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Mayor of Seattle Says He Vetoed Panther Raid

SEATTLE, Feb. 8 (AP)—Mayor Wes Uhlman says he turned down a federal proposal for a raid on Black Panther headquarters in Seattle because he did not want to popularize the Panthers' cause. He also said such raids smack of "Gestapo-type" tactics.

Uhlman, 34, who has been in office only two months, said a federal law enforcement agency asked for city participation in an "information gathering" raid on Panther headquarters a month ago. The raid did not take place. In an interview, Uhlman

criticized the tactics of some other cities in raids on Panthers and said "a great many people are having second thoughts about midnight Gestapo-type raids."

Police raided Panther headquarters in Chicago Dec. 4, killing two Panther leaders. A coroner's jury ruled the deaths justifiable homicide. A Los Angeles police raid on Panther headquarters resulted in the wounding of three policemen and two Panthers. Police seized arms and ammunition in both cities.

Uhlman's administration is under considerable public pressure because of 18 unsolved terrorist bombings in Seattle in the past seven months.

"The easy-answer thinkers say we can eliminate the bombings by eliminating the Panthers," Uhlman said. "We've been taking a lot of pressure to act precipitously, but we're going to withstand the pressure and do it the right way."

Police have not publicly connected the Panthers in any way with the bombings.

Uhlman would not comment on the progress of the investigation. The latest bombing early Saturday damaged the home of a State senator in Seattle, but no injuries have been caused by the bombs.

Uhlman would not say which federal agency requested the joint raid, but Seattle newspapers reported they had learned it was the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Tax Unit of the Internal Revenue Service.

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Local spokesmen for the unit, which searches out illegal firearms, refused comment, as did the Seattle headquarters of the Black Panthers.

In Washington, a Treasury Department spokesman said the unit is enforcing the gun registration laws and is not conducting any campaign against the Panthers as such.

Uhlman, a Democrat who was elected mayor in a non-partisan race last fall, disclosed the request and its rejection in a speech, saying "I can assure you we will not raid Panther headquarters in the middle of the night. We are not going to have provocation by police directed against

any group—Panthers or Minutemen.

"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 can do it to someone else."

Just as important, he said, is the fact that the Panthers have about nine active members in Seattle, but a potential following of hundreds of young blacks who are enthralled by their rhetoric.

"If you give them a cause, they can make political hay out of it, and the kids will look on them like Robin Hoods. Then you wind up with 900 Panthers."

Asked about police raids in other cities, Uhlman said, "I criticize their tactics from what I know about it."