

Reno wins Senate Judiciary Committee's approval



WASHINGTON (AP) — Janet Reno won unanimous approval Wednesday from the Senate Judiciary Committee to become the nation's first female attorney general after hearings one lawmaker called "a veritable love-fest."

The panel's action sent her nomination to a vote in the full Senate, where she is expected to win confirmation easily and complete President Clinton's Cabinet. Committee Chairman Joseph Biden said he hoped the vote could take place by the end of the week.

"I think from the time Ms. Reno is sworn in that the American people will know that they do have a friend, that they do have an advocate, that they really do have a people's counsel," said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., just before the Judiciary vote.

"I think, in fact, it is history in the making, and I am very proud to be here to be part of it," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.

Reno, 54, chief prosecutor in Miami for the last 15 years, had cautiously weaved her way through two days of questioning that revealed more about the breadth of the Justice Department's mandate than about her.

She fielded questions on subjects ranging from inter-

national terrorism to the tax system on Indian tribal lands, promising to work with committee members, but saying she needed to learn more.

After a particularly long and detailed answer from Reno on how she wanted to focus more attention on the juvenile justice system, Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., asked a follow-up question.

"Did you say you would support increased funding for juvenile justice?" he asked.

"Didn't say," she answered. Chuckles floated around the big hearing room.

"I can see you're getting the hang of this. Might as well keep the momentum going," Biden said later, after Reno declined the offer of a break from her second day of testimony.

"This hearing demonstrates in my mind that the best qualified man for the job is very often a woman," Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun said. "And I must say ... this has been a veritable love-fest for you."

"I can't quite describe a confirmation hearing as a good time," Reno said.

Reno's description of her approach to legal management was decidedly centrist, and she promised consultation not only with senators but with local law enforcement officials. She recalled visiting the Justice

Department during the Carter administration.

"I was prepared to be in awe," she said. "I left kind of confused."

Reno on Wednesday repeated her support for the Brady Bill, which calls for a waiting period before people can purchase handguns. Yet she said she opposed any outright ban on handgun ownership. She knew too many cases where handguns had saved lives, she said.

Reno also supports limits on the sale of high-powered "assault weapons," the firepower of choice for street gangs and drug smugglers.

Again and again, Reno said one of her highest priorities is to make sure the public is confident that criminals will be punished, and that victims of crimes should have a say before cases are plea-bargained.

However, she cautioned that defendants' rights had to be protected. For example, she expressed misgivings about radical changes in the rules that say illegally seized evidence cannot be used by prosecutors. She supported the exception for cases where police had a warrant, acted in good faith, but made some mistake.

But she said she still was open-minded on that and other issues Congress might consider in an omnibus crime bill. "It is important to not become too dogmatic on where you stand," she said.

Engineer formally charged in World Trade Center bombing

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A Palestinian-American chemical engineer was ordered held without bail Wednesday on a charge of helping to bomb the World Trade Center. He was the second suspect linked directly to the fatal blast.

Nidal A. Ayyad, 25, was arrested at his suburban Maplewood home by an FBI SWAT team. The Kuwaiti-born naturalized American citizen had ties to Mohammed Salameh, accused last week of renting the van used to carry the bomb that devastated the skyscraper complex Feb. 26, killing five people.

A federal investigator said Ayyad, like Salameh, also had ties to El Sayyid Nosair, who was acquitted of the 1991 assassination of militant Israeli Rabbi Meir Kahane but convicted of

related charges.

James Esposito, the FBI chief for New Jersey, said Ayyad's chemical background was significant, but he wouldn't say whether Ayyad was believed to have made the bomb.

"By his educational background, he has expertise that lends itself to this kind of crime," Esposito told reporters.

Ayyad and Salameh knew each other for more than a year, Esposito said. Ayyad's father, Abdel-Rahman Joseph Ayyad, confirmed that Salameh had visited his son at the house in Maplewood. He didn't know how often or how recently.

Reziq Ayyad, Ayyad's 17-year-old brother, said during his brother's court appearance that Nidal and Salameh worshiped at the same mosque, the location of

which he didn't specify. Officials have said Salameh worshiped at a Jersey City, N.J., mosque where Nosair also had worshiped.

The FBI said Ayyad and Salameh share a bank account, and that Ayyad's business card was found among Salameh's personal things when Salameh was arrested last Thursday. Ayyad is a research engineer for Allied-Signal Inc., which makes engineered materials and aerospace and automotive products.

On the day before the bombing, according to an FBI complaint, Salameh and an undetermined number of other people were seen making many trips to a Jersey City storage warehouse where explosives and bomb-making materials were later found. The complaint said they

drove a yellow Ryder rental van, which was believed used in the bombing.

Salameh also was seen making telephone calls from a pay phone nearby, and records show four calls were made from that phone to Ayyad's line at Allied-Signal, the complaint said.

The storage shed was rented to someone who identified himself as Kamal Ibrahim, according to the complaint. Esposito said the FBI isn't sure whether Kamal Ibrahim is a pseudonym.

Several people, including Salameh, were authorized to have access to the shed, investigators said.

Discovered in the shed after the bombing were several hundred pounds of urea, nitric acid, sulfuric acid, other chemical compounds, and equipment

such as graduated beakers, flasks, and a mortar and pestle, the FBI said.

There were enough chemical compounds "to produce a primary high explosive," according to the complaint.

Eleven days before the trade center blast, Ayyad rented a red General Motors car and listed Salameh as an additional driver, the complaint said. When the van believed used in the bombing was rented, the FBI said, Salameh was accompanied by a second person in a red GM car.

Ayyad appeared Wednesday before U.S. Magistrate Dennis Cavanaugh on a complaint charging him with "aiding and abetting the malicious damage and destruction" of the trade center.

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I worked for Mayfair Markets part-time

q: What do you like most about your job at the Bookstore?
Being near books, selling what's new and helping people to buy and read them

q: As a woman, what do you bring to your work?
Commonsense, seeing both sides of a subject, and levity—lightening a tense situation

q: What would you like most to see happen for women?
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