

# IRS Confirms Seeking Seattle Panther Raid

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The Internal Revenue Service yesterday confirmed that it changed its plans to raid a Black Panthers' headquarters in Seattle at the request of city officials but denied that the raid was suggested to gather information.

Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman said over the weekend that his administration refused to take part in the raid because it did not want to popularize the Panthers. He also said the federal agency had proposed the raid to obtain information.

IRS Commissioner Randolph W. Thrower, however, said in a statement that investigators received evidence early in January of federal gun law violations and that this, not a desire to gather information, was the reason for the proposed raid.

"This evidence," Thrower said, "was reviewed by the office of the United States attorney in Seattle and it was agreed that there was probable cause for the issuance of a search warrant.

"On that basis, the IRS investigators discussed and reviewed with officials of the Seattle Police Department the IRS intention to secure and serve a search warrant. At the

request of the police officials, the IRS decided not to seek the search warrant."

A spokesman said the evidence was obtained by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the agency, which is a part of the Treasury Department.

The commissioner's statement said investigators had proposed to serve a warrant for specific guns owned illegally.

Uhlman, who said the Panthers have only about nine members in Seattle, commented: "They need a cause and I'm not going to give them one."

The 34-year-old mayor added:

"The position I am taking is that we're not going to have 1932 Gestapo-type raids against anyone. If you pick a group like the Panthers and do it, then you do it to someone else."