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# More 'Secret' Raids Disclosed by Pentagon

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A Pentagon "White Paper" sent to Congress yesterday reveals that a White House-inspired system of dual reporting to keep B-52 bombing in Cambodia secret in 1969 and early 1970 was followed by more false target reporting later in 1970 and 1971 that was not sanctioned by higher authorities.

The 32-page Defense Department report also revealed details for the first time on the dimensions of clandestine U.S. ground involvement in Laos between September, 1965, and February, 1971, and in Cambodia between May, 1967, and June 30, 1970.

Over the years, the report states, 1,446 "reconnaissance" teams — usually involving three U.S. soldiers plus a larger number of South Vietnamese or indigenous troops—crossed the border into Laos.

In addition, there were 203 platoon-sized (about 45 men) cross-border forays, usually involving 5 or 6 Americans on each one, plus three "multi-platoon" operations each involving 20 or 22 Americans.

Some 441 of these crossings—including all three multi-platoon operations—were made

in 1970, after Congress had passed legislation in December 1969, prohibiting use of U.S. "ground combat troops" in Laos.

The report describes these operations as for "intelligence collection and interdiction."

But despite some occasional blowing up of bridges or communications centers and seizure of prisoners, Defense Department spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim stressed that "the purpose was not to get involved in combat, but to do something surreptitious, meaning principally the gathering of intelligence."

Thus, the Pentagon argues, the U.S. Special Forces troops taking part in these cross-border operations were not "combat" troops and thus not in violation of the law.

Using the Pentagon's statistics would indicate that some 5,500 Americans took part in these forays, which means that a number several times as large represented the total allied forces that moved in and out of Laos in small groups during the period.

Though some former Spe-

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cial Forces troops have testified before the committee that casualties on these raids were high, the report indicates only 76 Americans as being killed in Laos during these operations and 27 in Cambodia. A review of these statistics is continuing, however.

In Cambodia, the cross-border operations in which Americans took part included 1,119 reconnaissance teams, nine platoon-sized operations and one multi-platoon foray.

This would indicate a total of at least 3,400 Americans moving across the border over the years preceding the officially announced allied incursion on April 30, 1970.

The secret ground operations, as the report indicates, also prompted a sizable amount of American air support.

Statistics show almost 9,000 flights by U.S. helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers in Laos in support of these operations and some 4,900 in Cambodia.

The Pentagon report was provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee by Deputy Secretary of Defense William P. Clements.

It was intended as an answer to committee requests for a "simple, concise account" of circumstances surrounding U. S. ground and air operations in Laos and Cambodia, much of which had been kept secret until recently when committee hearings forced it into the open.

Sen. Harold Hughes (Iowa), who has led the questioning of U. S. activities, immediately branded the "White Paper" as "incomplete and unacceptable." Hughes criticized the lack of any official documentation in the Pentagon summary. "We have been given second-hand summaries of key decision documents rather than the documents themselves. We need to see the raw data if we are to judge who was really behind the massive operation of deception and falsification," he said.

The report provides detail to earlier testimony on how the special reporting procedures were set up to keep secret the diplomatically-sensitive attacks by B52s in Cambodia during 1969 and 1970. In so doing, it reveals that 3,875 such raids were undertaken, 245 more than previously reported.

But the report also indicates that between July, 1970, and February, 1971, some 3,634 strikes by smaller U.S. fighter-bombers were flown in one

area of Cambodia but were reported as having taken place in another area of that country even though there were no instructions from responsible authorities to do that.

Thus, the report raises a new question about whether unorthodox and highly secret dual-reporting systems, once blessed with official sanction to cover some activities—such as the B-52s can be controlled so they are not routinely used to coverup other things.

The report states that the false reporting of the fighter-bomber targets apparently grew up "in the field" and that the Air Force put a stop to it in February, 1971, after it was discovered by the Seventh Air Force command.

The report says that the actual targets were accurately reported in separate "limit distribution" reports by headquarters but that false reports were filed in official files.

The report says the Pentagon has been unable to find out who gave such orders and that it "appears that relevant directives were issued during the phase of" U.S. activities.

The White Paper confirms that "the necessity to minimize the likelihood of public speculation or disclosure" about the secret bombings in Cambodia "was established within the National Security Council," which officially is headed by the President but which is run by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger.

The report states that the NSC went so far as to issue specific guidance for the first secret B-52 strike inside Cambodia in March, 1969, that daily press releases in Saigon should show the targets to be in border areas inside South Vietnam.

The White House demand for ultra-secrecy, Friedheim told newsmen, made the dual-reporting system "inevitable."

The report indicates that several military commands as well as the office of the joint Chiefs of Staff had a hand in devising the specific technique in which actual targets hit were reported through a top secret communications channel, while less highly classified official files used for keeping track of fuel and bombs would not show where the real targets were.

It was the latter set of records, which covered up the attacks, that were eventually sent to Congress in what the Pentagon has described as an unintentional, bureaucratic foul-up.