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WASHINGTON (AP) President Clinton hasn't done enough to fight illegal drug use at a time when movies, music and the media are making light of the problem, the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman charged Tuesday.

Sen. Orrin Hatch said Clinton has put too much emphasis on treating hard-core users and not enough on law enforcement.

"Over the past three years, the Clinton Administration has, in my view, lethargically implemented an imbalanced drug policy," Hatch, R-Utah, told a Drug Enforcement Administration conference called to consider the problem of methamphetamines' growing popularity.

"President Clinton has abandoned the bully pulpit, overemphasized treatment of hard-core users and most importantly de-emphasized core law enforcement and interdiction activities," Hatch said.

In remarks that were not in his prepared text, Hatch said he thinks the administration's drug-fighting priorities result from the relative youth of White House aides who grew up the 1960s. An aide later confirmed he made the observation. *

At the White House, spokesman Mike McCurry vigorously defended Clinton's record and called Hatch's comment on the administration's younger members "silly."

"This is a canard that's been raised a couple times in the past," McCurry said. "There's no basis in the charge. It's kind of surprising that someone of the serious stature of Senator Hatch would be saying something so silly."

It wasn't the first time that a key Republican congressional figure caused an uproar with statements about White House drug policy. *

In a Dec. 4, 1994, television interview, House Speaker Newt Gingrich charged that as many as one-fourth of the White House staff had used drugs in the last four or five years.

Gingrich, who has admitted smoking marijuana as a youth, said the source of his information was a senior law enforcement official whom he would not name.

White House chief of staff Leon Panetta countered that no one in the White House uses drugs. "If Newt Gingrich has evidence to the contrary he ought to tell me that. He ought to make it public, and I'll fire them," Panetta said at the time.

This past December, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., and Gingrich, R-Ga., announced formation of an 18-member congressional task force to spend three months studying how to combat teen-age drug use and report to Congress in March. They alleged the Clinton administration's anti-drug policy was in "utter disarray" and promised that Republicans in Congress would step in to provide leadership.

Hatch was among the co-chairmen of the task force.

62ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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December 6, 1994, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 989 words

HEADLINE: INCOMING SPEAKER SHARPLY SCOLDED

BYLINE: By ROBIN TONER, Special to The New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 5

BODY:

The Clinton Administration today denounced Representative Newt Gingrich, the incoming Speaker of the House, for asserting that up to a fourth of the White House staff had used illicit drugs in recent years. Leon E. Panetta, the White House chief of staff, said the accusation was "absolutely false" and part of an emerging Republican pattern of "smear and innuendo."

The response from the Administration was remarkably strong and reflected the polarized relations between the White House and Capitol Hill as Mr. Gingrich was formally ratified as the Republicans' choice for Speaker today. Hillary Rodham Clinton told reporters that the charge by Mr. Gingrich, which he made Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press," was "so unfair" and added, "I would hope it was a momentary lapse."

Mr. Panetta, in two briefings with reporters today, said that Mr. Gingrich's conduct was simply not up to the standards of his new position. White House officials clearly felt that Mr. Gingrich had crossed the lines of political civility so blatantly that Mr. Panetta could abandon the elaborate courtesies that ordinarily would be paid to a Speaker, particularly on the day of his anointing.

"He's Speaker of the House of Representatives," the chief of staff said. "Words matter. And he's no longer just the minority whip in the House of Representatives, he's not the editor of a cheap tabloid, he's not just an out-of-control radio talk show host. He's Speaker of the House of Representatives, and he's got to learn to behave as the Speaker of the House of Representatives."

Tony Blankley, a spokesman for Mr. Gingrich, said the accusation stemmed from information received from a law-enforcement official in connection with Republican queries back in 1993 into delays in security clearances for White House staff members. Neither Mr. Gingrich nor Mr. Blankley named the official, nor would another Republican, Representative Frank R. Wolf of Virginia, who issued a statement saying he could confirm Mr. Gingrich's account.

