

# Republicans criticize 'lax' national security policies

By William C. Mann  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration has displayed "lax attitudes toward national security," the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman said Sunday, citing reports Chinese stole U.S. technology to produce a better nuclear bomb.

The committee already is investigating commercial technology transfers that Sen. Richard Shelby and other GOP leaders contend could help the Chinese upgrade their missile forces.

The new allegations "will certainly" mean more hearings, said Shelby, who criticized the administration for "lax attitudes toward national security."

"We have been on top of this lax security for a number of years. We've been pushing, we've been prodding the administration to do more, to tighten up security," Shelby said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott predicted Congress would be "very aggressive" in dealing with the administration.

"I think Congress is going to

have to toughen up in dealing with this administration, particularly when it comes to China and the violations that have occurred there," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

The New York Times and Newsweek magazine reported that China had obtained from Energy Department nuclear laboratories knowledge of America's top-secret W-88 miniaturized warhead.

Reiterating the administration position, White House national security spokesman P.J. Crowley said Sunday in a telephone interview that an interagency assess-

ment to determine "what damage, if any," was done started in 1996 and that the appropriate committees of Congress have been kept "updated throughout."

"Meanwhile, once we knew the scope of the problem we have instituted a series of very strong measures to improve security and counterintelligence at DOE labs," Crowley said.

Republicans contend the administration allows dangerous transactions so as not to disturb always-touchy relations with one of the largest U.S. trading partners.

Lott, R-Miss., said the case is "just another example of where the administration apparently is more interested in engagement (with China) than they are what's happening in that engagement."

"The administration continues to resist really getting into what caused the problem and solving the problem," Lott said. "China is getting to be more and more of a problem, both in their human rights conduct and the way we deal with it, but also a continuation of their efforts to get technology improperly and then use it improperly."

# Clinton travels to hurricane-battered Central America

By Sandra Sobieraj  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hamstrung by domestic politics, President Clinton ventures empty-handed into hurricane-clobbered reaches of Central America this week. His message of solidarity with America's neighbors is aimed as much at Congress as at the people rebuilding the region's roads, homes and schools.

Clinton embarks Monday — without his wife, sidelined by a recurring back problem — on what is intended to be a four-day goodwill tour of reconstruction projects in

Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, those hardest hit by last fall's Hurricane Mitch.

"Our moral responsibility as a neighbor to this region coincides perfectly with our interests as a nation," said National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

But the president leaves at home nearly \$1 billion in U.S. aid trapped on Capitol Hill by unrelated, partisan disputes over spending. Most likely, he will encounter the disappointment of Central Americans who fault his trade policy as halfhearted.

A U.S. promise not to deport illegal immi-

grants back to El Salvador and Guatemala during the disaster crisis was set to lapse Monday.

But Foreign Minister Eduardo Stein Barillas of Guatemala warned that the forced return of a large number of immigrants would severely crimp recovery efforts.

"Our battered economies are not going to be able to sustain this influx of people back to the region," he said.

Clinton will address the Salvadoran legislative assembly Wednesday. He will stand with disaster victims in a schoolyard in Posoltega, Nicaragua, where mudslides wiped out entire

villages, and lend support to U.S. troops pitching in on the reconstruction.

At Guatemala City's anthropology museum, Clinton plans a roundtable talk on peace with citizens still smarting from a Guatemala truth commission report last week that blames most of the deaths and disappearances during that nation's 36-year civil war on the U.S.-backed army and the CIA.

On Thursday, Clinton is to convene a summit with Central American presidents to make sure the post-Mitch crisis does not derail free-market economics and democratic systems.

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