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LAIRD NEWS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 30 (TEXT) (3,450)

WASHINGTON -- FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF A NEWS CONFERENCE BY DEFENSE SECRETARY MELVIN R. LAIRD NOVEMBER 30: (BEGIN TEXT)

12-70

SECRETARY LAIRD: GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I THOUGHT I'D COME DOWN THIS MORNING AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS WHICH YOU MIGHT HAVE. AS YOU KNOW, I'M LEAVING FOR THE NATO MEETINGS TOMORROW MORNING. THESE MEETINGS WILL BE CARRIED ON IN BRUSSELS THROUGHOUT THE REMAINING PORTION OF THIS WEEK. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS, ADMIRAL MOORER, HAD TO LEAVE 24 HOURS BEFORE MY DEPARTURE BECAUSE THE MILITARY COMMITTEE HAS A MEETING PRIOR TO THE DEFENSE NUCLEAR ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND BEFORE THE DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE'S MEETINGS.

I THOUGHT I'D TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS SOME OF THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS THAT DO HAVE AN EFFECT UPON OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AND NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING, AS WELL AS DEFENSE PLANNING. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO RECENT LONG-RANGE MISSILE LAUNCHES BY THE SOVIET UNION OF THEIR SS-13 MISSILE, ONE OF THEM WE RELEASED INFORMATION ON SATURDAY. WE HAVE SHIPS IN THE AREA OF IMPACT. I FELT THAT IT WAS WELL TO KEEP YOU ADVISED CONCERNING THESE TESTS. AS YOU KNOW, THAT AREA OF THE PACIFIC WAS SHUT OFF AND ANNOUNCED BY THE SOVIET UNION -- IT WAS A TEST AREA, AND ON SATURDAY OF THIS WEEK WE WENT FORWARD AND GAVE YOU THE INFORMATION ON THE FIRST SS-13. SINCE THAT ANNOUNCEMENT, THERE HAS BEEN ONE OTHER SS-13 FIRING INTO THE IMPACT AREA.

I ALSO THOUGHT I MIGHT BRING YOU UP ON SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND CARIBBEAN AREAS. WE HAVE FOLLOWED A POLICY HERE OF MAKING THIS INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON A REGULAR BASIS. I ALSO WANT TO REVIEW THE MANNER IN WHICH SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS ARE CARRIED ON.

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THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANY MISUNDERSTANDING AS FAR AS THIS BUILDING IS CONCERNED AND THE PRESS -- NEWSPAPER, RADIO AND TV MEDIA -- THAT COVER THIS BUILDING AS TO WHAT A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION IS, BUT THERE DOES SEEM TO BE SOME MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE OPERATION OF A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION AND THE FACT THAT THESE PEOPLE THAT ARE ON A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION AND THE SUPPORTING FORCES, HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF THE MEN THAT ARE ENGAGED IN SUCH MISSIONS.

ON SOME SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS WE'VE ALMOST JUST STOPPED THE WAR IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE MEN THAT HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS. WE HAVE HAD SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS WHEN THERE IS ONE MAN DOWN AND WE'VE PUT 20 SUPPORTING AIRCRAFT TO PROTECT THE SEARCH AND RESCUE GROUP THAT IS CONDUCTING THE MISSION TO RETRIEVE THE AMERICAN SERVICEMAN. THESE AIRCRAFT HAVE THE AUTHORITY IN THEIR OPERATING ORDERS TO EXPEND THE ORDNANCE THAT IS NECESSARY NOT ONLY TO PROTECT THEMSELVES BUT TO PROTECT THE SEARCH AND RESCUE PERSONNEL.

THOSE OF YOU THAT HAVE COVERED SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS ARE FULLY FAMILIAR WITH THIS FACT. I DON'T WANT THERE TO BE ANY DOUBT IN ANY AMERICAN'S MIND THAT WE HAVE DONE THIS IN THE PAST AND THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO IT AS NECESSARY AND THAT OUR SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAMS WILL BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED AND THE ORDNANCE THAT IS NEEDED AND NECESSARY TO PROTECT THEIR LIVES, AS WELL AS THE AIR COVER THAT IS INVOLVED, WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED.

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Q: SIR, I THINK THERE IS NO REAL QUESTION ABOUT THE POINTS YOU'VE BEEN MAKING ON THE PROTECTION OF THE SEARCH PARTY. I THINK THE QUESTION THAT HAS ARISEN CONCERNS YOUR SILENCE ON THE MATTER UNTIL FIVE OR FOUR DAYS AFTER IT OCCURRED.

SECRETARY LAIRD: I WAS NOT SILENT ON THE MATTER WHEN I WAS ASKED THE QUESTION BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TUESDAY MORNING. I EXPLAINED TO THEM IN DETAIL THE OPERATIONS OF THE SAR MISSION BECAUSE I THOUGHT SOME OF THEM HAD NOT BEEN FAMILIAR WITH SAR OPERATIONS AND ALTHOUGH THIS WAS A LARGER SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION THAN HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IN THE PAST, AS A MATTER OF FACT NOT AS MUCH ORDNANCE HAD BEEN USED ON THIS SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION THAN HAVE BEEN USED ON OTHER SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS WHEN ONLY A FEW AMERICANS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED.

Q: IT WAS A CLOSED HEARING.

