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By CLJ, NARA, Date 6-25

*Pres file*

Monday, July 31, 1967 -- 10:30 a.m.

Mr. President:

On bombing and retaliation.

The Communists are using mortars as their equivalent to our bombing in the North. Like them, we have hit airfields, barracks, and military installations. These mortar attacks are particularly attractive to them at a time when Viet Cong capabilities have somewhat diminished to make conventional guerrilla attacks.

The question is, therefore, what additional targets might we add which hurt them and made military sense, in retaliation for their increased use of mortars.

I surveyed the possibilities over the week-end.

Here, in order of priority, are some possibilities.

-- Phuc Yen and Gia Lam airfields. These are MIG bases and Gia Lam is an international airport, similar to the one attacked near Saigon.

-- Red River bridge. A mile long. With special care should be attackable without significant civilian casualties. Fits the transport offensive now being mounted.

-- The three Hanoi radio stations. The military case is not strong; although they are the source of vicious propaganda throughout Southeast Asia, including Northeast Thailand. They are all out in the country and would involve virtually no civilian casualties. (I, personally, have always thought pretty well of these targets because radio Hanoi is a symbol of the regime's power and regional pretensions. Some of the Intelligence people say they would miss the broadcasts as a source of information.)

-- Ministry of National Defense. They have struck quite close to the MACV compound. We're not sure they meant to attack. But an attack on the Ministry of National Defense would bring the war home to some of the military bureaucrats.

Hanoi TPP is ripe for re-attack when other conditions are ripe; but having been attacked before would not be a sign of our upping the ante in retaliation for mortar attacks on us.

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-2-

Finally, you should know the Air Force is presenting a plan to Bus Wheeler for cutting the transport lines more systematically around Haiphong and seeking to slow down supply movements more effectively. A quite serious and interesting proposal. No attacks on ships involved.

W. W. Rostow

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