

INQUIRER 12/24/70

Civil Unrest 'Spying' Confirmed by Laird

WASHINGTON (AP). — Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird confirmed Monday that the Pentagon had been assigned to make "civil disturbance surveys" under the previous Administration but he said such functions currently are being reassigned.

In a news conference Laird said also the Department of Defense conducts wiretapping in national security cases, under "procedures clearly prescribed by Congress and the Department of Justice." He did not elaborate.

TAKES ACTION

The defense chief said he believes the surveys associated with civil disturbances more properly should be conducted by the Department of Justice and added he has taken certain actions to curtail military participation in them since learning of it.

Laird's comments were prompted by a reporter's question whether he believed "the Army has any business spying on civilians."

He said military investigators conduct checks for security clearances on about 7 million civilian and military employees of the armed forces.

PLANS CURTAILMENT

As for civilians not connected with the Pentagon, he has testified before Congress that he learned of the civil disturbance surveillance assignment and was taking steps to curtail it, Laird said.

Laird's comments on other matters:

—DRAFT CALLS—He predicted lower draft calls next year but warned that the size of the draft and achievement of an all-volunteer force by mid-1973 will depend on Congressional approval of military pay boosts and other measures. Laird said he is "confident our efforts" in moving toward an all-volunteer force "will mean we will have lower draft calls next year." He refused to forecast how far the 1971 draft calls will fall below this year's 163,500.

—INFILTRATION—Stressing "arrivals" in South Vietnam, Laird said the movement of soldiers from North Vietnam is substantially below that of last year. But he said it is expected arrivals of North Vietnamese reinforcements in South Vietnam in the first quarter of next year will be



MELVIN LAIRD

... admits wiretapping

higher than the comparable three months of 1970.