A: I WAS NEVER ASKED THE QUESTION IN THE AFTERNOON SESSION. IF YOU'LL READ OVER THE HEARING RECORD, YOU'LL FIND THAT THE QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED. AS FAR AS THE OPENING STATEMENT WAS CONCERNED I WAS GIVEN 10 MINUTED TO GIVE AN OPENING STATEMENT AND BECAUSE PERHAPS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WERE NOT AS PREPARED AS THEY MIGHT BE AND THE QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED, THAT IS NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY. I'VE BEEN A QUESTION-ASKEER FOR 16 YEARS UP ON THE HILL. NOW I ANSWER QUESTIONS, BUT I ONLY ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT ARE ASKED. I'VE BEEN A QUESTION-ASKER BUT YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED, AND THAT PARTICULAR QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED. IT WAS ASKED IN THE MORNING AND IT WAS ANSWERED IN SOME DETAIL. THE ONLY OTHER TIME IT HAD BEEN ASKED WAS WHEN IT WAS ASKED OF COLONEL SIMONS HERE AT THIS MEETING AND HE SAID AT THAT TIME THAT HE WAS NOT AT LIBERTY TO MAKE THE REPORT. OF COURSE, HE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO MAKE THE REPORT AT THAT TIME BECAUSE OF THAT INFORMATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE TOHIM AT THE TIME. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THIS INFORMATION CHANGES AS YOUR OPERATION COMES IN.

I DID ANSWER THE QUESTION IN ERROR BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY MORNING. I SAID FROM 12 TO 14 SHRIKE MISSILES WERE FIRED. WHEN WE FINALLY EVALUATED ALL OF THE INFORMATION, WE FIND THAT IT WAS 11 THAT WERE USED AND THESE FLYERS HAD THE AUTHORITY TO USE THOSE MISSILES IF THE RADAR IS LOCKED IN ON THEM. IF THEY WERE LOCKED IN BY ENEMY RADAR AND THEIR EXISTENCE WAS THREATENED, THEY HAD COMPLETE AUTHORITY -- JUST LIKE THE F-105 DID YESTERDAY WHEN IT WAS LOCKED IN BY ENEMY RADAR -- THAT AUTHORITY HAS BEEN GRANTED TO GO FORWARD AND FIRE THE MISSILE. AS YOU KNOW, THOSE MISSILES HONE IN ELECTRONICALLY ON THE RADAR IMPULSE, THE RADAR TRACK, THAT IS BEING CARRIED ON AGAINST THE AIRCRAFT AND WHEN THEY FIND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN LOCKED IN, WHICH THEY CAN JUDGE ELECTRONICALLY WHEN THEY HAVE THAT INFORMATION, AND WHEN THE LOCK IS ON THEY CAN FIRE THEIR MISSILES.

SOME PEOPLE COULD SAY THAT I'D MADE AN ERROR BY USING 12 TO 14 BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE TUESDAY MORNING, BUT THAT WAS BASED ON THE BEST INFORMATION I HAD AT THAT TIME, WE'VE EVALUATED THE OPERATION AND 11 SHRIKE MISSILES WERE USED.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ON SENATOR FULBRIGHT'S .. ON THE SON TAY MISSION?

A: I REREAD THE HEARING RECORD AFTER HE MADE THE COMMENTS ON THE TELEVISION PROGRAM WHICH HE APPEARED AND THE INNUENDO AND THE CHARGE, WHICH HE MAKES BY INNUENDO, IS INDEED MOST INTERESTING, PARTICULARLY AFTER READING OVER THE HEARINGS. I'M NOT SURE WHAT QUESTION HE'S REFERRING TO, BUT I WOULD DIRECT YOU TO THE TESTIMONY AND I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT I'VE BEEN AS FORTHRIGHT AS ONE COULD POSSIBLY BE IN ANSWERING ALL QUESTIONS.

I THINK THE THING THAT CONCERNS THE CHAIRMAN IS THAT HE WANTS TO DEBATE THE POST. HE LIKES TO DEBATE THE TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION AND I DON'T CARE TO DEBATE THAT RESOLUTION AS TO WHETHER HE WAS MISLED BY SPONSORING THE RESOLUTION OR WHETHER HE WAS NOT. I DON'T CARE TO GET INTO THAT DEBATE. I DON'T CARE TO DEBATE WHETHER THE DECISION THAT WAS MADE IN 1965 AS FAR AS THE USE OF AMERICAN GROUND FORCES; I HAVE TRIED TO MOVE FORWARD FROM THE POINT WE WERE AT IN VIETNAM WHEN I BECAME SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

I'VE AVOIDED MAKING FORECASTS OR PREDICTIONS ABOUT VIETNAM, BUT AS FAR AS THE CREDIBILITY OF THIS DEPARTMENT AND MY CREDIBILITY AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, I WOULD LIKE ANYONE TO POINT TO A SINGLE FORECAST OR PROJECTION THAT HAS BEEN THAT WE HAVE NOT DELIVERED ON. MY PREDICTIONS AND FORECASTS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO THE TROOP REDUCTION. WE'VE GONE FORWARD WITH A VERY CREDIBLE RECORD IN THAT AREA. WE WILL BE AT THE FIGURE THAT WAS ANNOUNCED FOR MAY 1, 284,000; WE WILL BE AT THE 344,000 BY CHRISTMAS; WE HAVE MET OR BEAT EVERY ANNOUNCEMENT.

