

Probe Chief Chosen as FBI's No. 2

Potts Supervised Controversial Raids

Reuter

Attorney General Janet Reno yesterday named Larry Potts, who is running the Oklahoma City bombing investigation and previously supervised two controversial federal raids, to the FBI's No. 2 job.

Reno told a White House briefing of reporters that she had accepted FBI Chief Louis J. Freeh's recommendation in giving Potts the deputy director's job. Potts, a longtime associate of Freeh, has been filling that post in an acting capacity since December.

As assistant FBI director, Potts was in charge of two of the most controversial events in recent FBI annals. One was the 1993 raid on cult leader David Koresh's Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Tex., that left more than 80 dead.

In addition, he was disciplined last month over a 1992 Idaho siege when an FBI sharpshooter killed the wife of white separatist Randy Weaver. Weaver's son was also shot in the incident.

The events fueled the anger and anti-government views of far-right, extremist paramilitary groups. Timothy James McVeigh, a suspect in the Oklahoma City



LARRY POTTS

... longtime Freeh associate

bombing, has been described as having been agitated over the Waco raid and having ties to such paramilitary groups. Despite the questions surrounding those events, Reno praised Potts as "an extraordinary agent, a dedicated law enforcement official."

"Mr. Potts has been directing the investigation of the Oklahoma City bombing and the results to date are a tribute to his ability to coordinate a complex nationwide multi-agency investigation," Reno said.

"He has been the person responsible ... for the day-to-day operation of the Oklahoma City investigation, and I think it has been a landmark for law enforcement efforts," she said.

A month ago Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick censured Potts for failing to provide proper management oversight during the Idaho siege, in which an FBI agent shot and killed Weaver's wife as she stood in the doorway of the couple's isolated mountain cabin.