

SWING TO FAVOR

FBI Director Key Adviser to President

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WASHINGTON — Certain new light has been shed on relations between President Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover with the disclosure that Mr. Johnson assigned the FBI to probe Communist activity in the Dominican Republic.

More than had been generally realized, it seems, the President is listening to the FBI director's advice not only on police and security matters but also on broader questions such as the commitment of marines to the Dominican Republic.

If appearances are any indication, Mr. Johnson now is personally closer to Hoover than any President has been.

Attitude Shifts

Although five months ago he was reported on high authority to have been considering replacing Hoover, the President professes to set great store upon his counsel.

Evidently he talks to Hoover a good deal on the telephone, day and night. Frequently in private conversations with others he sprinkles lofty praise of Hoover, extolling his trustworthiness and recounting how ingeniously the FBI has infiltrated certain questionable organizations.

It has become characteristic of the President to refer to Hoover in superlatives, so much so that at times listeners, conditioned perhaps by

skepticism bred of experience in Washington, suspect he would not mind if a report on his words trickled back to the FBI chief.

Two of the capital's shrewdest students of power politics are Lyndon B. Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover. The importance of what each can contribute to the strength of the other is well known to both.

Hoover has become such a politically formidable figure over the years that his prestige has had to be taken into account by Presidents whether they liked it or not.

Presidents have been keenly aware that, if retired to private life unwillingly, Hoover could, were he so disposed, become a political rallying point with awkward implications for the White House.

Thus, the report in Newsweek magazine last December that the President had decided he must find a new FBI chief and that "the search is on" embarrassed the administration.

Hoover at Side

The White House denied the report. Mr. Johnson displayed much anger over it. Whatever else, the Newsweek article ended all speculation about Hoover's early departure from the government.

When the President went on television last March 26 to announce the arrest of Ku Klux Klan members accused of murdering Mrs. Viola Liuzzo near Selma, Ala., during the voting rights march, he had Hoover at his right

hand. He referred to him as "our honored public servant" and praised the work of the FBI and its director.

In sending a team of FBI agents to the Dominican Republic, as reported Tuesday in The Times, the President took an unusual step.

Commenting on it after the White House tacitly had confirmed the report, an FBI spokesman said there was no law forbidding assignment of FBI agents overseas. He noted that some embassies abroad have FBI agents attached.

CIA's Role

It was understood that FBI agents are stationed in Bonn, Paris, Rome, London, Ottawa, Berne, Tokyo, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and other capitals. They perform rather routine functions, such as liaison with foreign police forces.

Certainly it has been the custom since the establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency after World War II to leave the gathering of intelligence overseas to this agency, which, at the same time, co-operates with the FBI in the United States on certain matters of intelligence and security.

Reportedly, the President contacted Hoover personally and asked him to undertake the Dominican investigation.

Because of the credence that Congress and the public give to Hoover and the FBI,

it is widely supposed here that the President, under some criticism that he overacted to the Dominican revolt, would like to bolster his case with FBI findings about the extent of the danger of a Communist take-over in Santo Domingo.

What would happen if the FBI should find that, on the contrary, the Communist threat was exaggerated is a matter of conjecture.

Legally, Hoover is under the jurisdiction of the attorney general. In the previous administration, Hoover regularly reported to President

John F. Kennedy through Robert F. Kennedy, then the attorney general, though on a number of occasions, he met with the President.

In this administration, in which Nicholas D. Katzenbach has taken over as attorney general, Hoover obviously has no trouble going directly to Mr. Johnson.

Even his right-hand man, Cartha D. DeLoach, assistant director of the FBI crime records division, reportedly has a special White House telephone in his home.

Before entering the White House Mr. Johnson was an

old friend and neighbor of Hoover's in Washington.

Last May, "in the public interest," the President signed an executive order waiving compulsory retirement that would have taken effect on Hoover's 70th birthday last Jan. 1.

After the election in November, Hoover embarrassed the administration with Negroes by calling Dr. Martin Luther King, civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, "the

most notorious liar in the country."

It was soon after this that the report appeared that the President had decided he must replace Hoover. Eventually, however, this feud was patched over.

Hoover's role in the future of the Johnson administration will be watched with interest in Washington, for it appears that the FBI director's influence with the President is on the rise. EVD