

## Why are N.Y. Times critics silent on the results of Nixon's raids?

Forgive me if it just happens that I missed them, but in fact I have not seen anything from the Great Denunciators about the success of President Nixon's December bombings. I thought, for instance, that Gloria Emerson (of The New York Times) might rise from the catacombs to which she repaired after the bombings resumed, in order to express a word or two of gratitude that the war is, so to speak, ended; but she has not been heard from. Perhaps she is writing a mea culpa — it would in her case take time, notwithstanding her training in deadlines.

Tom Wicker wrote in mid-bombing: "... why should bombing a people make them want to deal in good faith?" Well, why did bombing a people make them deal in good faith? Why doesn't Mr. Wicker tell us? The New York Times, at about the same period, was very pointed on the matter. "The American bombs . . . have dimmed prospects . . . for peace in Indochina."

Well, in fact the American bombs didn't dim, but clearly enhanced prospects for peace in Indochina where, as a matter of fact, things are at this moment almost preternaturally peaceful, by Indochinese standards. What about it? We fear that the cat has got hold of The New York Times' tongue, though the silence is probably worth it, come to think of it.

Mr. James Reston, also of The New York Times, said that the bombing was "war by tantrum." Well, if it was, then he should meditate on whether strategy by tantrum is necessarily undesirable inasmuch as this one clearly paid off. Anthony Lewis, also of The New York Times, said that Mr. Nixon, in ordering the bombing, was behaving "like a mac-

dened tyrant." Two weeks later we had peace. Mr. Lewis would appear to be obliged either to diminish his respect for peace, or else increase his respect for maddened tyrants, no?

But, my children, it is altogether obvious how these doctrinaire gentlemen are going to handle this sequence of events. They will in the first place try to ignore them. If that does not work, they will say that after all, the November terms, rejected by Nixon, are not substantially different from the January terms, accepted by Nixon.

The answer to that is: the people best equipped to judge the differences — the South Vietnamese — accepted the January terms, having rejected the November terms. A supplementary point is that the November terms were different from the October terms.

Or they will say, "In what sense did the bombing figure at all?" The answer is: it must have figured in some way. One can understand people who say that the bombing would have a negative effect, i.e., that it would harden the opposition of the people. Or the opposite, that it would embolden the peace party in Hanoi. Hardly that it would be without effect. As it happens, the bombing turned Le Duc Tho into a parade marshal at Nixon's inaugural.

No, a sensible reading is this: bombing, unless it is done with crushing force over a period of time sufficient to knock off critically needed lubricants of war (See "The Memoirs of Albert Speer"), doesn't do much good under firm leadership over a united country. The bombing of the early years under Lyndon Johnson was not of a character either to divide the people, or to cripple the war-making potential.