AS FAR AS CASUALTIES ARE CONCERNED, I DID MAKE A PROJECTION AND A PREDICTION ON CASUALTIES THAT WE WOULD REDUCE CASUALTIES, AS A RESULT OF THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM; AS A RESULT OF OUR INCREASED EMPHASIS ON REDUCTION OF CASUALTIES, AND AS A RESULT OF THE CAMBODIAN OPERATION. I THINK THAT THAT PARTICULAR FORECAST HAS BEEN A CREDIBLE ONE.

LAST WEEK THE QUESTION WAS UP ON OUR CASUALTIES WHICH WERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL WEEKS ABOVE 60. THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE THAT FELT THAT BECAUSE ONE OF OUR HELICOPTERS DID RUN INTO A MOUNTAIN, IT WAS NOT ACTUALLY SHOT DOWN, THAT THESE FIGURES SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN OUR KILLED IN ACTION. BUT JUST SO THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY QUESTION ABOUT IT, THOSE FIGURES WERE INCLUDED IN OUR WEEKLY CASUALTY FIGURES. THIS WEEK, ON THE BASIS OF THE BATTLEFIELD REPORTS, WE WON'T KNOW FOR SURE UNTIL WEDNESDAY THE EXACT FIGURE, BUT OUR CASUALTIES WILL RUN LESS THAN HALF OF

WHAT THEY WERE LAST WEEK.

WE HAVE SCALED DOWN THE WAR IN SOUTH VIETNAM AS FAR AS AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IS CONCERNED. WHEN I CAME IN HERE AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, THEY WERE FLYING 35,000 SORTIES IN 1968.

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Q SORTIES FOR WHAT PERIOD -- A YEAR?

A THAT WAS THE AVERAGE SORTIE RATE PER MONTH. THAT'S A MONTHLY RATE. I HAVE THE FIGURES HERE FOR EVERY MONTH, BUT IF YOU TAKE THE SORTIE RATE FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, WE'RE DOWN TO 12 TO 14,000. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IF LOOK AT THOSE CASUALTY FIGURES, LOOK AT THE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT.

Q: ARE THESE SORTIES TOTAL EVERYWHERE?

A: THAT'S CORRECT, THEY ARE U.S. ATTACKS SORTIES OVERALL, SOUTHEAST ASIA RATE.

I WAS GOING TO COVER A FEW THINGS ABOUT NATO, BUT IF YOU'D RATHER HAVE...

Q: DO YOU ... INNUNENDO, MR. SECRETARY, AND PERHAPS EXPLAIN THAT A LITTLE MORE FULLY WHAT YOU'RE REFERRING TO?

A: I WAS REFERRING TO THE QUESTION ABOUT THE STATEMENT THAT I HAD EVIDENTLY NOT BEEN TRUTHFUL BEFORE HIS COMMITTEE.

Q: THAT IS THE CHAIRMAN'S INNUENDO?

A: THAT WAS WHAT THE QUESTION RELATED TO.

Q: YOU HAVEN'T FULLY COVERED THE SECOND SS-13 -- THE ONE THAT HAPPENED -- DETAILS ON THAT?

A: IT FOLLOWED THE ONE THAT WE ANNOUNCED ON SATURDAY WHICH TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK. WE HAD SHIPS IN THE AREA.

Q: WAS IT A MULTIPLE WARHEAD SHOT?

A: WE HAVE ANNOUNCED THE MULTIPLE WARHEAD FIRINGS OF THE SS-9S AND THE SS-11S. THESE ARE THE FIRST FIRINGS OF THE SS-13 INTO THE PACIFIC TEST AREA. I THINK MR. FRIEDHEIM REPORTED THAT THE ONE THAT HE ANNOUNCED ON SATURDAY IN HIS PRESS BRIEFING CAME FROM THE SOUTH CENTRAL SOVIET UNION INTO THE MID-PACIFIC. THE OTHER LAUNCH THAT WAS CONDUCTED OF THE SS-13 SOLID-FUEL ICBM CAME FROM THE NORTH CENTRAL SOVIET UNION AND ITS IMPACT WAS OBSERVED BY OUR PERSONNEL THAT ARE IN THE MID-PACIFIC TARGET AREA. NEITHER OF THESE SS-13 FIRINGS INVOLVED THE MULTIPLE REENTRY VEHICLES.

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Q: ANY PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE OUT OF TWO DIFFERENT LAUNCH SITES FOR THE SS-13 TESTS?

MR. FRIEDHEIM: THERE HAVE BEEN PREVIOUS FIRINGS OF THE ORIGINAL SS-13. THESE WERE THE FIRST FIRINGS OF THE MODIFIED OR PROVED VERSIONS.

Q: WERE EITHER OF THESE OPERATIONAL SITES?

A: THESE COULD BE OPERATIONAL SITES, YES. THEY'RE IN THE GENERAL AREA BUT THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ON THESE TWO FIRINGS IS PICKED UP -- BY SHIPS IN THE AREA AND WE KNOW THE COURSE THAT THE MISSILES WERE FIRED FROM, BUT WHETHER THEY WERE OPERATIONAL SILOS I WOULD NOT WANT TO GO OUT AND STATE THAT EMPHATICALLY. THERE WOULD BE NO WAY OF OUR PINNING THAT DOWN. I'M NOT TRYING TO HEDGE ON YOUR QUESTION, BUT THEY'RE FROM AREAS WHERE THERE ARE OPERATIONAL MISSILES, BUT IT COULD BE ASSUMED IF YOU WANTED TO, BUT I CANNOT STATE THAT DEFINITELY THAT IT WAS AN OPERATIONAL MISSILE SILO.

