

SECRETARY LAIRD ARRIVES IN TOKYO

Defense Chief Calls Accord
on Okinawa Example of
Partnership Policy

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TOKYO, July 4—Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird arrived here today on what was described as a visit combining business and sightseeing.

Mr. Laird, the first American Secretary of Defense ever to visit Japan, will be here for eight days, conferring with Japanese and American defense officials, visiting military installations and touring the temples and gardens of ancient Kyoto with his wife.

In an arrival statement, Mr. Laird hailed the Okinawa reversion agreement signed June 17 by the United States and Japan as an example of the Nixon policy of "partnership and negotiation" and expressed hope that the agreement would be quickly ratified by the United States Senate and the Japanese Diet.

Defense Talks Planned

Among the topics Mr. Laird is expected to discuss with Japanese defense officials are changes in the Far Eastern defense picture following reversion of Okinawa from American to Japanese rule next year. The same topic is expected to figure prominently in discussions Mr. Laird will have when he visits South Korea next week.

The Japan-United States security consultative committee met in Tokyo June 29 and approved arrangements for Japanese forces to take over some of the functions hitherto performed by United States forces on Okinawa. The committee is composed of the Japanese Foreign Affairs and Defense Ministers, the American Ambassador to Japan, Armin H. Meyer, and the Commander in Chief of United States Forces in the

Pacific, Adm. John S. McCain.

Some 3,200 Japanese will be stationed in Okinawa, including infantry, engineers, a fighter-interceptor unit and an anti-submarine patrol unit. Later, Nike and Hawk groups are to be stationed on the island.

Vast Saving for U.S.

American sources here estimate that the saving for the United States may total \$300-million to \$500-million over five years.

Mr. Laird will also have a look at the gradually diminishing American military presence in Japan, where total troop strength is reported to have decreased from 40,000 to about 30,000 over the last six months. Three American-operated airfields—Misawa, Atsugi and Itazuke—recently were turned over to Japanese control and there are now fewer than 120 American military installations throughout Japan. Eventually, American troop strength here will drop to 28,000 men, mostly Air Force personnel and marines.

In his arrival statement, Mr. Laird said nothing about pos-

sible strengthening of Japan's military forces or of taking over part of the burden of Far Eastern defense that has been borne exclusively by the United States. These are sensitive subjects here because the constitution bans going to war or the maintenance of "land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential."

Instead, Mr. Laird suggested that Japan and the United States "work together for the further economic development of the Pacific area."

The outgoing Defense Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, met Mr. Laird at the airport. Mr. Nakasone was Mr. Laird's guest in Washington last September, when he proposed annual consultations between the defense chiefs of the two countries. Mr. Laird turned down the request then, but agreed to visit Japan this year on a kind of "get-acquainted" tour.

Mr. Laird will pay courtesy calls on Premier Eisaku Sato and Mr. Nakasone tomorrow. Mr. Sato, who is reorganizing his Cabinet following upper-

house elections last week, is expected to complete his reshuffle late tomorrow and Mr. Laird will have an opportunity to meet the new Defense Minister before he leaves next Sunday. At the airport, Mr. Nakasone told reporters that he would not be in the new Cabinet.