

Armey: No more hearings on Waco

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Majority leader Dick Armey said yesterday he no longer sees a need for fresh hearings on the 1993 Waco siege, a new indication of the GOP's zeal for reinvestigating the fiery end to the standoff is fizzling.

Expressing confidence in independent investigator John Danforth, Armey told reporters, "I don't know that we will see any compelling need" for House hearings.

Armey's comments and recent remarks by other congressional Republicans are a sharp change from last month, when party leaders hounded that new revelations about the government's use of force against the Branch Davidians required in-depth congressional hearings and Attorney General Janet Reno's resignation.

In the House, where Democrats only need to pick up six seats to win control in next year's election, some Republicans grew nervous that yet another investigation of the Clinton administration might backfire with voters.

There is more enthusiasm in the Senate for new investigations of Reno's agency. But the focus on Waco has been diluted by other complaints against the Justice Department — such as its botched investigation of Chinese espionage charges — and muddled by Republican fighting.

"There's Waco fatigue," Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., a member of the House panel investigating Waco, said. He said he prefers postponing hearings until spring. "There's a feeling that the political risk may be higher than the political gain of pursuing this subject at this time."

Government Reform Committee Chair Dan Burton, R-Ind., has promised to move aggressively with hearings. His investigators expect to receive more than a million Waco-related

documents from the Justice and Defense departments within a week in response to a subpoena. Burton did not respond to a request for comment yesterday.

The revelations sparked the furor include the FBI's admission that its agents fired potentially flammable tear-gas canisters at the compound April 19, 1993, which the agency long denied. The FBI said the canisters, launched hours before the start of the fire that consumed the compound, bounced harmlessly off the roof of a nearby bunker and did not contribute to that fire. About 80 Davidians died in the siege.

"I don't know that we will see any compelling need for [House hearings]."

— **DICK ARMEY**
HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER

On Sept. 9, the day after Reno announced Danforth's appointment, Armey said he wanted the House probe to be more sweeping than the independent prosecutor's.

"I want to know it all," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., agreed congressional investigators should "do it in the broadest possible way." He said the revelations made him doubt the conclusion the Branch Davidians, and not the FBI, started the fire.

Since then, Senate Republicans have been feuding among themselves over the investi-



gation's scope and proper venue.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, wanted his panel to handle it. Instead, Lott last month announced a task force led by Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., a Judiciary Committee member, that would investigate the espionage charges as a first priority. Waco would be secondary, along with charges of Democratic campaign fund-raising abuses.

Democrats pre-emptively boycotted the task force as another in a string of "partisan witch hunts."

"You want to take this thing out of the committee structure to really form a major, major fishing expedition to get this person or get that person," Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., told Specter during a Judiciary Committee meeting yesterday. Specter denied the charge.

But faced with such opposition, Hatch has made another pitch to take over the investigation.

In an Oct. 5 letter to Specter obtained by The Associated Press, Hatch said the probe would have more credibility if it were done by a Judiciary Committee panel with the Democrats' participation.

The Senate's momentum also was stalled by a turf battle between Specter and Danforth, a highly respected former GOP senator from Missouri.

In two letters to Hatch and Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the committee's ranking Democrat, Danforth complained Specter's staff was interviewing witnesses in violation of an agreement Danforth had struck with the Judiciary Committee.

The Sept. 17 letter complained about interference. In the Sept. 21 letter, also obtained by The Associated Press, Danforth said he had instructed the Texas Rangers "not to consent to interviews or searches of evidence by Judiciary Committee staff."

Keeping secrets

Panel establishes National Nuclear Security Administration

LUBBOCK (AP) — Rep. Mac Thornberry, the newly-appointed chief of a congressional panel establishing the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), vows that the barn door on nuclear secrets "is about to be slammed shut."

Thornberry, R-Clarendon, whose district is home to the Pantex weapons disassembly plant, said this week he will make sure the Department of Energy operates more like a military organization than the "dysfunctional Washington bureaucracy" it has become.

"With the NNSA, we are going to make sure that the nation's nuclear weapons facilities are run with a clear, military-like chain of command," he said. "There will be clear accountability from now on. As chairman, that is one of the most important things I will ensure takes place."