Q: SIR, COULD WE TURN TO CIENFUEGOS? YOU MENTIONED BEFORE ITEMS THAT YOU WANTED TO DISCUSS.

A: THE SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO INCREASE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. THIS IS ONE OF THE ITEMS WHICH I WILL BE DISCUSSING

WITH NATO DEFENSE MINISTEC IN BRUSSELS THIS WEEK. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WILL BE GIVING A PAPER ON THE SOVIET NAVAL FORCES; THEIR INCREASED ACTIVITY AS FAR AS NAVAL WARFARE; THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE ACQUIRED DEEP WATER OCEAN NAVY, AND WHAT THEY'RE DOING WITH THIS PARTICULAR NAVY.

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BACK SEVERAL MONTHS AGO I DISCUSSED WITH YOU THAT IN 1965 THE TOTAL STEAMING DAYS WERE APPROXIMATELY 700 IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. THAT 700 HAS GONE TO ABOUT 16 OR 17,000 PER YEAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. THE FIGURES AS WE CLOSE THIS YEAR WILL BE OVER 19,000 STEAMING DAYS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. AS FAR AS NUMBERS OF SHIPS, THE SOVIET HAS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AT THE PRESENT TIME A LARGER NUMBER THAN OF COURSE THE U.S. SIXTH FLEET. THIS IS A CHANGE, OF COURSE, WHEN ONE LOOKS AT THE SITUATION JUST A FEW YEARS AGO AND IT CLEARLY INDICATES THE IMPORTANCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS PLACING IN ITS MODERNIZED NAVAL FORCE AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE PRESSING FORWARD WITH A WORLDWIDE NAVAL CAPABILITY.

AS FAR AS THE CARIBBEAN IS CONCERNED, WE HAVE KEPT YOU ADVISED QUITE REGULARLY ON THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET NAVY IS CONTINUING TO OPERATE IN OR NEAR THE CARIBBEAN. I THINK THAT THIS IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE SOVIET'S DETERMINATION TO EXPAND THEIR NAVAL INTERESTS INTO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE, JUST AS THEY HAVE IN THE OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, THAT I'VE DIRECTED MY COMMENTS TO IN THE POSTURE STATEMENT AS WELL AS IN OTHER TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CONGRESS.

I THINK IT'S ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE MUST PROCEED WITH A PROMPT MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVY. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE SOVIET UNION HAS A GUIDED MISSILE FRIGATE AND AN OILER THAT ARE JUST EAST OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. A SOVIET SUBMARINE TENDER IS IN THE CARIBBEAN AND MOVING AROUND IN THAT GENERAL AREA; WE'VE KEPT YOU ADVISED OF ITS ACTIVITIES. ITS LOCATION CHANGES FROM DAY TODAY, AS YOU KNOW, BUT ITS PRESENT LOCATION IS SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF HAITI, IN THAT GENERAL AREA. A SOVIET HYDROGRAPHIC SHIP -- SURVEY SHIP -- IS OPERATING OFF THE SOUTH COAST OF CUBA, AND OF COURSE THE RESCUE TUG WHICH WE REPORTED LAST WEEK IS STILL IN CIENFUEGOS.

FROM TIME TO TIME WE'VE REPORTED ON THESE SHIPS AND THE FACT THAT THERE IS THIS PRESENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN AREA. I THINK THE ONLY OTHER SOVIET SHIP THAT IS OPERATING IN THE GENERAL AREA AT THE PRESENT TIME OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE IS THE OCEAN-GOING TUG WHICH HAS A DIVING OPERATION CAPABILITY ON IT THAT'S EITHER IN THE HAVANA PORT OR IN OR OUT OF THERE, IT'S IN THAT GENERAL AREA. THE FACTS ARE THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS OPERATING WITH ITS NAVY WORLDWIDE.

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Q: MR. SECRETARY, COULD YOU CHARACTERIZE FOR US WITHOUT SEMANTICS OF THE BASE ... WHETHER THE SOVIETS DO HAVE SOME KIND OF FACILITY AT CIENFUEGOS, WHETHER CONSTRUCTION THERE HAS STOPPED OR... COULD YOU GIVE US SOME IDEA OF WHAT THE SITUATION IS THERE IN TERMS OF FACILITIES?

A: AS FAR AS THE SUBMARINE BASE IS CONCERNED, AS I'VE SAID RIGHT ALONG AND AS I SAID EARLIER, THE SUBMARINE BASE REQUIRES, OF COURSE, THE PRESENCE OF A TENDER. AS FAR AS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND LOGISTICS FACILITIES -- HAVE ANY OF YOU VISITED OUR BASE IN GREAT BRITAIN? YOU SEE, THE LAND FACILITIES ARE REALLY IN CONNECTION WITH RECREATION AND THE STORAGE OF LOGISTIC SUPPLIES. BUT AS FAR AS THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES THAT ARE RELATED TO TAKING CARE OF OUR SUBMARINE, IT'S THE TENDER THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING, AND WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT A SOVIET SUBMARINE HAS BEEN SERVICED FROM THIS TENDER. NUCLEAR SUBMARINES HAVE MADE CALLS IN THE PAST TO CUBAN WATERS, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE

THAT THIS TENDER WHEN IT HAS BEEN IN PORT HAS SERVICED A NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINE. THAT CAPABILITY, OF COURSE, IS THERE BUT IT IS TIED DIRECTLY TO THE TENDER. DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION? I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU CAN BE ANY MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT.

