



## Nixon Adviser Denies Reston News Charge

WASHINGTON — The New York Times charged \*this week that "a top official at the White House" has asked reporters "not to embarrass the government by printing the details" of weekend U.S. air raids over North Vietnam. The allegation was made by James Reston, the distinguished Times columnist, in a story that likened the "anti-Communist, anti-intellectual, anti-university, anti-newspaper" atmosphere in Washington to the days of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy. The charge is particularly serious in view of the Nixon Administration's avowed determination to avoid the "credibility gap" which plagued the Johnson Administration on the Vietnam issue.

Contacted by this column, Reston refused to name the White House official who had tried to manage the news. "You may ask," said Reston, "but I'm not going to tell you."

He insisted, however, that the incident had made him "damned mad" and that he had put through an angry call to the White House aide responsible for the attempted suppression.

### Frankel Refuses Comment

Max Frankel, chief of the Times' Washington bureau, also refused to talk about the incident. "I just don't want to discuss it," he said.

Nevertheless, this column has learned that the official was Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's top foreign policy adviser, who talked to Frankel about the air raids.

Kissinger said it was "absolutely untrue" that he had asked The Times not to print the details of the raids to spare the government embarrassment. He gave this account of his conversations with Frankel and Reston:

Frankel called Kissinger several times after Hanoi announced that American planes had bombed parts of North Vietnam. Frankel said he had the story on good authority but wanted to know how many U.S. planes were involved.

"I said I didn't want to get into num-

bers," Kissinger recalled. He also mentioned national security.

Frankel shot back: "Then you don't deny it."

### Referred to Pentagon

"I'm not confirming it nor denying it," Kissinger said. "I think you should go to the Pentagon for this."

After Frankel hung up, Kissinger said he called Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and asked that The Times be given as much information as possible about the raids.

He then called Frankel back to make it clear that he had no objection to the story but simply didn't want to be in the position of giving out details he felt should come from the military.

"I specifically told Frankel that I would use my influence with the Pentagon to help him get the facts," Kissinger said. "The last thing that was in our minds was to keep this secret."

Kissinger acknowledged, however, that the first announcement of the raids had come from Hanoi, not Washington. But he said this was customary when bombing sorties are flown in response to action against U.S. reconnaissance aircraft.

### Conversation With Reston

Concerning his conversation with Reston, Kissinger said he had been trying to get in touch with the Times columnist for much of the day to discuss a pending luncheon engagement.

When Reston finally returned the call, according to Kissinger, it wasn't in anger, as Reston had said, but the conversation was "jocular."

During this conversation, Kissinger said Reston mentioned in passing: "What's this about knocking off the story?"

Kissinger explained his silence about the air raids. Then Reston said: "Let's knock it off for the weekend" and suggested the discussion be resumed at luncheon on Monday.

Footnote: Kissinger quoted liberally from a stenographic record of his conversations. He said he always has a secretary listening on an extension when he talks to reporters, and a record is made of the conversations.

\*Reston, NYTimes, 4 May