

94
Pres file

Tuesday, October 3, 1967
12:05 p.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith Roscoe Drummond
makes more explicit what he would
like to do about bombing policy.

W. W. Rostow

WWRostow:rla

Publishers Newspaper Syndicate

1377 National Press Building Washington, D. C. 20004
Area Code 202 638-3760

ROSCOE DRUMMOND
GEOFFREY DRUMMOND

94a
Oct. 2, 1967

Mr. Walt W. Rostow
Special Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington DC

Dear Walt:

In connection with our chat Saturday - what I am trying to get at is this: Suppose the President asked ~~for~~ a total, down-to-the-roots re-examination of bombing policy. Suppose he asked for no conclusions in the first stage of that re-examination. I would like to be able to give readers every single ~~piece~~ ^{piece} of fact, within reason, which would necessarily go into such a presentation.

It is my conviction that such an offering of fact might do more than anything else right now to strengthen and stabilize U.S. opinion behind the war.

Specifically:

Why are we bombing? What are its military and political purposes?

Is it achieving its purposes? How well? What are the objective facts and factors behind the conclusion that the purposes are being achieved?

How effective is the bombing in holding down the flow of troops and supplies into South Vietnam? What is it doing to the North Vietnamese war effort? Are

COPY EBJ LIBRARY

there other ways to strike at the enemy supply routes?

Is the bombing of industrial targets the best way to persuade Hanoi to negotiate?

Haven't most of the targets been pretty thoroughly bombed and, if so, is more bombing worth the ~~cost~~ even in military terms?

What are the objective facts which would bear on the question of whether the ~~war~~ war should be expanded in an effort to immobilize Haiphong through which North Vietnam gets so much of its war materiel? What are the gains?

What pro and con factors, including internal chaos, do you list in assessing the risk of Red China coming into the war? If we think we are taking only a very limited risk of bringing China into the war when we bomb within a few miles of the frontier, how should we measure the risk of Russia coming into the war if we immobilize the port of Haiphong?

Why is the bombing restricted? What is the thinking behind the restrictions?

I know that some of these questions overlap. I hope you will add others so that no major aspect is overlooked.

My premise in this matter is that good information is often more persuasive than good argument.

As Always,

Roosevelt