Mr. Blankley said that Mr. Gingrich was not suggesting that this was an ongoing problem that needed to be dealt with, but a reflection of what he called the "counterculture" background of the Clinton Administration.

The New York Times, December 6, 1994

Mr. Panetta, however, asserted that the comments were part of a pattern that began with Senator Jesse Helms, the incoming chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, who said in recent weeks that Mr. Clinton was not up to the job of Commander in Chief and would need a "bodyguard" if he visited military bases in North Carolina.

"It started with Jesse Helms, and now it's Newt Gingrich, in which basically there are reckless charges made, reckless accusations that impugn peoples' integrity," Mr. Panetta said. "No evidence, no facts, no foundation, just basically smear and innuendo -- the kind of thing that we rejected in this country a long time ago."

Other Democrats went further. "It smacks of McCarthyism," said Representative Charles E. Schumer, Democrat of Brooklyn. Representative Barney Frank, Democrat of Massachusetts, said it signaled that Mr. Gingrich had yet to adapt to the scrutiny that comes with the speakership. "Up until now, he's had the luxury of irrelevance," Mr. Frank said. "He's lost it."

And Representative Ben Cardin, Democrat of Maryland, said, "If he has any documentation of what he's speaking about, let him come forward with it." The White House clearly felt it had the high moral ground and was eager to get its message out to reporters. At the very least, the episode was a distraction for Republicans on a day that highlighted their victories in last month's elections.

A spokesman for Senator Bob Dole, the incoming majority leader, said he was not abreast of the controversy. Republicans in the House rallied to Mr. Gingrich's side.

The incoming Speaker made his comments while being pressed to justify his earlier characterization of the Clintons and their White House as exemplars of the counterculture. "My point is you've got scattered throughout this Administration counterculture people," Mr. Gingrich said. "I had a senior law-enforcement official tell me that in his judgment, up to a quarter of the White House staff, when they first came in, had used drugs in the last four or five years."

Mr. Gingrich added, "I'm not making any allegations of an individual person, but it's very clear that they had huge problems getting people through security clearance because they kept bringing people in who had a lot of things that weren't very easy to clear."

White House officials said that was simply not true. People seeking employment at the White House do undergo background checks by the F.B.I. that involve questions about past drug use. But Mr. Panetta said that, at most, "a very, very small percentage" of people had acknowledged prior drug use in those checks. "Is that an out and out disqualification?" Mr. Panetta asked. "No. But he's becoming Speaker of the House of Representatives, and he's admitted to drug use in the past."

Mr. Gingrich acknowledged on "Meet the Press" that, like Mr. Clinton, he had smoked marijuana. But the Republican leader dismissed that by saying, "That was a sign we were alive and in graduate school in that era."

Mr. Panetta also said that the Clinton Administration had a drug policy for the workplace that was "better and tougher than any prior Administration put

The New York Times, December 6, 1994

into place," which requires random testing in addition to background checks.

In his first briefing of the day, according to The Associated Press, Mr. Panetta also conveyed something approaching an ultimatum. "The main point is that we cannot do business with the Speaker, we cannot do business with the Speaker of the House who is going to engage in these kinds of unfounded allegations."

Mr. Gingrich, speaking through a spokesman, dismissed that threat as nonsense, and said he was surprised that Mr. Panetta had reacted so angrily.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 6, 1994

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December 6, 1994, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A21

LENGTH: 812 words

HEADLINE: Panetta Holds Gingrich's Words Against Him -- and His Party

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Ann Devroy, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

The Clinton administration yesterday aggressively seized on comments by House speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) to suggest Republicans have engaged in a pattern of reckless public statements that raises questions about their ability to govern as the majority party in Congress.

White House Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta twice met with reporters yesterday to accuse Gingrich of making "absolutely false" statements in asserting on Sunday that a quarter of the White House staff had used drugs within four or five years of seeking their jobs.

