

— From Page 1

WASHINGTON — A high administration official says that the president's advisers considered the possibility of bombing Hanoi and Haiphong because they feared it could cost him the November election. The official, a high administration official says, reports present advisers pledged not to reveal the official's name, but CBS, which did not attend the meeting, said it had gathered from independent sources that the official is Treasury Secretary John P. Connally.

The official said that the decision to escalate the U.S. response to North Vietnam's Easter Week ground offensives because the president was convinced he could not have a viable foreign policy unless he did.

God, Christening
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Planned Response

Nixon began a least three months ago to plan his response to the expected offensive, the official said, and he did so secretly with small groups of advisers.

Although administration spokesmen have said the reason for the use of U.S. airpower is to protect remaining American troops, seek return of prisoners of war and prevent a further eastward conquest of South Vietnam, the official said Nixon had a broader purpose.

He said the U.S. mission is military and political leader of the free world.

Nixon was said to believe that if he ordered bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong that the leaders of other governments, although they might criticize him in public, would say in private: "By God he will stand up."

Nixon has said frequently that if Democratic presidential candidates try to make a major issue of the war, they will have the rug pulled out from under them. The official conceded that the war may now be a potent issue to use against Nixon.

— Turn to Page 2, Col. 1