

FBI Officials, Congressmen Condemn Attack on Hoover

A news account published Tuesday quoting a former FBI assistant director as describing the late J. Edgar Hoover as "not of sound mind" in his last years was called "irresponsible and reprehensible" yesterday by top FBI officials.

W. Mark Felt, acting associate FBI director, said the Los Angeles Times story, which was published in The Washington Post, "defamed the character of a great American who cannot now defend himself."

Felt, who said he was speaking for himself and all assistant directors of the FBI, said that the day before his death, Hoover "demonstrated extraordinary acuity in making significant decisions on the in-

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vestigative work of the bureau."

Less than two months before his death, Felt said, Hoover testified before two congressional committees, supplying "massive information in minute detail . . . without resorting to notes or consulting with any assistants."

The Los Angeles Times story quoted William H. Sullivan, former assistant FBI director, as saying that because Hoover "could not be trusted," FBI wiretap files were removed from the director's office and given to Assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian. The files were found last Saturday in a safe in the White House office of presidential assistant John D. Ehrlichman.

Sullivan, now director of the Justice Department's Office of National Narcotics Intelligence, was forced by Hoover to retire from the FBI on Oct. 6, 1971.

Joining the criticism yesterday were four congressmen, who defended Hoover against what they termed "scurrilous remarks" made by Sullivan, Reps. Robert L. Sikes (D-Fla.), John J. Flynt (D-Ga.), John W. Slack (D-W.Va.) and Rep. Samuel L. Devine (R-Ohio).

They were particularly critical of an allegation attributed to Sullivan that Hoover was a "master black-mailer" who may have intended to use the wiretap records for political purposes.