In response to questions from Republican members of Congress, the White House this year formally submitted written information to a House subcommittee attesting that "about 1 percent" of White House job applicants had indicated earlier drug use.

"The time has come when he has to understand that he has to stop behaving like an out-of-control radio talk show host and begin behaving like the speaker of the House of Representatives," Panetta said of Gingrich.

Later in a second session with reporters, Panetta said the White House "cannot do business" with Gingrich if he continues to make unfounded personal allegations. He said Gingrich's comments and those by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) last month, that Clinton might need a bodyguard if he visited North Carolina, were part of a "troubling pattern" from new Republican leaders.

"I think what's ... troubling here is that this seems to be a pattern now," Panetta said. "It started with Jesse Helms, and now it's Newt Gingrich, in which basically there are reckless charges made, reckless accusations that impugn people's integrity. No evidence. No facts. No foundation, just basically smear and innuendo."

The White House response to Gingrich signified that despite talk of cooperation with the new Republican majority, the Clinton team intends to take advantage of any opportunity to portray GOP members as extremists without the temperament to govern. One outside Democratic adviser to the White House said yesterday, "If they provide the rope, we'll help with the hanging."

Panetta challenged Gingrich to produce proof of his public accusations and to institute in Congress the drug-free-workplace rules in place at the White

The Washington Post, December 6, 1994

House, along with the random drug testing and background checks that White House employees undergo. Individual members of Congress institute their own rules for testing and questioning employees, and there is no overall set of standards.

Panetta said a "very, very, very small percentage" of potential White House employees had turned up as having prior drug use. As to current use, Panetta said it was a firing offense. Another official said "fewer than you can count on one hand" of officials tapped for random drug tests had failed to pass them.

Gingrich brushed off questions seeking any proof he had to back up the allegation. He ignited the controversy on Sunday by saying a "senior law enforcement official" told him that "in his judgment, up to a quarter of the White House staff, when they first came in, had used drugs in the last four or five years."

The allegation received little attention when Gingrich first made it a year ago, and the Democratic-controlled Congress was loath to investigate anything involving a Democratic president. But over the months, a House subcommittee did examine the issue as part of a look at White House transition and personnel practices and heard senior White House officials deny the allegation, in one case under oath.

Pressed on those statements yesterday, Gingrich referred questions to Rep. Frank R. Wolf (Va.), who led the House Republican efforts to investigate the issue of White House passes and security clearances.

Wolf declined to get involved. "This is an old issue," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, the White House has addressed it, and it's over."

Asked how the White House has addressed the issue, Wolf replied: "Talk to Panetta."

But Rep. Richard K. Armey (R-Tex.), incoming House majority leader, defended Gingrich. On PBS's "MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour" Armey said, "If the non-elected staff director of the White House decides that he can't do business with the elected speaker of the House, it seems to me pretty evident that the president should be able to find somebody who can do that."

Virtually everyone available in the White House -- including the First Lady -- was prepared yesterday to react with anger and dismay to the Gingrich comments. The chief of staff invited reporters to his office at midmorning to respond to Gingrich and when television reporters asked him to repeat his statements for the cameras later in the day, he agreed quickly.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, showing off Christmas decorations at the White House, was asked about the issue. She said that such statements are "so unfair" and that she hoped they were a "momentary lapse."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: December 6, 1994

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The Washington Times

March 28, 1995, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A6

LENGTH: 694 words

HEADLINE: 11 face drug tests at White House

BYLINE: Ruth Larson; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

Eleven White House staffers are in a special random drug-testing program because of concerns about "recent drug use," the director of the White House Office of Administration, Patsy Thomasson, told a Senate subcommittee yesterday.

All White House staffers are tested when they are first employed, and under the White House "drug-free workplace" plan, a minimum of 12 percent of the 1,007-member White House staff routinely faces random testing. However, the 11 staffers represent a separate pool that receives added scrutiny, congressional sources said.

