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Accusations fly in Iraqi loan investigation



WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Department documents released Monday suggest that a department lawyer expected the U.S. Attorney in Atlanta to help manage a politically sensitive case even after he had withdrawn from it to avoid a potential conflict.

The documents, released by Rep. Henry Gonzalez, D-Texas, chairman of the House Banking Committee, describe aspects of the investigation of illegal loans by the Atlanta branch of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro to Iraq. The U.S. Attorney in question, Joe D. Whitley, who is a former deputy assistant attorney general, said eight days after taking office on June 1, 1990, that he was removing himself from supervision of the case because of a client he had had in private practice.

'I didn't have any involvement with the case at all.'

— Joe D. Whitley, Atlanta U.S. attorney

But in a Sept. 21, 1990, memo released by Gonzalez, Justice Department lawyer Peter Clark wrote, "I thought that the (U.S. attorney's office) was under control now that Joe Whitley is in place."

Whitley said in a telephone interview that he has "no idea why (Clark) would include that in his memo, because I wasn't involved in the case whatsoever."

Attorney General William Barr last week named retired federal Judge Frederick B. Lacey of New Jersey to examine the adminis-

tration's handling of the politically charged case.

Barr earlier rejected a request from Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee for a court-appointed independent prosecutor to probe the case. Democrats on the committee renewed that request last week, and they were joined Monday by all eight Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Led by Sen. Joseph R. Biden, D-Del., chairman of the committee, the Senate Democrats said they "believe it is impossible for the department to review this matter without personal and political conflicts of interests."

Barr has 30 days to respond in writing to each request.

Democrats contend the administration botched the BNL investigation to protect its diplomatic relationship with Italy and shield its flawed policy of support for Iraq prior to the Persian Gulf War.

CIA ignored Cuban sources during Kennedy's 1962 missiles of October

LANGLEY, Va. (AP) — The CIA had 25 agents reporting from Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis that brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. But intelligence analysts in Washington discounted their reports of seeing what looked like huge missile-like tubes, believing the Soviet military buildup in Cuba was purely defensive.

"The record of intelligence is not unblemished in this crisis," Deputy CIA Director Adm. William O. Studeman said Monday during an unprecedented seminar at CIA headquarters, where more than 100 secret documents were made public and key players in the crisis shared their memories.

The compilation of documents includes notes taken by the agency director John McCone during White House crisis meetings estimates by the intelligence community, reports from Cuban agents, and memoranda coded Ironbark — meaning they were based on information from one of the most valuable Soviet spies of the Cold War, Col. Oleg Penkovsky.

If the CIA could do it over, Studeman said, it would pay

more attention to the informants reporting sightings of Soviet missiles in Cuba, and analyze better how the Soviets viewed deployment of missiles outside their borders.

In fact, the documents and reminiscences highlight how the United States nearly missed the deployment of the SS-4 medium-range missiles in Cuba until it was almost too late.

As it was, the deployment only became known when a U-2 spy plane photographed the launch pads on the western third of Cuba on Oct. 14 — at least one month after the first batch got to the island.

Warren Frank, then with the agency's foreign intelligence branch, said much of the Cuban agent reporting was collected in Miami at what became the largest CIA station in the world.

The 300-member station, located in what is now Miami's zoo, collected reports from some 25 agents on the island, interviewed Cuban refugees, and talked to emigres in regular correspondence with their families.

One report declassified Monday was made Sept. 17, 1962 by a 47-year-old Cuban de-

scribed as a businessman with four years of schooling and of average intelligence.

The informant described driving out of Havana and observing a convoy of 16 trucks and eight trailers, seven of which were carrying "what looked like huge tubes extending over the entire length of the flatbed and completely covered with canvas." The eighth was carrying what looked like a radar, he said.

The CIA received hundreds if not thousands of such reports, many of which its agents in Miami deemed credible, said Frank.

But analysts in Washington dismissed all but a handful as unreliable. Several analysts said part of the problem was that they could not understand why the Soviets would want to deploy medium-range missiles in Cuba.

A landmark analysis on Sept. 19, 1962 — also declassified Monday — said the Soviets were only deploying anti-aircraft missiles in Cuba to deter a possible U.S. invasion effort in the wake of the botched Bay of Pigs landing the year before.

New judge appointed to riot case

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge who is a former policeman and prosecutor was chosen Monday to preside at the racially charged trial of three black men accused of beating a white trucker during the city's April riots.

The selection of Superior Court Judge John Ouderkirk, who is white, ended nearly two months of angry disputes over the process of selecting a judge to hear the case.

Prosecutors removed the first judge, who was black, and defense lawyers used a joint challenge to remove a white judge before drawing Superior Court Judge John Reid, also white and known as a tough, prosecution-minded judge.

An appeals court permitted a defense lawyer to use an extra peremptory challenge to remove Reid from the case without stating a reason. Defense attorney James Gillen said outside court, "I may have thought he had an unconscious bias against my client."

5 challenges

For Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week
Oct. 18-24

- 1) Go to a party and don't drink alcoholic beverages
- 2) Be the designated driver
- 3) Brag about a good time you had sober
- 4) Organize a non-alcoholic outing on the weekend
- 5) Attend an alcohol awareness event and learn more about alcohol abuse

If you are reluctant to accept one of the five challenges above, ask yourself, "Could I have a problem with alcohol?"

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