

# Joint Chiefs Urge Bombing of Hanoi's Oil, Fuel Supplies

The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff are unanimously urging expansion of the air war against Communist North Vietnam, with fuel and oil stocks in the Haiphong area the top priority target, it was reported yesterday.

Both major American news services, Associated Press and United Press International, filed similar reports on positions attributed to the Joint Chiefs.

High civilian sources in the administration acknowledged that intensified pressure is

coming from inside the U.S. military establishment to widen the scope of bombing attacks in North Vietnam.

They emphasized, however, that decisions about the area of attacks in Vietnam deeply affect American global diplomacy as well as military strategy. There is no current intention, these civilian sources said, to authorize either the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, or the mining of Haiphong harbor.

*Fred S. Hoffman reported for Associated Press:*

The Joint Chiefs believe it is important to hit the petroleum stocks so that the truck traffic carrying men and supplies to the Communists in South Vietnam might be crippled.

The mining of Haiphong harbor, North Vietnam's sole major port, rates only a No. 2 priority with the military chiefs.

U.S. civilian authorities argue that seaborne supplies are not of prime importance because most war materiel comes overland from China.

In the view of the military chiefs, power plants have a low order of priority. Bombing and fuel industrial targets are worth the trouble.

One that does figure in military thinking is an iron and steel plant in the Hanoi area which makes rails, structural parts for bridges and pontoons for spanning streams.

*Charles W. Corddry reported for United Press International:*

The Joint Chiefs attach greatest importance to air strikes against oil storage depots in the Haiphong port area and Quangyen refineries north of Haiphong.

Studies indicate that the

kind of bombing envisioned would kill very few, if any, civilians.

The Joint Chiefs believe that light bombing in the Hanoi area could achieve the same effects as mining or blockading Haiphong without the risks.

It is reasoned, for example, that this would scare off free world ships that now call at Haiphong and would not concern the Soviet Union, which is supplying Hanoi with weapons.

The Joint Chiefs have unanimously favored heavier air blows in the North since November 1964. The bombing started in early 1966.

The military assessment here is that if Hanoi rulers were fully informed of military developments in the South they ought to be quitting. Besides getting bad information from their own field commanders, who report large victories, Hanoi chiefs apparently have yet to be convinced the United States will stay in the fight, it is believed.

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