Miss Thomasson did not elaborate on what constitutes "recent" drug use.

In response to a wide-ranging series of questions from Sen. Richard Shelby, Alabama Republican, Miss Thomasson also acknowledged that volunteers without adequate security clearances have been given access to sensitive areas in both the East and West Wings of the White House.

That contradicts testimony she provided to the subcommittee last year, when she denied that any volunteers had access to the West Wing, where the Oval Office is located.

In December, incoming House Speaker Rep. Newt Gingrich set off a firestorm when he quoted a senior law enforcement official as saying that up to 25 percent of White House staff members had had problems getting security clearances in the early days of the Clinton administration because they had used drugs within four or five years of joining Mr. Clinton's staff.

White House officials at the time denounced the Georgia Republican's remarks as being irresponsible and without merit. Chief of Staff Leon Panetta angrily responded: "His charges are absolutely false. There is no one in the White House who uses drugs. If Newt Gingrich has evidence to the contrary, he ought to tell me about it, he ought to make it public, and I'll fire them."

The drug use issue arose last year, when Rep. Frank Wolf, Virginia Republican, questioned the White House over its tardiness in issuing permanent entry passes. His probe uncovered cases of past drug use and drug convictions, years of unpaid taxes, unpaid debts and financial irregularities - all discrepancies that could be grounds for the Secret Service to deny a permanent pass, sources said.

The Washington Times, March 28, 1995

Reacting to Miss Thomasson's comments, Mr. Wolf's spokesman, David C. Whitestone, said: "This basically confirms what Mr. Gingrich said." However, he added, "Mr. Wolf is satisfied with the progress they've made on this issue."

In her testimony before the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on treasury, postal service and general government, Miss Thomasson said that 92.2 percent of eligible staff members had received permanent entrance passes; the remainder are recent hires who are still undergoing background checks.

She said volunteers undergo a simple background check by the Secret Service, not the extensive FBI checks required for permanent employees.

Under the White House's color-coded access pass system, blue passes allow access to both the president's and vice president's offices. Miss Thomasson acknowledged that some blue passes had been issued to volunteers, such as those helping in the social offices.

In testifying on other issues, Miss Thomasson denied that the White House had been delinquent in paying its telephone bills. The Washington Times reported in October that the unpaid bills could total as much as \$500,000.

Administration spokesman Arthur Jones confirmed at the time that the White House was unable to pay its phone bill, but termed it an "accounting" problem, because telephone company invoices did not bill each office separately. He also confirmed that Miss Thomasson was working with contracting officials to resolve the matter.

Miss Thomasson said yesterday that her office had paid all bills that were "received in proper form." In response to questions from a skeptical Mr. Shelby, Miss Thomasson said, "We have no delinquent bills now, and we didn't have any in October," and agreed to furnish the subcommittee with copies of the phone bills and payment checks.

GRAPHIC: Photo, White House official Patsy Thomasson testifies to a Senate Appropriations subcommittee about drug testing., By Cliff Owen/The Washington Times

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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The Washington Times

April 15, 1995, Saturday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A4

LENGTH: 703 words

HEADLINE: White House drug use probe? ;
Lawmaker seeks an investigation

BYLINE: Ruth Larson; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

Rep. Robert S. Walker, author of the drug-free-workplace legislation, has called for an investigation of possible "recent drug use" by White House staffers.

The Pennsylvania Republican originally had sought only an apology from White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta for his reaction to House Speaker Newt Gingrich's earlier remarks on staff drug use.

But after receiving Mr. Panetta's strongly worded response this week, Mr. Walker decided to press for a review of the White House's drug-testing program.

"The fact that the Secret Service believes there may be enough problems with drug use by some of the White House staff so that a special testing program is warranted, should be a major concern of the president and Chief of Staff Panetta," Mr. Walker wrote.

He has called on Rep. William F. Clinger, Pennsylvania Republican and chairman of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, to investigate the administration's drug-testing program.