Q: THERE WAS SOME CONFUSION AS TO WHETHER CONSTRUCTION IS OR ISN'T STILL GOING ON THERE SOMEWAY RELATED TO A SUBMARINE FACILITY.

A: YOU MEAN THE FACILITIES TO SERVE THE CREW?

Q: RIGHT.

A: THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THERE WERE FACILITIES CONSTRUCTED THERE, BUT THAT DOES NOT NECESSARILY RELATE ITSELF TO THEM. IT COULD OR COULD NOT RELATE ITSELF TO THE PRESENCE OF THE TENDER.

Q: IS THERE CONSTRUCTION GOING ON, SIR? HAVE ANY OF THOSE FACILITIES BEEN TORN DOWN?

A: AS FAR AS THE GROUND FACILITIES, THEY WERE STILL PRESENT.

Q: (INAUDIBLE.)

A: THERE HAS BEEN SOME USE OF THE GROUND FACILITIES. I DON'T WANT TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THEY HAVE NOT BEEN USED, BUT I CANNOT SAY WITH CERTAINTY WHETHER IT WAS SOVIET -- I WOULD ASSUME THAT, BUT I WOULD NOT WANT TO SAY WITH CERTAINTY.

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Q: HAS THAT COMMUNICATIONS STATION BEEN COMPLETED? THERE WAS A REPORT THAT A COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OR STATION WAS BEING BUILT IN CONNECTION WITH THIS CIENFUEGOS FACILITY, AND THAT SEEMS TO BE MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE SOCCER FIELD THAT WAS REPORTED OR OTHER RELATED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES. DO YOU KNOW IF THIS IS OPERATIONAL?

A: AS FAR AS THAT IS CONCERNED, I HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT IT IS OPERATIONAL AND I WOULD ALSO CAUTION YOU TO OVER-EMPHASIZING THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY BECAUSE IT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO HAVE A SEPARATE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY -- I'VE NOTICED THERE HAVE BEEN STORIES THAT THAT'S THE HEART OF MAKING A DETERMINATION. THE IMPORTANT THING, OF COURSE, IS THE PRESENCE OF THE SUBMARINE TENDER.

I'S REALLY BEEN KIND OF MOVING AROUND. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I HAD TOLD DAN HENKIN AND JERRY FRIEDHEIM DOWN HERE THAT I BELIEVE THAT IT'S PROBABLY A GOOD IDEA TO GIVE A WEEKLY OR A REPORT EVERY 10 DAYS OR SO, BUT I'M NOT FOR GIVING A REPORT DOWN HERE EACH TIME THE SOVIET NAVY BLOWS ITS NOSE, SO I THINK YOU CAN OVERDO THIS BUSINESS TO. I'D RATHER GIVE AN OVERALL REPORT ON THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET SHIPS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, THE CARIBBEAN, AND OTHER AREAS RATHER THAN GETTING TO THE POSITION HERE WHERE WE'RE USING THOSE MORNING MEETINGS, WHICH WERE ESTABLISHED SINCE I BECAME SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.

Q: YOU SAID THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SUB TENDER HAS SERVICED A SOVIET NUCLEAR MISSILE SUBMARINE IN PORT. IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE THE SUB TENDER HAS SERVICED A SOVIET MISSILE SUBMARINE OUT OF PORT, BUT IN CARIBBEAN WATERS?

A: I HAVE NO INFORMATION ALONG THAT LINE, AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO SAY THAT TENDER HAS NEVER SERVICED A SUBMARINE, BUT I HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT IT'S SERVICED A SUBMARINE IN THE CUBAN AREA.

Q: HOW MUCH MORE TIME ON STATION WOULD THE TENDER ALLOW THE SOVIET SUBMARINES TO HAVE?

A: YOU MEAN IF IT WERE ESTABLISHED?

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Q: YES.

A: IT WOULD INCREASE THE THREAT BY ABOUT APPROXIMATELY 33 TO 40 PERCENT.

Q: HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT?

A. BECAUSE OF THE TRANSIT TIME THAT'S INVOLVED IN GOING ON STATION, BUT IT DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE THREAT. THE Y-CLASS SUBMARINES ARE STILL ON STATION. SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT YOU CAN ELIMINATE THAT THREAT; THE Y-CLASS SUBMARINES ARE APABLE OF BEING ON STATION. IT JUST REDUCES THE TRANSIT TIME AND GIVES THEM A GREATER CAPABILITY. IT COULD GIVE THEM A GREATER CAPABILITY IN THAT WAY. IT DOES NOT DO AWAY WITH THE THREAT AND THAT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD.

AS FAR AS THE Y-CLASS SUBMARINES ARE CONCERNED, THE SOVIET UNION, AS I HAVE REPEATED MANY TIMES, WILL NOT HAVE A FORCE EQUAL TO OUR FORCE UNTIL EARLY 1974. WHEN I TALKED ABOUT THAT A YEAR AGO, SOME OF MY CRITICS INDICATED THAT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT. NOW IT SEEMS THAT THOSE SAME CRITICS JUST ACCEPT THAT FACT, AND I AM SURE THAT'S BEEN ACCEPTED NOW AND I'M NOT BEING ACCUSED AS OVER-ESTIMATING THE THREAT SIMPLY TO GET MY ROCK-BOTTOM, BARE-BONES DEFENSE BUDGET THROUGH THE CONGRESS.

