

Albert Queries FBI About Hill Files

By Jack Anderson

Speaker Carl Albert has asked the FBI's new boss, Clarence Kelley, to advise him on the "very serious matter" of FBI congressional files.

For years, we have been reporting on the FBI's habit of keeping files on prominent Americans, including members of Congress. As evidence, we have quoted excerpts from the secret FBI files.

When Kelley's predecessor, Pat Gray, took over the FBI, he blandly assured newsmen: "None of you guys are going to believe this—and I don't know how to make you believe it—but there are no dossiers or secret files."

We immediately offered to tell Gray, since he was new around the FBI, where some of the secret files were stashed. We even printed several of the file numbers to help him locate the hidden dossiers.

But it wasn't until the FBI was caught snooping into the private life of a Democratic congressional candidate six months later that Gray admitted the FBI had been collecting information on both congressmen and candidates since 1950.

Several congressmen, eager to find out what the FBI has been compiling about them, have asked to see their FBI files. But the bureau has contended that the law prohibits

the destruction or dissemination of existing files.

Now the mighty House Speaker has joined in the inquiry. As yet, Kelley hasn't responded to Albert's request. But he has been turning down other congressional requests.

For example, Rep. Edward Koch (D-N.Y.), a leader in the effort to close the books on the FBI's political files, got nowhere with Kelley.

"I am confident," responded the FBI chief in a private letter, "that you have file references in your office on me and my predecessors (to locate correspondence). I see nothing sinister in your maintenance of file references on me, and I trust you would agree this bureau is equally entitled to maintain such file references concerning you."

From our own access to the FBI's secret files, however, we can report that the FBI keeps far more than routine references. The congressional dossiers, in addition to newspaper clippings and biographical data, also contain eavesdrop information, surveillance reports and gossip from informants.

Speaker Albert's FBI file, for example, contains a report about his relationship with lobbyist Fred Black, based upon a conversation picked up by an FBI listening device.

The firm but friendly Kelley, however, shows no inclination to open up the congressional files. Although the FBI hasn't hesitated in the past to show files to favored congressmen and newsmen, Kelley wrote to Koch: "If there is a need to purge all references to you from FBI files or that you must inspect our files, certainly you are entitled to seek appropriate legislation to accomplish your objectives."

Unless Albert's intervention carries more weight with Kelley, in other words, it will take an act of Congress to eliminate the FBI's political files.

Diplomatic Express—Most of our wandering legislators are now back from their summer junkets, but the souvenirs they bought are following behind. Usually, these are shipped home by diplomatic pouch as if they were state secrets.

Thus the taxpayers not only pay the travel expenses for flying members of Congress all over the world but also the freight charges for bringing back their accumulated loot.

In South Vietnam, for instance, some visiting congressmen went on a shopping spree. They dumped their vases, jade elephants and bric-a-brac upon the U.S. embassy which shipped them by diplomatic air pouch to Capitol Hill.

But the U.S. embassy in Thailand balked when Rep. Law-

rence Hogan (R-Md.) tried to send a rattan patio set home by diplomatic pouch. The embassy fired off a cable to the State Department requesting guidance.

"Air freight cost on packages Congressman Hogan requested embassy escort officer to pouch to Washington will amount to \$620," explained the cable. "Embassy escort officer advised Congressman Hogan shipment via air pouch would be very expensive and recommended packages be forwarded via surface pouch."

"Congressman Hogan stated another' embassy had forwarded his packages by air pouch and thus did not agree shipment should be via surface pouch... Advise recommended means of transport."

The State Department finally notified Hogan he would have to pay commercial freight charges to ship his patio furniture to Washington.

Hogan told us he never asked the embassy to send his packages by diplomatic air pouch but merely mentioned that the Saigon embassy had done so.

Footnote: The other House members in Hogan's party were Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.), Joshua Eilberg (D-Pa.), Marvin Esch (R-Mich.), and William Steiger (R-Wis.). The Navy flew them, their wives and Bella Abzug's husband to the Far East.

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