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INFORMATION

January 11, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER  
FROM: JOHN D. NEGROPONTE  
SUBJECT: Bombing Targets in the DRV

I was struck by our weekly briefing on Vietnam yesterday by the number of trucks in the DRV just sitting in mass parking lots between Hanoi and the Chinese border. A couple of these truck parks, located near Thai Nguyen I believe, have as many as 1,000 new vehicles. The way they are exposed suggests that the DRV may consider itself immune to attacks against such targets north of the 20th parallel.

I am sure this entire subject has been considered previously in consultations to which I am not privy. I would, however, like to urge that if we have another series of protective reaction strikes that some of these truck parks be considered as targets.

-- If we could knock out 1 or 2 thousand trucks with 1 or 2 day air campaign, it would in effect be equal to roughly our entire truck kill in the logistics system for a month of the dry season creating replacement problems just at a time when they are most needed.

-- The psychological impact on DRV planning would be substantial with revived fears that no part of the DRV is immune to attacks on military targets which pose a direct threat to the South. Moreover, such attacks would exploit the lop-sided nature of their air defenses which are now oriented to the South and might even give them pause about such orientation.

-- At this stage a 1 or 2 day strike, even though directed at what is possibly a far more lucrative target, might generate considerably less publicity here than the last one did.

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