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24 NOV

Raid Risked Yank Lives --Senators

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Senators of both parties charged today — and President Nixon's supporters firmly denied — that the futile attempt to rescue U.S. prisoners of war deep in Vietnam betrayed an intelligence failure and jeopardized the lives of American captives.

Sen. George Aiken (R-Vt.) said the nation faces disaster unless President Nixon puts a bipartisan foreign policy ahead of partisan domestic political considerations.

And he called on Nixon to restore "the habit of consultation between the White House and the Congress, for only consultation gives substance to the idea of bipartisanship."

Briefed by Laird

Aiken, senior Republican member of the Foreign Relations Committee, delivered a broad-ranging foreign policy speech that criticized both policies and the way in which the Johnson and Nixon Administrations have abandoned consultation with the Congress.

Defense Secretary Melvin Laird came to Capitol Hill today to brief members of the Senate Armed Services Committee on the weekend action.

Laird also agreed to meet in open session later in the

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day with the Foreign Relations Committee, center of the war criticism.

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield questioned the reliability of U.S. Intelligence in Vietnam inasmuch as the American prisoners had been removed from the Communist camp prior to the raid.

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) said a repetition of the prison camp raid would be "risking an escalation of the war."

Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) also said he was "disturbed our intelligence was not accurate" and termed the raid a dangerous military escalation of the war.

In an exchange with Muskie, Sen. Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) said he had spoken to the wife of an American POW who told him she would "rather have her husband die trying to escape, than die in prison."

Republican Senate Leader Hugh Scott said that during World War II everybody praised commando-type rescue operations but "you do it once in the Vietnam war and all the doves flutter and take a hard-nosed dive at the President."

"This is crazy," Scott told newsmen.

He said it is more important than ever to try to get American prisoners out of North Vietnam because they are being tortured, inadequately fed, and kept in nar-

row cells in violation of the Geneva convention for the treatment of POW's.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), a senior member of the Armed Services committee, also called the effort to free the prisoners "sound, prudent and sensible.

"I believe the action here was fully warranted," he said. "I believe everything should be done to free our prisoners." Asked whether he feared possible reprisals against U.S. prisoners, Jackson said "one has to take a calculated risk."

Sen. J. W. Fulbright, joined by fellow Democrats Edward M. Kennedy and George S. McGovern, carried the Doves' fight yesterday when he called the actions "a very major escalation of the war that, it seems to me, will entail greatly intensified conflict."