that the Americans had destroyed some, he said, Catholics were working harder to increase production and volunteering to join the army.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 30, 1972]

**INSIDE NORTH VIETNAM: CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT KEEPS MOB4ILE HIGH IN “PEOPLE’S WAR”**

(By Richard Dudman)

When the American bombers come over Hanoi, Mrs. Tran Minh Tin, a waitress at the Thong Nhat Hotel, grabs her rifle and hurries out into the courtyard to try to shoot one down.

The 80-year-old wife and mother has been a waitress for 10 years and a militiaman for six. Rated a good marksman, she says proudly that she hit two bull’s eyes and almost hit a third in the last test, for a score of 28 out of a possible 30.

Down the coast in a village near Ninhbinh, a 61-year-old man named Dang Due Hal listens for a clanging sound from the next hamlet toward the coast. It means the planes are coming.

When he hears it, he hobble on his wooden leg over to a defused American bomb hanging from a tree and bangs it with a hammer to sound the air-raid alert. He
lost the leg in 1952 to a French artillery shell. Now he is helping defend his country against the Americans.

Morale obviously is high in North Vietnam, despite the current pounding by 200 to 300 bomb loads a day in some of the heaviest bombing in the history of warfare. Part of the reason is that everyone is made to feel that he or she has a part in the defense effort.

North Vietnamese leaders call their response a "people's war," and its basis is getting everyone involved. Farmers are told that they are helping to defend their country by growing more rice and vegetables; children win points by writing to soldiers at the front—not identified, but probably in South Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.

Just now, since the regular bombing of the North was resumed last April, this sense of participation is centered on shooting down American planes. Each shop and office and hamlet has its militia group, armed with rifles or perhaps a machine gun. The Migs, the surface-to-air missiles and the heavy antiaircraft artillery bring down most of the planes that are bagged, but the small-arms fire sometimes catches a low-flying bomber and generally creates a flak that deters contour bombing.

Each province, village and hamlet keeps track of how many planes it has shot down and how many U.S. pilots it has captured. In Hanoi, a downtown cartoon and photograph exhibition shows pictures of recently captured pilots pasted in the shape of a nose-diving F-4 Phantom with flames coming out of the tail.

Commemorative postage stamps come out each time the claimed total of planes shot down reaches another 500 mark. At 2,000, the stamp showed a hulking American pilot, hands tied behind his back, walking through the jungle guarded by a woman soldier who comes not quite to his shoulder. At 3,500, the stamp total was 3,914, nearly 300 of which showed a captured pilot behind bars.

Shooting back and the furious digging of bomb shelters throughout the country provide a feeling of doing something about the bombing, and that feeling appears to be successful in countering the sense of helplessness that might otherwise take over.

Another theme in the Hanoi government's morale effort is hatred of President Nixon, hardly a difficult notion to promote as long as the bombs keep falling. "Here comes Nixon" is a commonly heard remark when the air raid warning sounds and it is time to head for the bomb shelters.

The U.S. President is portrayed constantly in cartoons as an evil and bestial person bent on killing women and children. A cartoon in the current exhibition has "Nix-o-n" holding a picture of little Tanya, the Russian girl whom he mentioned in Leningrad as losing her whole family in World War II. With the other hand, Mr. Nixon is shown dropping U.S. bombs on a Vietnamese boy and girl.

North Vietnamese officials at all levels, when speaking of Mr. Nixon often use the Vietnamese words "cam tru," a strong phrase meaning to "feel hatred." Sometimes they also use "tra thu," which literally means to "return hatred" or to take revenge.

President Nixon is often likened to Hitler, in speech and cartoon. His name sometimes is spelled with a Nazi swastika in place of the X.

Underlying the apparently high state of morale in North Vietnam is an understanding of the war that is diametrically different from the explanations given by U.S. administrations, whether Democratic or Republican.

To the North Vietnamese, Vietnam is one country, a nation that declared its independence in 1945 but whose destiny has been thwarted first by the French and later by the United States.

They see South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu as a U.S. puppet and South Vietnam as a U.S. colony. To them, the current Communist offensive in South Vietnam is thus not an invasion from the North, as described by President Nixon, but a fully justified defense of a part of Vietnam that has been invaded by a foreign aggressor—the United States.

Periodic war maps of the southern campaign, in the Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan or in wall displays, show with reasonable accuracy the areas held by the Communists in their effort to drive out this foreign invader and its lackeys, as they describe the United States and the South Vietnamese troops.

Nationalism is a strong force in Vietnam, and North Vietnamese leaders continually picture the present war as another in a 2,000-year series of wars against foreign invaders.
In Hanoi, a physician-turned-historian Nguyen Khac Vien, editor of a book series called “Vietnamese Studies,” gives foreign visitors an erudite two-hour lecture on the national history that is part of the background of every Vietnamese and helps keep him going.

Saigon as well as Hanoi has a Ha Noi Trung Street, named for the two sisters who led a revolt against Chinese occupation in 40 to 43 A.D.

A nephew of Ghengis Khan led an army of 500,000, including bearers, into what is now Vietnam. The Vietnamese king, Tran Nhan Ton, knew that his regular army, the royal guards could not win a direct engagement; so he withdrew from his capital, now Hanoi, which was sacked and burned three times.

The professor said the Vietnamese won because of the king’s order to furnish no supplies to the invader, because the local militias constantly attacked the invader’s posts and patrols, and because the Mongol troops could not stand the tropical climate. Another factor was that the Mongol calvary became bogged down in the marshes of the Red River Delta.

On a political level, said the historian, King Ton organized not only his lords and generals, but also a conference of village representatives, in preparation for an early-day people’s war.

As a significant footnote, the professor added that when the invasion had been crushed the Vietnamese king returned all the prisoners of war to Peking rather than keeping them permanently as slaves, as was customary at the time.

