She said the boy had been evacuated during the Johnson Administration's bombing campaign.  
"He was a year old at the time, and I had to wean him a few months early," she recalled.
"The children are longing to return, but they told us last time we say them that they know they can return to Hanoi only when there are no more American planes."
"We are living under bombs, but we know we are fighting for freedom and independence. We are willing to accept any sacrifice. We know that when freedom and independence have been achieved we will have a more comfortable, happier life."

She was asked what future she wanted for her children.
"My problem now is to look after them properly so they will grow up in good health," she said. "They should follow their own interests, but of course they must submit to the interests of the country.
"If it happens that they grow up and the war is still going on, I want them to join the army and fight the aggressors. I think the Americans will be defeated by then, but if the fatherland needs them, I want them to defend the fatherland.

Did the boy play with guns? she was asked.
"Yes, he plays with guns, but he also plays with his football," she said.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 2, 1972]

THE NEWS BUSINESS: COVERING "THE OTHER SIDE" OF A WAR  
(By Richard Dudman)

One of several things that make the Vietnam war different from past wars fought by the United States is the occasional opportunity for an American reporter to cross over and visit the other side. The experience carries with it some special problems that are worth considering.

First of all, there is the question of the reporter's relationship in his own country. In Hanoi two weeks ago, the answer came easily when the commanding officer of an antiaircraft crew said, "If the American planes come over while you're here, you'll have to help shoot them down." I told him my business was reporting, not fighting, and he'd have to use his own people to handle the shooting.

Bearing arms against one's own country is clearly off limits, but whether to risk giving aid and comfort to the enemy, as the phrase goes, is more complicated. In China last summer, President Nixon himself had blazed the way. So that straightforward reporting of the China scene could hardly be questioned. But Henry Kissinger's private talks with Le Duc Tho did not make it respectable to the same extent to report from North Vietnam.

The proper role, it seemed to me, was simply to write as objectively as possible, on the theory that a reporter ought to go anywhere he can for a story and that the more light that is thrown on a national problem, from whatever angle, the better the American people are able to make a judgment as to how to deal with it.

Next comes the reporter's relationship to the country he is visiting—in this case North Vietnam. A bouquet of lotus blossoms on arrival—and the greeting, "I know you come as a friend," seemed to require a reply that would make it crystal clear where both parties stood. I said that I came as an objective reporter. The official accepted the correction smoothly enough, adding the thought that any objective report from North Vietnam would arouse sympathy. The idea of an independent press is not well understood in North Vietnam.

But there were no serious problems. By waiting to write until I returned home, I avoided the minor differences that might have arisen with their officials looking over my shoulder and questioning a word or a phrase or a paragraph.

During World War II, the universal remark here in the United States when some request was refused was, "Remember, there's a war on." Today in North Vietnam, the standard admonition is, "You must remember, we are a nation at war." It is a reason why many questions cannot be answered and many photographs cannot be taken.

Security is a major preoccupation for a nation at war, particularly if it is being bombed by some 200 or 300 planes that fly over every day in search of targets. All considered, it was surprising that there were so few requests to omit possibly
sensitive information. Locations of two provincial guest houses for foreign visitors, an evacuated section of the bombed-out Nam Dinh textile mill, and a mobile hospital were the only omissions requested. There seems to be no objection to telling about war goods stacked under the trees along every highway; apparently every place is the same as no place in the intelligence business.

Finally, there is the problem of how the reporter thinks of himself when he ventures into enemy territory. Even the terms “friendly” and “enemy” curiously shift their meaning when one stands on a street corner in Hanoi and watches U.S. Air Force or Navy planes, some of them made in St. Louis, dropping bombs that may fall very close.

The solution, it seems to me, is for the reporter to make a deliberate decision to suspend the use of the terms “friend” and “enemy” and the concept of “we” versus “they.” When the task is one of learning as much as possible in a brief two weeks and then telling it as clearly as possible, it seems best to try to be a detached observer.

That might, indeed, be a good stance for all Americans in the present circumstances. Worries about humiliation and losing face may be blinding them to the facts of the situation.

[From the Washington Star-News, Sept. 23, 1972]

HANOI SEES NIXON VICTORY, 4 YEARS OF WAR

(By Peter Arnett)

HANOI—President Nixon will probably be re-elected in November without negotiating a settlement of the Vietnam war, so even though North Vietnam would like peace it has no choice but to prepare for four more years of war, the editor of Hanoi’s Communist party newspaper Nhan Dan, Hoang Tung, told four visiting American antiwar activists today.

Tung also told Coa Weiss, David Dellinger, Prof. Richard Falk and the Rev. William Sloane Coffin that North Vietnam believes it has beaten the Americans and air and naval blockade aimed at cutting off armaments and fuel for frontline troops, “and we can accomplish our objectives.”

The three prisoners released Sunday by the Communists to be escorted home by the antiwar activist party now have their visas and travel papers.

They are Air Force Major Edward K. Klias of Valdosta, Ga.; Navy Lt. Markham Gartley of Greenville, Me., and Navy Lt. Morris A. Charles of San Diego, Calif. Gartley’s mother and Charles’ wife came with the activist party for a reunion with the freed prisoners. They have been Communist guests for the last week.

For his talk with the American activists, Tung said, “We can hardly believe the war meetings; Kissinger has shown no sign that Nixon is changing. The possibility for peace is greater now but if Nixon does not meet with difficulties in the coming election he will not accept a solution.”

Nixon’s strength, Tung believes, “is in his incumbency and his dramatic visits to Peking and Moscow.”

He added, “with these two strong points Nixon has refused to accept a solution to the war and I don’t think progressive forces in America can change the situation now.”

The ideal political scenario for the North Vietnamese, Tung said, would be a Nixon defeat.

“On Jan. 20, when McGovern enters the White House, we shall release the first series of U.S. prisoners. Within 90 days, the two sides would have solved problems and the last prisoner will leave Hanoi for home.”

But even with McGovern losing, Tung said, “his movement will have support in future. Nixon can win for only four years and Agnew won’t take over.

“The Democratic candidate will learn from McGovern and win in 1976,” he said. Because of this political situation, Tung said, “the best way is for us to prepare for more war. If Nixon does not end the war, the struggle will have to continue.”

Tung admitted that the escalated naval and air war had created difficulties for the North Vietnamese.

“We would have accomplished our goals in April this year had not Mr. Nixon re-Americanized the war with his navy and air force. Because the war was re-Americanized we were unable to drive ahead.”

Tung claimed, however, that “in recent months our fighting forces have faced great tests and we are now in a position to smash the puppet army, like we were in April.”
The air war and naval blockade have "created difficulties in terms of how to transfer supplies to thousands of our soldiers fighting on the front line. But we have been able to accomplish our objectives," he said.

"Laird said we would be exhausted in July, but today it is September and the fight continues. It proves we have made enormous efforts with spirit and courage," he said.

"With these measures we can continue transportation and these measures cannot be calculated by electronic computers."

"After the war we will show you how we did it—the people have done all sorts of things."

One of Nixon's purposes, Tung claimed, was to destroy the North Vietnamese economic structure.

"On these terms we have had losses and if the war continues for four more years we will have still more difficulties," Tung said.

But Tung expressed confidence North Vietnam could maintain its fighting pace.

"We have been fighting almost on our own economy and we have had a very good harvest this year.

"Neither Johnson nor Nixon could destroy our economy—our agriculture cannot be destroyed," he said. North Vietnam is able to live on its own rice harvest, Tung said.

Vietnam needs little food from outside, but is dependent on outside aid for weaponry and fuel, he said.

"If supplies of weapons and fuel were cut it would be dangerous for us. But we don't need too much—we know how to be thrifty in carrying out a war. And we have plenty of manpower. That is what is important.

"After 30 years of war you can still see many children playing on the streets." Tung said North Vietnam expected no letup in aid from socialist nations.

"This is a revolution supported by everybody and socialist countries cannot help but support us," Tung asserted.

His leaders, he said, "will persist in negotiations with Nixon because we want to end the war with him just as we have tried with successive American presidents.

"Mr. Nixon's war is ten times more barbarous than his predecessors'. Our people have to suffer big losses. So we will fight ferociously up to the last minute of the war and insist on our solution—the end of the neocolonials in South Vietnam," Tung said.

[From The New York Times, Oct. 8, 1972]

CLOSE-UP OF NORTH VIETNAM AT WAR: EVERYTHING MOVES BY NIGHT

(By Peter Arnett)

If you have wondered why the North Vietnamese can continue to fight on despite the biggest bombing campaign in the history of war, then ride with three American pilots and me down the roads south of Hanoi and find out.

Our destination was Nambinh City and the Phat Diem Cathedral, both severely bombed, which are shown to visitors to prove the destructive power of the American air campaign. Jane Fonda and Ramsey Clark have been there. Now it was the turn of the three pilots just released from a prisoner-of-war camp—Lieutenants Marl{ L. Gartley and Norris A. Charles of the Navy, Maj. Edward Ellis of the Air Force—and myself.

"ANT POWER" AT WORK

But long before we reached our destination we were shaking our heads in wonder, not at the destructive power of the bombs from the sky but at the survival power of the people on the ground. The pilots' previous view of North Vietnam was from the skies. For years I had watched from the vantage point of South Vietnam.

Now here on the ground was the "ant power" that Pentagon experts believe is behind Hanoi's ability to keep supplies and men moving to the southern war fronts. Where bombs had hit railway cars, dark shapes hammered at the twisted wreckage, while other figures carried material and dumped it into the craters.

As dawn came and we passed through the severely bombed railroad junction at Phule, we saw that the dark shapes were women and they were not even using buckets: they were carrying mud in their bare hands to fill in the craters, and they seemed to be enjoying it.
IN NORTH, AIR WAR ONLY

Walking or riding bicycles along lonely roads in South Vietnam at night can mean death or capture. But in the north, nighttime is the logical time to travel because it affords protection from the planes.

There are no guerrillas to harass the convoys or blow up the supplies. In North Vietnam the war is only from the air.

Except for when planes came over, the North Vietnamese countryside looked bucolic. But few things are ever what they seem, and Major Elias, who piloted a reconnaissance plane before he was shot down five months ago, enlightened me.

"See those gravemounds?" Major Elias asked as we waited under the trees for a ferry to cross a river where a bridge had been destroyed.

"They're antiaircraft pits with the muzzles down," the major said, "Let a plane come over and they'll stick up their snouts and blast away. And those things are difficult to spot in pictures. It would take a very expert and very lucky P.I. (photo interpreter) to see them."

