

Former spy chiefs want major overhaul of CIA

WASHINGTON — Whether the decision is to break it up or shake it up, the CIA is headed for radical change, several former U.S. spy chiefs say.

A 17-member presidential commission headed by former Defense Secretary Les Aspin is launching a yearlong study of how to overhaul the nation's spy agencies. The panel's first meeting is Friday.

In interviews, four former CIA directors said they welcome the prospect of a makeover of the far-flung, \$28 billion-a-year national intelligence system.

"In two or three years you will be able to look back and say really dramatic change has taken place," said Robert M. Gates, who was CIA director in the last years of the Bush administration and the deputy director in 1986-89.

Gates recommends taking the CIA out of the business of catalog-

ing the firepower and troop strength of foreign armies. Leave that to the Pentagon, he says. Gates would create a "director of military intelligence" at the Pentagon to oversee a slimmed down set of military spy shops.

Among the recommendations of Gates' predecessors at the CIA: Split it up by putting the spies in a separate agency, push for "new thinking" on what secrets to steal and how to go about it, give the CIA director firmer control over the loose federation of 13 spy agencies that comprise the intelligence "community."

There is no shortage of ideas for ways of adapting the CIA to a world without the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was the clear and sometimes overrated "enemy" whose every move the CIA felt compelled to track and analyze throughout the Cold War.

The debate over the CIA's future will intensify as the Senate Intelligence Committee holds a confirmation hearing for President Clinton's new choice to head the CIA.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., chairman of the Senate intelligence panel, has said he wants the prospective new CIA chief, John M. Deutch, to spell out his own ideas for reforms.

It is seemingly symptomatic of the CIA's troubled times that Clinton's initial selection to take over the spy agency, retired Air Force Gen. Michael P.C. Carns, abruptly withdrew last week.

For all the criticism the CIA has drawn to itself, there is little serious sentiment in Washington for doing away with the agency. Even the most prominent advocate for dismantling the CIA, Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., says he sees almost no chance a president would let that happen.

News... in a Minute

Snow-stormed students survive

TIMBERLINE LODGE, Ore. — Three college students who got caught in a snowstorm while climbing Mount Hood over spring break dug themselves a snow cave and played cards and read for two days until the sun came out Wednesday.

They had so much food left over that they brought some back down the mountain, they said after their rescue.

Fifty to 75 volunteers had been searching for the three experienced, well-equipped climbers since Tuesday night.

"They were out walking when the Sno-Cat came across them," sheriff's Deputy Damon Coates said. "They all seem to be in fair to good condition."

The three Reed College students had set out on Saturday for the 11,235-foot summit with three days' worth of food, a compass and map, a stove and climbing equipment. They had planned to return on Monday.

When the storm hit on the way up Monday, they stopped at 9,200 feet and dug in. They started down the mountain Wednesday. Searchers found them at 8,500 feet.

Union mob storms Gingrich office

MARIETTA, Ga. — Union members stormed into the district office of House Speaker Newt Gingrich on Wednesday, chanting slogans, causing minor damage and scuffling with police. Two men were arrested.

Some of the roughly 300 protesters wrote "Newt Sucks" on walls and put up bumper stickers before police asked them to leave after about 45 minutes, said Gingrich spokesman Allan Lipsett. Gingrich was not in the office.

Police then locked the building's doors and lined up to face shouting protesters. At least one fight broke out between protesters and officers.

Cobb County police charged two men with obstructing officers and inciting a riot.

The protesters were angry over several of Gingrich's positions, including his opposition to raising the minimum wage, said Stewart Acuff, head of the Atlanta Labor Council, an umbrella group for 65 major unions that organized the protest.

Gingrich, a Republican, said in a statement that those involved should be charged for damaging federal property.

California dries out, tallies damages

SAN FRANCISCO — California skies turned sunny Wednesday after a week of rain.

But if rain resumes at altitudes where the mountain snowpack this year carries twice the normal amount of moisture, the resulting meltdown could deluge already swollen lakes and rivers.

The next rain will probably be this weekend, concentrated north of the Sierra Nevada and the worst flooded areas, said National Weather Service forecaster Steve Smart. But the rainy season still has a month to go.

"If we get rain at 8,000 feet, that's going to be a threat - all that water will come down from the Sierras and it's going to have to go somewhere," said Jaime Arteaga of the state Office of Emergency Services.

Seven days of storms dropped up to 10 1/2 inches of rain in some areas, killed at least 14 people and caused an

estimated \$2 billion in damage. Americans can expect higher prices for fruits and vegetables because of the damage to winter crops.

The sunshine gave many people an opportunity to mop up and scrape mud from floors.

"There's mud everywhere and there's kind of a gassy smell to it," said San Jose flood victim Dennis Diggs as he cleaned up his home. "We're trying to block up the doors and windows to keep the smell out."

Southwest of Fresno, authorities found the body of a 19-year-old woman after using an infrared device attached to a Highway Patrol helicopter and a search dog with earthquake experience. The woman had been missing since an Interstate 5 bridge collapsed near Coalinga, tossing four cars into rushing floodwaters. Five other bodies were found.

California crop damage	
March rain and flood damage to agriculture totalled \$303,346,135*	
Fruit, nut field and vegetable crops	\$287,925,035
Produce losses include:	
Almonds	\$27,648,933
Broccoli	\$65,099,110
Cauliflower	\$65,003,564
Lettuce	\$66,649,100
Strawberries	\$25,082,000
Nursery	\$2,908,000
Livestock	\$2,512,100
*Preliminary estimate.	

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Editor: Jeff Zelony 472-1756
 Managing Editor: Jeff Robb
 Assoc. News Editors: DeDra Janssen, Doug Kouma, Matt Woody, Jennifer Miratsky
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