

Hanoi: Alert Maintained; Peace Reports Fail to Reach Man in Street

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HANOI, Jan. 14 (Delayed) — "Attention! Attention! To the west of Hanoi 50 kilometers (31 miles) away, a reconnaissance flight has been detected."

That staccato announcement at midday was the most tangible news heard by the people of the North Vietnamese capital today about what the war has in store for them.

For despite the halt in the American bombing of the Hanoi-Haiphong region, throughout the nation a continuing state of siege is maintained regardless of day-to-day prospects for a cease-fire accord.

"We have had too many bitter experiences to relax our vigilance now," said a North Vietnamese official. "Our anti-aircraft are constantly prepared to shoot."

The news of U.S. negotiator Henry A. Kissinger's departure from Paris with new talk of progress on both sides of the negotiations and Kissinger's consultations in Florida with President Nixon

re-echoed here only among those with independent access to the world outside. This includes North Vietnamese with short-wave radio.

But whatever hope or skepticism the news aroused was kept invisible in this determinedly disciplined society. To this moment, the North Vietnamese government has held off telling its own people even what its own delegation spokesman said in Paris when talks recessed.

The response here today to all inquiries is, "It is all up to Nixon."

To a newly arrived visitor, however, Hanoi outwardly appears more placid than any capital would be expected to be after a generation of war.

On this Sunday afternoon, the streets are lively with thousands of cyclists, the markets are crowded, the vegetables plump and the meat, chicken and other foodstuffs seem ample. The people by no means look undernourished, and now that the bombing is suspended, there are

See HANOI, A15, Col. 1

HANOI, From A1

Children rolling hoops on the sidewalks, pretty girls strolling and flower stands in the center of the city.

There is also a remarkable silence. It is punctuated only by the rumble of army trucks, usually hauling road-building supplies, or the occasional horn of a car or truck weaving a path through the omnipresent bicyclists.

Even the presently infrequent interruption of an air-alert warning produces no break in the pattern. Because the announcement identified only a reconnaissance flight, no one even broke stride over it. The people in the streets seemingly have complete confidence in the ability of the alert system to distinguish between a reconnaissance flight and an attack. The system is said to be refined enough to advise if a reconnaissance flight is by a piloted plane or a drone.

War has by no means scarred all of this city or even the major portion of it, one can quickly see even while awaiting a closer inspection of the air raid damage.

Much of Hanoi's city center is still lined with stately trees in full foliage, although the weather is gray and chilly in this season. The bomb damage is in pockets or strips where American B-52s dropped an unprecedented tonnage of destruction on this capital between Dec. 18 and 29.

Nevertheless, the immediate impact on the arriving visitor is a scene of devastation on landing at Gialam airport on the weekly Soviet Aeroflot flight. For the Gialam area in general, on the east bank of the muddy Red River opposite Hanoi, was a prime target with its industry, railroad repair yards and other installations, some of them near or virtually surrounded by the poorest residential sections.

Here, casualties were reportedly high.

Men and women workers methodically are picking through the ruins of crumbled buildings and residences on that side of the river salvaging everything possible, brick by brick.

Desolation continues to the water's edge where the broken skeleton of the famous Longbien Bridge (formerly the Paul Doumer Bridge) looms in the distance, once North Vietnam's prized artery to the east and north. It withstood

"Johnson," the interpreter wryly notes referring to the war years of President Johnson. "But not Nixon. But we have many pontoons."

Soon you are on the pontoon bridge after a line of trucks perhaps half a mile long allows your passenger car to squeeze through, zig-zagging perilously across the remnants of a roadway.

Improvised Bridge

The improvised bridge across the Red River is a hazard itself for a passenger car, even if it is a punishable Soviet-built Volga. No longer straight under the jarring truck traffic, the pontoon bridge, held by cables anchored to the river bed, presents an obstacle at each joined section where heavy planks tie it together. The passenger car mounts each section as a new challenge.

On the Hanoi side of the river, the roadbed is still pocked with craters being filled with dirt and gravel. As the river area recedes, however, so does the scene of continuing bomb damage.

Hanoi is officially displaying its wounds far more than it is cringing from them. No outsider, especially a non-Vietnamese speaker, can know what the Vietnamese people really think about their war plight.

The official presentation portrays the bomb scars as battle ribbons for heroism under fire. The people act as if they agree. Glancing away from their roadbuild-

ing, they look at the passing foreign visitor, unable to know if he is French, Russian, Swedish, East German—or a rarer American—with an expression of calmness rather than misery, as if they were saying "Look what we survived." All they can read or hear in the official media tells them they are heroic.

By official invitation, peace delegations are now coming into North Vietnam at an increased pace to inspect the American war damage, to deplore and condemn the strategy that inflicted and to extoll the fortitude of those who survived.

Victory Hailed

Billboards and banners across Hanoi's wide, shaded streets hail "Victory" over the 12 days of American B-52 raids and exhort the population to "Sacrifice All, But Never Submit" To "American aggressors."

