

Domestic Intelligence Is Defended

11/10/75
By John M. Goshko

Washington Post Staff Writer

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley yesterday defended domestic intelligence activities as necessary to combat extremists "basking in the sunshine of the freedoms we enjoy while working to destroy the form of government that assures those freedoms."

Speaking at a seminar sponsored for members of Congress by the American Conservative Union, Kelley insisted that there is no contradiction between "programs to protect our nation's security" and "the sacred rights and freedoms that we Americans honor and enjoy."

"No reasonable person, and certainly not the FBI, opposes legitimate dissent," he said.

Underlying his remarks was the controversy that has enveloped such federal agencies as the FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency because of their domestic spying activities.

The FBI, for example, has been criticized heavily for mounting a campaign of systematic harassment and disruption against extremist groups of the left and right in the 1960s and early 1970s.

To this, Kelley said: "If excesses have occurred in the past in domestic intelligence operations, perhaps their occurrence can be attributed in part to a peculiar attitude on the part of vast numbers of citizens — an attitude of 'let the FBI' and 'let the police' do the job — an all-too-familiar attitude of aloofness and noninvolvement."

The FBI, he said, must "rely on Congress, the courts and ultimately the American people for the legal tools and the support that are so essential if we are to adequately perform our mandated duties in the domestic security field."

He listed as elements of this support greater backing for "sensible gun control regulations," laws that would make it more difficult to procure the materials for bomb construction and the idea that extremists who commit acts of violence "should be held strictly accountable for their crimes under law."