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Kleindienst:

'Can't Enforce Pistols Ban'

WASHINGTON — Richard Kleindienst testified today at a hearing on his nomination to be attorney general that federal legislation to outlaw handguns would be unenforceable.

He told the Senate Judiciary Committee that because of the great diversity among the states, he feels the regulation of handguns is best left to each of the states.

Kleindienst also said he would oppose legalization of possession of marijuana if he was confirmed in the cabinet post.

Kleindienst, now deputy attorney general, told the committee that he believes marijuana "is a euphoric substance that permits young people to depart from reality."

More Accessible

Legalization would make it more accessible, Kleindienst said, and added that this would help unravel "the fabric of a strong society."

Kleindienst also renewed his support for use of electronic eavesdropping devices in cases involving national security.

He testified that "I will assume full responsibility" for every electronic surveillance instituted with a court order.

Decline

Kleindienst said there are now 43 or 44 electronic surveillances underway. He said the number had actually declined recently.

Kleindienst said there should be no distinction between a foreign or domestic threat to the national security. But he said the President should not make use of electronic devices "to spy or snoop on people with different political philosophies."

Kleindienst said that no electronic eavesdropping devices would be "authorized without his signature. They will be used sparingly and reports will be made personally to me and I will assume full responsibility for each one," Kleindienst said.



RICHARD KLEINDIENST
Poised at Senate hearing
—UPI Photo

The politically - touchy firearms issue was the first raised as the committee, with only half its members present, began hearings on Kleindienst's nomination to succeed John Mitchell.

Urged by Bayh

Kleindienst was urged by Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), to throw his support behind a bill to outlaw the manufacture and sale of cheap, small-caliber handguns known as "Saturday night Specials."

Bayh said weapons of this kind were used in half of the police killings last year. If his bill to ban them could get administration support, he said, "we could get these cop killers off the streets."

Kleindienst did not rule out backing legislation that zeroed in on a particular type of firearm and told Bayh that the administration is in the process of coming up with its recommendations.

To Treasury

He said, however, that Congress has given the Treasury Department responsibility for the control of firearms.

Kleindienst was presented to the committee by Arizona's Republican senators, Paul Fannin and Barry Goldwater.