

# A Bombing Extension Hint

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Washington

Defense Secretary

Schlesinger said

that the Nixon ad-

ministration will ask Con-

gress for an extension of

August 15 cutoff of

bombing and other U.S.

operations in

North

Although Schlesinger at-

tributed several major quali-

fications to his suggestion, it

was the time limit to come

from the administration that

in an extension request is

being seriously considered.

It also came amid indica-

tions that the government of

Cambodian President Lon

Not now might be willing to

accept a 11 immediate

cease-fire and negotiate with

deposed Prince Norodom St-

ranout.

Schlesinger indicated that

a request for extended

bombing authority would de-

pend largely on how close

the U.S. Government

thought it was to achieving a

cease-fire.

In his first press confer-

ence since being sworn in

Monday as the new defense

secretary, Schlesinger denied

emphatically that the recent

increase in tactical bombing

sorties in Cambodia has

anything to do with the con-

gressional mandate August 15 cutoff.

"There is no intention to

raise the levels of sorties by

B-52s," said Schlesinger. He

said that some congressional

critics who have interpreted

a 50 per cent increase of

tactical bombing since the

middle of last week as a

"double cross" have over-

looked the historical tac-

ticians of such air raids

near the Cambodian capital

of Phnom Penh.

"The tactical mission so-

has reflects the situation on

the ground, the weather con-

ditions, and the activity of

the insurgent forces," said

Schlesinger.

The single purpose of such

missions, he said, is to

achieve a cease-fire. He

conceded, however, that ef-

forts toward that objective

have been a "source of dis-

appointment."

Congressional leaders

were aware of fluctuations

in the level of tactical bomb-

ing, Schlesinger said. More-

over, he said, an increase

in bombing missions from

an average of 150 a day to

"somewhere in the 200s"

was spelled out by Admiral

Thomas H. Moore, chair-

man of the joint Chiefs of

Staff, to a congressional

committee before Congress

passed the June 29 cutoff

compromise.

"The main point is that

there has been no deliberate

escalation in the sense of a

massive increase in strikes

... If there had been a de-

sire to escalate (the bomb-

ing) it would have been re-

flected with an increase of

B-52 flights," Schlesinger

said.

Schlesinger said the

40-day deadline on the

Phnom Penh Government

may even impel the Cam-

bodians to a higher degree

of dedication.

Schlesinger scotched wide-

spread speculation that

the U.S. is preparing for a

unilateral troop withdrawal

from NATO forces in Eu-

rope.

He said he would seek to

persuade Congress of the ne-

cessity for maintaining the

300,000 U.S. troops now in

Europe, stressing that many

troops are withdrawn. It

would be a "green light" with

Warsaw Pact countries.