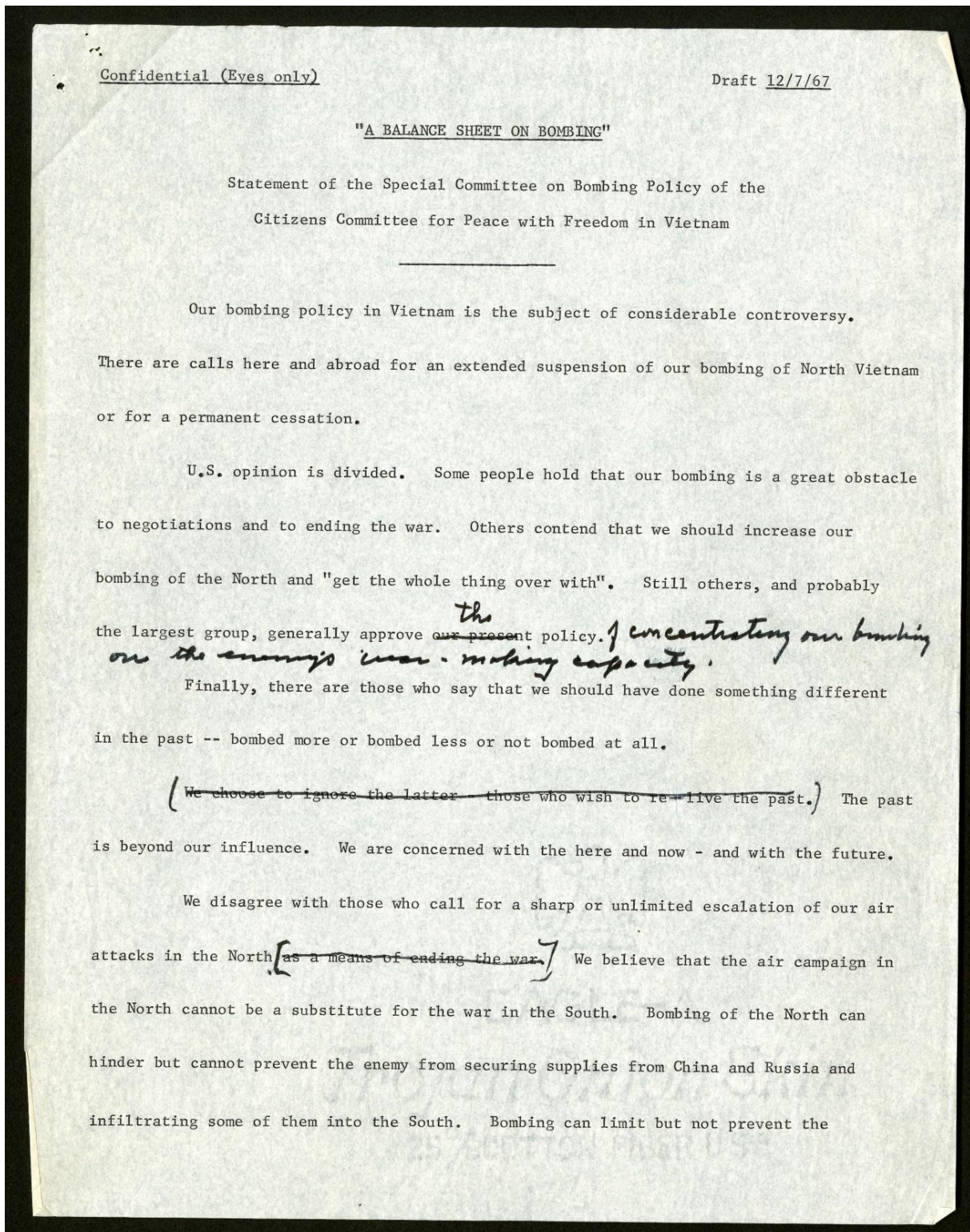


## A Balance Sheet on Bombing . . . , December 7, 1967

### Image



A Balance Sheet on Bombing: Statement of the Special Committee on Bombing Policy of the Citizens Committee for Peace with Freedom in Vietnam, December 7, 1967.(The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC09911.01 p1)



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infiltration of men. Nor can bombing alone break the will of North Vietnam. Our bombing in the North ~~is and~~ should be designed primarily to help our effort in the South. The war cannot be won from the air in the North; it can be lost in the South.

