

NIXON IS ASSAILED ON GROUND RAIDS

Hughes Says Indochina Data
May Show Law Violation

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WASHINGTON, March 27—Senator Harold E. Hughes declared today that the Senate Armed Services Committee had developed evidence strongly suggesting that President Nixon violated the law by permitting secret ground operations inside Laos and Cambodia.

The Iowa Democrat said the committee, which held public hearings last summer on the secret B-52 bombing of Cambodia and other activities, had determined that 60 ground operations inside Laos and Cambodia were authorized from early 1970 to the end of the American ground involvement in the Indochina war, in early 1973.

The White House had no immediate comment on Mr. Hughes's remarks.

"What is most disturbing here," Mr. Hughes said in a Senate speech, "is that the Congress had acted, by law, to forbid the introduction of ground combat troops in Laos and Cambodia." He cited the Cooper-Church amendments of 1969 and 1970, which barred the use of United States funds to finance "the introduction of American ground combat troops" into Laos and Cambodia.

Not all the ground operations were solely for intelligence gathering, Senator Hughes said, citing one witness who testified that many of them designated "slam" for "search, locate and annihilate missions."

Investigation Urged

Mr. Hughes said the Pentagon acknowledged that it had authorized 32 ground opera-

tions involving a platoon or combat troops or more inside Laos in 1970 and 1971 after Congress banned such activity in December, 1969. The Pentagon also reported the authorization of 31 missions of similar size—some involving 50 to 100 men—inside Cambodia after Congress forbade those operations a year later, the Senator said.

In a subsequent telephone interview, Mr. Hughes urged that the secret ground operations be investigated as potential Presidential impeachment offenses. "I think this should be pursued by the House Judiciary Committee," the Senator said.

He declared that "there is no doubt of obvious violations of the law" and of the "misleading" of the American people.

Mr. Hughes noted that the investigation conducted thus far by the Armed Services Committee had failed to develop any specific evidence linking Mr. Nixon personally to the orders for secret ground operations or to the Administration's decision to falsify classified records in 1969 and 1970 to conceal the secret B-52 bombing of Cambodia from the American public.

But in his speech, the Senator said that "no commander, including the Commander in Chief, should feel free to act beyond the limits of the Constitution or in violation of the law, even if his actions may successfully be concealed for months or years."

For four months last year the Armed Services Committee investigated the secret B-52 bombing of Cambodia without determining who had authorized the military to keep a double bookkeeping system for the bombing raids, which were reported inside the military's own communications system as having taken place in South Vietnam.