

Illegal Navy Raids Charged

WASHINGTON — (AP) — A Senate committee today delved more deeply into whether the Navy, as well as the Air Force, carried out unauthorized bombing raids against North Vietnam.

Confronted with what was described as a fresh conflict in testimony, the Senate Armed Services Committee summoned Navy Cmdr. John A. Miller for his account of the instructions given pilots based on the USS Constellation during the time in question, last November into March.

Miller was the commanding officer of two Navy pilots who testified in the closed-door session yesterday. Committee Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss.), told newsmen afterward:

"There is a difference in their testimony."

Conflict

According to Stennis, one of the men related that Navy fliers were told to bomb targets whether or not they encountered enemy fire or the evidence of impending attacks, while the other pilot maintained the instructions were not to bomb without being attacked.

The question goes to the

heart of the committee's probe of whether military officials flouted civilian-imposed war rules, specifically the rule in effect at that time which allowed only "protective - reaction" bombing of North Vietnam. The rule, in effect, said that U.S. pilots could not strike North Vietnam targets unless they were fired upon first or had radar evidence that they were about to be attacked.

The latest apparent conflict arose in separate testimony from William Groepper, a former Navy lieutenant, and Lt. William Moore Jr., now stationed at Jacksonville, Fla. The two were roommates and A7 Corsair pilots, on board the Constellation late last fall.

Unload

According to Stennis, Groepper testified that, for two missions against Quang Lang airfield last fall, Navy fliers "generally understood they were to unload bombs whether they met with hostile reaction or not."

But Moore said, according to Stennis, "They expected hostile reaction, but the intelligence officers said if they did not meet hostile re-

action 'you would not release your bombs.'"

The Navy was drawn into the inquiry after Stennis reported receiving new information of unauthorized raids flown by Navy pilots while in the midst of hearings on Air Force raids ordered by Gen. John D. Lavelle, who was fired as Seventh Air Force commander, demoted and retired after his role became known.

Relating the two Navy fliers' testimony about three Quang Lang missions, Stennis quoted Moore as saying he flew on two of them and in both cases, there was enemy ground fire.

Sen. William Saxbe (R-Ohio) said Moore had been briefed "by a whole array of brass" prior to his committee appearance.

Saxbe labeled Groepper's testimony hearsay. "This guy's got nothing. He's a nice kid, I want to be charitable. I don't think the testimony today contributes anything pro or con. One said one thing, one said the other."

But Sen. Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) said of Groepper's account, "I am greatly disturbed by what I heard."