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# THE STATES-ITEM

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The States-Item prints the news impartially. It supports what it believes to be right. It opposes what it believes to be wrong, without regard to party politics.

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## Nixon remains silent

President Nixon's determination to remain silent in regard to the latest devastating raids on North Vietnam makes a mockery of basic democratic principles. The total disregard of the American public's right to know flies in the face of carefully guarded tradition.

It is for this reason that Mr. Nixon should report to the nation. More than that, he should answer questions of the press with candor uncharacteristic of his administration.

In the two weeks since the latest massive blitz began, the U.S. has lost 27 aircraft, including 15 huge B52 bombers worth \$8 million each. Ninety-three American airmen are captured, missing or dead.

The more than 1,400 raids have not been flown to stop an invasion or to protect American ground forces.

We are to assume that massive obliteration of North Vietnam targets is designed to force the Communists to accept certain peace terms. These terms have not been made clear by the Nixon Administration.

The assumption that we can bomb North Vietnam to its knees is not new. The American people have been told almost from the in-

ception of our involvement in Vietnam that just a little more pressure, a few more men, a few more bombs, would mean the difference between victory and defeat.

Now, presumably, a few more bombs will save face for President Nixon. It was Mr. Nixon, through aide Henry Kissinger, who promised on the eve of the Nov. 7 presidential election that "peace is at hand."

At a time when Mr. Nixon should be most responsive to the American people he is least responsive. Instead of meeting with the President, the press must cary on an "information" charade with various minor White House aides who have no authority to answer questions for the administration.

The questions abound. Is there any evidence that the latest bombing raids are accomplishing what all other such missions have failed to accomplish? What is the toll of civilians killed in North Vietnam? What are the real differences standing between the antagonists and a peace settlement?

The President should remember that, although he was elected by a landslide vote, he was still elected. His office requires that he be responsive to those who elected him.