

FILE	SUBJ.
DATE	SUB-CAT.

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14. 3/11/69

**THE NEW COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE
AGAINST SAIGON WOULD NOT
HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT
THE BOMBING HALT**

Mr. STRATTON. Mr. Speaker, according to news reports this morning the Communist offensive in Vietnam has not tapered off. Instead the next few days are expected to be "very critical." Some five or six North Vietnamese divisions are now moving on to Saigon from the Cambodian sanctuary, poised for an all-out attack.

Not even in the surprise Tet offensive last year did the North Vietnamese attempt such an all-out assault on the South Vietnamese Capital.

Let me just observe today, well in advance, that if this expected assault materializes it will have been made possible chiefly by the total bombing halt which this country undertook in complete good faith last November.

I supported that halt. It seemed a reasonable risk to take to find out in Paris whether we and the North Vietnamese really could move together toward a genuine deescalation of this war.

But it was a very real risk and it involved and continues to involve some grave dangers to our troops in the field. Now in the environs of Saigon we can begin to see the full extent of those risks. I am myself sick and tired of all those pseudomilitary experts, both inside and outside the Pentagon, who have repeatedly claimed that bombing North Vietnam never accomplished anything.

The one key thing the bombing accomplished was to raise hob with the North Vietnamese production and supply system. It may not have stopped it completely, but it sure kept its effectiveness low. Since November the North Vietnamese have worked around the clock to make up for those serious restrictions. In these past 4 months they have hauled thousands upon thousands of tons of supplies and weapons from Hanoi to the borders of South Vietnam, including the Cambodian border from which this current offensive on Saigon is being launched.

Let there be no mistake; the North Vietnamese could never have committed five or six combat divisions to such an assault were it not for the respite provided by the November bombing halt. As the Nation's leadership now contemplates what should be done to respond to the offensive, I hope this simple fact may finally replace all the myths and wishful thinking we have indulged ourselves with in recent months.