WE'VE MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN REDUCING DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. I'VE TALKED ABOUT IT A LOT, BUT THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE I THINK THAT DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT WE'VE ALREADY PASSED ON TO OTHER SECTIONS OF OUR BUDGET, OUR PEACE DIVIDEND, AND WE'RE EXPENDING AT THE RATE OF ABOUT 17 BILLION DOLLARS IN TERMS OF CONSTANT 1971 DOLLARS BELOW THE RATE OF EXPENDITURE OF 1968. THAT'S WHY I'VE MADE AN ALL-OUT EFFORT ON THE RECLAMA WHICH IS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE FULL COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AT THIS VERY MOMENT. WE'RE HOPEFUL THAT WE'LL BE SUCCESSFUL WITH THAT RECLAMA -- A MAJOR PORTION OF IT -- BECAUSE WE ARE AT A BUDGET LEVEL THAT IS AN EXTREMELY LOW BUDGETED LEVEL, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF WHAT THE SOVIET UNION IS DOING AT THIS TIME.

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I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT NATO, GENTLEMEN.

Q. PLEASE DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

A. I'M GOING TO CUT THIS OFF. I'VE BEEN GOING FOR 40 MINUTES NOW.

Q. IS IT A VIOLATION OF UNDERSTANDINGS WITH THE SOVIET UNION IF THE BASE AT CIENFUEGOS WERE USED FOR A TENDER TO SERVICE SUBMARINES AT SEA RATHER THAN IN PORT?

A. I DON'T CARE TO SPECULATE ON THAT.

Q. DO YOU FIND WHAT IS NOW GOING ON AT CIENFUEGOS PARTICULARLY OMINOUS OR THREATENING TO THE UNITED STATES?

A. I HAVE TO ACCEPT THE STATEMENT THAT HAS BEEN MADE BY THE SOVIET UNION THAT THEY'RE GOING TO ABIDE BY THE UNDERSTANDING . . . INCLUDES SERVICING SUBMARINES. I DON'T SEE WHAT CAN BE ADDED TO THAT BY ANSWERING YOUR QUESTION. THEY HAVE COME OUT AND SAID THAT THEY WILL ABIDE BY THIS AND THEY WILL NOT BE SERVICING SUBMARINES, AND SO I ACCEPT THEIR STATEMENT.

Q. IN LIGHT OF THE CONVERSATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RUSSIANS, BOTH PUBLIC AND OTHERWISE OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS ON THIS SUBJECT, ARE YOU SURPRISED THE SUBMARINE TENDER IS STILL IN CARIBBEAN WATERS?

A. NO, I'M NOT. YOU WANT TO KNOW IF I'M SURPRISED OR NOT, IS THAT THE QUESTION?

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Q. THE EXPECTATION WAS THAT THE TENDER WOULD GO BACK HOME. IF THEY'RE NOT GOING TO SERVICE SUBMARINES, WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING THEM THERE?

A. THAT'S A QUESTION THAT SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE SOVIET UNION AND NOT TO ME.

Q. I WAS ASKING YOUR REACTION TO IT, RATHER THAN THEIRS. ARE YOU SURPRISED... THAT THE SUBMARINE TENDER HAS REMAINED. . . .

A. I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY SERVICED A SOVIET SUBMARINE

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IN VIEW OF THE STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE.

Q. IN PORT OR OTHERWISE?

A. I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF IT WOULD BE A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE, YES, I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY DID THAT IN VIEW OF WHAT THEY'VE SAID, IN VIEW OF THE REPORT WHICH WAS MADE BY TASS WHICH CAME OUT VERY STRONG AND CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT INTEND TO.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY INDICATION THAT THIS TENDER IS ON ITS WAY HOME?

A. I REALLY DON'T CARE TO COMMENT ON THAT. IN CONNECTION WITH THE SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE CARIBBEAN, I'VE RELATED TO YOU SOME OF THE SHIP MOVEMENTS THAT ARE INVOLVED AND I DO NOT CARE TO STATE WHAT THE ORDERS ARE OF ANY OF THE SOVIET SHIPS AS TO THEIR MOVEMENTS IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO WEEKS. I THINK THAT'S A MATTER THAT I'M NOT COMPETENT TO STATE WHAT THE ORDERS ARE OF ANY OF THE SHIPS THAT I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH YOU.

Q. HAVE YOU TAKEN OVER THE MAKING OF FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE ROGERS?

A. NO, I THINK QUITE THE OPPOSITE. WE'VE NEVER HAD BETTER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE IN WASHINGTON. I'VE WATCHED THAT FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME AND I THINK THE COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER. IT'S NOT MY INTENTION OR THE INTENTION OF THIS DEPARTMENT TO DEAL IN THE FOREIGN POLICY AREA. WE HAVE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AS FAR AS DEFENSE PLANNING IS CONCERNED, THE AREA OF NATIONAL SECURITY, AND OUR INPUT IS MADE AND THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS WE CAN, BUT WE HAVE NOT MOVED IN THAT DIRECTION AT ALL. I CAN ASSURE YOU OF THAT.

