By Louis Schragan

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Religious cult leader David Koresh has told federal agents sur- rounding his Mount Carmel fortress that the Branch Davidians, armed to the teeth, could "take on the military" and fight "down to the last droplet of blood.

"I was hearing that form a perpetrator in a typical situation I would consider that to be a clear threat, and we will take steps to protect our people," said FBI Special Agent Anthony DiMauro.

Koresh, 37, has been described as a tall, rugged, with a head of white hair and a beard, and he is known for his militancy and his refusal to negotiate with federal authorities.

"He (Koresh) has indicated he would wait no more please if he would engage in a gun battle with him," Ricks said. "He's made such statements before that I think it is why we are ready for war. Let's get it on. You're telling him it's good news. I'm going to give him an opportunity to save yourself before you get blown away."

"There may be explosives and perhaps even rockets in the compound."

One negotiator said that Koresh's increasing arrogance, irri- tability and hint of paranoia suggests that he is fearful of coming under attack and of losing control over the 80 to 100 Branch Davidians inside with whom he has been held up for days.

"They are the kind of statements people make when they are afraid and may have been motivated by his fear of an assault," said Peter H. Schrager, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

But, as Myers acknowledged, the additional cuts that the House and Senate Democrats have settled upon would do little more than enable Clinton to achieve his original target of reducing the deficit to about $3.8 billion in fiscal 1994 and $160 billion below the projected amount without any action.

In addition, a large chunk of the cuts — about $17.5 billion of the roughly $55 billion — would come in just two years.

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WASHINGTON

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