As we traveled into the rising sun, Major Elias's head was twisting to left and right. "See that flak site? they're 85's."

The discovery of the flak sites and the industrious people were possibly predictable enough. Enough American planes get shot down to suggest the extent of the antiaircraft fire.

What astounded the freed pilots was the extent of North Vietnam's visible supply chain. From the time we left the outskirts of Hanoi at 4 o'clock one morning to our return at 8. The next night we constantly encountered convoys, rows of stacked ammunition along roads and gasoline drums.

During daylight the vehicles were casually parked under the inevitable line of trees along the roads. They seemed extremely vulnerable. But Lieutenant Charles commented: "We could never see those things from the air. And the moment someone comes down to get a better look at them—blam, man!"

Reflecting on the scenes one evening in Ninhbinh Province, Lieutenant Gartley said, "I used to fly over this place and it seemed uninhabited. But look, it is teeming with life."

The lieutenant said later, "All the pilots really have for targets are the cities, the bridges and the railways. Yet the North Vietnamese move out from the cities and use these back roads."

Major Elias said: "It is technology against ideology. I just wonder how far technology can go, because the Vietnamese habitually beat it."

When the antiwar activists who went to Hanoi to pick up the released pilots met Premier Pham Van Dong, he told them, "You have to fight this war with intelligence, not with computers;" the computers merely multiply man's stupidities thousands of times," he said, with a knowing smile.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Oct. 3, 1972]

FOCUS ON HANOI'S 'ANT POWER'

(By Peter Arnett)

If you have wondered why the North Vietnamese can continue to fight on despite the biggest bombing campaign in the history of war, then ride with three U.S. pilots and me down the roads south of Hanoi and find out.

Our destination was Nam Dinh City and the Phat Diem Cathedral, both severely bombed, and showplaces of the destructive power of the American air campaign.

Jane Fonda and Ramsey Clark had been there. Now it was the turn of the three pilots just released from a prisoner-of-war camp—Navy Lts. Mark Gartley and Norris Charles, and Air Force Maj. Edward Elias—and me.

But long before we reached our destination we were shaking our heads in wonder, not at the destructive power of the bombs from the sky but at the survival power of the people on the ground.

The pilots' previous view of North Vietnam was from the skies above. For years I had watched from the vantage point of South Vietnam.

Now here on the ground as we rolled along the narrow highways in the dark hours before dawn, the cliches came true.
Here was the "ant power" the Pentagon experts theorized lay behind Hanoi's ability to keep supplies and men moving to the Southern war fronts. Where bombs had scored direct hits on railway cars or on the tracks paralleling the road, dark shapes hammered at twisted wreckage, while other figures carried material and dumped it into the craters.

As dawn came and we passed through the railroad junction of severely bombed Phu Le, we saw that the dark shapes were women and they weren't even using buckets; they were carrying mud in their bare hands to fill the craters in, and they seemed to be enjoying it.

When our old Russian Volga sedan bogged down at one point, the women swarmed out of the mud and gathered around us, laughing and gesticulating. This "ant power" was everywhere. Whereas in South Vietnam the war has denuded the countryside of population and sent people scurrying into the cities, in the North it is the reverse and they swarmed on the highway.

Walking or riding bicycles along lonely roads in South Vietnam at night can mean being killed or captured. But in the North, nighttime is the logical time to travel for the faint-hearted, or for the supply convoys, because it affords protection from the planes that fly above.

The key to the use of the night is simply that there are no guerrillas to harass the convoys or blow up the supplies. In North Vietnam the war is only from the air.

That is why I observed no barbed wire anywhere, no barricaded militia outposts or fortified bunkers. Except for when the planes came over, the North Vietnamese countryside looked positively bucolic.

But few things are ever what they seem, and Major Elias, who piloted a reconnaissance plane before he was shot down five months ago, enlightened me.

"See those grave mounds?" Major Elias asked as we waited under the trees for a ferry to cross a river where a bridge had been destroyed. About 100 yards away, buffalo grazed quietly around the heaps of earth.

"They're antiaircraft pits with the muzzles down," he said. "Let a plane come over and they'll stick up their snouts and blast away. And those things are difficult to spot in pictures. It would take a very expert and very lucky PI (photo interpreter) to see them."

"See that flak site? They're 85's," he would say, "There's another one, half a dozen .51-calibers." To me they looked like banana trees.

The discovery of the flak sites and the industrious people were possibly predictable enough. Enough American planes get shot down each week to adequately suggest the extent of the antiaircraft fire. And "people power" has long been known as North Vietnam's most important commodity.

What was mind-bending to the freed pilots was the extent of North Vietnam's visible supply chain. From the time we left the outskirts of Hanoi at 4 o'clock one morning to our return at 8 the next night we constantly encountered vehicle convoys, rows of stacked ammunition alongside the roadsides, and gasoline drums.

These were stretched out along the 180 miles we drove, and other foreign visitors in Hanoi at the time attested they saw similar scenes on different roads.

During daylight the vehicles were casually parked under the inevitable line of trees at roadside. On some long, straight stretches of highway we counted as many as 40 trucks.

They seemed extremely vulnerable, but Lieutenant Charles commented, "We could never see those things from the air. And the moment someone comes down to get a better look at them—blam, man."

This simple roadside cover held ammunition caches up to 1,000 cases in size, according to my fast counts from the moving automobile.
Particularly noticeable were concentrations of supplies at bombed-out railway crossings. The pilots figured these had been dumped by trains and would soon be moved to where the railway lines were usable again.

In the evenings, as the trucks began to move south loaded with supplies, the whole operation reminded me of a huge glacier forcing itself slowly but surely down a mountain valley.

Reflecting on the scenes one evening at a rest house in Ninh Binh Province, Lieutenant Gartley said, "I used to fly over this place and it seemed uninhabited. But look, it is teeming with life."

Lieutenant Gartley later said, "All the pilots really have for targets are the cities, the bridges, and the railways. Yet the North Vietnamese move out from the cities and use these back roads."

Major Elias said, "It is technology against ideology. I just wonder how far technology can go because the Vietnamese habitually beat it." He mentioned that Hanoi has found a partial answer to the threat of the laser-guided "smart" bombs that can zero in accurately on targets.

"The North Vietnamese put up smoke around the target. If you don't see it you can't hit it," Major Elias said.

The North Vietnamese glory in their ability to outwit the U.S. planes.

"You have to fight this war with intelligence, not with computers," Prime Minister Pham Van Dong told the antiwar activists who went to Hanoi to pick up the released pilots. "The computers merely multiply man's stupidities thousands of times," he said, rocking forward in his chair with a knowing smile.

The editor of the Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan told the activists that "we have made enormous efforts" to beat the American blockade of the ports. "We have spirit and courage. We have used many measures, and we can continue our transportation to the south. These methods cannot be calculated by electronic computer."

I was wondering how a computer could determine the number of handfuls of mud required to fill a bomb crater, or the manpower needed to load and unload supplies that are leapfrogged from train to train across the bombed-out portions of track each night on the way south.

But all those bombs raining on North Vietnam are dropping somewhere, and in interviews with top officials I got the impression that severe damage is being done.

"Whole cities have been destroyed. Hospitals, schools, churches, have been destroyed. There have been so many victims," said Premier Pham Van Dong when the antiwar activists asked if the American people could help contribute to reconstruction.

"I fear that no city will be left intact in the North if President Nixon is re-elected. Mr. Nixon's war is 10 times more barbarous than his predecessor's," the editor said.

 But as our old sedan bucked and rocked across filled-in bomb craters and carreeened by the ammunition boxes stacked like cordwood along the roadside, I got the feeling that the world of the cities and the world of the countryside supply routes were separate.

We were given no information about where these supplies originated, but we presumed they came down the highways from China to the north. I got the impression that as long as those supplies were pumped down through the arteries of North Vietnam, the war would go on even if the cities were destroyed.

[From the Boston Globe, Sept. 29, 1972]

BOMBS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE
(By Harold Aarts)

HANOI.—The Civil Aviation Authority of China, the Chinese national airline, provides one of the safest ways to get to North Vietnam: the Americans do not attack civilian planes, and certainly not Chinese ones. As we approached Hanoi, we could see railway lines and they did not appear to be damaged. But there was hardly a bridge which had not been destroyed.

At Gia Lap Airport an internnee from the bombed out Bach Mai hospital, Dr. Pham Dia Khat, was one of the people waiting for us. He was to be our interpreter and guide during our stay; he spoke fluent English and French. We stayed at Thong Nhat hotel behind the river dikes in the diplomatic quarter of Hanoit. This
was supposed to be an area the US never bombed. But a few days later bombs fell no farther than two kilometers from our hotel.

Another day, as I sat talking to Ngoc Ha, specialist in the Department of Investigation for War Crimes, loudspeakers suddenly began blaring out all over Hanoi. They were broadcasting air raid warning to civilians—the 400,000 left of Hanoi’s nearly 1 million population. Hanoi has an excellent air raid warning system and the sirens go off when American planes come within 60 kilometers of the city.

According to Ngoc Ha, the Nixon Administration’s decision to go in for the heaviest bombing in the history of the Vietnam War was the result of the failure of the Vietnamization policy in the South. It also reflected Washington’s frustration that the Vietnamese were able to keep up their offensive despite the American pressure. He said the offensive was being maintained by people from the North and the South. “We have always been one country,” he said. “It is the US which wants to divide our country in two. Everybody knows that the 17th Parallel is not a boundary but a temporary military demarcation line.”

AIMED AT CIVILIANS

The descriptions provided by Ngoc Ha and others of the techniques of American bombing were horrifying to a foreigner unused to two decades of total war. Ngoc Ha showed us a variety of bombs U.S. planes had dropped. Subsequently I saw the victims of these different types of weapons in North Vietnam’s hospitals. The experience was distressing since, as a doctor, I could not escape the conclusion that much of the bombing was deliberately intended to kill or maim civilians.

Apart from conventional bombs of different calibres, rockets, missiles and magnetic bombs, American aircraft have been employing a type of delayed-action bomb. These do not explode when they hit the ground. Dropped mainly on cities and dikes, they sink in the soft North Vietnamese soil. Under the water of the rice fields or the debris of buildings, they remain undetected.

