

Reno rejects counsel for investigation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Janet Reno declined Tuesday to seek an independent counsel investigation of telephone fund raising by President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, saying their actions were outside the scope of federal election law.

Under strong pressures for months from all sides, Reno said, "The decision was mine and it was based on the facts and the law, not pressure, politics or any other factor."

Republicans criticized her decision as wrong and perhaps affected by loyalty to the White House. Democrats called it correct and courageous.

She also rejected a special prosecutor to investigate former Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, concluding that O'Leary was unaware that a contribution to one of her favorite charities may have been solicited in return for her meeting Chinese businessmen.

In her explanation, Reno said Clinton's fund-raising calls in October 1994 were made from the White House private quarters, not the president's offices. "This places the calls outside the scope... of federal election law which applies only to solicitations for hard-money contributions occurring within the federal workplace," she wrote.

Reno told a news conference that her campaign finance task force continues to investigate Democratic fund-raising practices that — without Gore's knowledge — diverted some of the money he raised into questionable accounts. And she said the department would continue investigating others involved in the O'Leary incident.

And she promised to seek a special counsel if these or other continuing inquiries implicate Clinton or other top officials.

Rejecting a dissent from FBI Director Louis J. Freeh, Reno went right to the deadline before making her long-expected decisions. "He and I may not always agree, but the decision is mine," Reno said.

Republicans, who had predicted Reno's refusal, denounced her as viewing the campaign finance affair and the law too narrowly. Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., who chairs a House committee investigating campaign funding, said he would call Reno and Freeh to a hearing Tuesday.

Senate GOP leader Trent Lott called Reno's decision a tragedy. Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, said she had acted courageously despite "tremendous political pressure" from Republicans.

The telephone fund-raising inquiry was pushed into the spotlight by demands from Republicans on Capitol Hill, newspaper disclosures and the timetables set by the independent counsel law. It led to questioning of Clinton and Gore by Justice Department lawyers and FBI agents.

Russia's nonnuclear forces in dire state

WASHINGTON (AP) — Desertions from Russia's military are rising, weapons purchases are plummeting and few, if any, Army units are ready for combat. The military's state of disrepair threatens the political and economic stability of Russia itself, according to a congressional study.

"The armed forces are becoming more politicized. Many U.S. and Russian specialists warn of a military calamity — implosion, mutiny or coup — if present trends continue," said a report written by Stuart Goldman, a specialist on Russian affairs for the Congressional Research Service.

"Many experts assert that the Russian military threat is now more to Russia than from Russia," said the study, published by the group that conducts research and major studies for lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

This means that compared to the Cold War era, "the military threat to the West is greatly reduced," and the time the West would have to be warned of any crisis is greatly increased, the study said. It dealt only with Russia's conventional, or nonnuclear, military forces.

Since 1986, the study said, the size of the Russian force has become a shadow of what it was under the former Soviet Union:

—Troop numbers have fallen by over 70 percent, from 4.3 million to 1.27 million.

—The number of tanks and other armored vehicles has been cut by two-thirds, from 53,200 to 17,650.

—Artillery, combat aircraft and surface warships have been reduced by one-third. That translates to artillery pieces dropping from 29,250 to 19,150; aircraft from 7,360 to 5,160; and warships from 269 to 166.

—Weapons purchases have been "plummeting for over a decade," and in some key categories — such as in aircraft, tanks and surface warships — purchases have virtually stopped.

The ability of the Russian military has also declined, and "few, if any, of Russia's army divisions are combat-ready," the report said.

Training, exercises and far-flung naval deployments have been sharply reduced. Morale is low, primarily because troops haven't received their salaries.

"Draft evasion and desertion are rising. Half the officers say they plan to quit the military in 1998," the report said.

The study estimates it would take at least 10 years for Russia to rebuild its nonnuclear forces.

The report also points out that since 1986, the U.S. military force has shrunk overall by 34 percent, from 2.1 million troops to 1.4 million. But the Pentagon has been able, with backing from Congress, to provide the money to keep that smaller force at a fairly high level of combat-readiness.

The study coincides with many reports emerging from Russia, indicating that soldiers have been ill-fed and lack proper pay and equipment. In May, *The Washington Post* re-

ported that rations were in such short supply that there had been instances of recruits starving to death and that "severe malnutrition is common." Brutal hazing leads to hundreds of deaths annually, the *Post* reported.

Other reports say the Russian military has had difficulty even tracking its number of dead from the 1994-96 war in Chechnya. While the government says about 3,000 soldiers were killed in the tiny Muslim republic, soldiers' mothers groups put the number at 5,000 to 10,000.

The congressional report concluded that if the budget crunch for the Russian military continues for two or three more years, "They must lead either to more drastic force reductions or to military collapse," the study said.

