

# Senators Are Told U.S. Bombed Cambodia Secretly

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—A former Air Force captain told the Senate Armed Services Committee today that he had participated in the widespread falsification of reports on tactical bombing raids deep inside Cambodia for 11 months after the United States invasion in May, 1970.

The testimony was the first public indication that the secret bombing of Cambodia, which began with B-52 strikes authorized by President Nixon in March, 1969, did not end with the invasion, as previously reported.

The former captain, George R. Moses, testified that the daily raids, which involved such fighter-bombers as the F-100 and the F-4, had often been sent against suspected enemy targets—as identified by the Cambodian Army—more than 75 miles inside Cambodia.

### No Earlier Mention

None of the previous witnesses before the committee, which began hearings last month into the falsification of records on the B-52 strikes, had mentioned the secret tactical bombing missions in Cambodia.

All these raids, Mr. Moses told the Senators, were officially reported to have taken place in locations near the Cambodian border—the site of the enemy sanctuaries and the troop build-up areas that were the justification for the United States invasion—which began May 1, 1970.

Mr. Moses's testimony thus added another dimension to the Senate committee's ongoing investigation into the falsification of official records in connection with the secret B-52 bombing. Until today it was thought that the bombing ended in May, 1970, after 3,630 sorties in which more than 100,000 tons of bombs were dropped.



Associated Press

George R. Moses testifies at Senate hearing on bombing in Cambodia.

## After Invasion in 1970

### Double-Entry System

Apparently the same type of double-entry bookkeeping system was used for the B-52 raids and the fighter-bomber strikes that, according to Mr. Moses, began about two weeks after the invasion and continued until April, 1971. Under that system, only a few high-ranking officials with a "need to know" were given accurate information about the raids.

Mr. Moses's testimony was corroborated later today by a former colleague from South Vietnam, Maurice J. O'Connell, an Air Force captain now stationed at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona. Captain O'Connell told the committee that he, too, had participated in falsifications while serving with an Air Force special-operations unit in South Vietnam in 1970.

Mr. Moses's testimony seemed to contradict the assertions made last week by Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, who retired in mid-1970 as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Wheeler testified that all United States air attacks had been limited to 30 miles inside Cambodia, and he also told the senators that the special reporting procedures used for the B-52 operations

had not been needed after the invasion of Cambodia.

Throughout the 11 months of the reported secret tactical bombing in 1970 and 1971, President Nixon and other high Administration officials repeatedly suggested that United States operations inside Cambodia would be limited in the wake of the invasion, which the Administration had declared a success. United States ground support for the invasion officially ended June 30, 1970.

In a report to the nation that day, President Nixon noted that "we have scrupulously observed the 21-mile limit on penetration of our ground combat forces into Cambodian territory."

In his only reference to continued bombing, the President said then, "We will conduct—with the approval of the Cambodian Government—air-interdiction missions against the enemy efforts to move supplies and personnel through Cambodia toward South Vietnam and to re-establish bases relevant to the war in Vietnam."

At the time, it was generally understood that the President was referring to enemy efforts in border areas.

In a nationwide television interview with three correspondents in July, Mr. Nixon said that the United States was giving small arms and moral support to the Cambodians, "but, as far as military support, the United States moving forces into Cambodia for the purpose of helping them defend against enemy attack—that we are not required to do under treaty and we do not intend to do."

#### Denial by Laird

On Aug. 6, 1970, Melvin R. Laird, then the Secretary of Defense, denied published reports that American planes were providing close air support to Cambodian forces, although he did acknowledge that some aircraft were bombing enemy troop concentrations near Cambodian population centers.

During his testimony today, Mr. Moses, who is 27 years old and is now a staff aide to Representative Robert L. Leggett, Democrat of California, told of having falsified records on "many strikes a day" that, he

added, "must have been ordered by the Cambodians."

He said that he specifically recalled at least two major bombing operations near Cambodian towns in support of Cambodian forces. All those missions were reported to have been flown in unpopulated areas in the east, he said.

Mr. Moses said that the falsified reporting had begun two weeks after the Cambodian invasion when the Seventh Air Force headquarters in Saigon, which controlled all tactical fighter-bomber operations, sent a classified message to all units.

Mr. Moses said: "Although this message was modified slightly, its thrust remained basically the same: Combat missions flown in an area roughly west of the Mekong River in Cambodia were not to

have coordinates [map locations] reported as struck. Instead, intelligence personnel were instructed to contact the Seventh Air Force Tactical Air-Control Center for a set of coordinates which would be reported in lieu of the actual strike locations."

Mr. Moses said that his assignment as intelligence officer with the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing at Tuy Hoa Air Base had involved debriefing the pilots after their combat operations and logging the time, location and result of each attack. But after the raids on forbidden target areas in Cambodia, he said he would telephone the Seventh Air Force's Tactical Air-Control Center in Saigon and be told where to officially log the operation as having taken place. "I didn't feel it was right but

I felt that I had no viable alternative," Mr. Moses testified in response to queries from Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina. "I had no choice. I had to file false reports."

"It was a question," he added, "of our falsifying reports to the Seventh Air Force at the Seventh Air Force's insistence and with the Seventh Air Force telling us what to do."

When the reported falsified tactical raids began in May, 1970, the commander of the Seventh Air Force was Gen. George S. Brown, who became Air Force chief of staff this month.

Senator Harold E. Hughes, Democrat of Iowa, who initiated the current hearings, noted that General Brown had specifically denied any knowl-

edge of falsifications in connection with the bombing of Cambodia during a Senate committee appearance early last month.

Mr. Moses said that he did not know why the falsified reporting was stopped in April, 1971.

It was unclear how the actual results of the bombing missions inside Cambodia were reported to those authorities with the proper clearance or "need to know."

Captain O'Connell told the committee, however, that he had been informed that correct reports had been relayed through a special channel that had been fed information by the forward air controllers—forward observers flying in Cambodia—who had guided the strikes over enemy targets.