Increasingly employed nowadays is the so-called “perforating” bomb, which is modelled on sophisticated anti-tank shells normally not used against human targets. Lately, however, they have been dropped on a big scale over cities and villages. Some 250 to 800 of these bombs are encased in a “mother” bomb. When dropped in a target area they penetrate up to 20 centimeters of concrete. This characteristic makes them especially effective against air raid shelters. People are killed mainly by the heat a bomb creates in its target, around its steel nose.

We saw improved anti-personnel bombs—fragmentation bombs—which also are carried in “mother” bombs. On explosion, they scatter tens of thousands of splinters which kill people over a limited radius. Improved varieties are called spherical fragmentation or “plastic” bombs, I saw patients hit by both types. Victims die very slowly. These bombs seem to be directed mainly against the coastal provinces where the air-raid warning system is nowhere as efficient as in Hanoi. Most of the victims I saw were children.

One device American technology has developed specially for Vietnam is the “material” mine, a 4x4 centimeter slab with a little bump built into it. If you stand on it wearing a good shoe, nothing happens. But many people in Vietnam walk about barefooted. When these people put their foot on one of these objects, a gaping hole is blasted into their soles. Children often lose a whole foot.

“Arrow” bombs have the same mechanism as fragmentation bombs but their fragments are shaped like arrows. New in North Vietnam but widely used for a long time in the South is the CS bomb which delivers a chemical poison. Inhaled in small doses, it leads to nausea and vomiting, followed by acute conjunctivitis and possible paralysis. It does not kill. On May 12, this bomb was used for the first time in North Vietnam in Quan Boa and on a second occasion in Quang Binh.

INCREASE IN LIVER CANCER

I visited Prof. Thon That Tung in the Viet Duc hospital in Hanoi. Well known in Europe and the US, Dr. Tung is a surgeon whose experience in liver operations is probably the most extensive in the world. He has published a great deal in foreign medical journals. After explaining the problems of special war surgery, he showed me a large number of patients with primary liver cancer. He told me that the incidence of this disease had risen substantially in the last few years.
He admitted that he could not fully explain why. He had noticed that the cancer was found mostly in persons who had been living in South Vietnam. He suspected that it probably was the result of some sort of poisoning.

Specimens of herbicides and defoliation chemicals widely used by the US in South Vietnam had been sent to university specialists in Paris, England and Harvard for investigation. Research showed that molecular structure of these chemicals had been changed (though their old names are retained). The basic ingredient of these chemicals is 2,5-7-8 tetrachloride benzo-p-dioxine. This substance is known to be much more cancerogenic than benzopyrene, for instance.

When people drink water contaminated by this chemical, the poison cannot be eliminated by the normal processes in the body. What he had to prove, Dr. Tung said, is whether the same chemical is present in the liver cells of the cancer patients. But this research job is too specialized to be tackled with Hanoi's limited facilities. To get samples of diseased livers to research centres abroad is a problem because preservation of the samples in a satisfactory condition is difficult because of communications difficulties with foreign countries.

If Dr. Tung's hypothesis proves correct, the use of the chemical could be an appalling violation of all the rules of war. For, dioxide tetrachloride also causes mutations in chromosomes which could explain the rapid increase in the number of grossly deformed babies which doctors claim is now being experienced in Vietnam. These deformities are undoubtedly due to defective chromosomes; only the direct cause remains in doubt.

**NO ESCAPE FOR CIVILIANS**

Foreign journalists in Hanoi told me of a particular bombing technique which appears to be popular with American pilots. They cited the example of Hon Gal city on the Vietnamese coast. U.S. aircraft came to bomb this city at 3 a.m. They first dropped incendiary bombs, then fragmentation and perforating bombs and finally blast bombs. The incendiary bombs forced people to rush out to the streets and make for the shelters. In the open, they were caught by fragmentation bombs. The lucky ones who made it to the shelters became targets for blast bombs.

This bombing pattern leaves no escape for civilians. The city has been practically wiped out. The next morning, we saw living quarters destroyed and a factory for sluice materials razed to the ground. The day before, we had seen a dike which had been hit six times on the same spot. True, as the North Vietnamese admit, some casualties are caused by fragments of anti-aircraft shells and missiles and refusal to heed air-raid warnings. But the bulk of the casualties seemed to me to have been the direct targets of U.S. planes.

The horror of bombing dikes is that some 15 million people in North Vietnam live below water level. Just as in my country, Holland, their lives and food depend entirely on the dike system. I visited these dikes together with Yves Lacoste and Daniel Mandelbaum, two French specialists. They noted that the dikes were being bombed just before the rainy season and that the bombs left holes in the dikes, without completely destroying them. There are no immediate floods. But fissures are created in the base of the dikes. Floods will follow in the rainy season when the bombing will probably have ended. Washington will then be able to say that the floods are due to Hanoi's inability to take care of the dike system.

The French experts also noted that the bombings seemed to be carefully concentrated on places very important from the point of view of protecting populated areas. For instance, the province of Nai Hung was bombed many times over. In this province six rivers meet and the destruction of the dikes here could have disastrous effects.

If one truth emerged through it all, it was that there was no such thing as targets being hit by accident in North Vietnam. Some specially gifted minds clearly were meticulously planning and coordinating the entire bombing policy.
HANOI, North Vietnam, July 8.—This correspondent and a group of other foreign newsmen were taken at dawn today to the town of Hungyen, 86 miles east of Hanoi, which was said to have been struck by American bombs yesterday.

Casualties in the town, which has a population of about 20,000 were put by officials at 17 killed and 25 injured. Fifty-six families reportedly lost their homes.

Hungyen is a town of workers and peasant farmers, with long, wide streets. Nowhere in the part of the town we visited could be seen a barracks or a fuel dump, or even a warehouse that could be used for storing war supplies.

The most badly damaged thoroughfare was Law Street, inhabited mainly by craftsmen and farm workers. There, the meanest dwellings, straw huts for the most part, had been blasted and burned. Even more solid buildings were often reduced to rubble.

One 72-year-old man, Nguyen Van Lam, stood amid the ruins of his house, the rubble still glowing with heat, picking out scraps of clothing that had belonged to his wife, his son and two grandchildren.

"All that is left to me is my daughter-in-law," he said. "When the raid began she had already left for her work in the rice field."

None of his belongings had survived the fire that destroyed his home; the cheap wooden furniture was reduced to charred rubble, and not even a rice bowl remained.

One young woman, Vu Tri Trung, 24, limped as she searched the wreckage of her home.

Miss Trung was the eldest of a family of seven. Three of them were said to have been killed by the bombs and the four others injured. Above her torn blouse, she wore a white band around her head as a sign of mourning.

Further on, in front of the half-ruined building that had housed the local bookshop, we were warned that there were several unexploded bombs. There was also a still-intact bomb detonator bearing the words: "US Navyair Syscom. Lot 010. Date 071."

At one point there was a scrawled sign saying: "Road Closed, Time Bomb." Close by, a straw hat lay in the mud.

The newsmen were taken later to the local hospital where the injured were being cared for.

II. OTHER REPORTS AND COMMENTARIES

WASHINGTON.—Every day—weather permitting—more than 500 U.S. and South Vietnamese air strikes are launched in Indochina.

In the last six months, more than 500,000 tons of bombs have been dropped—a quarter of the total dropped by the United States in all four years of World War II.

Tens of thousands of North Vietnamese or Viet Cong have been killed, by conservative estimate.

This is the U.S. air war over Indochina, now approaching its sixth month—a war that has grown to one of the most massive aerial bombardments in history.

It now also is a war that is entering a new phase.

Carrier-based Navy pilots are running out of fixed targets. They say they've hit them all. Now they just "go hunting."

Air Force generals are acknowledging that air power can't stop the flow of weapons and supplies to North Vietnam or the battlefields.

And President Nixon has stopped talking about the air war in purely military terms—and started talking in terms of forcing negotiations.
All these developments are a far cry from the picture emanating from the Nixon Administration six months ago when Nixon pulled out all stops in the aerial war in response to North Vietnam's Easter offensive.

The air war has changed.

When Nixon explained it, in May, it was part of "a decisive military action to end the war."

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird said the United States would do "whatever may be necessary" to stop the flow of supplies.

Now that kind of talk is gone.

Latest intelligence reports to the White House have predicted that Hanoi can sustain fighting in Vietnam at the present rate for the next two years.

A high-level Air Force official has acknowledged that Hanoi is still getting supplies in quantity—in spite of Laird's obvious belief that a complete cut-off was possible.

An Air Force general conceded publicly last week: "We don't yet know how successful they (Hanoi) will be in trying to circumvent our interdiction campaign.

"We don't know for certain how much they have stockpiled, how fast they are consuming their supplies or how much they can tighten their belts and for how long."

Yet, the United States has been pouring it on.

Easily more than 100,000 men are involved in the aerial campaign.

Says one Navy captain: "It's more intense now than at any time in the Johnson Administration, in the Korea War or in World War II."

"Our fliers are facing some of the toughest combat flying the world has ever seen."

But the air war has many facets.

It has created new U.S. prisoners of war—who are being used as bargaining chips by North Vietnam.

At least 40 fliers have been captured since April, and another 88 are listed as missing in action.

To grasp it, you must begin with statistics—numbers involved.

Then there are questions of effects—what it is doing to North Vietnam and its people, how many may be dying, how effective it may or may not be.

First, statistics.

The United States and South Vietnam have assembled the greatest air armada in the Vietnam war in Thailand, on ships off the Vietnamese coast and in far-off Guam.

The total number of "strike" aircraft is about 1,300—compared to a top of about 1,200 at the peak of the air war in the Johnson Administration in 1968.

About 1,000 of the planes are U.S.—the rest U.S.-built, but flown by South Vietnamese.

The largest number of B52 bombers ever assembled by the United States for use in Vietnam is operating from Guam and Thailand. The total is about 200 bombers—half of the Strategic Air Command's total force.

U.S. and South Vietnamese planes have flown something like 100,000 attack "sorties" since the current, all-out phase of the air war opened in April.

Official bomb tonnage rates have approached, but not reached, the top levels of the war. The current rate of bombing is more than a million tons of bombs a year—but not up to the 1.4 million rate of 1968.

The meaning of these figures, however, in terms of death and destruction, can only be assessed by studies made of bombing in the past.

Says an Air Force spokesman of current attacks: "I know of no estimates of casualties resulting from the bombing."

In studying bombing during the Johnson Administration, however, the Cornell University Center of International Studies computed that a "relatively intense" air attack results from 100,000 or 200,000 tons of bombs a year. That is less than a fifth the present rate.

