

WXPof JUL 26 1975

# U.S. Raid Story Retracted

The Los Angeles Times published a story on June 8 by its former Saigon correspondent, George McArthur, stating that U.S. planes had conducted major bombing raids in South Vietnam against Communist-led forces during the American evacuation of Saigon. The Washington Post printed this story on its front page on June 8.

The Times said yesterday that, after a lengthy investigation, it now believes that parts of that story were wrong and other parts were open to question.

Los Angeles Times Editor William F. Thomas said in Los Angeles that the story "never should have been published, in light of the strong denials, without further checking."

Benjamin C. Bradlee, executive editor of The Washington Post, commended the Times for its "professionalism in setting the record straight." He said the Post had made only routine inquiries about the story and regretted its publication.

Two Administration spokesmen, Assistant Defense Secretary Joseph F. Laitin and White House press secretary Ron Nessen,

had issued strong, unequivocal denials of the story before its publication. These denials were published with the story.

The Times story of June 8 said the raids were by U.S. planes from Thailand and almost certainly had White House approval.

Times editor Thomas said McArthur "had every reason to believe his source, who was in a position to know and who had not been wrong before, but we here should have alerted McArthur that the specific nature of the denials demanded more investigation.

"That alert was not delivered, McArthur was left out on a limb, and the blame is entirely the Times' for publishing what appears to be at least a misleading story," Thomas said.

McArthur said yesterday that "the large number of military, diplomatic and intelligence officials contacted in Washington almost unanimously support the White House and Pentagon denials. The Times is convinced that the White House did not know of any significant bombing raids that day and certainly did not order them." \*

\*The next sentence says: "It is equally convinced, however, that a great deal happened that day that the White House did not know about." - SFChronicle 26 Jul 75.