The issue of White House drug tests resurfaced last month, when White House Administration Director Patsy Thomasson told a Senate subcommittee that 11 White House staffers were on a special random drug-testing program because of concerns about "recent drug use."

Mr. Walker viewed Miss Thomasson's remarks as a vindication for Mr. Gingrich, who said in December that a quarter of White House staffers had problems getting security clearances because of past drug use.

"The White House vigorously protested that anyone would suggest they were using drugs in the White House, particularly Mr. Panetta, who called the speaker's remarks 'irresponsible,'" Mr. Walker said in a recent telephone interview.

He decided an apology was in order.

"In light of Ms. Thomasson's recent testimony, it seems that either she lied to the Senate Appropriations subcommittee or you irresponsibly attacked

The Washington Times, April 15, 1995

Speaker Gingrich last year," Mr. Walker wrote in his letter to Mr. Panetta.

"If the latter is true, I believe that you owe an apology to both the speaker for your unwarranted assault, and the news media for your inaccurate information."

Mr. Panetta declined to offer an apology to Mr. Gingrich, of Georgia, and responded with a few more barbs aimed at the speaker and his fellow Republicans.

"You seem to believe that Ms. Thomasson's testimony . . . contradicts my prior statements on this issue. It does not," Mr. Panetta wrote.

He disputed Mr. Gingrich's contention that 25 percent of White House staffers had used drugs: "The very small percentage of the more than 1,700 . . . staff members who participate in such [drug] testing serves only to underscore the hyperbolic nature of the speaker's allegations."

The 11 aides Miss Thomasson mentioned constitute roughly 1 percent of the White House staff.

Mr. Panetta challenged Mr. Walker to substantiate Mr. Gingrich's charges. Failing that, "I would suggest that you direct your rhetoric about 'irresponsible attacks' toward those in your party who continue to make them," he wrote.

He said the administration remains committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace and annually tests roughly 12 percent of the staff.

Mr. Panetta called the special testing for 11 staffers "a precaution we take above and beyond these procedures for a very limited pool of individuals whose drug use prior to joining the administration, in the judgment of the Secret Service, warrants additional measures."

Mr. Panetta added: "I would respectfully suggest that these procedures compare very favorably with those (if any) in place in the House of Representatives."

After receiving Mr. Panetta's response, Mr. Walker decided the White House's testing program warranted further scrutiny.

A spokesman for the Government Reform and Oversight Committee said Mr. Walker's letter was being reviewed, but that no decisions had yet been made.

Mr. Walker also has written Rep. Frank R. Wolf, Virginia Republican, who first uncovered previous drug use problems among White House staffers while investigating delays in the issuing of permanent White House passes.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Rep. Robert Walker has taken on Leon Panetta over drug testing.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE-MDC: April 15, 1995

Freeh, Reno May Be Grilled in Files Dispute

FBI 'Heads-Up' to White House on Livingstone's Background Report Leaves Republicans Angry

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

FBI Director Louis J. Freeh and perhaps Attorney General Janet Reno may be caught this week in the cross-fire between the White House and Congress over the FBI files investigation.

GOP lawmakers were outraged last week to learn that the bureau alerted the White House to damaging information in former White House security chief Craig Livingstone's background file the day before the chief counsel for the House Oversight Committee arrived to inspect it.

An aide to House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston (R-La.) said the congressman was considering asking for Freeh's resignation. The Senate Judiciary Committee may call Freeh and Reno to a hearing.

"As a former prosecutor at the federal, state and local levels, I am increasingly concerned about the FBI's involvement in White House matters," Livingston said in a statement. "It is imperative that the impartiality and integrity of our nation's law enforcement agency be protected from politics, and I fear that line has been crossed."

Reno said on June 20 that it would be "a conflict of interest" for the Justice Department and the FBI to investigate dealings between the White House and the FBI.

