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Laird Repeats U.S. Raids Will Continue in Cambodia

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WASHINGTON, June 26— Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird today reiterated Washington's plan to continue American bombing raids inside Cambodia after the June 30 deadline for the withdrawal of American troops here.

Although he made it clear that the "primary emphasis" of these raids would be denial of routes for enemy troops and supplies, he did not rule out the use of air support for allied ground combat troops.

Like Secretary of State William P. Rogers, who said at a news conference yesterday that he would not make "any statement that might limit the use of our air power," Mr. Laird said he believed it was a "bad practice" to exclude certain types of future military operations.

In other comments today on his return from a visit to American troops in Europe, Mr. Laird said he had brought back a number of recommendations for President Nixon on the American military presence on the Continent.

Although he characterized the recommendations as "substantial changes" regarding current conditions, he declined to discuss them. He said only that they would deal with and reflect the "strategic, fiscal, manpower and political realities of the nineteen-seventies."

Mr. Laird said his extended trip to visit American troops in Europe was the first of its kind by a Secretary of Defense.

Its purpose, he said, was "to find out from our service personnel what were some of the reasons that would cause them to remain in the service so we could move to a zero draft call." In this connection, the Secretary said, he "shook hands and talked to" approximately 4,000 American servicemen and members of their families.

Mr. Laird's position on Cambodia appeared to reflect a subtle change in emphasis from his comments May 17 before a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

At that time, the Secretary said the proposed strikes would be against enemy positions and not in support of whatever South Vietnamese forces might remain after American forces leave.

In talking to reporters at An-

draws Air Force Base after his arrival from Europe, Mr. Laird pointed out the "ancillary benefit"—an increasingly popular phrase among Pentagon officials—derived by allied ground troops from bombing missions primarily intended to deny the enemy the use of roads.

Earlier, a Defense Department spokesman, Jerry W. Friedheim, reiterated that bombing raids against "developing supply lines in Cambodia" were continuing.

Although Defense officials are reluctant to discuss specific places, Mr. Friedheim acknowledged that a road system near the city of Kompong Thom, over 70 miles from the closest point on the South Vietnamese border, was a potential target.

He said it was "conceivable" that Cambodian ground troops in this area would receive the "ancillary benefit" of American bombing on the road system, whose primary artery is Route 12.

At the State Department, a spokesman, Carl E. Bartch, said, "Sometimes it's hard to draw the line between interdiction and cooperation with the Cambodian Government. The Cambodian troops are fighting the same enemy as we are, so some cooperation is involved."

The net effect of various Administration statements on the bombing in Cambodia appeared to reflect a further blurring of the distinction that officials of the Nixon Administration had tried to create between so-called interdiction bombing, which the Administration has backed, and close air support of ground troops, which at one time was thought to have been ruled out.

Although officials have not acknowledged that air support is being given to South Vietnamese and Cambodian troops outside the border sanctuary areas, it is known that some A-37 airplanes, which are designed for counterinsurgency operations and close air support for ground forces, are being used in the bombing.