

Roy Wilkins Calls Report on His Aid To FBI 'Fantasy'

NEW YORK (AP) — Roy Wilkins, retired leader of the NAACP, says a report that he cooperated with the FBI in a campaign to oust Martin Luther King from the forefront of the civil rights movement is "pure fantasy, a damn lie."

The Washington Post yesterday identified Wilkins as the black leader whose name was deleted from a Dec. 1, 1964, FBI memo that discussed an undercover campaign against King.

Wilkins, in a statement read by his wife, said, "Every black person with any sense knew that J. Edgar Hoover was trying to weaken or destroy the movement for civil rights through his attempt to discredit Dr. King.

"My record of loyalty to my people and the cause of individual civil rights is open for anyone to see. At this stage in my life I don't think I have to defend it."

The Post quoted unidentified sources who said Wilkins met Nov. 27, 1964, with Cartha DeLoach, then assistant FBI director, about the bureau's attitude toward King.

The 76-year-old Wilkins declined to be interviewed, but his wife said, "He did meet with DeLoach for the purpose of asking the FBI to lay off of Dr. King. He asked for it after a newspaper reporter had told him that the FBI was leaking derogatory stories about Dr. King to the press."

The Post said that in a memo written Nov. 27, DeLoach said his meeting with Wilkins ended with Wilkins, then executive secretary of the NAACP, promising to "tell King that he can't win in a battle with the FBI and that the best thing for him to do is to retire from public life."

Some of the DeLoach remarks in the Nov. 27 memo were included in a subsequent Dec. 1 memo written by FBI official J.A. Sizoo, but with the name of the black leader deleted. That memo was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the non-profit Center for National Security Studies.

The center is a private research organization that studies government intelligence operations and tries to detect abuses.

DeLoach had told The Atlanta Journal that he had "a vague recollection of some black leader coming to see me."

"I don't remember who he was," the former assistant FBI director added. "I have no idea what we talked about."