Cornell scholars computed that 23,000 casualties were inflicted by U.S. bombing in 1968—when 124,000 tons of bombs were dropped. Eighty per cent of the casualties, the report said, were civilian.

There were 124,000 tons of bombs dropped in 1968—about 25 per cent of what has been dropped in the last six months.

The scholars said that in 1967 "the noncombatant casualty rate was quoted as 1,000 per week." About 200,000 tons of bombs were dropped in 1967—about 40 per cent of what has been dropped in the last six months.
What little is known about the effects of bombing has come from U.S. visitors to North Vietnam—carefully screened, of course, by Hanoi.

Several have raised questions about whether the United States is striking civilian targets. U.S. officials have insisted that only military targets have been hit. The best known visitor to North Vietnam was Ramsey Clark, former Democratic attorney general.

In a letter to a Senate subcommittee, Clark said, "Bombing damage to what appeared to be purely civilian targets was extensive. I personally observed schools, hospitals, churches, residential quarters of cities and whole villages... which had been damaged or destroyed by bombing."

Critics of the air war have long raised questions about whether air power can be used effectively against a relatively primitive society.

One of the most outspoken is Fred Branfman, director of Project Air War, a church-supported information center about aerial warfare in Indochina.

"Conventional military targets in North Vietnam are few and have long since been destroyed," says Branfman.

"Virtually all of the military and economic targets in North Vietnam that can be considered even remotely significant have been struck, except for a few targets in Hanoi and Halphong."

Branfman also charges that U.S. fighter-bomber pilots "primarily bomb civilian targets because they cannot locate military ones."

Although Pentagon officials deny striking civilian targets, official Navy spokesmen acknowledge that most missions over North Vietnam today are what are called "armed reconnaissance" missions.

These missions do not have predetermined targets. Armed fighter-bombers are sent up to hit what they can see while on reconnaissance.

A Cornell expert, Professor Norman Uphoff, of the government department, says: "Armed reconnaissance is just another way of saying hunting expedition. They are looking for targets of opportunity."

"A flyer gets maybe two seconds to decide whether he's looking at a 'military target' or not, and no one is around to say that his decision was wrong."

A Navy spokesman said there are few fixed targets left in North Vietnam that can be pre-targeted.

"There just aren't that kind of targets now," he said. "In May or June, when there hadn't been any bombing for four years, there were lots of them. But no more."

The Navy is carrying the brunt of the aerial war over North Vietnam, with flights from four aircraft carriers based off the coast. Three of the carriers are "working" North Vietnam. One is assigned to South Vietnamese targets.

The Air Force is carrying most of the load over South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The South Vietnamese Air Force, with about 300 "strike" aircraft, also is handling South Vietnamese missions.

Air Force spokesmen say that most of their targets in South Vietnam are pre-targeted and that a high percentage of their bombs are "smart," or guided, bombs, with a high degree of accuracy.

Serious questions are now being raised about both the effectiveness and the purpose of the massive air war.

Pentagon spokesmen, led by Laird, have insisted from the beginning that the purpose of the aerial effort was to cut off weapons and supplies from outside North Vietnam and to isolate the battlefield.

Evidence now, however, is that the purpose of the air war is heavily political, not merely military—to try to bomb Hanoi into a negotiated settlement before the elections.

Nixon said almost as much in his last press conference when he said, "There will be no reduction of the bombing... unless there is progress on the negotiating front."

Maj. Gen. Robert Ginsburgh of the Air Force, said last week: "After the war is over, I believe we will have ample reason to be proud that air power helped bring the North Vietnamese out of the shadows of intransigence into the light of meaningful negotiations."

War critics say this means that the United States is staging a terror campaign through bombing.

"Given the proven military ineffectiveness of the bombing," says Fred Branfman, "it appears that it has now been re instituted primarily to force North Vietnam's surrender by terrorizing the civilian population."

Professor Uphoff, of Cornell, says he has drawn the same conclusion.
"I would say some significant proportion of our raids are terror raids," he says.

A high-level Air Force official told a small group of reporters a few weeks ago, that North Vietnam still appeared to be getting supplies in quantities at least 25 per cent as large—and possibly as much as 50 per cent as large—as it had before the bombing-mining campaign.

This estimate was a far cry from Laird's repeated statements in May that the United States would do whatever was necessary "to completely stop the flow of supplies to North Vietnam."

[From the Evening Star and Daily News, Oct. 4, 1972]

NINE-MONTH RAIDS EXCEED TOTAL FOR ALL 1971

(By Tad Szulc)

Bombs dropped by the United States in Southeast Asia in the first nine months of 1972 already exceed the tonnage dropped during all of the previous year. Pentagon statistics show.

And a heavier tonnage of bombs has been dropped on Indochina in the past 21 months than was dropped on Germany by Allied aircraft during all of World War II, the figures indicate.

Data obtained from the Defense Department disclose that more than 800,000 tons of "air ammunition" has been used over North and South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, as compared with 763,160 tons during all of 1971.

REACTION TO OFFENSIVE

The increase, department officials contend, resulted chiefly from stepped-up tactical air action over South Vietnam in support of Saigon government troops since the start of the Communist offensive March 30, and from resumed systematic bombing of North Vietnam for the first time since 1968.

Up-to-date figures on U.S. air operations in Indochina were supplied by the Pentagon to the Senate subcommittee on refugees, and were then made available to The New York Times.

Assessments by U.S. intelligence agencies last month emphasized, however, that while American air activities played a key role in blunting the communist offensive in South Vietnam, the intensive bombings of the North have failed to interfere meaningfully with the flow of troops and supplies to the South.

SEVEN AND ONE-HALF MILLION TONS IN SEVEN AND ONE-HALF YEARS

Aggregate figures for the last 7½ years showed that U.S. aircraft had launched 7,550,800 tons of bombs and other ordnance—rockets, cannon missiles and machine gun fire—on Indochina between February 1965 and Aug. 30, 1972.

This was roughly 3½ times the tonnage of explosives used during all of World War II by all the Allies in all the war theaters. The World War II total was 2,056,244 tons.

An analysis of American air operations in Indochina—mainly over Vietnam—also showed that U.S. planes had dropped a heavier tonnage of bombs on this region in the last 21 months than the total Allied tonnage released over Germany between 1940 and 1945.

SEPTEMBER ESTIMATED

Thus, according to Pentagon figures, "air munitions" expended over Southeast Asia between Jan. 1, 1971, and the end of last month added up to about 1,560,000 tons.

The precise total for September is not available, but the confirmed count through Aug. 31 is 1,466,287 and estimates for September are roughly 100,000 tons.

The 5-year total of Allied bombings of Germany in World War II was 1,554,000 tons.

The total during the three years of the Korean War, 1950-1953, was 885,000 tons—less than the tonnage dropped on Indochina in any year since 1966. In that year, 496,319 tons of air munitions were used.
A-BOMB COMPARISON

Another yardstick to compare the Indochina war bombings with previous U.S. air strikes is that the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 had a power equivalent to only 20,000 tons of TNT, slightly less than one-third of the explosive total used over Indochina during January 1972.

Staff members of the Senate subcommittee on refugees said an analysis of the Pentagon figures showed total American bombings of Indochina during the 48 months between 1965 and 1968, in the Johnson administration, totaled 3,225,808 tons, while 3,829,992 tons were dropped during 44 months between 1969 and 1972 in the Nixon administration.

'SMART BOMBS'

Most of the bombing data was provided to the Senate subcommittee, which is headed by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., in a Sept. 22 letter from J. Fred Buzhardt, general counsel of the Defense Department. More up-to-date figures were obtained from the Pentagon by The New York Times.

Testimony last week before the Kennedy subcommittee by State and Defense department officials had shown that between May and September 1972, U.S. aircraft had dropped 4,260 "smart bombs" on North Vietnam. These bombs, known technically as "Mark 84s," are missiles guided to their targets by laser beams.

According to that testimony, U.S. aircraft had also used antipersonnel bombs against North Vietnamese crews of ground-to-air missiles and antiaircraft batteries, but the number was not given.

In terms of bomb tonnage, the statistics showed, the most intensive bombing of Indochina was during June, when the total was 112,400 tons.

[U.S. BOMBING OF HAIPHONG AREA MOUNTS]

(BY PETER OSNOS)

SAIGON, May 25 (Thursday).—Air Force and Navy jets struck another two North Vietnamese thermal power plants and hit an important petroleum storage area near Haiphong, the U.S. Command said Wednesday.

The raids in the vicinity of North Vietnam's principal port city removed the last doubt that the United States intends to continue with its steadily expanding bombing of the North, including Hanoi and Haiphong, while President Nixon is in Moscow.

In South Vietnam's Quangtri Province, Saigon marines were reported meeting stiff resistance as they carried out a probing operation deep behind enemy positions following a combined amphibious and helicopter assault which began just after dawn Wednesday.

Military sources said the operation probably would not last more than two days as it was intended only to disrupt North Vietnamese positions and further delay an anticipated attack on Hue.

The Saigon command said 260 enemy soldiers were killed in the day's fighting and two PT76 tanks were destroyed.

The air attacks on the two power plants, following a similar raid over the weekend, are part of what the Defense Department has now officially acknowledged to be a new phase of the bombing, aimed at crippling North Vietnam's limited industrial capacity.

The rationale for the strikes against the power plants, senior American officials say, is that they supply electricity to the small shops and factories which repair North Vietnamese trucks and tanks.

A weekend air raid on a cement factory near Haiphong, still not officially announced, but privately confirmed by American sources, is justified on the grounds that it hampers Hanoi's ability to keep open its lines of supply to the southern battlefields.

Both the power plants suffered damage, but U.S. military sources said neither was as badly torn up as the one serving Hanoi that was the first to be hit. The raid on the petroleum storage area five miles north of Haiphong produced three large secondary explosions, the command said, "with columns of black smoke rising from the target area."
The raids on power plants and factories in North Vietnam (sources said the country's only steel plant is certain to be hit in the near future) repeat strikes carried out during the previous sustained bombing of the North from 1965 to 1968. A key difference this time, sources say, is that so many of the strikes are in and around Hanoi and Haiphong, which were kept largely off-limits during most of the last bombing campaign.

Beginning Wednesday, the U.S. Command said, it will release a daily rundown on the northern raids, instead of a periodic report as had been the case since regular bombing of North Vietnam was resumed in early April.