North Vietnam's statistical claims to victory in this period, about double the acknowledged American count, abound in signs and posters across the city: "planes down 81, including 34 B-52s, 5 F-111s and 42 others."

Across the front of the city's closed theater a red banner about 50 feet high

proclaims: "The people and army of Hanoi have won great exploits to be worthy of the people of the heroic capital of the whole country."

The reference to the "whole country" means North and South Vietnam, the unity of which is of course Hanoi's ultimate objective.

As Kissinger conferred with President Nixon, one of North Vietnam's leading exponents of national unity talked of the ability of North Vietnam to persevere in war or peace to achieve the goal of unity. He was Luu Quy Ky, who bears the disarming title of secretary general of the Association of Vietnamese Journalists. Ky, among other things, is the author of 16 books about Vietnam.

The "secret of Vietnam," he said, is "how to endure."

Ky, a southerner by birth, relished recounting the history of Vietnam's repulsion of foreign invaders during two millenia. "We will not talk optimism about the Paris talks," he said. But we are optimistic about eventual victory. If you conceive that to fight for freedom is a happiness, then you can fight for a very long time.

"How can we fight a nation that can send men to the moon when we are still

using buffalos to plow?" He asked rhetorically. "We are not producing one gram of steel," he said, but "we win victories because of our courage and our intelligence. We have studied the limits of human endurance," he said, and have practiced it.

During a two-and-a-half-hour conversation, Marxism went unmentioned except once indirectly in answer to a question about outside aid to communist North Vietnam, which he maintained is now adequately supplied by its socialist allies.

Questions about North Vietnam's extraordinary protests last summer that "big powers" (meaning the Soviet Union and China) were succumbing to President Nixon's attempt to make them abandon the "National Liberation Movement" were met by the disclaimer today that "Nixon has been defeated" in that strategy.

Hanoi Population

His themes, instead, were nationalism, endurance, perseverance and the conviction that no one can determine North Vietnam's destiny for it.

The population of metropolitan Hanoi, normally about 1.2 million, is still only a third of that size. This is a result of the evacu-

ation of residents during the B-52 bombardment.

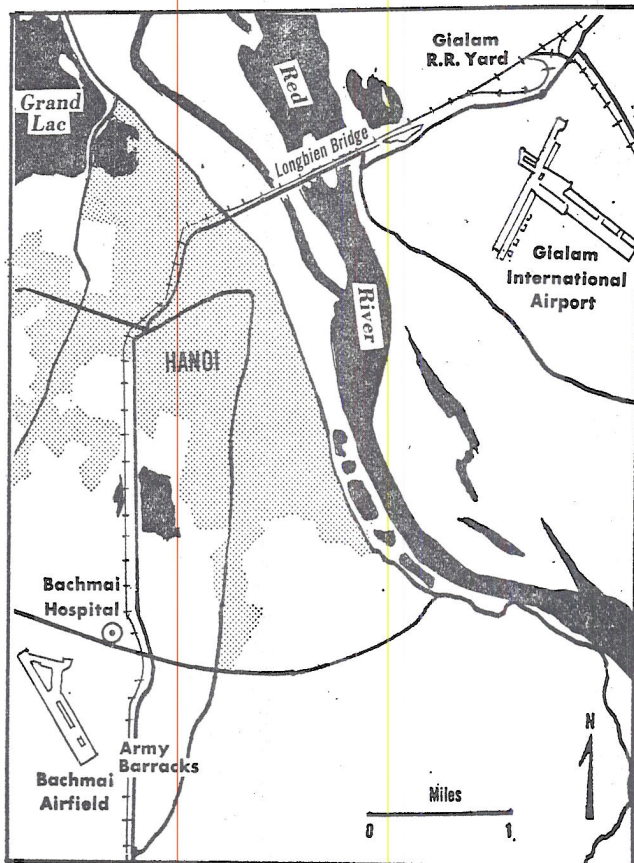
But even though the bombing halted two weeks ago, North Vietnam is constantly preparing for a possible resumption.

The people see and hear nothing but victorious war claims or reports of world acclaim for North Vietnam's tenacity. If there are skeptics or doubters, they were informed by today's official government newspaper *Nhan Dan* that "all the youths of Hanoi are very happy to be chosen as soldiers. The leaders of their street councils encourage them to join the army. Many write letters to the army command expressing their willingness to fight."

What has been the toll for the last generation of war, including what North Vietnam calls 13 years of continuous war with the United States? Ky gently replies that "We have not calculated this figure."

The population of North Vietnam, however, has nevertheless increased, despite the toll, from about 17 million people in 1960 to an estimated 21 million today as the result of a high birth rate.

"We eagerly want peace," the assertion comes. "But we also are prepared for indefinite war if necessary."



By Joseph Mastrangelo—The Washington Post

Map of Hanoi shows the badly damaged Gialam area.

The first glimpse of this underdeveloped, battered, but somehow still functioning, country indicates that this contention of endurance—a vital ingredient in the

nation's psychological warfare, both for its own population and for its bargaining in the world outside—is widely believed by the populace.