

Johnson's Reliance on

By Robert J. Donovan
Los Angeles Times

New light has been shed on relations between President Johnson and J. Edgar Hoover with disclosure that Mr. Johnson has 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 on broader questions such as the commitment of Marines to the Dominican Republic.

If appearances are a true

indication, Mr. Johnson now is personally closer to Hoover than any other President ever has been although five months ago he was reported on high authority to have been considering replacing Hoover at the FBI. This was soon after Hoover had called the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "the most notorious liar" in the country.

Evidently, Mr. Johnson talks to Hoover often 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.

Two of this 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.

Presidents have been keenly aware that, if retired to private life unwillingly, Hoover could, were he so disposed, be-

FBI Chief Grows

New Dominican Inquiry Enhances Hoover Role

come a political rallying point.

Thus the report in Newsweek last December that the President had decided he must find a new FBI chief and that "the search is on" proved highly embarrassing to the Administration.

The White House denied the report; Mr. Johnson displayed much anger over it. Whatever else, the Newsweek article had the effect of ending all speculation about Hoover's early departure from the Government.

When the President last March 26 went on television to announce the arrest of Ku

Klux Klan members accused of murdering Viola Gregg Liuzzo near Selma, Ala., during the civil 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, the President took an unusual step.

Commenting on it after the White House had tacitly confirmed the report, an FBI spokesman said there was no law forbidding assignment of

FBI agents overseas. Some U.S. embassies abroad, he noted, have FBI agents attached.

Primarily, however, 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, cooperates with the FBI in the United States on certain matters of intelligence and security.

Reportedly, the President

got in touch with Hoover personally and asked him to undertake the investigation. Because of the credence to Congress and the public given to Hoover and the FBI, it is widely supposed here that the President, under some criticism that he over-reacted to the Dominican revolt, would like to bolster his case with FBI findings about the extent of the danger of a Communist takeover 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.