

Clinton, FBI argue over China's election influence

National Security Council officials reportedly kept quiet about Chinese contributions.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House and the FBI clashed in a rare public quarrel Monday after President Clinton said he should have been alerted when the bureau told national security officials that the Chinese government might be trying to influence U.S. elections.

The FBI said it did not try to keep the information from Clinton's senior staff last year. But the White House said the FBI imposed specific limits that restricted the information to two people on Clinton's National Security Council staff.

"Therefore, the White House considers the FBI's statement to be in error," presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said, leaving the FBI and the White House at an embarrassing impasse at day's end.

Four hours earlier, Clinton complained that he should have been told about the FBI's suspicions. "It didn't happen. It should have happened. It

was a mistake."

"The president should know," he said when questioned by a reporter.

Indeed, FBI agents had briefed at least one member of Congress about the alleged plot as long ago as 1991 during the Bush administration, a congresswoman said.

Late Monday, the FBI issued a statement contradicting White House assertions that the bureau had restricted the two national security officials from telling their bosses about the FBI warning.

The statement said senior officials of the bureau's national security division briefed two senior staff members of the NSC "about the possible covert activities of a foreign government in the United States." One of the people receiving the briefing was an FBI agent detailed to the NSC.

Responding to the FBI's statement, McCurry said the two NSC officials have been questioned by the White House legal counsel.

"They are adamant in recalling specifically that they were urged not to disseminate the information outside the briefing room," he said.

The alleged withholding of information from Clinton seemed even

stranger in the wake of revelations that the FBI gave classified briefings — to members of the NSC staff last year and to a member of Congress five years earlier — warning that China was trying to influence members of Congress with campaign contributions.

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said FBI agents approached her in San Francisco in late 1991 and early 1992 with a caution that China "is going to attempt to get funds into campaigns in the United States."

Pelosi said she heard nothing more about the issue until last June, when the FBI again came to her with similar warnings. Democratic Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein of California and Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York said they also received FBI briefings last year.

The secret China briefing was the latest development in a series of White House embarrassments on the campaign fund-raising front.

The alleged plot already has become a factor in U.S.-China relations. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, on a recent visit to Beijing, raised the subject with senior leaders. They denied the allegations, she said.

LAPD chief denied contract

Unless city council intervenes, L.A.'s first black chief will leave July 6.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police Chief Willie Williams, hired to restore public confidence and department morale after the Rodney King riots, was denied a second five-year contract on Monday.

The civilian Police Commission said Monday that Williams failed to become an effective leader of the 12,000-member force. The five members of the commission voted unanimously against renewing his contract, which expires July 6.

Williams, 53, said he was disappointed, but was unclear about what he might do to fight the decision. He insisted he's done a good job.

"We've moved forward, we've changed. ... A significant portion of this department supports the chief of police — period," said Williams, who was previously police commissioner in

Philadelphia.

The city's first black police chief, Williams replaced Daryl Gates in the aftermath of the racial explosion ignited by King's videotaped beating by police officers and the riots that erupted in 1992 when officers were acquitted of criminal charges.

Unlike his predecessors, the new chief was not chosen from within and did not have the same job protection. The city charter was changed, putting police chiefs under five-year contracts decided by the commission.

"As an African-American, the chief quickly became a symbol of positive change to the city's minority communities as well as to the city at large," Commission President Ray Fisher said. But Williams "did not take steps to become a respected leader in the department."

The City Council can overrule the commission. That would require agreement by 10 of the 15 council members to consider the issue.

Councilman Richard Alatorre said he didn't think Williams had the votes.

"If he hasn't made any real progress toward — and articulated — a vision for the department in five years, we're going to wait five more years for that vision to be articulated? I don't think we can afford to wait," he said.

Mayor Richard Riordan backed the commission and suggested Deputy Chief Bernard Parks, a black 32-year veteran of the department, be appointed interim chief when Williams' contract ends.

Los Angeles Urban League President John Mack denounced the vote.

"Chief Williams came to Los Angeles facing a hostile police force internally, in which so many of the officers were against an outsider and some were against having an African-American as chief," Mack said.

"He's getting the job done and they don't like how he's doing it," said Richard Washington, 42, a black customer at a Crenshaw restaurant. Of the race issue, he said: "This is America — everything has racial overtones."

Big-money politics fail Indian tribe

CONCHO, Okla. (AP) — Two impoverished Indian tribes drained their emergency fund to donate \$107,000 to the Democratic National Committee, hoping to regain tribal land taken by the federal government more than a century ago.

Since the donation last year, tribal leaders have been wined and dined in Washington. But the land hasn't been returned, and now tribal leaders say the DNC and Democratic lobbyists are back asking for more money.

