

FBI Facing Stricter Curbs

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WASHINGTON — The Justice Department plans to use its extensive investigation of FBI conduct in probing the private life and assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to justify further tightening control over the bureau.

Aides of Attorney General Griffin B. Bell said today he will quickly implement many administrative reforms recommended by a special department

task force as a result of its 10-month study of FBI activities involving King.

The task force concluded that the FBI conducted a thorough investigation of the King assassination and found no evidence to believe that King's convicted murderer, James Earl Ray, was part of a conspiracy.

But the task force's 149-page report was highly critical of FBI conduct during a six-year security probe of the civil rights leader prior to his death. The report concluded that the FBI criminally harassed King, but that the statute of limitations on possible viola-

tions has run out—precluding prosecution of present or former FBI officials.

The task force said disciplinary action against FBI officials also was precluded by the fact that J. Edgar Hoover, who directed the investigation, is dead, and his key aides are either dead or retired.

The task force, which consisted of five lawyers, made strong recommendations for remedial action including:

✓ Tighter control over FBI activities by Justice Department lawyers and the attorney general himself, with no criminal investigation by the FBI with-

Pittsburgh Press, Sat., Feb. 19, 1977 A-3

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out "the closest coordination and consultation" of proper departmental officials.

✓ Clear directives that the FBI may not bypass the attorney general and deal directly with the White House.

✓ More black FBI agents to overcome the bureau's limited "outlook and understanding of the problems of race relations."

✓ Sealing of the FBI's tapes and transcripts concerning King's personal life and congressional legislation authorizing the National Archives to destroy these records.

✓ New laws making it a felony for the malicious dissemination of FBI investigative data. This is presently a misdemeanor.

✓ Censorship of all FBI public relations activities and press relations

by the public information office of the Justice Department.

"We intend to act on those recommendations," a Bell aide said after the report on the King investigation, originally ordered by former Attorney General Edward H. Levi last April, was released to the press yesterday.

The task force specifically recommended against disciplinary action for the FBI field agents and their immediate supervisors who played a role in the "illicit dissemination of raw investigative data to discredit Dr. King" and bureau efforts "to intimidate him, to break up his marriage and the explicit and implicit efforts to blackmail him."

Noting the wiretaps of King had the approval of then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and the harassment of King was ordered by Hoover, the task force concluded:

"We do not think the 'leg men' in the bureau should be held to an undefined standard of behavior, much less a standard not observed by the highest legal officer of the government."

"In over view (Hoover's) subordinates were far removed from decision responsibility. Moreover, we think the subordinates clearly felt that, by reason of Director Hoover's overpowering and intimidating domination of the bureau, they had no choice but to implement the bureau's directions."

In recommending that defamatory files on King's personal life be destroyed, the task force noted that King's family might seek those tapes and documents. "Worse still, they may be sought by members of the public at large under the Freedom of Information Act," the task force report said.