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The Washington Times

Senate panel plans probe of FBI's internal security

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Jerry Seper THE WASHINGTON TIMES

1 The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, in the wake of reports that classified software made its way to terrorist Osama bin Laden, yesterday said the FBI internal security safeguards will be a major focus of pending committee hearings.

2 Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont Democrat, said he is concerned that the country's internal security will be breached if federal authorities are unable to keep classified information from "outside enemies."

3 "We have spent millions of dollars on computer security for federal agencies, and much of it goes to the FBI," Mr. Leahy told The Washington Times.

"Keeping secrets from outside enemies of this country is only as good as our internal security.

4 "If the FBI is doing a poor job on internal security, all the money in the world will not effectively keep outsiders from breaching our most critical and secure systems," he said, adding that the committee would hold as yet unscheduled oversight hearings on the FBI internal security safeguards.

Mr. Leahy's comments came in the wake of reports in yesterday's editions of The Times that Robert P. Hanssen, a former FBI agent now awaiting trial on federal espionage charges, gave sophisticated software to his Russian handlers that later was sold to bin Laden for \$2 million.

House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner Jr., Wisconsin Republican, also has said he intends to hold oversight hearings this year in the Hanssen case. Mr. Sensenbrenner told reporters he wanted to know what protections the FBI had built into its internal security system "against double agents as a result of the Hanssen case."

The software delivered to the Russian handlers and later sent to bin Laden, according to the sources, is believed to be an upgraded version of a program known as Promis - developed in the 1980s by a Washington firm, Inslaw Inc., to give U.S. attorneys the ability to keep tabs on their caseloads.

It would give bin Laden the ability to monitor U.S. efforts to track him down, federal law-enforcement officials say. It also gives him access to databases on specific targets of his choosing and the ability to monitor electronic-banking transactions, easing money-laundering operations for himself or others, according to the sources.

The millionaire fugitive is being sought in the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa and is believed to be hiding in Afghanistan.

While federal prosecutors have declined comment on the Hanssen case, they charged in a criminal complaint that the former **FBI** counterintelligence agent made extensive use of the bureau's computerized case **management** systems, Field Office Information **Management** Systems (FOIMS) and Community On-Line Intelligence Systems (COINS), as part of his espionage activities. They also charged that he gave his handlers a technical manual on the U.S. intelligence community's secure network for online access to intelligence databases.

The sources said FOIMS and COINS are believed to be upgraded versions of the Promis software program.

Mr. Hanssen's Washington attorney, Plato Cacheris, yesterday declined comment on the pending case. His client pleaded not guilty May 30 to federal charges of passing highly classified U.S. secrets to the Russians over a 15-year period and faces trial tentatively scheduled for Oct. 29.

The former **FBI** agent was arrested Feb. 18 as he tried to leave a package of reportedly classified documents at a secret drop-off location in a park near his Vienna home. He was indicted by a federal grand jury May 16 on charges of selling U.S. intelligence secrets to the Soviet Union and Russia beginning in October 1985. Fourteen of the 21 counts carry the death penalty.

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