

PRESS CONFERENCE, 12/22/02.

An important issue has surfaced in recent days, one which I feel compelled to address before leaving town tomorrow on a family vacation.

That issue is intelligence gathering by the Denver Police Department, something which can have a direct effect on the safety of every citizen of this city.

Let there be no doubt about my position on recent attacks and charges: I will no longer sit by silently while an assault is waged on our law enforcement community. At the same time individual rights of our citizens must be guarded.

As both a former chief of police and manager of safety, I know, first-hand, that Denver has an outstanding police department, made up of dedicated men and women who risk their personal safety and lives to serve and protect us.

And let me say this loudly and clearly: Anyone who attempts to compromise the police department while this matter is before the U.S. District Court, to further a political or personal agenda, does a disservice to efforts in behalf of the safety and well-being of the people of Denver.

Am I saying the department is above reproach and accountability? Absolutely not, and I say that equally loudly and clearly.

In the past several days, much has been said and written about police intelligence gathering. The words "spy files" have surfaced. Questions have been raised about alleged abuses of intelligence operations. And that is exactly what they are: alleged abuses. Until current federal litigation is concluded, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on those claims.

But the issue of management responsibility is something that can and should be addressed.

In 1953, the Denver Police Department established an Intelligence Bureau, whose purpose was to gather information that could be used to alert the department to activities that could lead to threats to public safety. It is, and will continue to be, a valid and useful tool of law enforcement, as part of efforts to prevent crimes before they happen.

Who among us would wish to abandon all efforts to protect the citizenry from acts of terrorism or disruption? Who would want to board an airplane or simply attend a large public gathering without knowing someone is protecting us and our families from genuine threats to our safety and our lives?

The Intelligence Bureau was a functioning part of the police department when I served as its chief and, later, as Denver Manager of Safety.

That means that the ultimate management responsibility was at the top, through the chain of command. At no time during my tenure in either job was I ever aware of abuses of intelligence gathering. Had I been aware of any, I most assuredly would have taken corrective measures to protect honest citizens from unwarranted targeting or harassment of any kind, for any reason.

Another important point I want to make is there were specific policies in place, outlining the procedures and limits of intelligence gathering, dissemination and purging. Those policies are contained in the 1983 Intelligence Bureau Manual, which was in effect while I was Police Chief, and

which I had every reason to believe was still in effect was I was Manger of Safety. The manual is excerpted in this document, which you will receive today.

Let me quote from the document, dated June, 1984, to the then Chief of Police.

The use of illegal or unauthorized methods of collecting information is absolutely prohibited.

Information will only be gathered on those organizations and/or persons that advocate criminal conduct, threatened, attempted or performed criminal acts on life or property.

Intelligence data will not be collected by members of the Intelligence Bureau on any individual merely on the basis that such person supports unpopular causes or on the basis of ethnicity or race or on the basis of the individual's religion and/or political affiliations.

The document goes on to prohibit such actions as violations of constitutional rights, illegal activities in intelligence gathering and basing collection on personal habits of any individual.

It also states, and I would underline this: No member of the Intelligence Bureau will use confidential intelligence data for political and/or economic purposes.

That last prohibition should serve as a precaution to anyone who would politicize this issue.

And finally, I want to point out that the policy clearly states that dissemination of intelligence and investigative information is limited to legitimate situations only.

Although I no longer am engaged in any official capacity of law enforcement, but because I am soon to be a candidate for Mayor of Denver, I feel it's appropriate to comment at this time, in the interest of clarification of the issue.

I also feel it's imperative to urge all involved parties to avoid any rush to judgment of the Police Department, its officers and its management ranks.

If violations of policy or of citizens' rights are proven, they must be immediately corrected and offending parties must be appropriately dealt with.

Until then, I urge the public, the press and political candidates to join me in treating fairly and equally both those

who are sworn to protect us and those citizens with valid
grievances and complaints.

I will now take your questions.