

Republicans urge President Clinton to act

WASHINGTON (AP) — Outraged Senate Republicans accused the Clinton administration Tuesday of trying to run out the clock on its campaign fund-raising investigation and urged President Clinton to "step up to the plate" to force his supporters to testify.

Facing a Dec. 31 deadline, the Republicans teed off against Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno for more than two hours while the White House point man for the 1996 campaign, Harold Ickes, waited to testify. As Ickes sat in a back room outside the large Senate hearing facility, his written statement was provided to reporters, and it demonstrated his oft-demonstrated combativeness.

He said the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee's "virtually exclusive focus on Democratic ... fund raising in general, and fund raising by the winning campaign of President Clinton and Vice President Gore in particular, serves a partisan — not a public — agenda."

Although Ickes was eased out of his White House staff position earlier this year, he defended all the Clinton-Gore fund raising as legal and maintained the hearings were designed "to tarnish the Democratic Party in general, and President Clinton, and more pointedly, Vice President Gore."

Returning to a focus on fund-raising abuses after several weeks of scholarly witnesses, the majority Republicans on the committee came prepared for combat. The trigger for their anger was the White House's release of videotapes of 44 executive mansion coffees featuring the president and Democratic Party donors. The Senate panel and the House Government Reform Committee had asked for such tapes months ago.

Committee chair Fred Thompson, R-Tenn., showed the tapes on television monitors, contending they demonstrated illegal fund raising on government property. One coffee was in the Oval Office, while others were in the White House residential area.

Thompson said the White House had told the committee earlier the Oval Office coffee, on May 1, 1996, was in the residence. "As this clip

shows, however, these representations simply were false," Thompson said. "Let's roll that clip."

Federal law prohibits political solicitations on federal property, but it is unclear whether the law applies to the residential quarters of the White House. Reno has contended the law does not apply to the living quarters.

The GOP senators said the delayed discovery was only the latest example of White House dallying, and came on top of witnesses exhibiting faulty memories, the assertion of the Fifth Amendment privileges and the flight by key witnesses to foreign countries.

"There's a clear pattern of delay, foot-dragging, concealing," Thompson said. "People leave the country, documents are destroyed, defenses are gotten together on and evidence gets cold."

"Everything about this guy is scandal," Sen. Bob Smith, R-N.H., said of Clinton. "How much more do we have to take?"

Several Republicans saved their major salvos for Attorney General Reno, accusing her of conducting the most narrow investigation possible.

"The attorney general is so inconsistent in her statements that ... the president of the United States ought

to relieve her of her responsibility in the interest of seeing that the American people at least can feel a tiny bit like justice might be taking place in the Justice Department," Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said.

Democrats rose to Reno's defense. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., said he had "more confidence in her ability to be objective and independent, frankly, than I do in partisans of either party on Capitol Hill."

Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., said the attorney general was somewhat trapped. "If the woman names an independent counsel, it would appear she was intimidated. If she doesn't, she's defending the president," he said.

Thompson, a former actor, spoke with dramatic effect as if he were directly addressing Clinton, who was not in the Senate hearing room.

"And now I think the American people expect you to step up to the plate and take responsibility, because surely nobody wants this to go down looking like a successful cover-up of much more serious activities," he said.

Thompson said the administration's strategy was "to wait this committee out, discredit the (House) committee, and hope that the attorney general holds fast" against prosecutions.



Clinton

Investigators question access to Pentagon

FBI security probe shows suspected spies obtained histories of subversive activities

WASHINGTON (AP) — James Clark was turned down as a security risk when he tried to get a job at the CIA. Theresa Marie Squillacote was married to a known communist sympathizer, Kurt Alan Stand. So how did the three former campus radicals now accused of spying gain Pentagon security clearances?

Although the information obtained by the alleged spies appears less damaging than in past espionage cases, the question of how the government failed to detect documents suggesting a security risk in this case has emerged as a key issue.

Warning signs abounded. One of the suspects, Clark, was refused a job at the CIA, his application stamped "security disapproved," meaning as early as 1980 the agency had discerned what it regarded as a security risk. The FBI had a 1975 report describing Clark's participation in the youth arm of the Communist Party. The military also had anti-draft statements Clark submitted to the Selective Service in the 1960s in which he pledged to "fight to defeat U.S. imperialism" and quoted Mao Zedong on revolution.

All this appears to have escaped the notice of government security reviewers. In 1986, Clark received a "secret" clearance for his work for a private firm, doing contract work for the government. That gave Clark access to chemical weapons documents, including a how-to manual on the manufacturing of nerve gas. In 1992, a year after hiring Clark as a civilian analyst, the Army affirmed his security clearance.

Squillacote, another of the suspects, had been married for more than a decade to Stand, a communist sympathizer and the third suspect in the alleged spy ring, when she went to work for the Pentagon in 1991. Stand allegedly recruited the others in the 1970s to spy for East Germany. In 1979, Squillacote had organized a speaking appearance at the University of Wisconsin's Milwaukee campus for a man convicted of spying for North Vietnam. Yet in 1992, the Defense Department gave Squillacote the same "secret" clearance.

Thomas J. Pickard, the FBI official who supervised the probe, when asked how the wife of a

known communist could get a cleared post at the Pentagon, said, "I'm not going to try to explain it."

The Pentagon had few answers on Tuesday but said it was investigating.

"Any time you have a breach like this, it causes you to go back and see how good your security measures are," said Defense Secretary William Cohen. But while he said strict controls are important, "you also have to make sure that you don't employ tactics that you end up 'Stalinizing' your society."

Navy Capt. Michael Doubleday said secret security clearances require no background check. But they do require a review of government records, which might have turned up the FBI report and CIA job rejection on Clark and records of Stand's communist involvement.

A Pentagon review of possible security breaches has already begun, Doubleday said. It is examining "whether there were unusual circumstances that resulted in the individuals being granted security clearances, and secondly, to see if there need to be any changes in the process."

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