

• from story by John F. Finney:

[During testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird was] asked by Senator J. W. Fulbright, the committee chairman, what authority the President relied upon in ordering the renewed bombing of North Vietnam. [Mr. Laird replied:]

"It's the protection of American personnel. You don't need any more authority than that. It's sufficient, it's complete, and total. There should be no question about it."

analysis
from ~~story~~ by Max Frankel:

The formal explanations of the bombing given to Congress by Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird have been less than complete.

They have stressed the need to protect American troops, though the forces are not engaged in much combat, because that remains the only constitutional basis for military action in Indochina.

[Would the justification of protection of American personnel and American troops include POWs?]