

Report Says Presidents Withheld Major Decisions

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A special Senate committee has concluded that many of the most significant presidential decisions have been withheld from the Congress and the public, its report showed Sunday.

The panel said withholding practices have hidden actions relating to the 1969-70 secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia as well as other matters relating to the Vietnam war.

The report by the Senate Special Committee on National Emergencies is to be issued later this week, along with proposed legislation to tighten the laws that have permitted withholding.

The panel has been studying the use of national emergency proclamations as a basis for presidential actions taken without the approval of Congress.

In the report, it said the gap in the public record "is primarily due to a failure by Congress to specify substantive standards under which all presiden-

tial directives should be recorded."

"In addition," it adds, "Congress has not yet enacted laws which would prevent the executive from using classification to withhold information from Congress and the public."

"Until Congress grapples with these issues directly it will be faced with a continuing veil of secrecy and be unable to carry out its constitutional task of overseeing the Executive," the report continues, declaring:

"The Indochina War and Watergate tragically illustrate the results of such congressional inattention."

The report says legal require-

ments for publishing in the Federal Register any presidential "proclamations" or "executive orders" have been evaded by calling presidential directives by some other name, such as the National Security Action Memorandums of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and the National Security Action Directives of Richard M. Nixon.

It said that legislation expected to be introduced later this week would require all presidential directives to be published in the Federal Register but would provide for "a classified Federal Register" where secrecy must be maintained.