

War Foes Deny Charges By Hoover, Weigh Lawsuit

Associated Press

An antiwar group, accused by FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover of plotting to disrupt capital utility lines and kidnap a high federal official, denied both charges yesterday and said a lawsuit is being considered.

In a news conference, Roman Catholic priests, nuns and laymen of the East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives continually stressed the group's nonviolent character and said Hoover was attempting to set the stage for repression of all leftist groups.

Dominican Sister Susan Cordes, 32, said the group would welcome an official investigation which, she hoped, "would uncover what is happening in this country."

Jesuit priest Peter Ford, 32, of Jersey City, said "as a group we have never met with the Berrigans"—Daniel and

Philip, both priests held in a Connecticut federal prison and said by Hoover to be principal leaders of the group.

Fordi said he has known both priests and many of the group members have read their writings, met socially with them, and worked with them over the years in such endeavors as church social work.

Father Joe R. Wenderoth, 34, of Baltimore, said the Berrigans "have no connection whatsoever with us."

The Berrigans earlier issued a statement through their lawyers also denying Hoover's charge and declaring the FBI chief should "either . . . prosecute us or publicly retract the charges he made."

(Afterwards, Attorney General John N. Mitchell was asked through an aide whether Hoover's allegations violated Justice Department policy of refusing to discuss criminal cases that are under investigation. Mitchell was also asked about liaison with the FBI director before he made his charges last week before a Senate appropriations subcommittee.

(A Justice spokesman said that Mitchell did not know of

Hoover's testimony in advance nor that it would be made public. Mitchell replied to questions concerning the testimony representing a policy change and whether indictments were planned with a "no comment.")



Father Peter Ford and Sister Susan Davis deny charge that antiwar group plotted to kidnap federal official.

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