

NAME: President Richard M. Nixon  
OCCASION: News Conference  
DATE: February 17, 1971

Q. Mr. President, it is reported in both the South Vietnamese and, I think, in our statement the operation will be limited in time and scope. Can you define those terms?

THE PRESIDENT. By time, the operation will be limited to the time that is necessary to accomplish the objective. The objective is not to occupy any part of Laos. The South Vietnamese are not there to stay. They are there to disrupt the enemy's lines of communication, their supply lines, their infiltration routes, and then to get out.

Once that is accomplished, if it is accomplished early, they will get out. If it takes a longer time, they will stay in.

There is also another limitation in terms of time. And that is the weather. In the latter part of April or the early part of May, the rains come. And they would have to get out then because then the North Vietnamese also would pose no threat.

In terms of area, space, it is limited to the specific area that you see on the maps here, in terms of cutting across the trails—and it is more than one trail, there are three or four trails—the trails that are the supply lines on which the North Vietnamese operate.

LAOTIAN OPERATION - A Limited Action

NAME: Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense  
OCCASION: Interview by Newsmen Following Appearance before  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
DATE: February 9, 1971

Q: How long will South Vietnamese forces remain in Laos?

Secretary Laird: This is of limited duration, as President Thieu has said. The objective is to destroy and uproot the sanctuary areas which are occupied by the North Vietnamese in Laos and the program thus far is going forward according to the schedule set by the South Vietnamese military command.

NAME: Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense  
OCCASION: The Rotary Club of Phoenix, Arizona  
DATE: February 12, 1971

The action against the enemy-held territory in Laos is limited in three ways. The ground forces are limited to South Vietnamese forces. No American ground combat troops are being or will be used in Laos. Secondly, it is limited to certain areas in the southern part of Laos which have been plainly under enemy control for years and which have been used for the storage of supplies and movement of North Vietnamese troops and supplies into South Vietnam and Cambodia. Finally, it is limited in time, as President Thieu has said.