

Laird Upset Over War Report 'Leak'

'Publication Violates Security Regulations'-- Mitchell Probe Asked

Associated Press

Washington

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird said yesterday that someone violated the law by publishing parts of a secret Pentagon study saying the Johnson Administration planned attacks on North Vietnam well before the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

"The publication of the papers violates the security regulations of the United States," Laird said.

He said as far as he is concerned the report still is secret, despite publication of lengthy excerpts from it. "It seems to me it falls on us to call these matters of disclosure of highly classified matter to the attention of the Justice Department," he said. "This I have done."

A justice spokesman said Attorney General John N. Mitchell had received Laird's request for an investigation but had not yet decided what action to take. "We have to determine whether or not there is something to investigate," he said.



AP Wirephotos

**SECRETARY LAIRD
To him it's still secret**

Laird said he didn't know who gave the study to the New York Times but said it would not be hard to find out because not many copies exist. Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim put the number at a dozen or so.

Friedheim said about half the copies are still at the Pentagon and accounted for. This indicated the leak came from outside, possibly from a former official in the administration of President Johnson.

Laird said he had looked through a copy of the report after he came to office, but had not read it completely because he didn't have enough time.

Laird complained of the Times articles both in a Pentagon statement and in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about a military aid bill.

As to who may have violated

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ed the law in publishing the report, Pentagon spokesman Friedheim said primary responsibility would fall on whoever gave it to the Times but the law is vague as to the newspaper's responsibility.

White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler told reporters the report had not been brought to President Nixon's attention before its partial publication in the Times. But he said complete information had been available to the Nixon administration when it took office, and declared "I am saying we had complete information."

In a Senate speech, Senator George S. McGovern (Dem-S.D.) said the secret report tells "A STORY OF ALMOST INCREDIBLE DECEPTION, DECEPTION OF THE Congress and of the American people, by the highest officials of government including the president of the United States."

He said it would be a mistake to assume that such deception ended with the Johnson administration, and called for passage of the Hatfield-McGovern amendment to cut off funds for the war by December 31.

Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania called the documents "instructive" and added "I think the implicatin is shocking that a President would know things which he didn't say which ran counter to the theme of his campaign."

Asked if he felt the American people had been subject to "massive deception" about the true nature of the nation's role in Vietnam, Scott would only go as far as saying, "I think the American people have never been told as much as they could digest about the 3war."