

Senate Report Sees Flaws in Raid

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A secret Senate Armed Services Committee report concludes the ill-fated Iran rescue raid was flawed by a poor commander, poor organization and failure to anticipate emergencies, it was learned yesterday.

The Pentagon immediately denied the claims.

"I believe very strongly," the report's author, believed to be retired Marine Col. Bud MacFarland, stated, "that the heart of the several errors lies in the poor choice of the commander and the subsequent errors which were compounded as a result of his limited scope."

"I believe he is out of his depth in planning an operation involving more than the U.S. Army."

Pentagon spokesman Thomas Ross criticized the leaking of the document "in a cross, distorted manner."

"This document is full of inaccurate statements and judgements," Ross said. "It is a distortion of the testimony of those who participated in the mission and the conclusions it reaches, based on that testimony, are wholly inaccurate."

The mission's overall commander was Army Maj. Gen. James B. Vaught,

chosen, according to the report, by Army Chief of Staff Edward Meyer.

Vaught was plucked from The Citadel, a military college in South Carolina. As an Army division commander, Vaught had substantial experience in combat but none in special operations, the report says.

Ross said Vaught "is an expert in the highly specialized techniques of special operations and he has performed skillfully in high-level management positions."

[Several senators on the Armed Services Committee told The Washington Post last night that they regarded the report as a staff memo, not any collective judgment by the committee on Vaught or anyone else involved with the mission.

[One senator said the panel's investigation of the rescue attempt has not gone deep enough to make an informed judgment, partly because of the Pentagon's refusal to supply details.

[Committee staffers said there has been no finding, even in draft form, that they would characterize as a report. One senator said the document quoted by UPI was prepared for Sen. John Tower (R-Tex.), a member of the

committee. Tower could not be reached for comment.]

Informed sources said the report was drafted by MacFarland after interviews with mission participants by three committee investigators.

UPI obtained a copy of the nine-page "top secret" report, alleging these flaws:

- Organization: Vaught created an organization that fragmented authority between Army Col. Charlie Beckwith for ground forces, Air Force Col. James H. Kyle for fixed-wing aircraft and Marine Col. Charles Pitman.

- Weather: The Air Force Weather Service failed to predict that the mission would run into a dust cloud 200 miles long, requiring about two hours to fly through.

- Emergencies: "It is clear that there was a plan. It is also clear that there was very little planning for unexpected contingencies. What do you do if you hit bad weather? What do you do if there is an emergency involving fire? What do you do if Iranians intervene? What do you do if you get down to five aircraft at Desert Site One? What do you do if some Iranians, who observe the mission, escape?"