

# Laird Says Fulbright Didn't Ask

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Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird said yesterday he did not tell the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about a U.S. air attack in support of the raid on Son Tay POW camp near Hanoi because the committee members never asked him about it.

Denying charges by committee chairman J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.) that he "misrepresented the facts," Laird told reporters, "I only answer the questions that are asked . . . some members on the committee were not as prepared as they might be . . . that particular question was never asked."

Although Laird did not mention the support raid in the televised testimony Tuesday, he said he did tell about it earlier at a closed hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

House Republican leader Gerald R. Ford, and Representative John J. Rhodes (Rep-Ariz.), chairman of the House GOP Policy Committee, also criticized Fulbright for his remarks made Sun-

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day during a television interview.

Fulbright said the fact that Laird did not mention the support attack near Hanoi, later disclosed by the Pentagon, was further evidence that Laird and the Defense Department "misrepresent the facts . . . and they do it all the time."

Rhodes said Fulbright failed to substantiate his charge. "If he knows of any time that Secretary Laird has not told the truth he should bring it forward," said Rhodes. Otherwise, he added, Fulbright is guilty of "a gratuitous attack on the veracity of the Secretary of Defense."

Laird came to his own defense when he surprised reporters by appearing at the Pentagon's regular morning news briefing.

He said he had told the Senate Armed Services Committee that from 12 to 14 Shrike air-to-ground missiles had been fired near the Son Tay camp during the unsuccessful commando raid November 21 to rescue U.S. prisoners who had since been moved elsewhere.