S A MATTER OF CREDIBILITY, BECAUSE THE SECRETARY SAID HE THOUGHT THE SOVIETS WOULDN'T SERVICE THEIR NUCLEAR SUBMARINES AND I BELIEVE THEY DID NOT SAY SO. I WANT TO BE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY. WHAT THEY SAID THROUGH THE TASS STATEMENT WAS THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE ITS SUBMARINE BASE IN CIENFUEGOS AND LEAVING SOME DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THEY WOULD USE SOMEBODY'S TENDER OR SUB HERE. THEY MERELY SAID THEY WOULD REPORT THE UNDERSTANDING THEY HAD IN 1962 WHICH WE ASSUMED OF NOT BASING OFFENSIVE WEAPONS IN CUBA. THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY WOULD NOT SERVICE A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE, LET'S SAY, OUTSIDE THE WATERS OF THE CARIBBEAN?

A. I KNOW WHEN THAT QUESTION CAME UP, I DID NOT RESPOND TO THAT, BUT I THINK THAT THE SITUATION WAS SUCH THAT SERVICING WITHIN THE CUBAN HARBOR WAS INVOLVED IN THEIR STATEMENT. I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT IN YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE RUSSIAN TASS REPORT AND I HAVE NOTHING TO QUARREL WITH YOUR INTERPRETATION, BUT WHEN I WAS ASKED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER I WOULD CONSIDER THAT, I DIDN'T COMMENT ON THAT PARTICULAR QUESTION. I THINK THAT YOUR INTERPRETATION, AS FAR AS READING THEIR STATEMENT, IS UNDOUBTEDLY CORRECT AND THEY DID NOT COVER IN THAT STATEMENT SERVICING OF SUBMARINES AT SEA IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND THAT I THINK WOULD BE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT QUESTION, AND ONE WHICH I DID NOT DIRECT MY ATTENTION TO, AND I TRIED TO DIVERT AWAY FROM THAT PARTICULAR QUESTION WHEN IT WAS ASKED.

Q. WHEN YOU SAID YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY SERVICED ANY NUCLEAR SUBMARINES, YOU MEANT IN THE PORT OF CIENFUEGOS?

A. YES. THAT IS WHAT I WAS REFERRING TO.

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Q. SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION.

A. I THINK THERE IS A DIFFERENCE, AND THE DIFFERENCE THAT LLOYD MAKES, AND IF I GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT I WAS APPLYING IT TO -- IF THAT TENDER WAS USED AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE AT SEA, I DIDN'T MEAN TO GIVE YOU THAT IMPRESSION BECAUSE I ASSUME THAT

THAT TENDER WILL BE USED TO SERVICE SUBMARINES IN THE FUTURE AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT REASON THEY'D HANG ON TO IT IF THEY DIDN'T SERVICE SUBMARINES. BUT MY REMARKS WERE BASED ON MY INTERPRETATION AND THE INTERPRETATION WHICH YOU SHARE ABOUT THE TASS REPORT.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT NATO?

A. I'LL JUST BRIEFLY COVER IT. AS FAR AS NATO IS CONCERNED, WE WILL BE DISCUSSING AT THE DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE'S MEETING, THE AD-70 STUDY, WHICH DEALS WITH THE ALLIANCE DEFENSE PLANS FOR THE DECADE OF THE 1970'S. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STUDY WHICH WAS INITIATED AFTER PRESIDENT NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT TO THE CONGRESS EARLIER THIS YEAR. IT'S A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY OF NATO, THE STRATEGY THAT WAS USED FOR THE PERIOD OF THE 50'S - 60'S, AND WHAT CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE AND SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO MEET THE THREAT OF THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES DURING THE DECADE OF THE 1970'S. I THINK THAT THIS WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE NATO MEETINGS THAT I HAVE ATTENDED SINCE I'VE BEEN SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, PARTICULARLY THE DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE'S MEETINGS WHICH WILL ADDRESS THIS VERY IMPORTANT PAPER.

I WON'T GET INTO THE NATO THING. I'LL REPORT TO YOU ON THAT WHEN I GET BACK. IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS - -

Q. WHAT WILL YOU TELL THEM ABOUT OUR FORCES IN EUROPE?

A. OUR INTENTION IS TO MAINTAIN OUR FORCE CAPABILITIES THROUGHOUT THIS FISCAL YEAR. OF COURSE, WE HAVEN'T GOT OUR BUDGET APPROVED FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR BUT WE INTEND TO HAVE IT APPROVED, AND THUS FAR WE'VE HAD NO REDUCTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO OUR NATO FORCES. WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN THOSE SAME FORCE CAPABILITIES IN THE BUDGET WHICH WE SUBMIT TO THE CONGRESS IN FISCAL YEAR 1972. I'LL GIVE YOU A DETAILED REPORT ON THE NATO SITUATION WHEN I ARRIVE BACK AFTER THE MEETING.

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WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUT OUT INFORMATION ON A REGULAR BASIS EVEN THOUGH WE MAY BE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO STIMULATE SOME INTEREST IN DEFENSE PLANNING AND IN NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEMS WHICH FACE THIS COUNTRY. I FEEL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO THIS INFORMATION AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUT OUT THE INFORMATION IN THIS DEPARTMENT. WE MAY BE CONDEMNED BY OUR CRITICS FOR PUTTING OUT INFORMATION AS TO THE THREATS FACING THE FREE WORLD, BUT AS LONG AS I'M SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WE'RE GOING TO CONTINUE PUTTING OUT THIS INFORMATION.