The accounting, which covers a 24-hour period ending Tuesday evening, lists 100 strikes, somewhat less than the average of well over 300 flown in recent days. The command said that preliminary assessments indicate varying degrees of damage to two bridges, four trucks, seven field guns, two petroleum sites, 27 surface craft, four warehouses and ten military barracks. In addition, pilots said four surface-to-air missile sites were destroyed and two damaged.

One of the immediate effects of the bombing has been the removal of much of North Vietnam's antiaircraft defenses from the southern portion of the country to the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

Officers say this shift has made it easier for U.S. planes to hit Communist forces in the area of the Demilitarized Zone where North Vietnamese air defenses had been particularly tight. Compared to the hundreds of SAMs fired at U.S. aircraft at the start of the offensive, only a few a day are now being recorded.

Fighting in South Vietnam continued in much the same pattern that has emerged in the past three weeks—heavy contact but without significant changes in the positions of the opposing forces.

The South Vietnamese are still intent on moving to relieve An Loc, 60 miles north of Saigon, but forward elements of the relief column have been stalled in the same place since late last week, about one mile south of the city.

The daily pounding of the ruined city continued to taper off slowly, but in essence nothing has changed since May 11, when the North Vietnamese made an all-out artillery assault on the government defenders.

Much of the same kind of stalemate prevails around Kontum, in the Central Highlands, but the awaited attack on Kontum City has yet to develop. Along Highway 14, the road linking Kontum to Pleiku, South Vietnamese troops are moving slowly to clear out Communist positions, with little success.

Military sources said that 100 rounds of rocket fire fell on Kontum City Wednesday, the most since the fighting began there six weeks ago.

The U.S. Command said three helicopters and one small observation plane were downed Wednesday and 12 Americans were listed as missing. One of the helicopters was hit near An Loc by a heat-seeking guided missile.

(\textit{Washington Post} correspondent Peter Braestrup, covering the government marine assault in Quangtri Province, sent the following dispatch Thursday from Phuoc-Dien:)

\textbf{Enemy resistance reportedly cost South Vietnamese rangers 60 men wounded and dead. One marine battalion, originally supposed to link up with amphibious troops, instead had to go to assist the rangers near the Olan River.}

\textbf{The action occurred in the scrubwood and sand-dune country some 20 miles northwest of Hue where enemy probes and artillery fire occurred all along the marine defense line of Mychaub.}

\textbf{Instead of clearing out the entire "Street Without Joy" area along Highway 555, the 1,000 marines who were landed by boat and helicopter, had to move to secure night defensive positions, on the coast by passing dug-in troops.}

\textbf{The object of Wednesday's end run into Quangtri Province was not to gain new ground, but rather, according to South Vietnamese officers, to nip off a threatening enemy salient, test marine amphibious capability, and give another boost to South Vietnamese morale.}

\textbf{Despite some nervous moments, the hastily planned operation began smoothly. No amphibious tractors carrying the south Vietnamese marines ashore were hit.}

\textbf{Naval gunfire from three U.S. cruisers and three destroyers, a B-52 strike on the beach and repeated air strikes softened up the landing.}

\textbf{What made Wednesday's operation particularly risky was that the marine battalion slated to link up from the south with the amphibious troops was hell-lifted to a jump off point which was still in contested territory. Two marines were wounded aboard the Vietnamese helicopters as they landed. Then the troops organized and began slowly moving into the scrub and tree line under enemy fire. Air strikes eased the pressure.}
Meanwhile, a ranger battalion supported by U.S. Army gunships and air strikes was trying to clear the marine unit's rear. Fighting in the scrub was heavy all day. About 2,000 yards from the Myphu command post a sudden geyser of black smoke marked the loss of a U.S. Army UH-1 helicopter supporting the rangers. There were reportedly no survivors.

The North Vietnamese did not unleash their artillery against the marines on the coast, but used recoilless rifle and machine gun fire.

[From the New York Times, July 13, 1972]

VIETNAM: HOW TO BOMB A DIKE BUT NOT TARGET IT

(By Seymour Hersh)

WASHINGTON—Ever since the American air campaign over North Vietnam was resumed early in April, Hanoi had been charging—and Washington had been denying—that the North's highly vulnerable river-dike system was being bombed. By the end of last month, the controversy had spilled into an international propaganda war, with some Hanoi-based journalists and diplomats reporting that the dikes were indeed being hit by bombs.

Last week, the United States Government took a new tack. Military and civilian officials acknowledged that targets such as mobile antiaircraft missile units and roads were being bombed even if they were on top of dikes or other parts of the North Vietnamese irrigation-system.

"We're not targeting the dikes," one senior Navy officer said. "But if a SAM [surface-to-air missile] is a threat to you, you're certainly entitled to protect yourself." Another military source said, "A military target is targeted, and if it happens to be near a dike, then it gets hit."

The incident that brought the controversy to the fore last week began at about 6 A.M. Tuesday near the city of Nam Sach, a rice-growing area about 35 miles south of Hanoi in the fertile and heavily populated Red River delta. A flight of Navy aircraft, ignoring two or three SAM missiles fired in defense, began dropping bombs throughout the region.

To Jean Thoraval, a Hanoi-based correspondent of the French news agency, Agence France-Presse, who had been taken on a routine inspection trip to the area, some of the bombs appeared to be deliberately aimed at the dike on which he and other foreign journalists were standing. Other bombs, he reported in a dispatch, appeared to be dropped almost at random.

The Pentagon looked into the matter and reported that the aircraft had three basic targets in the area—a SAM missile site, some dispersed oil barrels and an above-the-ground fuel pipeline. The Pentagon did not rule out the possibility that the dike had, in fact, been hit. But, a senior Defense spokesman said, "You can be sure nobody told him [Mr. Thoraval] that there was a pipeline or a SAM site there."

"It is hard to know how many similar incidents take place every day in North Vietnam. One complicating factor, in the military view, is the sheer number of dikes, dams, and other irrigation facilities in the North. The dike system, which is more than 2,000 years old, sprawls across 2,500 miles. Much of it is built to contain the fast-flowing Red River, which, at the height of the summer monsoon between July and September, attains a flow of more than 30,000 cubic feet of water per second. And much of northern-central part of North Vietnam lies below the bed of the Red River. Hence the huge earthen dikes throughout the North.

Last year a portion of the dike system along the Red River broke during the monsoon, and flooding wiped out much of the autumn rice crop. An even worse flood 25 years ago brought death through starvation to an estimated 2 million Vietnamese.

Some experts here believe that serious flooding would force North Vietnam to reduce its war effort. In 1967 the Johnson Administration weighed the possibility of bombing the dam and dike system. The option was rejected by Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara. In a memorandum that was part of the published portion of the "Pentagon Papers," Mr. McNamara wrote, "There may be a limit beyond which many Americans and most of the world would not permit the United States to go."

Concern over the bombing of the dikes came up several times during the Democratic National Convention; it could develop into an issue in the Presidential campaign.
Readers of "Catch-22," that World War II novel by Joseph Heller, will remember that pilots who thought they were going crazy could not be grounded unless they asked to be grounded. And as Doc Deneeka explained the rules to the war weary Yossarian: "Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn't really crazy" and thus must keep flying after asking to be grounded. "That's some catch, that Catch-22," Yossarian told the doctor after his futile attempt to get out of the war.

And now we have a new kind of Catch-22 for Vietnam, one that Air Force Gen. John D. Lavelle came up with to get into the war in a bigger way.

Lavelle, as commander of the Seventh Air Force in Vietnam, felt frustrated as his reconnaissance pilots brought back pictures of a big pileup of military equipment in North Vietnam late last year. He wanted to bomb the stuff before it moved south. And yet the protective reaction rules in force at the time said Lavelle's warplanes could not bomb unless the North Vietnamese fired first or missile radar zeroed in on them.

Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, sounded like Doc Deneeka talking to Yossarian as he told reporters in Denver on Sept. 19 how Lavelle got around his problem with a Catch-22. "In the course of this offensive buildup and the efforts to block it," Stennis explained, "why, the testimony was that Gen. Lavelle conceived the idea and said that if you go into North Vietnam, you're going to get struck at, you're going to get a hostile reaction and you just better assume it before you go."

Because the general assumed the hostile reaction was present even before his planes took off for specific targets in North Vietnam, all his pilots had to do was drop their bombs and declare for reporting purposes that there was a hostile reaction. After all, the general himself said so.

"In that way," continued Stennis in explaining Lavelle's rationale, "why, he considered he was complying with the directives from Washington, his rules of engagement. Also, said Stennis, he was responding to pressure from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington to hinder the North Vietnamese buildup "the very best he could, in every way he could" without breaking the rules.

Lavelle's Catch-22 launched 28 bombing missions against North Vietnam which the Air Force ultimately decided went beyond the rules of engagement. The only person in the 11,000-man Seventh Air Force who formally protested was a 23-year-old sergeant named Lonnie Franks. He wrote his senator, Harold E. Hughes (D-Iowa), about it—a letter which triggered two separate Pentagon investigations, culminating in Lavelle being stripped of his command.

In what might sound like a burlesque of the situation, Stennis and three fellow Senators flew to the Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Denver to hear Lavelle's Catch-22 explained in full by his operations officer, Maj. Gen. Alton D. Slay, who was under the care of Dr. John Messersmith. (Slay had undergone minor surgery.)

The "Catch-22" parallels don't stop with the catch itself. There is the way, for example, the Air Force decided to punish Lavelle for his transgressions beyond removing him from Command; recommend him for a promotion from his permanent rank of major general (two stars) to lieutenant general (three stars).

Ordinarily, a general who held a four star job like Lavelle did would be recommended for retirement at that rank. It is a matter of prestige in the record book, not money. Lavelle will receive four-star retirement pay regardless because he went out on a 70-percent physical disability. But the Air Force leadership argues its recommendation to retire him with the rank of lieutenant general, rather than full general, is in reality a humiliating slap—a detonation.

The Congressional Record, in its listing of Congress' business for the day, noted that the Senate Armed Services Committee on Sept. 31 held executive hearings on the Lavelle nomination "for the promotion of lieutenant general on the retired list." One week later, the Record's listing for "the committee's hearing had changed to: 'hearings on matters relating to authority for certain bombing missions in North Vietnam between November, 1971, and March, 1972.

The change symbolizes how the Lavelle nomination was just the technical reason for the hearings. The real focus was on the unauthorized bombing and
who really ordered them. And now that most of the evidence is in, the committee
must express itself on the Catch-22 war Lavelle ran in Vietnam.

