

Bombing Control Called Looser

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
WASHINGTON (NYT) — A number of former government defense specialists believe that the recent disclosure that Gen. John D. Lavelle conducted a series of unauthorized bombings of North Vietnam reflects an even larger problem — the Nixon administration's relaxation of command and control over the air war in Southeast Asia.

In a series of interviews last week, the specialists — all of whom worked in the Pentagon or the White House for the Nixon administration — agreed that President Nixon's decision, made early in his administration, to consolidate authority in the hands of a few men in the

national security structure and to remain more remote from day-by-day military planning loosened Washington's ability to control Air Force activity in Vietnam.

More than half a dozen specialists were interviewed, including men who had direct responsibility for the over-all planning and focus of the air war. For reasons of security, the men — four of whom worked in similar positions during the Johnson administration — did not discuss any specific incidents that occurred during their tenure with President Nixon.

One man who recently left the government stressed that the command and control system,

with its reliance on the forwarding of orders down the chain of command to tactical units, "is by its nature capable of incredible sloppiness."

"If you don't go and check things up," he added, "things get very sloppy."

In the current dispute, Lavelle was relieved as commander of the 7th Air Force in Southeast Asia and demoted after ordering — by his own admission — "in the neighborhood" of 20 unauthorized bombing attacks on military targets in North Vietnam and reporting them to higher authorities as "protective reaction." The strikes took place between November 1971 and March 1972.

Because of the vastness of the

undertaking in Indochina, the loss of command and control of military commanders in the field is not unique to the Nixon administration. Some of the government specialists recalled lapses in command and control during the Johnson administration as well.

One source mentioned the bombing of Hanoi in December 1966, just after the United States had received indications from an envoy that the North Vietnamese were willing to open peace discussions in Warsaw. A second major incident during the Johnson administration involved the bombing of two Soviet ships in Haiphong Harbor by American Air Force jets. The pilots in that case,

along with their commander, were court-martialed.

The My Lai massacre — involving the killing of 300 civilians by American troops — also took place during the Johnson administration. No charges were filed in the case for 18 months after it was first reported to the Pentagon in a letter from an enlisted man — a pattern similar to that in the Lavelle incident.

Under the rules of "protective reaction," as enunciated in 1969, when such strikes were formally initiated, American fighter planes flying escort for the unarmed reconnaissance missions could bomb and strafe North Vietnamese missile and gun positions after enemy action.

List 'Action'

In his appearance before a House subcommittee last week, Lavelle admitted that he had ordered his subordinates always to list "enemy action" in filing official after-action reports to justify the unauthorized raids.

The former White House aide, asked about the general's testimony and the reports of earlier abuses of "protective reaction," declared that such action would not be within the informal rules as the White House understood them.

He added that the staging of offensive and unauthorized "protective reaction" missions without reporting all of them, as also was alleged by some former intelligence personnel last week, "would be out of bounds." Also ruled out would be the bombing of enemy supply depots and similar targets, he said.

Role Rejected

This official categorically rejected, as did all the others interviewed, the conclusion that the Nixon White House was aware of all "protective reaction" raids and in fact had a role in planning them in an attempt to apply maximum, but covert, pressure on North Vietnam. Such views had been expressed privately by some high-ranking former Johnson administration officials.

In interviews last week, a number of former photo intelligence analysts said that at least 20 unauthorized "protective reaction" raids on such targets as oil and truck depots were planned in advance and carried out each month by the 7th Air Force throughout 1970 and 1971. Lavelle took over his command in July 1971, indicating that such abuses — if the allegations are true — were carried out by his predecessors.