Freeh had said the week before that the FBI's unquestioning provision of the reports on employees of previous Republican administrations to the Clinton White House in 1993 constituted "egregious violations of privacy" and said they would not recur while he is FBI director.

Yet in the midst of the files controversy, House Government Reform and Oversight Committee Chairman William F. Clinger Jr. (R-Pa.) and other Republicans protest that Freeh, acting with Jus-

tice Department approval, gave the White House a "heads-up" about what was in former security chief Livingstone's file. The prime item was an FBI agent's report of a March 1993 interview, quoting then-White House counsel Bernard Nussbaum as saying that first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton had "highly recommended" Livingstone for his White House post and that she knew Livingstone's mother.

The day after Clinger's committee inspected the file, the FBI sent agents to interview Dennis

"I am increasingly concerned about the FBI's involvement in White House matters."

—Bob Livingston, chairman,
House Appropriations Committee

Sculimbrenne, the agent who wrote the report. Sculimbrenne's lawyer said Friday that his client had no independent recollection of the Nussbaum interview, even after being shown the written report, but that he did recall former associate White House counsel William H. Kennedy III telling him he was "stuck with Livingstone" because of his connections with the first lady.

The lawyer, Richard Hauser, said Kennedy's remarks stuck in Sculimbrenne's mind because they came during a conversation about problems in Livingstone's background that the FBI had discovered. By contrast, Hauser said, "the interview of Mr.

Nussbaum was conducted during the background investigation and was unremarkable at the time."

Nussbaum has denied making the remarks Sculimbrenne attributed to him and said he was "mystified and outraged that someone would attribute to me something I never said." Hillary Clinton has said she had nothing to do with Livingstone's hiring. And both she and Livingstone's mother say they didn't know each other.

Alerted in advance by the FBI, the White House and Democrats in Congress pounced in anger when Clinger took to the House floor last week and disclosed Sculimbrenne's account without trying to verify it.

Republicans may be even more indignant, especially in light of the FBI's dispatching two agents to Sculimbrenne's home on July 17—eight days before Clinger's speech—to question him about the Nussbaum interview.

The FBI said it did this "for internal reasons"—in light of "serious questions" about "the accuracy of reporting by agents assigned to the White House." The bureau explained its "heads-up" to the White House by saying it felt it "had a responsibility to advise affected parties." The White House said Sculimbrenne's report was "confidential background material gathered for the White House by an FBI employee" and that it had every right to know when some other party was given access to the report.

The partisan warfare puts Freeh in the middle, looking much like an unhappy referee. He made what the White House regarded as a bad call last month when he said "the FBI and I were victimized" in the handoff of files to the White House. Then he made what Republicans regard as a bad call in the other direction by alerting the White House to what was contained in "underlying documentation" that Freeh had invited the Republicans to inspect.

THE WASHINGTON POST
MONDAY, JULY 29, 1996

PHOTOCOPY PRESERVATION

Jet's Rear Cabin Hit Sea 1.5 Miles After Nose

Breakup of Airliner Was Similar to Bomb Destruction of Pan Am 103 Over Lockerbie

By Don Phillips
Washington Post Staff Writer

SMITHTOWN, N.Y., July 28—Trans World Airlines Flight 800 broke apart shortly after it was hit by some sort of catastrophic event, with the nose and forward passenger cabin hitting the Atlantic Ocean a mile and a half before the wings and rear cabin crashed into the sea, investigators said today.

The pattern of breakup was similar to that of Pan American Flight 103, which was destroyed over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 when a bomb in its forward cargo hold exploded. In that crash, the nose and cockpit of the Boeing 747 cracked away to the right, almost like a door turning on a hinge.

Because of the TWA plane's lower altitude—it had ascended to 13,700 feet after taking off from John F. Kennedy International Airport—there was less difference between the outside air pressure and the pressurized cabin. As a result, a much larger bomb would have been required to down the TWA plane, investigative sources said.

