

Study of Bombing Ban 'Loophole'

Washington

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger disclosed yesterday that U.S. officials are studying whether the new war powers bill opens a new major offensive.

However, Schlesinger told a news conference: "I think the intent of Congress is quite clear."

He referred to a discussion over whether the new bill, which authorizes the President to send U.S. forces into combat for 60 days without congressional authorization, supercedes earlier legislation flatly banning any U.S. military action in Indochina after August 15.

Senator Jacob K. Javits (Rep. N.Y.), principal architect of the war powers resolution, said it is subject to

"no such interpretation." He told newsmen the funding ban on U.S. combat activity "remains in full force and effect."

Schlesinger said the question is "being looked into" by experts at the State Department.

Schlesinger restated his belief that Mr. Nixon would go to Congress for authority to act if North Vietnam launches a big thrust in South Vietnam.

"If Hanoi were to misjudge the situation and if they were to launch an assault of the kind that oc-

curred in May, 1972," the Defense secretary said, "I believe the President would be prepared to come back to the Congress to ask for support of military action in support of South Vietnam."

State department spokesman George Vest said that under no circumstances should the conclusion be drawn that the government intends to re-intervene in Vietnam.

Schlesinger's news conference ranged over many topics in addition to the war powers dispute, touching on the fuel situation and concern about the nuclear balance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

He said the armed services plan to cut consumption of petroleum products about 125,000 barrels a day, to a level of 625,000 barrels.

Pledging again to try to minimize the impact on the civilian economy, he said that he would be prepared to move under the Defense Production Act to assure adequate fuel supplies for manufacturers producing equipment and supplies under defense contracts.

As he has before, Schlesinger indicated concern that

the Russians' would surge well ahead of the U.S. in nuclear weapons, particularly if the new round of arms limitation negotiations breaks down.

"We want to be prepared to take the necessary steps to maintain true equality" in strategic arms, Schlesinger said, apparently signalling an increased emphasis in the new budget on research and development funds for nuclear weapons.

He said the U.S. should be prepared to move ahead in research and development of bigger land-based missiles, mobile missiles that would be harder for the Russians to hit in a first attack, more warheads that could be mounted on a single missile, advanced weapons for bombers, and perhaps a large force of Trident submarines, planned for the late 1970s.

Schlesinger also said reductions in overseas bases were being contemplated to increase efficiency and economy and that the Pentagon was also looking at possible reductions in domestic bases.

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