

JUN 15 1972

# Full Probe Demanded of Unauthorized Bomb Raids

SFChronicle

Washington

Senator Harold E. Hughes (Dem-Iowa) called yesterday for a comprehensive investigation of unauthorized Air Force bombing attacks on North Vietnam, including a possible link to the break-off of the Paris peace negotiations.

Hughes' Senate speech prompted Majority Leader Mike Mansfield to say he was disturbed by the possible effect the air attacks "may have had on successful negotiations" secretly conducted by Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, and Le Duc Tho, North Vietnam's chief negotiator. Mansfield said he was also disturbed by the position in which Mr. Nixon was placed as the civilian commander-in-chief by the unauthorized attacks.

John D. Lavelle, the Air Force general who commanded the Seventh Air Force at the time of the attacks, has taken responsibility for the attacks.

Lavelle was relieved of his command and retired as a lieutenant general, a demotion of one grade, after a

Defense Department investigation triggered by an Air Force enlisted man's letter to Hughes, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In testimony at a House hearing Monday, Lavelle testified he ordered the attacks on his own authority and without the approval of the Pentagon or the White House.

Hughes told the Senate that nearly one in every four air attacks on North Vietnam between November 8 of last year and March 8 of this year "was in violation of the rules of engagement established by the President and the secretary of defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

He commended the Pentagon chiefs "for acting swiftly and effectively to investigate the allegations and halt the violations" but said there still is this gnawing uncertainty:

"To what extent can the actions of a single combat commander, authorizing persistent violations of established orders over a period of four months, trigger a

spiraling escalation of hostilities by both sides at a time when we are committed to winding down the intensity of the war and withdrawing?" Hughes asked.

He said that at his request the Senate Armed Services Committee is holding up action on Lavelle's nomination to retire at the rank of lieutenant general pending an inquiry and hearing into the events that led up to it.

Associated Press