Further, in our judgment, those who favor "unleashing" our air power misunderstand the basic and limited objectives of our effort. We do not seek to destroy North Vietnam or China. We seek to assist a free people to resist subjugation. ~~Our primary aim is not to punish aggressors but to prevent them from succeeding.~~ We are *in predatory action* demonstrating that the cost of aggression is too high, that cheap victories are not possible and never will be.

The enemy, on the other hand, is waging unlimited war on the ground, on his own terms and on terrain of his own choosing. He goes South; we do not go North. *invade the* ~~This places us in a disadvantageous position, and is a~~ *We* ~~are fighting at an extreme disadvantage. This is the frustrating price that we pay in~~ *to* order to reduce the risk of a general war in Asia ~~(or the world, or a nuclear confrontation between great powers.)~~ Our effort is limited and, thus, our patience must be great. There are no quick, easy or painless solutions as we encounter risk and danger in our struggle for freedom.

Our special Committee has considered and here presents the arguments for and against an extended bombing pause - a "balance sheet" of the pros and cons as we have heard them ~~(and as we see them.)~~



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We submit this as a contribution to a thoughtful, calm level of debate on the issue. We hope that our "balance sheet" will be carefully studied by our fellow Citizens. We are submitting the facts and the arguments so that the people can make up their own minds on a rational basis. We have faith in the fundamental good sense of the American people.

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(NOTE: In the published version,  
The Case For.... (beginning on page 4) and  
The Case Against..... (beginning on page 6)  
will appear in parallel columns.)



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### The Case for an Extended Bombing Pause

Bombing has been ineffective: It has not stopped the infiltration of men or material from North Vietnam. It has hardened the resolve of the North Vietnamese.

Bombing is dividing us from our friends; it is giving the United States an image of imperialism and of "the big bully" in Asia; and it bears within itself the ~~very~~ real threat of a wider war, perhaps World War III.

An extended bombing pause might lead to negotiations and a settlement of the war. In any event, it would improve our standing in world opinion. Even many of our friends and allies oppose our bombing policy. Stopping bombing would also quiet a great deal of domestic opposition to our policy in Vietnam and help to unite public opinion behind our effort.

If we initiated a bombing pause and Hanoi failed to respond by de-escalating the war or entering into meaningful negotiations, we could resume bombing but this time with American public opinion almost solidly behind us and with non-communist overseas opposition largely muted. Our good faith would be established.

North Vietnam does not have air bombing capability so it doesn't make any sense for us to ask them for reciprocal action if we stop bombing.

If we stopped bombing, without any reciprocal concessions, we would still be able to respond to enemy artillery and rocket fire with similar fire of our own. On the whole we have as strong fire power as our opponents and can still reply in kind. We



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might be put at a disadvantage at certain points but not many. In any event, we could still repulse any direct attack on our positions.

We are already bombing targets less than one minute's flying time from China and, thus, running the risk of accidentally bringing China into the war.

Stopping bombing would be a humane act since we would stop killing North Vietnamese civilians.

Those who oppose a bombing pause have too little faith in the essential decency of mankind. Generosity breeds generosity. If we go the "second mile" by stopping bombing, we will be making an appeal to the humanitarianism and good will of the Communists which will ultimately make itself felt. The method of force and more force has not worked. We should at least try the method of generous good will.



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### The Case Against an Extended Bombing Pause

Every day that we suspend bombing strengthens the enemy and increases the dangers faced by our fighting men. More than 500,000 people in North Vietnam are manning defenses against our air attacks and repairing the damage. If we stop bombing, this enemy manpower could be used in aggressive acts against our troops and those of South Vietnam and our allies.

Bombing not only weakens North Vietnam's ability to make war but it also helps protect our troops from attack by long range artillery and rockets.

North Vietnam would use a bombing pause to move huge amounts of supplies, including ammunition, into South Vietnam. In one month, they could build up a stockpile to last at least 6 months. They could greatly augment their present force of less than 50,000 highly trained and disciplined North Vietnamese regular troops in the South and, thus, place added pressure on our forces.

Bombing makes more difficult the infiltration of men and supplies. Bombing cannot prevent infiltration of men through jungle and mountain trails and dense forests, but it does make that infiltration far more costly and time-consuming to the enemy. Bombing cannot prevent the delivery of supplies but it does sharply reduce truck and other road traffic carrying supplies. Bombing increases the number of men and tons of supplies required to get 1 man and 1 ton into South Vietnam.

An extended cessation of bombing would have a detrimental effect on the morale



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of the South Vietnamese and of our own troops. We would be asking them to fight with one hand tied behind their back. They would remain under fire from the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese while North Vietnam itself would be free of attack.

