

# Moorer Calls Bombing Raids Very Effective

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Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday that the 12-day American air raids last month against "military targets" around Hanoi and Haiphong were "very effective" in reducing North Vietnam's "war-making potential."

The admiral spoke to newsmen after briefing members of the House Appropriations Committee behind closed doors.

Moorer's report to the Nixon administration's first response to a growing chorus of demands from Congress for information on what happened during the massive U.S. aerial blitz and why it was necessary.

Committee sources said Moorer was questioned intensely in a well attended two-hour meeting. One member described the admiral's briefing as "interesting but not enlightening."

Many members reportedly pressed Moorer to explain the military rationale for bombing at this stage of the war, when bombing the North throughout the war has been inconclusive, in their view. The admiral reportedly said the North Vietnamese had engaged in a new supply build-up while talks were going on, and showed pictures of damaged rail yards to make his case.

Other top defense officials in private have described the purpose of the raids as political rather than military.

Moorer also showed pictures of U.S. prison camps—including the one known as the Hanoi Hilton—to rebut Hanoi claims that U.S. planes had hit them with bombs.

The admiral left open the possibility that shrapnel might have fallen near the camps, but said there was no evidence of bomb hits.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, the man who is to take over as Secretary of Defense later this month, Elliott L. Richardson, heard complaints from lawmakers ar-

gry over the administration's failure to explain fully the bombing raids and upset over a variety of other lingering Pentagon problems.

At the opening session of Richardson's confirmation hearing, Sens. Harold Hughes (D-Iowa), Harry F. Byrd (Ind.-Va.), Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) and William B. Saxbe (R-Ohio) all raised the bombing issue.

"If we have to leave these talks within the next two or three weeks with no agreement, I want to know what the next step will be," Hughes said.

Richardson, now Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said he didn't feel he could answer questions about the validity of the raids because he still had not taken office nor had enough information to answer properly. Even if he did, he said, the military and diplomatic factors were so intertwined that to comment might jeopardize the negotiations.

The Secretary-designate, however, lent clear support to the President's policies and tactics in Vietnam, describing them as "wise and conscientious" and aimed at "achieving an honorable peace in Southeast Asia."

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), one of the military's strongest supporters in Con-

gress, charged that inter-service rivalry and politicking in the nation's top military body, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "is as bad today as it ever was" and that it is hurting U.S. defenses by driving costs way up.

"You've got some major problems" in assuming this job, Goldwater said. "I had hoped that Secretary Laird would have overcome them all, but he didn't, and why I don't know."

Goldwater claimed that "JCS influence, especially in the House (of Representatives), had overturned wise decisions made in the Senate" and that Richardson

had an opportunity "to really do some head beating" to make the military chiefs understand the necessity of lower cost on weapons.

Goldwater, a general in the Air Force Reserve, said that the Air Force had been given the job several years ago of providing close air support to ground troops, but that the Pentagon and Congress were allowing four separate tactical air forces to come into being at an investment cost of \$13 billion, when the job could be done as well "for under \$5 billion."

Richardson spoke with no notes as he handled questions from the committee.

He said, "a strong and effective military posture has never been more critical than it is now," if new negotiations are to be successful and "a generation of peace" achieved.

He called for a clear sufficiency of military strength, and sidestepped an attempt by Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) to commit him to a policy of nuclear weapons "superiority" rather than "sufficiency."

Thurmond said he had "received some opposition to your appointment chiefly on the ground of whether a person who is a big humanist—of which you have a reputation—can also serve as the head of a military organization."

Thurmond said he had satisfied himself about Richardson's qualifications, and Richardson said his views have always been consistent with strong defense even when at HEW and as under secretary of state before that.

As to the "superiority" question, Richardson stuck to sufficiency, which is the administration's position on the nuclear balance with Russia. When U.S. "technological superiority" in weapons is added, it equals overall superiority, he said.

Richardson's hearings will resume today.