

Held Admits Cointelpro Ties

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Richard G. Held, newly appointed deputy head of the FBI, acknowledged yesterday that he implemented a program of "dirty tricks" against political radicals in Minnesota, but said he was "not aware of its day-to-day activities."

In a statement released yesterday, Held said no "illegal acts were committed or advocated by special agents of the Minneapolis office," which he headed from 1962 to 1973.

However, he said that "it was my responsibility to see that the work proceeded" in the bureau's domestic counterintelligence program, known as Cointelpro, to harass and discredit alleged political radicals during the 1960s and early 1970s.

He added, "I was not in any decision-making positions when this program was instituted nor did I direct it while the program was active."

Held said he was releasing a statement on his involvement in Cointelpro because

of recent stories in the press. The Washington Post on Thursday reported that a Senate intelligence committee report listed five instances between 1968 and 1970 when the Minneapolis field office tried to discredit Cointelpro "targets," including student protesters at the University of Minnesota.

Sources said that FBI memos cited in the report show that disruption campaigns were proposed by the Minneapolis office and approved by officials in Washington.

An FBI spokesman said Held would not discuss the extent of his involvement in the specific actions mentioned in the Senate report.

"You're asking him to go back seven years and remember one or two of the 4,000 cases he handled," the spokesman said. "That's not practical."

The counterintelligence program was carried out between 1956 and 1971 against such groups as the Communist Party, the Ku Klux Klan, black militants and antiwar protesters.

According to the Senate report, "targets" at the University of Minnesota included a woman leader of the campus Afro American Action Committee and students who carried signs with four letter words in a demonstration against censorship of the student newspaper.

Among the tactics used against these targets, the report said, were attempts to arrange for reporters to interview them with planged questions and anonymous mailings to college administrators.

"As the special agent in

charge" of the Minneapolis office, Held stated, "I had the responsibility for all the activities that flow from that office, good or bad. This responsibility could not be delegated, and I in no way wish to do this."

Held noted that FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley in a speech on May 8 apologized for past FBI wrong doing, and said he shared the director's sentiments.

Held's statement said Cointelpro "was instituted and directed from Washington" and that "it was our responsibility in the Minneapolis office to implement this program."

"While I was in charge of this office," he said, "we covered three states consisting of 207 counties, with an approximate caseload of 4,000. . . I was aware of Cointelpro, but I was not aware of its day-to-day activities. The same can be said for the above 4,000 cases."