Q. (INAUDIBLE.)

A. I'LL GIVE YOU A COMPLETE BRIEFING ON THE NATO MEETING. I WAS GOING TO GET INTO THAT TODAY AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOU, BUT ON MY RETURN I'LL GET INTO A COMPLETE REPORT AS FAR AS THE NATO MEETING IS CONCERNED. I'M SORRY THAT WE DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TODAY.

Q. . . . I'LL BE WILLING TO SIT HERE ALL DAY AND LISTEN.

A. I HAVE THE ARMY COMMANDERS IN AND THEY'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM ME. I SPEAK BEFORE THEM AT 12:00 THIS NOON, AND AS MUCH AS I WOULD LIKE TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOU, I'VE BEEN HERE NOW ALMOST AN HOUR. IT'S BEEN DELIGHTFUL. I'VE ENJOYED IT, BUT I DO FEEL THAT I SHOULD MAKE MY APPEARANCE AS CLOSE TO SCHEDULE AS I POSSIBLY CAN.

Q. HAVE YOU HAD AN INDICATION THERE HAVE BEEN ANY REPRISALS ON THE PRISONERS OF WAR SINCE THE RAID LAST WEEK?

A. NO. THIS IS A MATTER THAT WE CONSIDERED VERY CAREFULLY AND THERE IS NO SUCH INDICATION. I BELIEVE THAT DISCUSSING THIS POW QUESTION SINCE WE HAVE OPENLY FOR THE LAST 15 MONTHS OR SO AND THE ACTIONS THAT WE HAVE TAKEN INDICATE QUITE CLEARLY THAT JUST THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE. I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD UNDERSTAND FULLY OUR CONCERN FOR THE WELL BEING OF THESE MEN AND THAT WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT INSISTING THAT THEIR CONDITIONS BE IMPROVED.

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PRESS: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(AS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE EXITED, ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS WERE POSED BY NEWSMEN. FOLLOWING IS A PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THAT EXCHANGE:)

Q. I BELIEVE SOME OF THE CONFUSION THAT AROSE FROM YOUR STATEMENT OF MONDAY, WHEN YOU SAID THERE WAS NO EXPENDITURE OF ORDNANCE, WAS THAT ONLY IN RELATION TO NAVY DECOY MISSION OFF THE COAST?

A. THE SITUATION AS FAR AS THIS DIVERSIONARY FORCE WAS CONCERNED; I WAS ASKED ABOUT THE DIVERSIONARY FORCE -- THE ORDNANCE THAT IT USED AS FAR AS HAIPHONG AND HANOI, THEY WERE GIVEN THE MISSION OF PUTTING OUT FLARES. AS FAR AS THEIR ORDERS ARE CONCERNED THEY WERE NOT ON ANY BOMBING MISSION AT ALL. THEY DROPPED FLARES DOWN THERE AS A DIVERSIONARY TACTIC. THEIR INSTRUCTIONS WERE THAT THEY COULD USE THEIR ELECTRONIC MISSILES IF ONE ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS -- SAM -- LOCKED INTO THEM. IN THAT PARTICULAR CASE, THERE WERE ONLY THREE LOCKED IN AND THE ONLY EQUIPMENT THAT THEY EXPENDED WERE WHEN THEY WERE LOCKED ON, AND THIS IS AUTOMATIC; THE PILOT AUTOMATICALLY CAN USE THEIR SHRIKE WHEN THEY'RE LOCKED IN. THAT DIVERSIONARY TACTIC, THERE WAS NO ORDNANCE OTHER THAN THE ELECTRONIC FIRING OF THREE . . . THAT I TALKED ABOUT. THERE WAS NO BOMBLOAD OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. WHEN THEY WERE LOCKED IN AND FIRING AT THAT PARTICULAR AIRCRAFT, THAT PILOT HAS THE RIGHT, AND AS LONG AS I'M SECRETARY OF DEFENSE I'M NOT GOING TO SEND PILOTS UP THERE, THAT WHEN THEY'RE LOCKED IN ON RADAR LIKE THAT, DO NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO USE THIS ELECTRONIC MISSILE TO GO IN ON THE SITE THAT HAS THEM LOCKED IN.

BUT AS FAR AS BOMBING ORDNANCE, AS FAR AS BOMBING RAID AGAINST HAIPHONG AND HANOI, ABSOLUTELY NONE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, I'LL ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THIS. THE THING ABOUT IT WAS WHEN YOU ASKED THE QUESTION OF COLONEL SIMONS, I THINK THAT'S THE QUESTION YOU'RE REFERRING TO, AND WHEN HE WAS ASKED, HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE . . .

Q. MY RECOLLECTION WAS YOUR ANSWER TO ANOTHER QUESTION.

A. YOU FIND THE ANSWER, AND I'LL BE GLAD TO -- I DON'T THINK I MISLED YOU AT ANY TIME ON THAT ISSUE. THE ONLY PEOPLE I MISLED WAS TUESDAY MORNING WHEN I OVERSTATED THE NUMBER OF MISSILES ACTUALLY FIRED. (END TEXT) ITEM

11-30-70 GD/APA/715P