A final morale factor is the evident solidarity of the people of North Vietnam. The enemy is in the sky and in the warships off the coast. There is no threat from within.

In contrast, the Saigon government and its supporters face not only an enemy army, but a constant threat from guerrilla rockets and mortar shells, sappers, saboteurs, assassins and plain hoodlums in a city where armed robbery is steeply increasing.

In Hanoi and in all of North Vietnam, the bomb shelters and the antiaircraft guns seem to provide substantial protection against the only threat.

And, except for the victims and their families, the bombing appears to be regarded more as a nuisance than as a hazard.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 1, 1972]

CITIES DEVASTATED, BUT NORTH VIETNAMESE READY TO FIGHT ON

(By Richard Dudman)

With a calm sense of the inevitable, North Vietnamese leaders are assuming that President Nixon will be reelected and are preparing for four more years of war if necessary.

At the same time, they express willingness to negotiate peace terms with Mr. Nixon, either before or after the election, so long as that does not mean giving up their goal of “freedom and independence” for all Vietnam.

This reporter’s dominant impression, after two weeks of observation in Hanoi and driving through 750 miles of countryside, is that North Vietnam is willing and able to fight on almost indefinitely.

North Vietnamese often quote the late President Ho Chi Minh’s 1966 call to “fight until complete victory,” in which he warned that the war might still last 10 or 20 years or longer and that Hanoi, Haiphong and other cities might be destroyed, but declared that the Vietnamese people would never give up.

In his will, he told his people that although new sacrifices would be necessary, “our rivers, our mountains, our men will always remain” and that when victory at last was won “we will rebuild our country 10 times more beautiful.”

His words appear to be generally accepted as literally true.

Some cities already have been largely devastated. One of the first was the panhandle railroad city of Vinh, which earlier visitors had reported almost destroyed by the Johnson administration’s bombing campaign.

This reporter observed that much of Nandinh, once North Vietnam’s third largest city, and almost all of the provincial capital of Ninhbinh had been leveled by what appeared to have been saturation bombing. North Vietnamese officials said those places had been hit heavily this year as well as in the 1960s.

Through the countryside, many villages and towns were found to have been almost totally wrecked. The railroad and highway junction town of Phaly, 35
miles south of Hanoi, was one example. Many brick kilns in the open countryside appeared to have been bombed this year.

"We don't know why they attack the brick kiln," my interpreter said. "Maybe they think they are something more modern."

Some of the bomb craters were already overgrown with grass and brush, leftovers from the Johnson period. At other places, fresh dirt and freshly produced rubble pointed to the Nixon bombing campaign of this year.

Hanoi itself, with some spectacular exceptions, had not yet been bombed systematically. The suburbs had been hit hard and repeatedly. Officials showed off the destruction of apartment houses in the middle of two large housing projects well inside the city limits, buildings that hardly could have been mistaken for anything else.

But the destroyed cities already had been largely evacuated, and their essential functions were going on in caves and huts scattered through the countryside. Many of the factories and other essential functions in Hanoi had long since been evacuated, as well as about half the population, according to North Vietnamese officials.

Officials said repeatedly that they were prepared to abandon Hanoi completely if President Nixon went ahead with what they considered a logical next step in escalation, the use of B-52s for the "carpet bombing" of the capital.

The probable effect of that strategy was impossible for a visitor to estimate. What could be said with certainty was that the heavy and continual bombing of North Vietnam by the Nixon administration starting last April had failed to prevent the production and distribution of essential supplies and had failed to weaken popular morale discernibly.

A two-week observation of the North indicates that the bombing has been sufficient to cause pain and misery to thousands of civilians, but has fallen far short of achieving a military objective of wrecking North Vietnam's capacity to wage war, wrecking its economy or wrecking its will to carry on.

The North Vietnamese, in addition to their own efforts to cope with the bombing, have had good luck in the weather. The worst tropical storms struck elsewhere in the region, and there was no repetition of last year's floods. There were general predictions of a bumper rice crop in October.

Everywhere were signs of long-range preparations to continue the fight as long as necessary. Local officials pointed to the swarms of boys and girls of all ages in the towns and villages as proof that manpower would continue to be adequate as long as the war lasted.

Nor was there any indication that the country is short of men and women of military age. Many were seen on the streets. Officials said that many were exempted from military service to continue studies that were regarded as essential.

Birth control is widely practiced in North Vietnam. Contraceptive devices are sold cheaply in drugstores, and abortions are said to be available at request. At the same time, large families are in vogue, probably with government encouragement. Young men and women often said, in answer to questions, that the right age for marriage was 18 for a woman and 20 for a man and that they hoped to have four or five children.

A Swedish diplomat in Hanoi told how North Vietnam has embarked on specific planning even for a postwar future. He had been working with North Vietnamese officials on a Swedish economic aid program and a $50 million grant for medical supplies, both in the immediate future, but also plans for Swedish assistance in construction of a paper mill after the war.

"I have worked on similar assistance projects with officials of Pakistan, Syria and Egypt, but I never before have dealt with such sophisticated economic planners as the North Vietnamese," he said.

A conversation with a clerk in a gift shop in downtown Hanoi gave a sense of how at least one family has adapted to the bombing and regards the future. It was significant, too, that the goods she was selling in the state-owned store were such items as tortoise-shell junks and carved ivory horses and roosters—hardly the bare essentials one might have expected.

She said that her husband, who worked in the foreign ministry, had arranged a day off to visit their children, a boy, 9, and a girl, 8, who had been evacuated to a village 75 miles south of the capital.

"There have been frequent bombing attacks along the way, and my husband didn't want me to go," she said. "He started last night—by train to the last station, and then the last 20 miles on his motorbike, which he took with him on the train."