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Rumors

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SEATTLE, Wash. AP - The raid on the Son Tay prisoner camp near Hanoi in 1970 that failed to produce any prisoners suffered from widespread advance rumors that "may have been paramount to security leaks," the Seattle Times said in its Sunday editions. The Times said the rumors traveled across the nation among families of prisoners of war and men missing in action for weeks before the Nov. 20 raid.

The Nixon administration has said repeatedly the raid by Army Special Forces and Air Force commandos was a complete surprise for the North Vietnamese. However, the raiders found the prisoners had been moved from the camp, possibly weeks before the operation.

"Sure, we heard on two occasions, early in the fall or summer, that there was going to be some kind of rescue of our men," the Times quoted the wife of a missing pilot downed over North Vietnam as saying.

"Yes, there were rumors," said the eastern Washington mother of an imprisoned pilot.

The wife of a missing airman told the Times she had heard two versions of advance rumors—one that a mercenary force was being recruited seemingly as a private effort, and another that a military force was being trained for the purpose in the Southeast.

The mercenary-recruiting version found its way into print, the Times said, and clipping from a Rocky Mountain newspaper was circulated in Spokane, Tacoma and Seattle in the first week of November 1970

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