

17Dec72

17 December 1972 The JCS issued the following message to CINCPAC, CINCSAC, and subordinate operational commanders:

YOU ARE DIRECTED TO COMMENCE AT APPROXIMATELY 1200Z, 18 DECEMBER 1972 THREE-DAY MAXIMUM EFFORT, REPEAT MAXIMUM EFFORT, OF B52/TACAIR STRIKES IN THE HANOI/HAIPHONG AREAS AGAINST THE TARGETS CONTAINED IN (THE AUTHORIZED TARGET LIST). OBJECT IS MAXIMUM DESTRUCTION OF SELECTED MILITARY TARGETS IN THE VICINITY OF HANOI/HAIPHONG. BE PREPARED TO EXTEND OPERATIONS PAST THREE DAYS, IF DIRECTED.

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS APPLY:

- A. UTILIZE VISUAL AS WELL AS ALLWEATHER CAPABILITIES.
- B. UTILIZE ALL RESOURCES WHICH CAN BE SPARED WITHOUT CRITICAL DETRIMENT TO OPERATIONS IN RVN AND SUPPORT OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA.
- C. UTILIZE RESTRIKES ON AUTHORIZED TARGETS, AS NECESSARY. NORTH VIETNAMESE AIR ORDER OF BATTLE, AIRFIELDS, AND ACTIVE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SITES MAY BE STRUCK AS TACTICAL SITUATION DICTATES TO IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS OF ATTACK FORCES AND MINIMIZE LOSSES....
- D. EXERCISE PRECAUTION' TO MINIMIZE RISK OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES UTILIZING LGB WEAPONS AGAINST DESIGNATED TARGETS. AVOID DAMAGE TO THIRD COUNTRY SHIPPING.

Message, JCS to CINCPAC 17001 OZ Dec 72, Subj: Linebacker II Operations. Declassified by OJCS DJSM-340-80, 15 February 1980. Certain targets on the JCS target list were designated for LGB attack only.

Although the operation named Linebacker II was essentially a continuation of the Linebacker I bombing campaign of the preceding eight months, which included earlier B-52 strikes in the Haiphong area, it was distinctive in two respects. Ever-increasing international and domestic pressure on the United States for resolution of the conflict mandated attainment of a certain level of damage to military targets within the shortest period of time, while adverse weather conditions dictated reliance on all-weather capabilities more than visual attack.³¹ The overall objective remained the same. However, whereas earlier Linebacker I efforts had the military purpose of widespread interdiction, Linebacker II concentrated on bombing targets located in the military-industrial center of North Vietnam.