

# Laird Refuses to Appear For Taped CBS Interview

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Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird has refused to take part in a taped interview with CBS for a forthcoming documentary called "POWs—Pawns of War!"

The Defense chief, according to Pentagon spokesman Daniel Z. Henkin, "would be pleased to appear on the program if the interview was done live."

Henkin said Laird's refusal to do the taped interview was "not a binding role on all interviews," but that the POW issue "was a very sensitive matter" and only a live interview would be acceptable.

Interviews recorded on video tape can be edited before being broadcast. One of the Pentagon's chief complaints about CBS's award-winning "Selling of the Pentagon"—which was sharply critical of Pentagon public relations—was the networks editing of interviews with Henkin, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs.

A negotiated settlement in the new dispute does not appear likely.

CBS News bureau manager in Washington, William J. Small, said yesterday that there "are times when CBS News is delighted to put the Secretary of Defense on live," but that "it is extremely rare that anyone is interviewed live on a documentary, as Mr. Laird and Mr. Henkin both know."

"When newspapers and magazines concede to a similar request by granting Mr. Laird a certain number of column inches to fill as he sees fit, the CBS News will consider grant-

ing him a certain amount of time to appear live within an otherwise filmed documentary." After such consideration," Small added, "our answer will still be 'no'."

At the Pentagon yesterday, TV network reporters argued with Henkin that live inserts in otherwise filmed documentaries are very difficult to do from a technical standpoint, but Henkin said it has been done before and is "not technically impossible."

The CBS report will be presented in two parts, June 22

and June 29, and will deal with the status of U.S. prisoners held by Hanoi and prospects for their release, according to the network.

The Defense Secretary was first approached on the POW subject by CBS several weeks ago and indicated that only a live interview would be acceptable on that subject.

Even with no live interview, Laird probably will still be seen on the show, in film clips of earlier press conference on congressional appearances, according to Small.