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PRAVDA REPORTS ON DRV ANTI-AIRCRAFT ACTIONS

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(V. Sharapov article: "The Defenders of /Ham Rong/"; all bracketed Vietnamese names are as transliterated and all ellipses as printed)

(Text) The life of the Vietnamese antiaircraft men is difficult and dangerous. It is easier to list the few hours of quiet than to count how many times a day they must, glued to the guns, watch for approaching American aircraft and engage them in combat. The signal for alert is sounded 10 and sometimes even 20 times a day on the positions. So it was now, too, that when Battery Commander (Kha Khyui Kuang) began to describe the recent engagements, it was reported from the observation post that a group of American fighters was approaching from Than Hoa. . . .

We had met the soldiers of this battery in May. They then presented us with a miniature replica of an American F-101 fighter plane made by the soldiers out of the debris of the plane which they had downed in the first fight at the (Ham Rong) bridge. The battery's position then was not far from the electric power station. Now the guns are located in rice fields from which the bridge can be seen clearly. There is probably no other objective in Vietnam on which the American Air Force has dumped so many bombs as on the (Ham Rong) bridge. This bridge extends between two mountains over the deep (Ma) River near Thanh Hoa city. I did not succeed in seeing this bridge in the form that it was built by the people. Only frames of documentary films and photographs have preserved its stark beauty.

I happened to see these places a few months ago. We then had heard about the extensive raids of the American Air Force on the (Ham Rong) bridge but did not imagine all the consequences of the barbarous bombings. We were told that at the (Ma) River itself we would cross on a ferry since the bridge was damaged. The night was bright and the moon was shining. It hurt the view at (Ham Rong): there where crippled trusses and bridge spans that had crashed into the water . . .