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February 5, 1976

SAFIRE COLUMN ON U. S. POLICY TOWARD THE KURDS

Q. Will you comment on the Safire story in the New York Times today which accuses the United States and President Ford of "betrayal of the Kurdish people? "

A. The story you mention is based on leaks from the Pike Committee and illustrates two problems we have always had with that Committee -- the first being the use of and leaking of classified information, the second being the gross distortions of documented testimony and evidence they have received. It is extremely difficult to comment on a sensitive subject like this and obviously we cannot and will not comment on the details or substance of the issue, but let me just say that the general thrust of the story is contrary to the record.

To all other questions:

I am not able to go beyond my remarks today.