

21 Officers of F.B.I. Criticize McGovern And Defend Hoover

WASHINGTON, March 9 (AP)—Twenty-one senior officers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation have joined in defending J. Edgar Hoover against the criticism of Senator George S. McGovern.

They also denounced the South Dakota Senator, who is the only announced candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination as an irresponsible, reprehensible opportunist.

The F.B.I. officials made

their remarks in letters, which Mr. McGovern had published today in The Congressional Record.

The Senator said the letters came from "the very men who have cooperated in the redirection of Mr. Hoover's administration from the interests of law enforcement to an overbearing concern for the F.B.I.'s public image."

The letter-writing campaign stemmed from Senator McGovern's publication March 1 of an anonymous letter he said came from 10 bureau agents critical of Mr. Hoover.

Mr. McGovern has been seeking a Senate inquiry into the resignation under pressure of John F. Shaw, an agent who

wrote a letter that included some criticism of Mr. Hoover.

In one of the letters defending Mr. Hoover, Clyde Tolson, associate director of the F.B.I., accused Senator McGovern of criticizing the bureau's director for political purposes.

"You are not the first person I have encountered during 30 years in Washington whose ambition has far exceeded his ability, and I cannot help wonder how many other esteemed career public servants will be maligned and abused before your political balloon runs out of hot air," Mr. Tolson wrote.

Senator McGovern said the Tolson letter "has well exceeded the bounds of proper comment by a high Government official."

NYT - 3/10/61