We are now making steady progress in Vietnam. We must keep the pressure on relentlessly so that the Vietcong will quit as the Communists did in Malaysia, the Philippines and Greece. Bombing brings home to the North Vietnamese that aggression does not pay and that no sanctuary exists for them.

Hanoi would not regard another bombing pause as a conciliatory gesture and it would not lead to meaningful negotiations. Hanoi would regard an extended pause as a sign that we are weakening in our resolve and that their propaganda has succeeded.

Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi have consistently refused to negotiate during 6 previous bombing pauses. They say that they would refuse again. Further, they continue to insist not only on a permanent and unconditional cessation of our bombing but also of "all military activity." Hanoi is not setting conditions for negotiations in good faith; Hanoi is demanding our surrender.

We deliver bombs by aircraft -- the enemy delivers bombs by guerilla terrorists and land-based weapons. A bomb fired from land is just as deadly as one fired from the air. Why should we stop bombing them if they won't stop bombing us?

Over 90% of our air attacks are against railways, roads and waterways -- the lines of communication vital to the conduct of the war against us.



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Our bombing has been pin-point accurate. Only a minute fraction of our bombs has missed the target. China has not been hit.

We have confined our bombing to military and supply targets and have never intentionally bombed civilians or engaged in the "terror bombing" tactics of World War II. Civilians have been killed by mistake just as some of our own troops have been killed by mistake. These tragic mistakes are a matter for deep regret but they are an inevitable part of war. As John F. Kennedy said, "War is unfair." War is also cruel, barbarous and wasteful. However, we must recognize the big difference between accidental killings by our forces and the systematic, planned murders committed by the Vietcong. Vietcong terrorists have already killed or kidnapped over 50,000 innocent South Vietnam villagers. We hear little about these Vietcong murders because they are largely committed in the dark of night and without other eyewitnesses. The Vietcong murders of civilians are part of its war of terror -- a conscious, deliberate policy rather than an accidental by-product of war.

We cannot rely on appeals to the humanitarianism and good will of people who live in police states where the news is controlled. Through its absolute control of propaganda and the use of terror methods, the State keeps the population misinformed, uninformed, or under control. Humanitarianism and good will do not flourish in a climate of ignorance and fear.



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In the judgment of our special Committee, bombing is not as central to our effort in Vietnam as its strongest proponents would have us believe. Neither is bombing the obstacle to negotiations and peace which some of its strongest opponents claim. Bombing, while a valuable military tool, is only one of America's weapons. It is not a panacea - it is not a cure-all.

Bombing is the most visible and most dramatic of our weapons and it makes the most headlines - but our objectives in Vietnam will not be won in the headlines. There is no purely military solution to the limited conflict in which we are engaged. ~~Con-~~  
~~ventional bombs will not win the war. Nuclear bombs would lose the peace.~~

Our goal is not military victory but peace with freedom, *for South Vietnam.* Our victory will lie in denying victory to the aggressor.

America's limited objectives in Vietnam were well stated by the late Adlai Stevenson:

"In Southeast Asia we want nothing more, and nothing less, than the assured and guaranteed independence of the peoples of the area. We are in Southeast Asia to help our friends preserve their own opportunity to be free of imported terror and alien assassination, managed by the North Viet-Nam Communists based in Hanoi and backed by the Chinese Communists from Peking."



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We live in a divided world. The issue that divides the world is freedom.

Powerful and ruthless men are determined to push back the frontiers of freedom.

Adolf Hitler taught us the folly of step-by-step surrender and since then the United States has been the most powerful defender of freedom in the world. Under the leadership of four American Presidents in the past 20 years we have helped prevent Communist take-overs in Greece, Turkey, Iran, West Berlin, Korea, <sup>70</sup>ormosa<sup>1</sup>, Lebanon and now in Vietnam. Through the Marshall Plan we contributed to preventing a take-over of Western Europe. America believes that surrender to the enemies of freedom is not and never can be an acceptable alternative to sacrifice and even death.

We stand prepared to make the sacrifices required to preserve the basic framework of a system of free men. But patience and restraint must go hand in hand with sacrifice. In this age of nuclear weapons, we need a better alternative to surrender than a full scale war. That is why our effort is and should be limited in Vietnam.

Our determination to succeed is no less strong because our resistance to aggression is limited in nature. It is limited not by our material or spiritual resources but by our objectives. The enemy would do well to note that important distinction.

America will stay the course.