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Aide Says Pentagon Does Not Receive Reports on Civilian Damage in North

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 8—A senior military officer has testified in secret before a Senate panel that the Pentagon and the Administration do not "necessarily" receive specific reports detailing civilian damage and casualties resulting from United States air strikes in North Vietnam.

Maj. Gen. John W. Pauly, deputy director for operations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate subcommittee on refugees in closed session on Sept. 28, that although United States air commanders in Vietnam conduct field "critiques" on the results of the raids, these studies are not sent on to Washington.

The transcript of the closed hearings, with security deletions made by the Defense Department, was made public today by the subcommittee, which is headed by Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts. The hearings were called in an effort to determine the extent of civilian damage in North Vietnam stemming from American raids on military targets there.

Using the Pentagon term "collateral damage" to describe hits on civilian targets, General Pauly, an Air Force officer, said that "our policy has been established that only military targets will be struck, and that civilian casualties be minimized."

Evaluation Sessions Held

"Lucrative targets are often rejected if, as a result of examination, we found that the collateral damage would be substantial," he said.

General Pauly explained that "the results of the strike, once it take place, are critiqued at all levels in the field."

"The reconnaissance is put in to identify what damage has been done to the target, and to identify, where possible, any collateral damage that has been done," he said.

"The critiques are done by the commanders and the crews alike with the idea of refining not only our capability of taking out the targets we are after, but likewise to minimize any possible collateral damage."

But under questioning by Senator Kennedy, the general said: "We do not get distribution on the actual critiques. They do not come to our level. It is handled out in the field and the type reports that are kept, I am not sure of at this time."

"We get regular reports in the system back here — the report of the strike and then the day after, a resumé of the strike," General Pauly testified.

'Collateral Damage' Cited

"They do not necessarily in all cases contain any indication of collateral damage," he said. "In one case that I will point out, we did find, in those reports that were identified, mention of collateral damage. The crews pulled off as they released because a SAM had been detected; it was an accident and that was identified. But the regular critiques are done at unit level."

Asked by Senator Kennedy whether reports on "collateral damage" were submitted to the "top level" in Washington, General Pauly replied: "No, sir, not as a specific report."

In a comment on General Pauly's testimony, Senator Kennedy said today: "It is apparent from the record that at the highest levels of our Government—where the decisions for the massive bombing and shelling of North Vietnam are made—there is no regular procedure for observing and monitoring

the damage being done to civilian populated areas."

"Spokesmen for the Administration can talk with great precision about the number of bridges and roads and supply depots knocked out, but the damage done to schools and hospitals and housing and civilian installations generally is unavailable, even in executive session," the Senator said.

He said that Pentagon officials "seem to operate on the assumption that because it is not our Government's policy and intentions to hit civilian areas, we therefore don't—except accidentally.

"How many so-called accidents occur is apparently un-

known," he asserted.

The transcript of the hearings quoted Senator Kennedy as asking General Pauly if there was "any reason we cannot have the aerial photography" of areas where civilian damage had been inflicted. A note in the transcript said that "the witness's answer is classified." It added that "no photography was shown to the subcommittee, however, and none, apparently, will be made available."

Several other Senators acquainted with the transcript of the hearings expressed privately their view that General Pauly's testimony appeared to raise again the problem of command and control in the conduct of the Vietnam war.