Most of the members on the Senate Armed Services committee respect the
military and resent the burden the rules of engagement put on American com-
mmanders in Vietnam like Lavelle. Yet the members also respect the code; Military
orders, however burdensome, must be obeyed. The testimony is that Lavelle did
not obey them, certainly not to the letter.

Promoting Lavelle to three star rank on the retirement list is not comfortable
for the committee because he broke the code. Leaving him at two star rank fur-
ther punishes a commander who, in the opinion of several senators on the com-
mittee at least, already has suffered enough by being stripped of command and
exposed in the press.

Yet what Lavelle did—taking a war into his own hands—has obviously grave
implications for the nation in this nuclear age where world incineration is 30
minutes away by guided missile. Lavelle is not a fictional Col. Cathcart, but the
general of the Air Force selected to run the air war in Vietnam. What to do is a
big dilemma for the Senate Armed Services Committee. It is the reason the hear-
tines have been suspended to allow time to think this one through.

150 RAIDS MADE ON NORTH, SOME OF "SPECIAL" TARGETS: SUPPLY AND COM-
MUNICATIONS FACILITIES ATTACKED—HEAVY FIGHTING CONTINUES AT ANLOC
AND NORTHWEST OF SAIGON

(By Sydney H. Schanberg)

SAIGON, South Vietnam, Sunday, May 14.—American warplanes made 150
bombing raids on North Vietnam yesterday, United States military sources
reported.

Most of the raids struck the south of the country, but the sources said "a few"
were carried out on "special" targets, which reportedly did not include the
immediate areas of either Hanoi or Haiphong Harbor.

The sources said the Air Force reported knocking out the entire petroleum-
pumping network that has been supplying the North Vietnamese on their offensive
in South Vietnam.

The United States command does not disclose the specific targets in the North,
but the pumping stations, bridges, roads and rail lines.

ANLOC FIGHTING HEAVY

In South Vietnam, heavy ground fighting continued at Anloc, the besieged
provincial capital 60 miles north of Saigon. And in a battle on the northwest
approaches to Saigon, within 23 miles of the capital, South Vietnamese forces
killed 137 of the enemy, according to a Saigon command spokesman.

This engagement, six miles northwest of Trangbang, began when North Viet-
namese troops staged an artillery and ground attack on Government Infantry.
The Government troops called in artillery fire and air strikes. Government losses,
the spokesman said, were four killed and four wounded.

This enemy operation is an extension of the attack on Anloc, where the rem-
nants of eight South Vietnamese battalions have been cut off and under siege
for over a month.

Intensified North Vietnamese assaults began on Thursday, with about 10,000
artillery shells falling on the rubber-plantation town, which is the capital of
Binh Long province.

TOWN BATTERED

The town is now nearly flattened, not only by enemy artillery but also by thou-
sands of tons of bombs and rockets from American and South Vietnamese planes.

With the help of this air support, the Government troops—who hold only the
southern half of the town—were able to resist the renewed infantry and tank
attacks, but military sources said today that there were still enemy companies in-
side the South Vietnamese perimeter. Casualties on both sides were said to be high.

Although about 20 B-52 bombers pounded North Vietnamese positions around
Anloc during the 24-hour period that ended at noon, support was hampered by
cloudy and rainy weather.

The B-52 strikes at Anloc during the last three days have been some of the most
concentrated air raids of the Vietnam war.
The road from Saigon north to Anloc, Route 13, has been cut by the Communists from the beginning of the siege early last month. But military sources reported today that a stalled Government relief force—the 21st Division—had begun to make progress toward Anloc, reaching a point about six miles below the town by nightfall.

The sources said the relief force had encountered only "minimum resistance" and called this "surprising." But the sources said this might be because the enemy troops that had been along the road had been pulled back to participate in the renewed assault on Anloc.

According to the military sources, the defenders at Anloc seem to be holding. "The thing there is just hanging on," said one source, "there's certainly not much valuable real estate left there. Its importance is psychological."

President Nguyen Van Thieu has ordered Anloc held at all costs. Similiar do-or-die orders have been issued for Hue, on the northern front.

In the Central Highlands there was an unexpected lull in the fighting. The American command reported that a Huey helicopter destroyed an enemy tank with an optically controlled, wire-guided missile 11 miles north of the threatened city of Kontum.

A spokesman said this was the first time that a helicopter armed with this weapon had destroyed a tank. Other sources said that the antitank missiles had been brought into the country recently to be fired from Huey helicopters.

The American command also reported that the heavy cruiser Newport News, sitting off the coast, shelled an enemy ammunition and fuel dump near Quangtri city on the northern front, which was taken by the North Vietnamese about two weeks ago. The report said the target was destroyed.

In a delayed report, the Americans said that on May 10, a Navy Phantom fighter-bomber was shot down by antiaircraft fire over North Vietnam in the area of Hanoi. Both crew members were listed as missing.

[From the Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 29, 1972]

HOW SUPPLIES STILL REACH BLOCKADED NORTH VIETNAM?

(By Paul Wohl)

Supplies are reaching blockaded North Vietnam.

This is one of the explanations being offered for Hanoi's continuing offensive with artillery and armored vehicles. Stocks piled up before the blockade must be almost entirely gone after months of intensive warfare. Many of these stocks have been destroyed by bombing, according to American and South Vietnamese communiques.

It is known that China has stepped up its aid to North Vietnam since President Nixon announced the blockade. This is admitted even by the Russians who hitherto have belittled China's role in supplying Vietnam.

On Aug. 20 the noted Soviet commentator Yuri Zhukov told a television audience in Moscow that "China, as all socialist countries, is helping the ... Vietnamese people." He merely complained that "Peking does not accept unified action in aid."

More surprising was the Soviet broadcast of Aug. 12 about "large quantities of commodities, including machinery, machine tools, food stuffs, etc. being shipped to North Vietnam by sea."

BALLY SPEAKER QUOTED

At a rally held at a Black Sea port attended by a representative of the North Vietnamese trade unions it was stated that "dock workers at ports along the Black Sea coast had decided to give first priority to the loading of ships going to North Vietnam."

Could it be that these ships on reaching Vietnamese waters anchor offshore and by night unload their cargo by means of lighters? According to Washington analysts a few Chinese freighters have managed to unload their cargo lighters offshore and that these barges then attempted to slip ashore past American destroyers and aircraft.

Judging by the Soviet broadcast of Aug. 12 the Soviets may be doing the same thing on a larger scale. Thanks to their more highly developed technology they may have found means of unloading their small freighters at great speed, perhaps through the use of special containers and of camouflaging the movement of barges to the shore.
EAST EUROPEAN VESSELS?

There also are reports that supplies reach south Chinese ports by vessels of East European (not Soviet) registry. They are then transshipped by land to North Vietnam. This would seem to be confirmed by the blustering statement of an East German sea captain whose ship was bombed in Haiphong and who, according to the East German newspaper Neues Deutschland, vowed that he would be back again with weapons for the North Vietnamese comrades.

But beyond such remarks, the Communist side does not give many clues about just how they are managing to break the blockade. A prominent Soviet commentator at a public meeting in Moscow recently declared—as had party chief Leonid Brezhnev earlier—that the Soviet Union was continuing to help North Vietnam. When asked how it was possible to send supplies through the minefields and past the naval and air blockade, the commentator answered that he did not wish to give out information which might help the Pentagon.

On Aug. 24 a senior American Air Force official told a group of newsmen that North Vietnam appeared to be still getting at least a quarter of the supplies which came in before the U.S. bombing and mining campaign. At that time it was estimated that between 6,000 and 7,000 tons a day were reaching North Vietnam, mainly by sea.

No one knows exactly how much is coming in by way of China. Before the blockade North Vietnam supposedly received 800 tons a day over land. Now overland traffic may have climbed to 1,000 and even to 2,000 tons a day.

[HANOI APPEARS WELL STOCKED]

HANOI, VIETNAM.

The American bombings north and south of the 17th parallel apparently have not considerably diminished the military potential of North Vietnam.

Despite the secrecy concerning all problems of defense here, officials do not hide the fact that the situation concerning the supply of military and other material “is not as bad as certain Pentagon experts state.”

No statistics are available. But a high official told me, “We can say that our supplies have not dried up, and we have what is necessary to continue the war for a long time still.

“Experience has taught us that even when we are assured of continuous supplies, we should stock reserves. This is what we have done.”

REMARKS CONFIRMED

If such a statement had been made at an official ceremony, one might have been skeptical. But it was made in an off-the-record chat by an official who can be qualified as “very authoritative.”

The remarks are confirmed by information from the front and by all that can be seen by foreign journalists here, who are not confined to their hotels and who periodically go on the road to see the results of the U.S. bombings and their impact on the population.

“OTHER SOLUTIONS” FOUND

To explain all of these apparently Incredible phenomena, an official told me: “Every time we find ourselves faced with a new situation, we must find other means of dealing with it. So when the bombings increased and the ports and coasts were mined, we had to find other solutions to meet the situation.”

To prove his point, the official invited me to eat a delicious French fish soup, a “bouillabaisse,” full of lobster and other shellfish. With a slight smile, he said, “so much for the blockade.”

It is a fact that the North Vietnamese know how to adapt to these “new situations.” Despite the bombings of textile factories, the troops go into battle well-informed and well-equipped.

Gone are the days of a peasant army fighting in rags. Gone also are the days of the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu against the French, when sacks of rice and shells were pushed over thousands of kilometers on bicycles by coolies, although there is still close cooperation between the or and the Soviet heavy-cargo truck.
The same cleverness is employed along the coasts, despite the mining of the ports. Old and traditional junks, insensible to magnetic mines, still have their utility, just as they had during the war against the French.

Evidently, the use of the junks is slower than the direct entry of a big freighter into Haiphong Port. But people here shrug their shoulders and say that time is of little importance.

"We know this well," they say, "because the war has lasted 30 years already, and nothing indicates that it is over."

Over the past three months, in trips over thousands of kilometers, I have been struck, like my colleagues, by the endless convoys of trucks of all sizes, built in China or the Soviet Union or some other country of the Communist camp. Many of them are so new you can still smell the paint on them, and their tires are in good condition.

The trucks are camouflaged under branches, carrying a bit of everything, including munitions cases marked with Chinese characters and sometimes Soviet antiaircraft rockets.

Sometimes one can also see, lined over several kilometers, scores of cannon of all calibers hidden under trees.

Under my windows, in central Hanoi, I have often seen oxen slowly pulling carts filled to the brim with munitions or supplies. One does not know where they came from. One does not know where they are going, except that they are going south.

