

# Boggs, GOP Spar On Wiretap Charge

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House Majority Leader Hale Boggs (La.) charged the FBI yesterday with spying on congressmen, but Republican defenders angrily retorted that he offered no proof.

Boggs spoke for an hour in an effort to buttress a charge he had made in a one-minute speech on April 5 charging the FBI with tapping the telephones of members of Congress. About 70 members, including leaders of both parties, waited at the end of the day's business to listen.

At the end of the speech, a group of Democrats stood and applauded Boggs' denunciation of the "secret police spying and prying" into the lives of congressmen and other citizens.

But Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R-Md.), a former FBI agent, replied: "I am shocked, disgusted and nauseated at the stench of red herring in this chamber." He said Boggs had promised proof of wiretapping and had produced none. No other Democratic Party leaders spoke.

After Boggs' speech, Attorney General John N. Mitchell issued a statement saying that "as expected, Mr. Boggs failed

completely and totally to substantiate his wild charges." Mitchell said Boggs had produced nothing to show that the FBI has "done anything more than perform its duty to obtain criminal evidence by lawful means."

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## BOGGS, From A1

"It is unfortunate that Mr. Boggs continues to use the high office he holds to malign and defame the most respected

investigating agency in the world."

Boggs related a personal incident from last summer: "I became suspicious of interference on the telephone lines at my private residence. The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company was asked to investigate. The investigator determined that a tap had been placed on my private telephone lines but that it had been removed in advance of the inspection.

"Some time later, the telephone company transmitted to me its official report on the matter. The report stated categorically that there was no tap on my lines. Subsequently I learned that it is the policy of the Washington company and of the regional companies throughout the Bell System to give such reports, denying the existence of a tap if the tap had been placed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Hogan replied that there is no way for anyone to tell whether a telephone has been tapped, nor any way to tell who placed a tap if one were found.

Boggs also repeated his demand that J. Edgar Hoover,

76-year-old director of the FBI, be fired. He said Hoover had performed great service in his 47 years as director but should now give way to younger men.

Boggs said two "highly placed career officials" of the Department of Justice recently told him that "the bureau was being destroyed—being turned into something it had never been—all because it was being used not to perform its mission but to protect the position of its director."

The bureau is "no longer the FBI of film and fiction," said Boggs. For a quarter century, he said, it has been used increasingly to spy on what people think, rather than on criminal acts they perform. "For a decade, we have seen instance after instance of the director himself conducting himself in ways which no responsible law enforcement executive would permit."

Boggs specifically mentioned Hoover's action in charging a group with conspiring to kidnap a high government official months before they were indicted.

Boggs also recited other cases which are matters of public record, such as an FBI informer going to the office of

Rep. John Dowdy (D-Tex.) with an electronic device taped to his back to record a conversation. Dowdy has been indicted on charges of accepting a bribe.

"Any one of you can be sitting in your office and an informer can come in with a tape on his back and the secret police can do anything they want with it," said Boggs.

Boggs quoted Attorney General Mitchell as saying congressmen are becoming "paranoid" on the subject of being spied on.

"If that is so," said Boggs, "it is exactly what is intended. Freedom of action by men in public life can be compro-

mised quite as effectively by the fear of surveillance as by the fact of surveillance. This is a standard objective and tactic of the bureau."

The FBI is vital to national security, said Boggs, but it cannot be what it should be "so long as it runs beyond the oversight and accountability of the Congress."

He asked President Nixon to appoint a commission to investigate the operations of the FBI "to go to the core of this cancer and remove it before the poisons spread further."

A survey by Congressional Quarterly, meanwhile, revealed that the House Appropriations Committee currently

employs three FBI agents full-time and 25 others parttime as investigators. The committee, which acts on all spending requests, uses the agents to investigate financial affairs of government agencies. The practice began in 1943.

CQ quoted Rep. Abner Mikva (D-Ill.), who was himself subject to Army Intelligence surveillance for antiwar activities, as saying use of executive branch investigators by the legislative branch "distorts the separation of powers." The Senate Appropriations Committee has never employed FBI agents as investigators, according to Chairman Allen J. Ellender (D-La.).