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New Bomb

Policy May

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WASHINGTON — (CST)

The United States appears embarked on a "no holds barred" bombing policy in North Vietnam that surpasses the peak period of the Johnson Administration, former Assistant Defense Sec. Paul Warnke said yesterday.

"I gather that anything goes," said Warnke in an interview, "as long as it's not strictly a population target or the Red River dikes.

"This seems to me a distinct change in kind from the pattern of bombing in the Johnson Administration. President Lyndon B. Johnson always limited targets based on the possibility of civilian casualties.

"These restrictions are now apparently eliminated," said Warnke, who served in the Pentagon under Johnson.

"The Pentagon statements are that industrial and commercial targets will be hit if they support the North Vietnamese military effort.

"This reminds me of an admiral, who shall go nameless, who always urged that we classify villages as 'supportive' and bomb them.

"Sending more B-52s over certainly indicates it. With them, you can't target 'military' or 'industrial' targets with the so-called 'surgical accuracy' that's claimed."

Warnke said, "This has always been the risk of the President's program of Vietnamization. As you withdraw ground troops, you lose your ability to repel a ground attack and you have to go back to the 1967 philosophy of bombing them till they stop.

"It's obvious that if they didn't stop in 1967, you'll have to bomb them more than you did then, and this seems to be what is happening.

"I think he'll try to bomb them to the point at which they capitulate. He's said that he would take 'strong and effective action' if they tried militarily to upset his Vietnamization program, and this is it.