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WASHINGTON, Feb. 28 — Senator Harold E. Hughes has urged his colleagues on the Armed Services Committee not to confirm the pending promotion of two Air Force generals who were involved in the unauthorized bombing of North Vietnam in 1971 and 1972.

In a letter to committee members made public today, the Iowa Democrat recalled that Brig. Gen. Charles A. Gabriel and Maj. Gen. Alton D. Slay testified during hearings in late 1972 that they "knowingly and unquestioningly received and carried out orders" from Gen. John D. Lavelle of the Seventh Air Force to strike the unauthorized targets.

During those hearings, General Lavelle acknowledged that he had ordeerd more than 29 bombing raids on North Vietnamese targets that were falsely reported as being "protective reaction" strikes—that is, in response to North Vietnamese fire. The general subsequently was demoted and retired from

the Air Force as a major general.