

~~TOP SECRET~~

measures could convince Hanoi that its support of the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao no longer would be tolerated.<sup>13</sup>

(TS) LeMay believed that the war was being lost. Administration authorities had directed the JCS on 20 May to tighten its rules of engagement for U.S. air support within South Vietnam to lessen U.S. involvement. With respect to strategy against the North, LeMay pointed to two years of unsuccessful efforts to compel Hanoi to decide to end its subversion by examples of U.S. determination. The objective, he said, should be to destroy the North's capability, and to achieve this he proposed conveying the "message" by attacking sharply two important targets supporting the Viet Cong and Pathet Lao: Vinh and Dien Bien Phu.<sup>14</sup>

(TS) In this instance the Army and Navy chiefs agreed with LeMay but General Taylor considered the risk too great as both were huge targets. Air strikes would require hundreds of sorties for several days, be unnecessarily destructive, retard eventual "cooperation" with Hanoi, challenge the Communist bloc, and escalate the war. Of three JCS proposals considered--a massive air attack on all significant targets, a series of lesser attacks, and limited attacks to show U.S. will--Taylor favored the last although he asked Felt to prepare for all three. McNamara agreed with Taylor's conclusion. PACOM's commander submitted the plans to the JCS early in July.<sup>15</sup>

(TS) JCS advocacy of air strikes against North Vietnam had strong support in the State Department. The chairman of its Policy Planning Council, Walt W. Rostow, although opposed to a large-scale U.S. ground

~~TOP SECRET~~