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## Air Policy Left Vague

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The Pentagon yesterday left open the possibility that U.S. warplanes might continue to bomb targets in Laos and Cambodia under certain conditions after the cease-fire agreement to be signed in Paris goes into effect in North and South Vietnam today.

Pentagon spokesman Jerry W. Friedheim, asked about the prospects for such bombing, did not say U.S. planes would carry out such attacks.

But he repeatedly declined to go beyond statements made Wednesday by presidential aide Henry A. Kissinger. Kissinger's remarks appeared to leave the situation in Laos and Cambodia purposely vague at this time while efforts are going forward to try to extend the cease-fire into those countries.

The Pentagon's refusal to clarify the situation came as Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma claimed he had assurances that U.S. bombing would continue if needed, but that he expected a cease-fire to be extended to Laos within about 15 days.

The question of lingering U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia arose at a news conference yesterday in which more details were revealed on plans to return more than 550 American prisoners from North Vietnam, 23,700 troops from South Vietnam—half within 30 days—and to sweep the mines from North Vietnam's harbors and waterways.

Among the major points:

- Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, earlier in the day, said that "more than 100" prisoners will be included in the first group to be released by Hanoi, and that they would be back in the United States "within the first two weeks" after the Paris signing, with "some home sooner than that."

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Friedheim added later officials hope to have some POWs home during "the first week in February."

- The halt of all military actions throughout Vietnam

includes an end to all U.S. reconnaissance flights over the North, including those carried out by unmanned drone aircraft.

Friedheim said the reconnaissance ban would be observed "by the U.S. government in toto," meaning that no one outside the military, such as the CIA, would undertake such flights.

- As the last U.S. troops are withdrawn from South Vietnam over the next 60 days, some military personnel will move to Nakohm Phanom, Thailand, a U.S. Thailand base on the border of Laos, to set up a Joint Recovery Center that will organize search parties to try to locate men missing in action.

Friedheim indicated this move, like a number of other post-war plans, might be subject to consideration by the four-power post-cease-fire military control group.

- Pullout of the U.S. force will leave only perhaps 50 to 100 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam, attached to the embassy. There will be no separate military advisory group, officials indicated.

- Task Force 78, composed of 20 to 25 ships, a helicopter carrier and several thousand men, is forming and heading toward the North to begin removing hundreds of mines that have blockaded North Vietnam's harbors and coastline since last May. The clearing operation will, Laird says, "take some time" to complete, perhaps as much as two months in some estimates.

On the prospects for continued bombing in Laos and Cambodia, officials seemed to indicate that invoking new U.S. air strikes in those countries would depend on what Communist forces do in the days immediately after the Vietnam cease-fire.

At his press conference Wednesday Kissinger said "our side will take the appropriate measures to indicate that it will not attempt to change the situation by force" in Laos and Cambodia.

"We have reason to believe," he said, "that our position is clearly understood by all concerned parties, and I will not go beyond this in my statement."

The entire situation is also left murky by the Paris agreements.

The peace accords call for the United States, North and South Vietnam and the Vietcong to "undertake to refrain" from using Laotian

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and Cambodian territory "to encroach on the sovereignty and security of one another and of other countries."

It also says that "foreign countries shall put an end to all military activities in Cambodia and Laos," withdraw troops and stop sending new men or material through both countries.

Yet there is no specific time limit associated with this language, such as the time for withdrawal, for example. Nor is it entirely clear whether this language is to take effect when the agreement is signed in Paris or when the broader cease-fires that Kissinger says he expects in Laos and Cambodia are achieved.

The situation is further complicated by the presence in both countries of large local Communist forces other than the North Vietnamese.

If U.S. raids do continue before these other cease-fires they might be taken as a sign that the North Vietnamese have violated the accord by engaging in military activities.

Or it could lead to charges against the Americans as violators if the raids were directed, for example, against the local Pathet Laos.

Judging the validity of such charges would be difficult without further clarification of the timing of the Laos and Cambodia provisions in the Vietnam peace accord.

The North Vietnamese have never officially admitted being in Laos and Cambodia, and the local units frequently are mixed in with the North Vietnamese, presenting a further problem.

Some U.S. officials suggest privately that if bomb-

ing is carried out it will come at the request of the Lao or Cambodian governments. They also express the hope that the problem will solve itself by indications that the Cambodian government will announce a unilateral cease-fire Sunday and by a fast settlement in Laos.

On the prisoner release, the U.S. will receive in Paris today its first official list of

men held throughout Indochina by the Communists.

The list will be transmitted immediately to Washington, after which scores of military "casualty officers," who stay in touch with individual families, will immediately begin notifying the next of kin. Defense officials say they hope the notification procedure can be completed "in a matter of hours" so that the list can be made public perhaps Sunday.

Officials said they still did not know which prisoners would come out first, but that the route home will be direct from Hanoi to Clark air base in the Philippines for initial processing.

The United States lists 591 military men as held captive by the Communists throughout North and South Vietnam and Laos. Another 1,344 are listed as missing in action.

The State Department lists another 40 U.S. civilians known to have been captured in Southeast Asia and another 11 listed as missing.

The State Department will be responsible for notifying next of kin for whichever of these people—government officials, contractors, journalists, missionaries—show up on the North Vietnamese list.

Friedheim said he was still not sure when the first pickup of POWs released in South Vietnam would be.

It was also indicated that as soon as medical authorities at Clarke indicate a returnee is fit to travel, he will probably be sent on to the United States even if all the medical checks are not completed. This will allow some of the men to be home and reunited with their families "in a matter of days" after leaving Hanoi, according to the Pentagon. It was estimated that the minimum time at Clark will be three to four days.

The White House said yesterday President Nixon had not yet made any specific plans about where or when to greet the returning POWs.

The POWs will be released in roughly four increments of 100 to 150 men over the 60 days, and at Clark "quick reaction" teams of about five persons—including a public

information officer—are standing by to fly into Hanoi on either C-141 or C-9 medical evacuation jets.

To get the remaining U.S. troops out of South Vietnam, it was estimated yesterday it will take about 130 flights by the Military Airlift Com-

mand and some commercial charter flights. Another 200 flights plus some ships will carry out equipment.

Another 175 flights will be needed to airlift the 35,000 South Korean troops still in South Vietnam back home.

It was also announced that Maj. Gen. Gilbert H. Woodward of Suffolk, Va., currently chief of staff of the U.S. command in Saigon, will be the chief U.S. representative to the joint four-

power military commission for implementing the cease-fire during the first 60 days.

Some 500 to 1,000 U.S. servicemen will be assigned to work for that commission while it is set-up.