



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

Rep. Raulsback, left, confers with minority counsel Sam Garrison before Judiciary session on Article II.

WXPost JULY 30 1974 Cambodia Raid Data Released

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The House Judiciary Committee staff yesterday released a lengthy history of secret U.S. bombing in Cambodia between 1969 and 1971, but offered no conclusions about allegations that President Nixon had misled Congress by concealing these large-scale air attacks.

The "statement of information" by the staff came as a small group of committee members were debating privately whether to recommend to the full committee another article of impeachment for the President's alleged responsibility in the submission of false reports to Congress on these raids and misleading public statements concerning U.S. actions in Cambodia.

The question of whether to include the Cambodia bombing issue in the impeachment charges has been a sensitive subject for several weeks.

Even those who would like to recommend its inclusion say it has virtually no chance to be accepted by the committee for a variety

of reasons. Thus, if an article is submitted by some Democrats and is defeated by the committee, some fear it will put the committee in the position of condoning the President's actions on the bombing and the false reporting to Congress. Also, it could weaken the broad consensus on the articles of impeachment that Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. is trying to develop, congressional aides say.

On the other hand, supporters of such a recommendation argue that the committee debate is an excellent place to air this issue publicly. If the decision is made not to recommend a Cambodian bombing article, then supporters may raise it when the impeachment bill reaches the House floor.

Those most interested in pressing the bombing issue are Reps. Robert F. Drinan (D-Mass.), Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.), John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Robert W. Kastenmeier (D-Wis.).

Republican Henry P. Smith of New York also has said the bombing issue concerns him deeply, though he has not stated his view on its relevance to impeachment.

Drinan and other Democrats were slated to meet late yesterday to decide if they will submit an article on this subject. If they do, it will deal with the submission of false information to Congress in 1971 and 1973, essentially concealing the air attacks, rather than with presidential actions in ordering the raids themselves.

Supporters believe this issue is more clear-cut, and that the question of ordering the raids will raise such issues as "national security" and protecting U.S. troops in Vietnam, which will be heard to resolve in debate.

Virtually all of the material in the staff report had been made public before, but never in one place. It reiterates that between March 18, 1969, and May 1, 1970, the United States carried out 3,695 B-52 strikes inside Cambodia, raids which only a handful of people here ever knew about.

After the two-month-long U.S.-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in May, 1970, other raids by U.S. warplanes were carried out, with false reports filed on where the actual targets were located.

Although the report is

meant to help members assess the issue and draws no conclusions, it points out that "the staff's examination of all available material did not reveal any request by the administration for funds or any appropriation for any American military activity in Cambodia between March, 1969, and August, 1973."

During that period, the United States carried out 170,000 bombing sorties and dropped some 540,000 tons of bombs in Cambodia. The issue of bombing in Cambodia without any specific request to Congress for funds was a major point raised in Senate hearings last year,

when the raids were disclosed publicly for the first time.

The report also cites a list of specific legislation which became effective before some of the tactical air strikes in such operation as "Freedom Deal" and "Freedom Deal Special" were carried out in late 1970 and '71. These laws specifically did not authorize funds for providing military support and assistance to the government of Cambodia.

The administration has argued that the raids into North Vietnamese base areas inside the Cambodian border were diplomatically

sensitive since they were being made in a neutral country and that the Cambodian ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, had allegedly acquiesced in these raids as long as they were kept quiet.

To cover up the raids, a dual reporting system was developed by the military, under orders for intense secrecy from the President, in which the targets hit were listed in one file as in South Vietnam rather than Cambodia. It was this material, rather than the accurate record, which was sent to Congress on three occasions when information was requested.