

COLUMN BY SAFIRE**ON KURDS ASSAILED**

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 5 (AP)

—The State Department today sharply criticized a column by William Safire of The New York Times that accused the Ford Administration of "the betrayal of the Kurdish people."

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"We look upon that piece as a collection of distortions and untruths unsupported by any documents or the record," Robert L. Funseth, the department spokesman, said.

"Frankly I find it too contemptuous for further comment."

Mr. Safire wrote that in an "unscionable sellout" President Ford, acting on the advice of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, ignored a plea for help from Gen. Mustafa Barzani, the Kurdish leader, after the Shah of Iran had withdrawn his support for the Kurdish independence movement in Iraq.

Mr. Funseth declined to say whether Mr. Kissinger had read the column. The spokesman's criticism was in a prepared statement that he read when questioned about the column at the daily State Department briefing. Such statements usually are directed or authorized by top department officials.

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Mr. Safire, when asked for his comment, replied: "My column on the sellout of the Kurds was based on a portion of the suppressed report of the House select committee on intelligence abuses, including direct quotations from C.I.A. memoranda reprinted in that report."

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