

# FBI probes county police allegations

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By Graham Moomaw  
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Prince George's County police officials acknowledged the existence of an FBI probe into allegations of criminal misconduct by county officers, saying Monday that any officers involved in the investigation had been taken off patrol in order to ensure public safety.

"Our number one duty to the public is to make sure that they get professional police service... their safety is paramount to us," said police spokesman Maj. Andy Ellis in a news conference held outside the police headquarters in Palmer Park.

The police statement was prompted by an article that appeared in Sunday's *Washington Post* that revealed the existence of the FBI probe into police corruption involving allegations that uniformed officers provided security for a criminal gambling ring.

"Any police officers in Prince George's County who are found to be involved in any illegal activity as a result of this will be prosecuted both criminally and administratively," Ellis said.

Ellis said he wanted to assure



PHOTO BY GRAHAM MOOMAW

**Police Spokesman Maj. Andy Ellis, spoke to reporters Monday about the FBI probe into allegations that uniformed officers provided security for a criminal gambling ring.**

the public that the officers involved in the investigation would not come into contact with citizens.

"No resident of Prince George's County needs to be concerned that an officer would either pull them over on a traffic stop or respond to a call at

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their house," Ellis said.

The potential misconduct was first discovered by the police department's internal affairs unit in 2007 but the investigation was completely turned over to the FBI earlier this year.

Ellis declined to go into specifics about the ongoing FBI investigation and the current status of the officers involved, but he made it clear that the department was determined to root out officer corruption in order to maintain public confi-

dence in law enforcement.

"To have allegations of police misconduct, it makes all of us in law enforcement very angry," Ellis said. "We wear the same badge as officers that commit misconduct. One bad cop tarnishes the badge that we all wear."

One county police officer, Cpl. Eddie Smith, was arrested in June for his alleged involvement in a bank burglary in Temple Hills, but Ellis wouldn't say whether Smith was involved in the current FBI investigation. Smith has since resigned from the force.

A spokesman for the FBI's Bal-

timore office declined to comment on the corruption probe, saying that the bureau only speaks about ongoing investigations if there is a specific reason to do so.

Jim Keary, a spokesman for County Executive Jack B. Johnson, reiterated Prince George's officials' resolve to find and punish criminality among county personnel.

"The police department and the county administration does not tolerate inappropriate behavior among its employees," Keary said. "If wrongdoing is found, we will prosecute them."