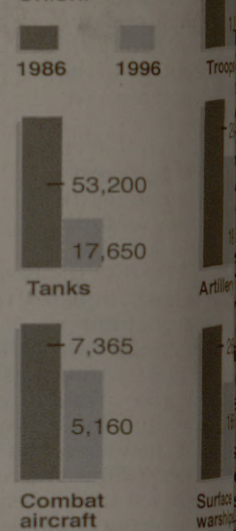
The report found that President Boris Yeltsin's government has "taken better care of internal security forces than the Army," apparently because it believes it faces more of an internal, rather than an external, security threat.

Yeltsin has declared military reform a top priority. Proposals have been made to make even more cuts in the size of the Army, consolidate the military command structures and services, pay all salaries in arrears and move toward an all-volunteer force.

The congressional study argues that resistance still exists within the military and from opposition political parties, bringing into question whether the reforms will be accomplished.

Russia's military

The size of the Russian military force is but a shadow of what it was under the former Soviet Union.



Source: Congressional Research Service

Kyoto talks yield slow progress

KYOTO, Japan (AP) — Negotiators made slow progress on key issues of a global warming agreement Tuesday, but the United States appeared stymied in its efforts to extend new limits on fuel emissions to the Third World.

A U.S. Senate delegation flew into Japan, and its leader warned that any treaty deal excluding developing nations would be rejected by the Senate.

"It won't even be close," said Sen. Chuck Hagel, a Nebraska Republican.

The U.S.-Third World impasse troubled other negotiators.

"This seems to be one of the major problems that could eventually... break the whole process," said Joergen Henningsen, the environment chief of the European Union, which offered to mediate the dispute.

Tuesday was the second of 10 scheduled days of negotiations, involving 1,500 delegates from 150 countries, to produce a protocol that would strengthen the 1992 Climate Change Treaty. Delegates hope to mandate cutbacks in industrial nations' emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases linked to the threat of global warming.

These "greenhouse" emissions, mostly products of fossil fuel burning, allow sunlight through but trap the heat that Earth emits back toward space.

An authoritative U.N. scientific study says continued emissions at current rates could raise average global temperatures by as much as 6 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100. That would disrupt global climate patterns unpredictably, and raise sea levels by as much as 3 feet as glaciers melt and oceans expand from heat.

In the 1992 treaty, 34 industrial nations set a voluntary goal of lowering their greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by 2000. In 1995, as it became

clear almost all would fail to do so, they agreed they had to set new, legally binding goals.

The cutbacks could be achieved by phasing out coal-fired power plants, developing more fuel-efficient automobiles and taking other energy-saving steps.

The European Union has proposed 15 percent reductions below 1990 emissions levels by 2010. But the United States proposed only "stabilization" — at 1990 levels — by 2012, a position that has drawn sharp criticism from environmentalists.

In Monday's opening discussions, the American delegation shifted its ground to support "differentiation" — varying the targets for different countries, rather than setting a uniform rate of reduction across the board. And by Tuesday, it was clear the U.S. move had given the idea some powerful momentum.

"Differentiation as a concept is widely accepted," the Argentine chairman of the closed-door talks, Raul Estrada, told reporters. Other negotiators, meanwhile, reported some progress in working out timetables for emissions cuts.

Washington's negotiators said they had no specific range of differentiated targets in mind yet — except that they want to retain the back-to-1990 level for the United States in any "differentiation" scheme.

Estrada was pressing the Americans for a more flexible position, accepting deeper cuts below 1990 levels, a knowledgeable source said. And cuts of only 2 or 3 percent below 1990 would be insufficient, he said.

The U.S. team said it has not yet settled on criteria for determining "differentiated" targets. Japan has proposed a sliding scale of targets based on such factors as a country's per-capita emissions, which would benefit an energy-efficient country like Japan.

U.S., Britain donate \$6 million to new fund for Nazis' victims

LONDON (AP) — The United States and Britain donated nearly \$6 million Tuesday for a new fund for victims of Nazi persecution — and urged other nations to help prevent Holocaust victims from dying in poverty.

Argentina and Luxembourg indicated they will contribute to the fund at the opening day of a 41-nation conference on Nazi gold remained silent.

The United States, Britain and France have asked the 15 nations to contribute 5.5 tons of gold under their control — stolen by Nazis in their conquest of much of Europe in World War II — to the fund.

But France itself has not yet decided whether to contribute, said a French delegation official, speaking anonymously. France will be announced Thursday, he said.

"I would be very upset and surprised if the French did not lead of the British and the United States," said Lord Janner, the maker who persuaded the government to host the conference, "but it is unworthy of the great French tradition. I believe every country should contribute."

The head of the American delegation, Undersecretary of State E. Eizenstat, said the United States will make an initial contribution of \$6 million to the Nazi Persecution Relief Fund and hopes to offer more over three years, if Congress approves.

The United States decided to give the money, he said, because of its own actions and inactions after the war and because of the suffering of those Holocaust survivors who have received little or no compensation in the intervening years.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said Britain will give \$5 million to the fund.

"We must avoid the second tragedy of those who survived the Holocaust being left to live out their days in poverty," he said. "We are here for compensation for a suffering that can never be expiated. We must ensure we do not forget the most awful memory known to mankind."

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