Temperatures

H. L.	H. L.
77 56 Albany	88 69 Kansas City
96 58 Albuquerque	103 72 Las Vegas
90 61 Amarillo	93 66 Little Rock
66 48 Anchorage	85 66 Los Angeles
82 67 Atlanta	85 62 Louisville
89 71 Birmingham	71 76 Miami Beach
79 64 Bismarck	68 47 Milwaukee
73 49 Boise	85 61 Mpls.-St. Paul
61 57 Boston	91 70 New Orleans
87 63 Brownsville	65 64 New York
78 49 Buffalo	85 62 North Platte
82 52 Casper	91 66 Okla. City
87 52 Ch'lton, S.C.	83 65 Philadelphia
88 70 Charlotte	104 69 Phoenix
73 53 Chicago	82 53 Portland, Me.
78 55 Cincinnati	79 55 Portland, Ore.
70 47 Cleveland	87 66 Raleigh
78 55 Columbus	74 53 Rapid City
89 70 Dallas	93 46 Reno
82 54 Denver	86 68 Richmond
83 60 Des Moines	87 58 St. Louis
78 49 Detroit	75 75 Tampa
79 46 Duluth	87 57 S. Lake City
84 64 El Paso	89 69 San Antonio
65 60 Fairbanks	73 62 San Diego
76 63 Fargo	61 51 St. Francisco
68 45 Helena	73 42 St. Joe, Mo.
82 73 Houston	73 55 Seattle
82 60 Indianapolis	93 68 Shreveport
83 68 Jackson	72 53 Spokane
83 74 Jacksonville	101 70 Tucson
60 44 Juneau	78 69 Washington



CRASH SCENE—This is the view of the wreckage after a BEA Trident crashed at Staines, 20 miles west of London, killing

all of the 118 persons aboard in the worst air disaster to occur in Britain. The plane crashed shortly after takeoff. Ex-

perts said a steep climb plus an engine power cutback to meet antinoise regulations may have caused the crash. —AP

Probe Phase Ends

Germans Ready Bomb Trial

From Press Dispatches
KARLSRUHE, Germany — Police have all but wrapped up their investigations into the long string of crimes attributed to the Baader-Meinhof anarchist gang, federal prosecutor Ludwig Martin said Monday.

Martin told a news conference here that the prosecution now faces the hard chores of preparing charges and compiling evidence for trial.

The gang, which also called itself the "Red Army Faction," claimed responsibility for the bombings last month of U.S. Army headquarters in Frankfurt and Heidelberg which killed four American servicemen and injured 30 persons.

Ulrike Meinhof, the woman who was the ideological leader of the anarchist group that plagued West Germany for over two years, was arrested last week.

Police picked up Meinhof and a male bodyguard Thursday in Hanover, exactly two weeks after they captured Andreas Baader, the gang's male coleader, in Frankfurt.

In another development Monday, a federal court judge suspended Berlin lawyer Otto Schily from the defense of Gudrun Ensslin, an alleged hard-core member of the gang.

Martin said he suspects that Schily smuggled a letter from Miss Ensslin's Cologne jail cell.

The letter was found when police arrested Meinhof in Hanover last week. The discovery caused an uproar because German authorities were certain their prisoner was in absolute isolation.

Martin said the judge suspended Schily from the defense of Miss Ensslin "under the urgent suspicion of cooperation and assistance to a criminal association."

He said Schily was the only person allowed an unobserved talk with Miss Ensslin after she was arrested June 7 in a Hamburg boutique. He spoke with her for three hours, Martin said.

Miss Ensslin, like other suspected members of the gang, has two defense lawyers, the other being from a legal

firm in Hamburg.

Schily strongly denied the allegations to reporters and said he would continue to represent Miss Ensslin. But he said he would let his mandate "rest" until after the allegations against him were cleared up.

Martin said the letter smuggled out of jail indicated the whereabouts of an explosives and weapon cache police discovered in a Frankfurt apartment building Saturday.

Also mentioned in the letter were two Frankfurt lawyers who had previously defended a group of leftists in Heidelberg, Martin said. Meinhof was reported to have had contacts with that group.

He added that since Meinhof was arrested 13 persons were closely investigated and two of them later arrested. Among them was Dr. Dieter Hoehne, whose passport was found on Gerhard Mueller, Meinhof's arrested escort. Mueller's photo had been pasted in the passport.

Martin said the Heidelberg physician was still under inves-

tigation.

Gerhard Boeden, a federal crime bureau evidence expert, displayed at Monday's news conference the extensive cache of explosives police discovered Saturday in the Frankfurt apartment building occupied by more than 100 individual renters and their families.

Included in the cache were 660 pounds of mixed explosives, two propane gas bottles filled with 75 pounds of explosives, three steel bomb casings and several bombs with magnetic fuses.

Boeden said police did not exclude the possibility that similar bomb deposits might be located in other apartments around the country.

In connection with the arrest of Meinhof, police confiscated a variety of material which included the names of gang members, addresses and the sketch of an escape route to France, Boeden said.

Security police who followed the hand-drawn map said it showed mountain footpaths which led directly into France.