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Laird Won't Campaign After All

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In an apparent switch, a Pentagon spokesman said yesterday that Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird "does not plan specific partisan political appearances" this campaign year.

Ten days ago, spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim had told newsmen, "I anticipate that a man who has been in political life for his entire adult career . . . will from time to time engaged in political activities in the coming months."

Yesterday Friedheim said "I knew at the time he had been approached to be a delegate" to the Republican National Convention next August.

Since then, Friedheim said, Laird has decided against being a delegate to the convention from his home state of Wisconsin, which he represented in Congress for 16 years before becoming Defense Secretary three years ago.

Traditionally, secretaries of defense have remained aloof from partisan politicking during presidential campaigns and Friedheim's earlier statement indicating that Laird would become involved this year had come as a surprise.

Asked whether Laird had received any new instructions from President Nixon on political activity, Friedheim said, "not to my knowledge."

Associated Press