

Senators Told:

'Bombing, Mines Won't Stop Reds'

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — The former head of the Defense Department's Vietnam Task Force which produced the Pentagon Papers told Congress today that more bombing and mining of the ports of North Vietnam will bring neither victory nor peace.

Dr. Leslie Gelb of the Brookings Institution told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that more bombing and mining would in time somewhat curtail Hanoi's offensive in the south but at the risk of again setting back U.S. relations with Russia and China and at the price of countless civilian lives.

More bombing in South Vietnam, he said, will impede Hanoi's offensive at the expense of killing or making refugees out of hundreds of thousands of people.

Purpose

"What then is the purpose of such senseless slaughter?" asked Gelb.

At the same time it was disclosed that a secret government study ordered in early 1969 raised serious doubts about cutting North Vietnam's land supply lines if its ports were blockaded.

"All of the war essential imports could be brought into North Vietnam over rail lines or roads from China in the event that imports by sea were successfully denied," the Central Intelligence Agency wrote in the assessment.

Kissinger

President Nixon ordered the study the day after he took office. It was prepared under the direction of Dr. Henry Kissinger, incorporating both military and civilian opinion, in the government. Copies of the study were leaked to several news agencies recently.

Even the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not totally sold on the effectiveness of air interdiction, the study showed. They estimated it would take a minimum of 6000 aircraft sorties a month to close two rail lines that run into North Vietnam from China.

The 6000 sorties compares with the record sustained high of 10,000 sorties per month over North Vietnam reached before the 1968 bombing halt.

Highways

The study pointed out that eight main highways and the Red River also could be used to ship supplies into North Vietnam.

Military analysts pointed out, however, that Hanoi needs more supplies than it did in 1969. Hanoi's troops

are fighting a more conventional, World War II-style war, using tanks, trucks and artillery. This has greatly increased their supply problems.

In his testimony today, Gelb called for the United States to resolve the Vietnam dilemma by setting a date for the complete withdrawal of land, sea and air forces in return for American prisoners of war.

Alternative

"We must also stand ready to provide refuge for those desiring to leave South Vietnam," he said. "This is not a good alternative ... but it is better than persisting in an endless, hopeless and tragic war."

Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D - Ark.), who presided at the hearing, noted that Gelb's testimony had been prepared before it was known President Nixon would speak last night.

"But what you have to say could not have been more appropriate," Fulbright said.