

Kelley fires high FBI official

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WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley on Friday fired the agency's No. 2 official in the wake of Justice Department investigations of FBI burglaries and financial kickbacks.

Kelley "asked for and received the resignation of Associate Director Nicholas P. Callahan," the FBI said in an announcement. Kelley made the decision from his sickbed at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment for a back ailment.

"Director Kelley declined to discuss the matter because of the continuing investigations of various allegations concerning former and present officials and personnel of the Federal Bureau of Investigation," the statement continued.

An FBI spokesman declined to elaborate on Callahan's dismissal.

The firing of Callahan was Kelley's first sharp, strong response — at least in public — to the reports that current FBI

officials are under investigation in two separate Justice Department probes.

The fact that Kelley fired Callahan was all the more significant because Callahan was eligible for retirement.

Callahan, 62, has been with the FBI for about 40 years and rose through the ranks under the bureau's first director, the late J. Edgar Hoover. He was near the top of the hierarchy when Kelley took over three years ago.

Kelley appointed Callahan associate director despite criticism inside and outside the bureau that he was relying too much on old Hoover hands.

The department's Civil Rights Division a few weeks ago began an investigation of FBI burglaries during the past five years. It is examining whether criminal charges should be brought against agents or officials for violating the civil rights of Americans.

Kelley acknowledged recently that

some burglaries were conducted as late as April 1973, three months before he took office.

He said he had based earlier statements that no burglaries were conducted since the mid-1960s on the best information that was provided to him at the time.

The targets of the burglaries are believed to have been political militants.

The other investigation is in the hands of the Justice Department's Office of Personnel Accountability, which reports directly to Atty. Gen. Edward B. Levi.

It involves allegations of improprieties, including financial kickbacks, in the purchase of electronic surveillance equipment and other goods.

A department official has said the probe is not limited to kickbacks but involves other alleged "abuses of power."