A bill creating the NNSA, a semi-autonomous agency charged with regulating security at nuclear plants, was signed into law this week. Previously, all security issues were handled by the DOE. Thornberry's panel will choose the agency's leader.

House Armed Services Committee Chair Floyd Spence appointed Thornberry this week to the oversight panel.

"[His] expertise and bipartisan workmanlike approach to this issue over the past several years makes him the perfect candidate to chair the panel," Spence said.

The reorganization plan grew from months of controversy about lax security at the Energy Department and the alleged theft by China of nuclear warhead secrets from U.S. labs over the past 20 years.

Appeals court rules prayer protected at football games

SANTA FE (AP) — A Santa Fe High School student received a federal judge's protection yesterday that will allow her to lead public prayers for the remainder of her school's home football games.

Last month, Marian Lynn Ward, 17, drew national attention when she prayed before her school's season opener despite a 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling banning the practice. The appeals court ruled in February that sporting events were not serious enough to warrant organized prayer.

Hours before the Sept. 3 game, U.S. District Judge Sim Lake of Houston issued a temporary restraining order barring the school district southeast of Houston from punishing Ward if she prayed.

Lake ruled the district's guidelines for pre-game messages "clearly prefer atheism over any religious faith."

Ward's attorney, Kelly Coughlan, said the school's policy violates students' constitutional right to freedom of speech.

Lake yesterday affirmed his previous ruling, granting a preliminary injunction covering the rest of the season, including the Indians' homecoming game today.

Coughlan said he will seek a permanent injunction and expects Lake to schedule a trial.

Ward finished second in a student vote to determine who would deliver a message before each home game. She assumed the duty after the winner bowed out.

The Galveston County Daily News reported Wednesday that Santa Fe police will beef up security for today's game in anticipation of a protest by activists who believe the student-led prayers violate their own constitutional rights.

"We've got to show, at least, that there are people in the community who respect the First Amendment and don't want interference from the religious right," protest organizer Will Ellsworth said.

Elvis' former Fort Hood home hits electronic auction block

KILLEEN (AP) — Elvis once slept here. And so can the highest bidder.

Elvis Presley's home while a soldier at Fort Hood is for sale again on the Internet auction site eBay.

One prospective buyer already has matched the minimum bid of \$200,000, home's owner M.J. Craig, said. The auction will close tomorrow evening.

Craig said two previous auctions closed with high bids of \$126,100 and \$75,000 — not enough to part with the one-story, three-bedroom brick home she has lived in since 1987.

Craig, who owns a realty firm in Killeen, said when she started thinking about moving from the 2,308-square-foot home, her daughter convinced her to try the Internet auction instead of the open market.

"I didn't think it would work, but I decided to try," Craig told the Waco Tribune-Herald. "People come by all the time asking to

see the house, driving by or stopping by to take pictures of the house where Elvis lived."

Presley was stationed at Fort Hood for basic training when he was 23. He lived in the home for 25 weeks, Deborah Garrell, Craig's daughter, said.

Garrell said Presley's parents also lived there for a time, until his mother became ill with hepatitis and had to return to Memphis to be hospitalized.

Craig said the market value of the home, minus the collector's attraction to it, is between \$130,000 and \$150,000. It was built in 1952.

Craig said she is just waiting to see if the deal actually goes through.

"I never get excited about a real-estate deal until it's completed because so many things can happen to stop a real-estate transaction," she said. "I'll be excited when we sit down to do the paperwork."

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DAVID CAMPBELL is internationally known as concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber musician - described by Jack Brymer as "the finest player of his generation". He has appeared as soloist with many leading orchestras including the English Chamber Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, London Mozart Players, English String Orchestra, BBC, Scottish, Welsh, Philharmonic and Concert Orchestras, London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

WERNER ROSE, a pianist and Professor of Music has resided in the Brazos Valley since 1988. A native of New Jersey, Rose had served on university faculties in Tennessee, Connecticut and Wyoming before coming to Texas. Rose has had an active career concertizing as a soloist recitalist, concerto performer, and especially as a chamber music artist. Since 1970 he has been a member of the Western Arts Trio which has toured extensively throughout Europe, Australia, and the Americas.

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