The sources said the TWA plane's forward cargo hold contained baggage, with cargo containers loaded to the rear.

James K. Kallstrom, the FBI official in charge of the criminal part of the investigation of the July 17 disaster, said today that the probe is approaching a turning point. He said he has asked recovery teams to look for certain pieces of wreckage, which he would not characterize further.

Kallstrom said, "I hope within the next 48 hours we'll get something that we think is going to give us the clues" needed to come to a final conclusion about what happened to the plane when it crashed shortly after takeoff, killing all 230 people aboard.

Law enforcement officials said over the weekend that they are "80 percent to 90 percent certain" that a criminal act was responsible for the crash—such as a bomb or, less likely, a missile—and the FBI could take over the investigation as early as this week.

Today, a senior law enforcement official said privately that the only holdup now is that investigators do not have conclusive evidence of a bomb. The official stressed "conclusive."

Navy divers have found new pieces of aircraft debris that, coupled with enhanced radar data, indicate that the wings and rear passenger cabins flew on alone for perhaps as long as 24 seconds after the front of the aircraft broke away, and then disintegrated in a fireball.

However, Norm Wiemeyer, radar specialist for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), said much work needs to be done before the plane's final movements will be known for certain.

Navy divers have recovered its

nose landing gear in a debris field about a mile and a half to the southwest of the main field of wreckage, indicating that it was one of the first pieces of plane to fall away. Nearby was a section of the forward fuselage with the first- and business-class section. Wreckage of the cockpit area had not been found as of late today.

Rear Adm. Edward Kristensen, heading the Navy salvage effort, said several of the Navy's salvage ships will search the new field, as well as another wreckage field found another two miles farther southwest. He said he does not yet know what is in the third field.

NTSB Vice Chairman Robert Francis refused to speculate about what may have happened to produce the debris pattern, but he said, "Things that come off first tend to be indicators of what happened."

Investigators are puzzling over why initial radar tracks did not indicate such large pieces falling off so early in the flight, but said the main piece of the fuselage might have shielded other sections from radar waves.

In any case, it is now becoming clear that whether a bomb or some other form of explosion brought down the plane, the event originated at the front of the aircraft.

The most likely location is the forward cargo hold, which stretches from the front of the wings to the nose area. The forward end of that hold ends just below the rear of the cockpit and the distinctive spiral staircase used in older 747s for access to the upper deck.

Directly ahead of the cargo hold are the electrical cabinets, which contain all the plane's electrical connections.

An explosion there would explain why all electricity ended at about the same moment to the plane's radar transponder, which reports the plane's altitude and identity to air traffic controllers, as well as the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder. All radio capability would also likely be wiped out, even if the crew members were not incapacitated.

Analyses of the two recorders showed normal activity and conversation, which was suddenly and inexplicably cut off. On the cockpit voice recorder, which uses four microphones to pick up cockpit sounds, the tape ends with a brief, split-second loud noise, an ending that investigators said was similar to what was found on the cockpit voice recorder recovered from the Pan Am 103 crash.

Francis said recovery of bodies is proceeding, with 153 of the 230 victims having been found and brought up from the ocean bottom. So far, 147 of the bodies have been positively identified, 146 families notified and

142 bodies released to relatives. Francis said the identification process has gained speed because the Suffolk County medical examiner is getting more information on fingerprints and other documentation from families.

Francis also said a large new section of fuselage was found today that may contain more bodies. He said it apparently was from the center-to-rear portion of the plane, and was found in the main debris field where most other fuselage sections and wing and engine parts had previously been found.

There also were indications that another one of the plane's four engines has been located in that field. With the two already located, this would indicate that the wings and engines remained with the main part of the fuselage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For pictures and profiles of the victims of the crash of TWA Flight 800, click on the above symbol on the front page of The Post's World Wide Web site at

<http://www.washingtonpost.com>

THE WASHINGTON POST

MONDAY, JULY 29, 1996

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