At the same time flights of MIGs soar over the city, recalling, for those who might be skeptical, that fuel still exists despite the American bombings. Apparently, the pipelines linking North Vietnam to China have not been cut.

Motorbikes are more numerous in the streets than they were in 1968, and gas rationing is less strict than that imposed when the former Johnson administration decided to bomb the North.

U.S. FEELS VINDICATED BY HANOI’S LOW FLOODING

WASHINGTON.—Administration officials who two months ago were fearful that natural flooding in North Vietnam late this summer would lend substance to Hanoi’s claims that the United States is deliberately bombing North Vietnam’s dike system are breathing easier.

In separate interviews in recent days, government officials with access to intelligence reports of flood conditions in the Red River Delta have confirmed that the flood crest, which annually reaches its high point in late August, is lower than usual and is well below last year’s record levels.

"We’re beginning to think they’ll make it through this year," one official said.

"Last year at this time they were treading water."

Recent Air Force photo-reconnaissance of the Red River Delta south and east of Hanoi has revealed only two instances of minor flooding, according to government sources.

Neither instance has been reported by Hanoi radio, which is monitored extensively by U.S. intelligence and which, through much of the summer, has kept up a drum fire of charges that American bombing of North Vietnam has deliberately targeted the dike system.

The key to flood control in the Red River Delta is whether or not the annual runoff from melting snows in the Himalayas, which find their way to the Red River’s sources in the Yunnan Plateau in southwest China, threaten to overpower North Vietnam’s 2,700-mile system of levees.

PRODUCED A DISASTER

Many of the dikes are 30 or 40 feet higher than the surrounding terrain they protect.

By late August last year, an abnormally high runoff had combined with heavy rainfall from typhoons in the Yunnan Plateau and early monsoon rains in the Red River Delta to produce a major disaster.
Up to a million acres of rice land were flooded, and damage to crops, according to various estimates ranging from 10 per cent to 25 per cent of the total harvest, caused near-famine conditions in parts of the country.

Earlier this summer, Hanoi radio’s broadcasts for home consumption began to exhort citizens to make good the repairs from last summer’s floods so they would not be repeated this year.

But by mid-June, these exhortations became mingled with reports that the U.S. had begun a bombing campaign aimed at insuring there would be another flood.

State Department’s Rebuffal

As this accusation began to be echoed around the world, State Department officials sought to rebut the charge.

They pointed out that the dike system could easily have been damaged below the water’s surface in last year’s floods and warned that new floods from this cause very well might recur this summer.

At the same time, the administration backpedaled from earlier denials that any dikes at all were bombed.

Late last month, it issued a grudging admission that the primary dike system through mid-July had suffered some damage in 12 locations during the course of bombing raids on “targets of military value.”

A composite intelligence report released at the time by the State Department ended with this warning:

“North Vietnam must . . . complete the repair of damage caused by the 1971 floods before next month when this year’s rainy season will reach its peak.”

It now appears that danger is past, officials say, unless there is a freak typhoon during September similar to the one that inundated parts of the Philippines earlier this month.

Recent Central Intelligence Agency weather estimates of the Himalaya and Yunnan Plateau runoff show that “this is a low water year as far as river flow is concerned,” as one high government officer put it.

Study of French Records

This official view of the situation received unofficial support yesterday from a critic of the war who has made a special study of weather and flood conditions in the Red River Delta as part of a monograph that is sharply critical of U.S. bombing policy.

John Gledman, a young Ph. D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is at present a free-lance writer living in Cambridge, Mass.

He explained in a telephone interview that a study of weather records of Indochina kept by the French from 1865 to the outbreak of World War II shows that there never have been two successive years of serious flooding.

Mr. Gledman also pointed out that a survey of Hanoi’s reports of bombing damage since the raids resumed this spring shows a pattern of attacks that in themselves would not cause serious flooding of the delta even if the dike system were deliberately targeted.

Most of the bombing, he said, follows a pattern “similar to the Johnson era.”

Nixon “Telling It Right”

Dikes were hit then, during the graduate escalation of bombing by President Johnson from 1966 to 1968, but the bombing was concentrated mainly in coastal areas where flooding would be light and would damage crops rather than drown civilians.

While he is a critic of U.S. war policy, Mr. Gledman said he had concluded from the evidence to date that “I don’t think a policy decision has been made to take out the dikes. Nixon was telling it right on that point.”

He pointed out, however, that U.S. bombing could still cause great damage to the autumn rice harvest by attacking the dike system in early November—“right after the election, to lessen the political impact.”

He said raids of this sort could cause devastating food shortages with less danger of mass drowning of civilians than bombing during the summer flood season.

Mr. Gledman said he had undertaken independent research of the Red River Delta’s flood and weather conditions in preparation for a pamphlet, “Terror from the Skies,” criticizing U.S. bombing policy.
The pamphlet was undertaken for the Vietnam Resource Center, an anti-war organization based in Cambridge.

[From the New York Times, Sept. 11, 1972]

ABROAD AT HOME—THE FOOD WEAPON

(By Anthony Lewis)

An Associated Press dispatch from Saigon Sept. 3 included this passage:

"The Seventh Fleet disclosed that one of its vessels had intercepted and seized two and a half tons of rice that it said the Chinese had tried to float ashore from a freighter (off North Vietnam) in waterproof plastic and burlap sacks."

The sentence was well down in a roundup of military action in Vietnam that day. The United States Navy's seizure of rice being shipped to North Vietnam was evidently regarded as routine. But for some readers it raised significant questions.

When the United States began its blockade of North Vietnam last May, President Nixon spoke of "tanks, artillery and other advanced offensive weapons supplied to Hanoi by the Soviet Union and other Communist nations." He said the "one way to stop the killing" was to "keep the weapons of war out of the hands of the international outlaws of North Vietnam."

The announced seizure of those bags of rice raises the question whether the American blockade is in fact limited to military supplies.

The question was put to a Pentagon expert. In reply he first pointed out that this particular seizure of rice took place near Hanoi Island, off the southern pan-handle of North Vietnam 75 miles above the demilitarized zone. He called it a "conduit area," where * * * and food "has to be for troops, or for those working the supply system." But this point turned out to be of no significance.

After checking with higher authority, the Pentagon officer stated that the U.S. Navy was under orders to stop food and anything else discovered anywhere off North Vietnam. He said:

"The policy is to interdict all supplies going into North Vietnam by sea."

In short, the United States is carrying out a total naval blockade of North Vietnam, not one limited to military supplies. What makes that highly improbable is the fact, not widely understood, that only a tiny proportion of North Vietnam's imports by sea is of a military character.

An analysis of North Vietnamese imports was made in the opening weeks of the Nixon Administration. It appears in National Security Study Memorandum No. 1, known as NSSM-1.

About 85 per cent of the aid from her Communist allies reached North Vietnam by sea, NSSM-1 said. And that was almost entirely food and other "economic" aid rather than military. "The military equipment provided by the Soviets and Chinese" came mainly by rail through China, it said.

During the first nine months of 1968, NSSM-1 estimated, the seaborne cargo broke down as follows: "Foodstuffs (chiefly rice and wheat) 38 per cent of total volume, general cargo 33, petroleum 20, fertilizer 8, timber 1."

The memorandum added:

"The importance of food imports can hardly be overstated; even with them, North Vietnam has been forced to strictly ration foodstuffs."

There is no reason to think that the import proportions have changed drastically since the NSSM-1 analysis. The hawkish Economist of London estimated recently that in 1971 only about a quarter of North Vietnam's imports were "military-related, much of the rest being raw materials and food."

From all this two things are unarguably clear:

North Vietnam is dependent on imported food to a significant degree to feed her population.

The American blockade, to the extent that it is effective, must have one of its principal impacts on the food supply. And those who made the policy well understood that when they instituted the blockade.

There is of course the view, expressed by a number of military figures, that no distinction should be drawn between Vietnamese military and civilian activity or personnel. They are all helping the war effort; after all, and if they called that off they would have no trouble importing the food they need.

But our moral system does not allow such obliteration of the military-civilian distinction. We all recognize that it is one thing to her, say, missiles from Cuba and another to cut off food and everything else. One of the Nazis condemned to
death at Nuremberg was the wartime governor of Holland who caused a civilian famine by ordering the dikes destroyed.

Considerations of this kind are not likely to move Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger or the other men who believe that American honor requires bombing, mining and shelling Indochina indefinitely to keep Nguyen Van Thieu in office. But the rest of us might have a feeling in the pit of our stomach the next time Mr. Nixon tells the heart-rending story of little Tanya, the 12-year-old Russian girl who saw her family die one by one in the famine during the German seige of Leningrad.

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 6, 1972]

CRITICS REBUFFED—THE PENTAGON BRIEF FOR BOMBING HANOI

(By Stephen S. Rosenfeld)

No serious student of the American bombardment of North Vietnam will want to ignore the revealing submission on the subject made in a letter to Sen. Edward Kennedy by J. Fred Buzhardt, general counsel of the Defense Department. It was put into the Congressional Record on Tuesday.

Kennedy had asked to be told the “rules of engagement” governing air and naval strikes on North Vietnam. Denying the request, the Pentagon’s chief lawyer explained that the rules are “highly sensitive documents . . . very closely controlled because of their obvious and inestimable value to the enemy. To expose the rules governing the conduct of combat operations is to risk jeopardizing the lives of United States personnel . . . and would otherwise be detrimental to national security.”

In other words, the rules of bombing are whatever the Pentagon decides they are. An occasional whistleblower, such as Sgt. Lonnie Franks in the Gen. Lavelle case, may let the public know what one of the rules is. Otherwise, the Pentagon is free to bomb as it sees fit.

Kennedy had also asked to be shown aerial photographs, before-and-after shots if possible, of populated areas in North Vietnam allegedly subject to American attacks. Denying this request too, Buzhardt said that “particularly in view of the patently propagandistic character” of Hanoi’s allegations about dike bombing, “no useful purpose” would be served by a study of photographs—photographs “which for military security reasons would mostly not be releasable to the public . . .”

In other words, the results of bombing are whatever the Pentagon decides to say they are. Occasionally, foreign visitors to North Vietnam may let the public know what some of the results are. Otherwise, the Pentagon is free to report as it sees fit.

This is in line, to be sure, with the administration’s strong reaction to independent reports of bombing damage brought back from North Vietnam by American public figures and journalists, and with its support for the House Internal Security Committee bill authorizing the President to prevent American citizens from traveling to “hostile areas”—fortunately, the bill was defeated on the House floor last Monday.

