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Schlesinger Raises Total Of Ship Rescue Casualties

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He Now Lists 5 Dead, 16 Missing and 70 to 80 Wounded of 300-Man Force

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 18 — Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger announced today that the number of American casualties in last week's effort to rescue the freighter *Mayagüez* and her crew was larger than initially reported.

He said the current listing, based on the latest mustering of marines and airmen involved in the mission, indicated that three marines and two airmen had been killed, 16 were missing and 70 to 80 had been wounded.

Friday, a Pentagon spokesman at a press briefing said that one had been killed, 22 wounded and 13 were missing.

A Defense Department official reported today that three of the 70 to 80 wounded were still listed in critical condition, although "most had only superficial wounds."

[In Bangkok, demonstrators burned an effigy of Uncle Sam outside the American Embassy in the second day of protests over the use of a Thai base in the operation to recapture the freighter *Mayagüez*. Page 3.]

Some 300 Involved

Nearly 300 marines and helicopter pilots were involved in the landings Wednesday night on Tang Island in the Gulf of Siam, where a United States force attacked to retrieve the *Mayagüez* and her crew from Cambodian captors.

The final toll of Americans killed is expected to be at least 21, a Defense Department off-

cial said today, since the 16 missing are presumed to have drowned after their helicopter was struck by Cambodian ground fire and then crashed about a mile out to sea from the island.

Mr. Schlesinger made his disclosure on the ABC television program "Issues and Answers." He was asked how he squared his account with the report yesterday from Singapore of Charles T. Miller, Captain of the *Mayagüez*, that there were seven dead marines aboard the destroyer *Wilson* already "on ice" when he and his crew were rescued.

4 Waves Authorized

The Defense Secretary replied: "The captain may have been in error." He added that what Captain Miller had reported "probably referred to wounded marines, rather than marines who had been killed."

Reviewing the rescue action, Mr. Schlesinger disclosed that military planners, acting on orders from President Ford, had authorized four waves of attack planes to move against Sihanoukville, known as Kompong Som under the old government, the main Cambodian harbor city 30 miles from Tang Island.

A Pentagon official said the air strikes were part of a general attack plan that included the possibility of landing marines on the mainland in the Sihanoukville area "if necessary" to try to rescue the

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SCHLESINGER ADDS TO CASUALTY LIST

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Mayagüez crew.

The first wave of strike aircraft swept over Sihanoukville at 8:45 P.M. Eastern daylight time Wednesday without bombing or strafing. The second, at 10:57 P.M., struck the airport at Ream. The third, at 11:50 P.M., struck a petroleum depot close to the harbor.

Mr. Schlesinger said the fourth wave was "terminated" before it took off from the Carrier *Coral Sea* about midnight

against targets in Vietnam, Mr. Schlesinger described the strikes against Sihanoukville as "a very prudent, limited use of force" motivated by the desire "to protect the marines on the island."

"I don't believe that any error, in fact, was made," he declared, with reference to the Tang Island landings. Later he added: "This has been—including an element of good fortune—a very successful operation and I would not change it."

"The main thing is the United States must take action to defend the right of innocent passage, to defend the right of freedom of the seas."

This, he said, might be a lesson to be drawn by North Korea with regard to any feelings about the possibilities for invading South Korea, where 38,000 United States troops are stationed.

Lessons of the Past

"I think one of the lessons of the Vietnamese war is that ancillary military operations, not directed against any fixed military objective, such as destroying the heart of enemy power, his military forces, is likely to be ineffective," he said.

A lesson for the United States, he went on, is "that we go against the military power of an opponent and that we not simply spend time parrying their offensive operations."

Asked whether this would mean heavy bombing of North Korea if it were to attack South Korea, he replied: "I think that is an option to be considered. I would hesitate now to say what we would do under the circumstances. The heart of deterrence is to maintain uncertainty about the specific actions or maintaining certainty about our commitments."

As for the Middle East, Mr. Schlesinger said that while a new oil embargo by Arab nations was "very improbable," an American military response to it "could be achieved" although "it is certainly not an option that is attractive on its own terms."

"As I've indicated before," he said, "we might be less tolerant of such an embargo than we have been. Just precisely what measures we might take would remain to be seen."



Associated Press

James R. Schlesinger, Defense Secretary, commenting on casualties incurred in action off Cambodia last week.

when President Ford and the National Security Council determined that the *Mayagüez* and her crew were safe.

Altogether, "15 tactical air sorties" — bombing and strafing missions by individual aircraft — were flown against Sihanoukville installations, he said.

Comparing this to 1972 when United States airmen were flying "several thousand" sorties