

SFChronicle
MAY 9 1972
**Sights and Sounds
Of War in Hanoi**

By Joel Henri
Agence France-Presse

Hanoi

Houses in central Hanoi shook under the impact of bombs dropped by American aircraft yesterday in what appeared to be a violent attack on areas around the capital.

The rumble of a long series of explosions could be heard even by people who had sought refuge in underground shelters.

From outdoor observation posts, the explosions — wave after wave at five-minute intervals for 35 minutes — could be heard very clearly.

Still unconfirmed reports said the targets included the small commune of Phe Xuy-

en some 20 miles from Hanoi.

I spent the previous night at Phu Xuyen. Nothing in the locality except perhaps a small rail and road bridge could constitute a military target.

Phu Xuyen was a target of the United States Air Force several times during the Johnson administration.

Other unconfirmed reports said the Hoa Binh region 25 miles west of Hanoi also was attacked.

Some explosions seemed to have occurred much closer. Rumors which could not immediately be checked said U. S. aircraft dropped

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leaflets over Hadong commune less than six miles from Hanoi urging the population to evacuate their homes before coming "raids of destruction."

Hadong is devoid of any strategic significance, in the view of observers here. It is a small town with a teacher's training college, a secondary school and agricultural cooperatives for the surrounding area.

In Hanoi, a special plane was expected late yesterday to evacuate staff members of the diplomatic missions of Eastern European countries, including the Soviet Union, who were not considered as "indispensable" for the working of their missions.

Many foreigners, including diplomats and correspondents, who have to remain in North Vietnam, might be evacuated to less dangerous areas in the coming hours.

Prior to yesterday's raids, I visited the bomb-scarred provinces of Thanh Hoa and Nam Ha to the south of Hanoi, where American warplanes have hit schools and hospitals over the past fortnight.

If the raiding F-5 Phantoms were aiming for military targets such as convoys I saw no evidence of it — but together with about a dozen foreign newsmen I saw evidence of what the civilian population has suffered from American bombing.

We left in the middle of the night to avoid and unpleasant experiences with American planes, and set out along deserted Highway

No. 1 which leads south to Saigon.

As we pushed south the villages came to life, and the first farm workers set out with their buffaloes for the rice fields. Soon we met our first road traffic: Military trucks loaded with children being taken to safety from the coastal areas.

Frequently we had to wait for the ferries to cross rivers, and beneath the trees, never far from slit-trenches, others were also waiting, some grouped around the small stalls selling coconut milk, bananas and rice-cakes.

Watching the groups of peasants standing in the early morning, chatting, it was hard to believe that the threat of war had disturbed the calm flow of their lives — but war has changed this life, and the almost medieval "technology" of rural Asia how co-exists with a modern more mechanical world.

While the ferries are often pulled across the river by hand-made cables, bulldozers are hidden in camouflaged shelters to repair roads damaged by bombs and rockets. Traditional wooden bullock carts pull off the road to let five-ton Chinese trucks and Soviet-built missile trailers pass.

Another indication of this modern world is the frequency with which the word "maybay" — the Vietnamese for plane — crops up, and the new habit — quickly adopted by all travelers — of glancing up anxiously at the sky whenever one is in the open.

At the end of our journey

was the Thanh Hoa provincial hospital 75 miles south of Hanoi. The destruction stunned our party.

It was hard to believe that this could have been the result of a mistake. The buildings are surrounded by rice fields. And the hospital has already been attacked before, last December, when the damage was shown worldwide on television.

The latest raid — on April 27 — brought a shower of 36 bombs onto the hospital: 12 were giant 2000-pounders, and the rest were anti-tank bombs which penetrated the concrete roofs of the hospital as well as the air-raid shelters, the hospital's chief doctor told us.

In the enormous 45-foot craters and the rubble, the wreckage of operating tables and X-ray equipment could be seen. The death toll was 12 — and now the 600-bed hospital has been evacuated to the mountains.

Our next stop was six miles south, in the village of Dong Yen, where five aircraft dived out of the sky to hit the primary school during morning classes. Five bombs fell, leaving 20 dead and 25 wounded. The village is still shocked and silent. In the ruins of the school scattered books, burned and torn, lie among shattered desks. A childish drawing showing the circulation of the heart floats on the water which now fills one of the giant craters.

We looked for the military targets which might have justified the raid — for artillery, radar aerials or machine guns. There was noth-

ing. Just mud and straw huts.

The only "radar" here which gives only a few seconds warning of an approaching raid is supplied by children perched in the branches of trees, who bang on drums and blow whistles to sound the alert.

This primitive early warning system operates in most villages, and as we were leaving Thanh Hoa province we heard the alert sound, and took shelter near the road.