The Buzhardt letter went on to break new public ground in describing the administration’s legal rationale for its bombing.

Now, granted, the legal rationale is not the political or military rationale: It is less a reason to bomb in itself than a way to defend a policy undertaken for other reasons. “Only a child would expect a Pentagon lawyer” to advise his “client,” the Secretary of Defense, that his policy has legal disabilities and should be changed. The rationale offered by Buzhardt does have, nonetheless, its own value.

Candidly, Buzhardt conceded that international law applying to armed conflicts reflects only “the willingness of states to accept legal restraints on their conduct or the weapons to be used.” He summarized three broad existing restraints:

The right to hurt a foe is “not unlimited.”

The right to attack a civilian population “as much as possible.”

And how much is “possible”? This is crucial. Buzhardt’s answer is that the principle of separating civilians from combatants “addresses primarily the party exercising control over members of the civilian population. The principle
recognizes the interdependence of the civilian community with the overall war effort of a modern society. But its application enjoins the party controlling the population . . ."

If I understand him correctly, Buzhardt is saying: The first responsibility for sparing its civilians from bombing is Hanoi’s. If it wants to spare them, let it get them out of the way. In the same breath, he remarks—surely accurately—on the “interdependence of the civilian community with the overall war effort” in North Vietnam. That is, the only way North Vietnamese citizens can be spared is for Hanoi to stop fighting the war.

Usually, the Pentagon says that the bombing of civilian targets is a regrettable accident incidental to the bombing of legitimate military targets. But Buzhardt suggests that civilians (“interdependent with the overall war effort”) are themselves fair game. If they get hurt it’s their own fault. North Vietnam is a fire zone.

Anyone who would question this reading is hereby referred to the conclusion of Buzhardt’s letter. The “correct rule of international law,” which governs American military operations in Southeast Asia, Buzhardt says, is that “the loss of life and damage to property must not be out of proportion to the military advantage to be gained.”

Who is to determine in this instance the extent of such loss and the extent of such military advantage and whether the two are in proportion or not? J. Fred Buzhardt replies: “A review of the operating authorities and rules of engagements for all or 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 military operations in carrying out military objectives” (emphasis added).

Again to attempt a paraphrase: Buzhardt has checked the bombing rules, which are secret, and the bombing results, which are secret, and he has solemnly concluded that his boss, the Commander-in-Chief, is faithfully following “the correct rule of international law” and is pursuing an especially careful humanitarian bombing policy to boot.

His letter to Sen. Kennedy surely ranks as one of the most illuminating documents of the Indochina war. And one of the most appalling. “My office.” My eye.

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

PILOTS DON’T PAINT PEACE SIGNS—ARE THE AIR CASUALTIES TOO HIGH?

(By Michael Getler)

If it is possible for the death of some young men in war to be more tragic than the death of others, then perhaps the greatest tragedy is reserved for those who die last—while the negotiators and politicians sit around the world and the country with the issue of war or peace in their briefcases and in their campaign speeches.

In Vietnam, it is becoming increasingly clear that the last Americans to die in any numbers there are going to be Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps pilots and aircrews who are carrying out daily bombing raids against North Vietnam.

What is unclear, however, is how long these raids and these losses will go on, and whether many Americans are thinking about, sharing and acting upon the sense of tragedy that comes with dying at this point in the war.

Between April 1—when the Communists launched their big ground offensive across the DMZ and brought on renewed U.S. bombing of the North—and last weekend, the U.S. military command has reported 54 American planes shot down over the North and 94 airmen missing. There may be more by now.

When the numbers lost over South Vietnam are added, the total jumps to more than 175 U.S. flyers listed as missing, another 72 as dead and 55 wounded since the offensive began.

For many Americans, the war in Vietnam is a bad dream that is fading. The war is over on the ground, and the personal involvement of many citizens is likewise over. The last combat battalion was withdrawn earlier this month. The weekly casualties are way down, and the protests are way down, too.

But the air war is not over, and something very curious seems to be happening. American pilots, who are continuing to drop record tons of bombs on North
Vietnam, continue to be shot down at a rate which any country would be outraged at—other than one made numb by years of such high losses. Yet, there does not seem to be any really strong public outcry on either point.

To the extent that protest and dissent lingers, it focuses on the bombing and damage being done to the north. This is countered, of course, by administration spokesmen who point out the devastation caused in South Vietnam by the Communist offensive. But with the U.S. now out of Vietnam almost entirely on the ground, the continuing loss of American airmen has a measure of whether our continuing combat involvement in the war is worth it—is generally being overlooked.

Meanwhile, the toll in POW camps mounts.

Superpowers apparently cannot be expected to make decisions on the basis of the lives of just a few men. But several issues appear to be converging now which raise serious questions about where the continuing U.S. air war is leading. For one thing, it is fair to ask ourselves, now that the vast majority of American troops is out of South Vietnam, if we are witnessing a willingness by a majority of Americans to accept—without much dissent—a continuation of the air and sea war for an indefinite period into the future?

If that is so, then the next question is whether we have thought hard enough about the costs to those left fighting it.

This second point is compounded by another factor. When the U.S. had half-a-million ground troops in Vietnam and the war became highly unpopular, there were visible signs of that unpopularity. Anti-war veterans group were made up of GI's, grunts who fought on the ground. Tanks with peace signs painted on them showed up on the nightly TV news with regularity.

But pilots don't paint peace signs on their airplanes. They are a different breed of fighting man. And, for a variety of reasons, they would probably be the last to stand up and shout: 'Hey America. We're still out here and getting killed,' even if they wanted out.

Anyone who flies an airplane does it because he prefers that to anything else. Flying in combat escalates the challenge that most aviators love. Each pilot is an officer, and in effect a military commander of his own fighting machine.

What we seem to be witnessing is a situation in which men not given to protest are fighting the war, making it easier for the population as a whole to forget what is going on.

Yet, if the country has rejected the human cost of the ground war for Americans, why should it tacitly accept the lower but still human cost of carrying on that fight from airbases in Thailand or from aircraft carriers off the coast?

In a philosophical sense, the question of whether these pilots are prepared to carry out their missions—which undoubtedly many of them are—becomes secondary to the question of whether they should be assigned to carry them out.

Finally, there is the question of how long the air war will go on and how much more it will eventually cost in American lives.

Last week, at an informal evening meeting with a few newsmen, a high-ranking Air Force official was asked if he thought the air war could go on for another two or three years. He said that he hoped not, but that it was possible.

The next day, the Pentagon labeled such possibilities as sounding "pretty incredible."

The Nixon administration has, in fact, pledged to turn over the air war to the South Vietnamese just as it has the ground war. But that pledge was made years ago and no date has even been set publicly for that turnover to be completed.

And, perhaps most important, it would be impossible for the U.S. to turn over the type of air war now being fought by the U.S. The South Vietnamese don't have huge B-52 heavy bombers, nor fast F-4 Phantom or A-7 Corsair fighter-bombers, nor is it, U.S. policy to give such planes to the South.

So the question remains, what will the U.S. do if the North just keeps on fighting, doesn't agree to a negotiated settlement and doesn't go home?

(From the Christian Science Monitor, Oct. 10, 1972)

The Bombs Won't Work.

To the general bulk of our knowledge, or ignorance, of what is going on in Vietnam there have now been added two new sources of information which need, we think, to be examined and weighed seriously and carefully.
Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Peter Arnett of the Associated Press have both been touring North Vietnam. They are both conscientious, careful reporters known and respected in their profession. Both saw much the same things—the Hanoi-Haliphong area and a trip down the line from Hanoi to Nam Dinh, which is the main textile producing center of the country.

Their observations confirm each other. They prove one thing. In the area they visited, only a small slice of the whole of North Vietnam, people were busily engaged in keeping the military supply line working and, seemingly, doing it successfully and in high morale in spite of the bombing.

Nam Dinh itself was a shambles, its big buildings mostly bombed out and useless. But the machinery had been taken away and scattered among homes and villages before the bombs fell, or pulled from the wreckage afterwards. The train runs regularly between Hanoi and Nam Dinh. The daily bomb craters are all filled in time for the regular run.

Wherever the two reporters went they saw large quantities of ammunition and other war supplies along the open highways, under trees. Long lines of trucks park by day under the trees—roll along at night. There is no evidence of food or fuel shortages. Consumer goods come out of village or backyard or roadside improvised plants.

In other words the bombing has scattered the people and their daily activities, but not interfered seriously with the productiveness of the community. It continues to be able to push the daily quota of war supplies down the supply route to the war front in the South.

This evidence is incomplete. The two reporters did not see the whole country. They do not know how much of the materials pushed into the country from China reach their destinations. But it does confirm evidence from other sources that the bombing has not been able to shut down North Vietnam as an exporter of military power.

There is said to be a reduction in the quantity of supplies reaching North Vietnam from the outside world. Both Pentagon and the CIA estimate that the total is down by about half. But is this reduction (if true) due to the bombing or to Henry Kissinger's diplomacy?

American military intelligence has consistently failed to note any large buildup of supplies in China, north of the Vietnam border, or anywhere inside North Vietnam, as could be expected if the bombing were holding up supply lines. If we can infer from this that it is Henry Kissinger's Peking-Moscow diplomacy which is cutting off supplies, then the bombing can only be regarded as the most wasteful operation in the annals of warfare, in both human and material terms.

Under these circumstances, the only possible justification for continuing the bombing is one of diplomatic tactics, not of military strategy. That reason would be the genuine conviction on the part of the White House that Hanoi is at, or very close to, the point of coming to terms at the bargaining table. Under these circumstances, it could be argued that a bombing halt would be interpreted by Hanoi as a sign of weakness, causing it to back away from imminent accord. That is one possibility. But there is another viewpoint, as expressed in two dispatches from Paris carried in this newspaper last Friday, which argued that the peace talks are at stalemate and, indeed, that Hanoi is already planning a new offensive.

If the White House knows something that nobody else knows, then its bombing tactics should justify themselves in the appearance shortly of a peace settlement. But White House sources are already reported to be hedging, by saying privately that a settlement will not come before Election Day, November 7. Which leaves the average American citizen in the same quandary that he faced before Election Day 1964 and 1968, both as regards presidential promises of peace in Indo-China and rationalizations for bombing of North Vietnam. The needle is stuck in its groove, and the question is whether to wait and hope it jumps the track, or to get up and change the record.