

Thirty Minutes in Hanoi: A Sky Alive With Planes

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Agence France-Presse

HANOI, North Vietnam, May 10—The sounds of jets and bombing began at 9:50 A.M. today, and smoke could be seen rising several miles west of Hanoi.

When the air-raid warning sounded, I parked under a tree in the northern suburbs of the capital, having just returned from a visit to Haiphong, and watched as a surface-to-air missile seared up into a cloudless sky.

Suddenly three formations of United States Phantom jets screamed into sight from different directions and at various heights. Radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns opened up, and I counted at least 100 puffs of yellow smoke as shells burst around one of the planes.

The sky seemed to be alive with aircraft as they twisted to avoid the ground fire.

Several of the planes went into a dive, apparently to attack the Longbien Bridge, which spans the Red River. Some of the bombs seemed to miss their target and explode more than 600 yards beyond the bridge in the middle of the residential suburb of Gialam.

These and other bombs burst with a deafening roar, and black smoke rose all around Hanoi. At 10:15 A.M., half an hour after the raiders had arrived, they were gone, and the all-clear sounded.

Civilians climbed from their one-man shelters while strips of aluminum floated down from the sky, where the American pilots had released them to jam the radar apparatus that controls the surface-to-air missiles.

The bridge was unusable after the attack, and a long detour, including use of a ferryboat, was necessary to cross to the other bank and drive into the city.

Near the capital, I saw a railway marshaling yard and several warehouses blazing fiercely, several houses in

ruins and the twisted wreckage of trucks.

Some people who said they witnessed the raids in Hanoi reported having seen four planes explode in the air and three parachutes float slowly down.

The Hanoi radio said 16 American planes were shot down, and the North Vietnamese press agency reported that several American pilots were captured. The agency also said that hospitals and historical monuments were damaged by the attacks on the capital.

In Haiphong, it was reported that no ships had left the port since it was mined by American planes yesterday. Operations to clear the mines were said to be under way.

4 Russians Injured

The port director expressed the belief that, despite President Nixon's statement that the mines would not be active until tomorrow, some might already be armed.

But, he went on, ships will continue to use Haiphong, and "we will do what is necessary."

At the dockside were five Russian, two Chinese and two Polish ships, one North Vietnamese vessel and one British. Other cargo ships were tied up at buoys in the harbor.

While in Haiphong, I visited a hospital where four Russians were being treated for wounds reportedly suffered yesterday during the mining, in which two Soviet cargo ships, the Babushkin and the Peveck, were said to have been damaged. One of the four is a woman, identified as a hostess aboard one of the ships. The others were a ship's doctor, a cook and a first mate.

The chief doctor at the hospital said the condition of at least two of the Russians was serious.