"Of course we've been taken advantage of," Archie Hoffman, secretary of the Cheyenne-Arapaho tribes' business committee, said Monday. He conceded that no promises about the land were made.

"We weren't hoping for any short-term results," Tyler Todd, the tribes' senior adviser on governmental affairs, said. "We were hoping to make

things a little more easy on that long-term goal."

White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Monday he didn't know President Clinton's reaction to news reports of the tribes' donation.

"I know that he does not feel any contribution should change any legitimate effort by the government to review the status of a land claim," McCurry said.

Amy Weiss Tobe, a spokeswoman for the DNC, said her organization was looking into the matter.

"The only thing that is clear is there is internal dissension within the tribe," she said. "The DNC is trying to ascertain the facts and we haven't been able to talk to tribal leaders and other players yet."

The tribes are trying to reclaim 7,500 acres the government took in 1869 to build Fort Reno. The fort was

closed in 1948 and the land is now used for a federal agricultural research project.

The tribes want to turn Fort Reno into a tourist attraction and use the surrounding land for agriculture.

About 80 percent of the tribes' 10,700 members are unemployed, and the political donation came from an emergency-relief fund that provides \$150,000 each year to pay for food, medical care and other necessities, Hoffman said.

For their \$107,000 donation, about 10 percent of the tribes' annual revenue, their leaders got to eat at the White House with President Clinton.

Now a tribal faction has asked the DNC to return the money.

"We are a poor people and the amount of money donated we cannot afford," tribal member Melvin WhiteBird said in a statement.

Nation/World

Clerk killed in apparent store robbery in Cozad

COZAD — A 41-year-old store clerk was shot and killed Monday morning during an apparent robbery attempt at a convenience store.

The incident happened around 10:30 a.m. at the Amoco Service Station along Interstate 80, according to Dawson County Attorney Elizabeth Waterman. The name of the victim and the amount of money stolen has not been released.

Police are searching for a white male in his early 20s, about 6 foot 3 inches tall and about 225 pounds, driving a red Pontiac Grand Am with California plates.

He was barefoot at the time of the robbery, and police believe he may be carrying a semiautomatic weapon.

Police are also looking for another woman who may have witnessed the shooting. The woman was with a 2-to-3-year-old child, and officials are hoping she might provide some more details.

Albanian rebels advance, steal jets as army flees

TIRANA, Albania — Rebels in southern Albania seized more territory Monday, looting assault rifles, heavy machine guns and MiG fighter planes from government bases as police and army units fled north.

In Tirana, President Sali Berisha met with opposition leaders to discuss the composition of a new coalition government to run the country before elections held by June. Opposition politicians, however, do not control the armed civilians, who have said they will accept nothing less than Berisha's resignation.

Berisha agreed to the election and new government in an attempt to quell the rebellion, sparked by public rage over high-risk investment schemes in which nearly every Albanian family lost money. Many blame the government for not warning people away from the pyramid schemes — and some claim it profited from the funds.

Citadel expels one, punishes nine cadets for hazing

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A male cadet at The Citadel was expelled and nine others were given lesser punishments in the hazing and harassment of two women cadets, the military school said Monday.

One cadet was cleared, and the FBI and state investigators continue to look into the women's allegations for possible criminal charges.

Of 15 male cadets who faced discipline, one was expelled, the maximum penalty, and one was given the second most severe punishment: He is restricted to campus for the rest of the semester and must do 120 hours of marching with an unloaded rifle in the barracks courtyard.

Eight of the cadets received lesser punishments, ranging from shorter marching tours and demerits to confinement to the barracks.

Cadets Jeanie Mentavlos of Charlotte, N.C., and Kim Messer of Clover, S.C. said their clothes were set on fire and cleanser was put on their heads. They also said they were forced to drink tea until they became ill, made to drink alcohol and forced to stand in a closet while being shoved and kicked last semester. They didn't return to the state military school for the spring semester.

Clinton's approval rating slips in polls

WASHINGTON — President Clinton's approval rating has slipped slightly in the wake of allegations of questionable campaign fund-raising activities, according to two polls released Monday.

A CBS News survey showed Clinton's overall approval has fallen from a high of 63 percent after the Jan. 20 inauguration to 56 percent on Sunday, while a survey done for ABC News and The Washington Post found a decline between mid-January and last week from 60 percent to 55 percent.

Both polls also indicate that while the public is concerned about alleged wrongdoings in campaign fund raising, it has accepted them as common practices.

In the CBS poll, 74 percent surveyed said they believed campaign contributions encourage many public officials to change government policy.

The ABC-Washington Post poll found while many were uncomfortable with Clinton allowing donors to spend the night in the White House, 59 percent said the president did nothing unlawful.

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