

# Big Kidnap Plot Charged By Hoover

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Washington

J. Edgar Hoover said yesterday that the FBI has uncovered a plot by an East Coast group to kidnap a high Government official and demand as ransom an end to United States bombing operations in Southeast Asia and the release of all "political" prisoners in the nation.

The FBI director told a Senate appropriations subcommittee, from which he seeks more funds to hire more agents, the name of a White House staff member has been mentioned as a possible kidnap victim. He would not disclose the identity of the official.

Senator Robert C. Byrd (Dem.-W.Va.), the committee chairman, later told newsmen that Hoover did not expand on his testimony about the plot, either on or off the record.

Byrd said neither he nor Senator Roman L. Hruska (Rep.-Neb.), the only other subcommittee member present, asked Hoover any questions about it.

"I'd like to know who the White House official is," Byrd said. "I don't know why I didn't ask him."

Other sources said the White House staffer was only one of several Government officials and foreign diplomats mentioned as possible kidnap victims in intelligence

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obtained by the FBI from the radical East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives, a militant group composed of Catholic priests and nuns, teachers and students.

Hoover said the "principal leaders" of the "anarchist group" are Philip and Daniel Berrigan, Catholic priests now serving terms in a federal prison in Danbury, Conn., for destroying Selective Service records in Baltimore in 1968.

The director did not explain how the FBI obtained its information but another source said the intelligence came by infiltrating the radical group's ranks.

He added that the group also plans to blow up underground electrical conduits and steam pipes in Washington in order to disrupt operations of the Federal Government. He spoke in the present tense as he discussed the alleged plotting.

## REACTION

In New York, two attorneys who represent the Berrigan brothers said that Hoover "has once more stooped to use his immense powers for the aggrandizement of his own office and to carry on vendettas against his critics."

The lawyers, William M. Kunstler and the Rev. William C. Cunningham, said in a statement: "If Mr. Hoover had the evidence he claims to have, then it would be his sworn duty to see that the Berrigans and their alleged co-conspirators are prosecuted for serious crimes."

The East Coast Conspiracy to Save Lives was the name given a group of eight persons who destroyed draft records in Philadelphia last February. In prior and subsequent raids on draft offices the militants took different names.

Most of the raids in the last two years were conducted by young Catholic radicals, some of whom were priests and nuns. In none of the raids were there reports of violence.

## REFUSAL

The government refused permission for the Berrigans to be interviewed in prison to reply to Hoover's accusation. Justice Department spokesman John Wilson said no exception would be made to the long-standing Bureau of Prisons policy prohibiting interviews with Federal inmates.

Hoover made his statements in testimony from a prepared text before a closed session of the Senate committee. Byrd released the testimony.

Hoover also warned that the Black Panthers may resort to aircraft hijackings to gain the release of party

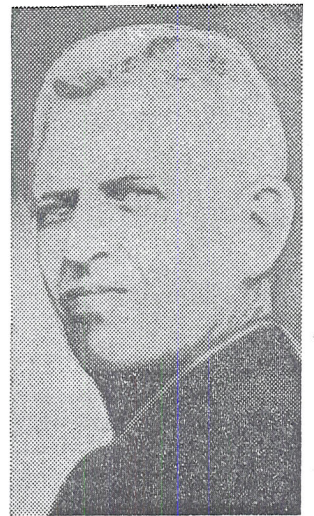
chairman Bobby Seale and other Panther leaders now in jail. He said the Panthers may "seek to ape Arab tactics" and cited increasing ties between the militant blacks and Arab guerrillas in Algeria.

## 'RESPONSIBLE'

The Panthers, Hoover said, have been "directly responsible" for killing 11 policemen and wounding 64 others in the last four years.



DANIEL BERRIGAN



PHILIP BERRIGAN

Catholic priests were Hoover's target

In a direct slap at the California court system, Hoover noted that Panther leader Huey Newton, who is awaiting trial for voluntary manslaughter after his conviction for the 1967 killing of an Oakland policeman was reversed, was freed on bond last August.

"Newton was released ... with no travel restrictions of any kind imposed on him by the court. He is free to travel whenever and wherever he desires."

## MONEY

Hoover made his allegations before the subcommittee in seeking a \$14.1 million supplemental appropriation to pay the salaries of 1000 additional FBI agents and 702 clerks whose employment was authorized under the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, recently passed by Congress.

Byrd said the Justice Department also sought \$7.3 million to hire additional federal marshals to guard more than 20 federal judges who have received threats on their lives.

The crime control law greatly expands federal jurisdiction over gambling activities and corruption of public officials inside the states and gives the FBI jurisdiction over bombings and arson on most college campuses.

A total of 600 of the new agents will be assigned primarily to organized crime duties, while the remainder will work on bombings, radical movements and aircraft hijackings.

## WIRETAPS

Hoover told the Senators to expect greatly increased usage of wiretapping in gambling cases, considering its gigantic scope in the nation.

All 21 of the FBI's court-approved wiretaps involved organized crime cases as of November 16, Hoover said, with nine more taps awaiting installation. Another 35 wiretaps and one microphone surveillance are awaiting approval of the Justice Department, he said.

Despite Attorney General John N. Mitchell's prohibition on using the terms Mafia and Cosa Nostra on grounds that it tainted Italians, the 75-year-old FBI director used "La Cosa Nostra" several times in his testimony.