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Kelley Discounts F.B.I.'s Link to a Terrorist Group

By JOHN M. CREWDSON
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WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 — Clarence M. Kelley, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, denied today that his agency had played a significant role in financing or encouraging the activities of a group of right-wing San Diego terrorists known as the Secret Army Organization.

Mr. Kelley said that while the bureau investigated the organization before it broke up in 1972 and had spent funds to develop an informant within the group, its agents "certainly had not" directed, countenanced or paid for the group's alleged bombing, burglary and murder attempts against anti-war activists in the area.

He made his remarks on the ABC "Issues and Answers" television program in response to questions about a report in today's San Diego Union that the F.B.I. had created the secret group and "sanctioned" its alleged terrorist activities.

Rise in Terrorism Seen

Mr. Kelley expressed considerable concern over what he termed "a tremendous rise" in terroristic activity in this country over the last few years, and he called "horrifying" the bombing last month at New York City's La Guardia Airport, in which 11 people were killed and some 70 injured.

But he conceded that the F.B.I. had still found no evidence to indicate whether the bombing might have been carried out by a lunatic or a terrorist group, although he said his own intuition was that it had been terrorists.

The F.B.I. is puzzled, he said, by the fact that "this is one of the few" such bombings in recent memory in which no group or individual had taken responsibility for planting the explosive device, which experts have determined was left in a locker in a luggage-claims section at one of the airport's terminals.

Despite Mr. Kelley's insistence today that the F.B.I. "did not sponsor, did not engage in and did not condone" any of the Secret Army Organization activities, information has been placed on the public record or gathered by the Senate Select Committee on Intel-

ligence that shows substantial F.B.I. involvement with the San Diego group.

Howard B. Godfrey, the F.B.I. informant to whom Mr. Kelley referred, who was also one of the co-founders of the Secret Army Organization, has testified in a California court that the bureau gave him \$10,000 to \$20,000 worth of weapons and explosives for use by the group in addition to his \$250-a-month salary as an informant.

In addition, a report by the American Civil Liberties Union provided to the Senate committee last summer, quotes John Rosperry, a second F.B.I. informant, as alleging that bureau agents had instructed him to kill Peter Bohmer, a San Diego economics professor and racial activist, but that he had not.

However, according to court testimony, members of the secret group, including Mr. Godfrey, did carry out such a murder attempt on Jan. 6, 1972, when they fired a pistol through the front window of Mr. Bohmer's San Diego home. Mr. Godfrey said that he did

not fire the pistol but that he was in an automobile with the men who did. Mr. Bohmer was unhurt, but Paula Tharp, a friend, was wounded in the elbow.

Senate committee investigators have discovered, according to sources familiar with their inquiry, that the pistol in question was later given by Mr. Godfrey to his controlling F.B.I. agent, Steven Christiansen, a member of the bureau's San Diego office.

Committee sources said that Mr. Christiansen concealed the weapon in his own home for half a year while the San Diego police searched for evidence in the Tharp shooting.

The sources said that Mr. Christiansen, who has since resigned from the bureau, was disciplined in some undisciplinary way by the F.B.I. for his handling of the secret group.

Mr. Kelley conceded today that he did not "recall all the details" about the case. Under its guidelines for the use of informants, the bureau

has held that while its informants must stop short of initiating the commission of a crime, they may infiltrate and even lead politically radical or violent organizations and provide the necessary means to others who are inclined themselves to break the law.

Mr. Kelley stated today that the bureau did not "have a practice of providing funds to set up an organization" to serve as a vehicle for others to engage in political or illegal conduct.

But the Senate committee has uncovered several instances in which F.B.I. agents have encouraged informants to found radical or Marxist organizations as a focal point for such activities.

The committee, according to staff aides, is considering drafting legislation that would sharply restrict the activities in which F.B.I. informants could engage, and that might even require the bureau to obtain a court order before infiltrating a group.