

FBI Domestic Role Became

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who cut himself and the bureau off from the rest of the federal intelligence establishment.

This picture of Hoover was reinforced by the recently-published top secret memoranda of former White House internal security adviser Tom Charles Huston. The Huston papers portrayed in unflattering terms the former director's successful obstruction to the controversial "1970 Intelligence Plan" disclosed by the President on May 22.

It was largely because of Hoover's alleged bureaucratic isolationism that the President said he had to set the 1970 plan in motion. And it was Hoover's opposition to the plan's opening up the FBI's zealously-guarded internal security turf to other intelligence agencies that caused President Nixon to shelve it after five days.

The bureau has remained silent in the face of its current adversities. It is bereft of the protection of Hoover, the Compleat Bureaucratic Infighter, and it is undergoing its third leadership transition in 13 months. The bureau is anxiously awaiting confirmation of its new director-designate, Clarence M. Kelley, the Kansas City police chief.

Acting FBI Director William D. Ruckelshaus, the bureau's departing temporary trustee, insists that when Kelley comes aboard the malaise in the bureau will evaporate.

"When Kelley is confirmed we may be in a position to do some talking," said one old bureau hand.

The old boy network of Hoover loyalists both in the bureau and among its alumni has been severely stung by the recent attacks and is thirsting for a chance at rebuttal.

"The charge that we cut off liaison with all other intelligence agencies is just not true," said one high-ranking FBI official. "We did cut out a lot of the messenger boy stuff—having agents stationed in other agencies and serving as high-priced couriers. But we have maintained constant liaison with everyone."

In 1970, when the troubles began in earnest for the bureau, the public relationship between Hoover and President Nixon seemed to be a model of cordiality. Only in recent weeks, with publication of the Huston documents, has it been revealed

an Administration

that a grim struggle was already under way with the Nixon administration over reorganizing and expanding the government's powers of domestic surveillance to the point of illegal entry.

The deeds and rhetoric of such groups as the Black Panthers, Weathermen, Students for a Democratic Society, and the post-Cambodia ferment on the campuses were raising a high state of alarm in the White House and Justice Department.

Hoover himself went to Capitol Hill with shrill denunciations of black activists and student demonstrators and their organizations. At one point he proclaimed the Panthers to be the leading internal security threat to the nation.

But the underlying truth was that it was a new ball game for the bureau, one for which the traditional informants and infiltration tactics did not seem to be working.

The response at high levels of the Justice Department and in the White House was to point an accusing finger at the FBI for failing to keep abreast of the agitated domestic scene.

It was in this climate that President Nixon set in motion the 1970 plan, which was allegedly abandoned in the face of Hoover's objections. Ensuing steps were taken by the President—establishment of an inter-agency Intelligence Evaluation Committee and creation of the

Sore Point

President's own Special Investigation Unit (the Plumbers)—to operate on the internal security turf that was once Hoover's exclusive preserve.

"The White House was getting people with no experience. My God, that man Liddy was a wild man when he was in the bureau—a super-klutz," groused one of Hoover's most senior aides. "They were amateurs who were bound to get into trouble. And they did."

Relations worsened. Hoover cut off formal liaison with the Central Intelligence Agency in 1970 because of an incident in Denver in which an FBI agent passed information on to an agency operative. Hoover insisted on knowing the identity of the agent. The CIA refused.

The ragged relations between the bureau and the administration surfaced in Hoover's summary dismissal in October, 1971, of William C. Sullivan, the No. 3 man in the bureau and once Hoover's most valued deputy.

Sullivan had insisted, publicly and privately, on tougher surveillance of New Left and Black Panther activities, as well as of foreign nationals. He openly criticized Hoover for preoccupying himself with such nearly defunct groups as the Communist Party, USA, by then a virtual geriatric society, and the Ku Klux Klan.

Sullivan was a minority voice in the bureau. But he was paid serious heed in the Justice Department where he had the ear of then-Attorney General John N. Mitchell and Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian,

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a principal adviser on national security affairs.

One measure of Sullivan's prior loyalty to the administration was his removal of records of controversial national security wire taps ordered by the White House, from the FBI to Mardian's office in Justice. The former Hoover aide let it be known that he feared the wiretap material would be used by Hoover to embarrass the White House.

And Hoover, in one of his most celebrated "sudden death" reprisals for disloyalty, ordered the locks changed overnight in Sullivan's office and his name removed from the door. Afterward, Sullivan was appointed to a high Justice Department post, chief of narcotics intelligence.

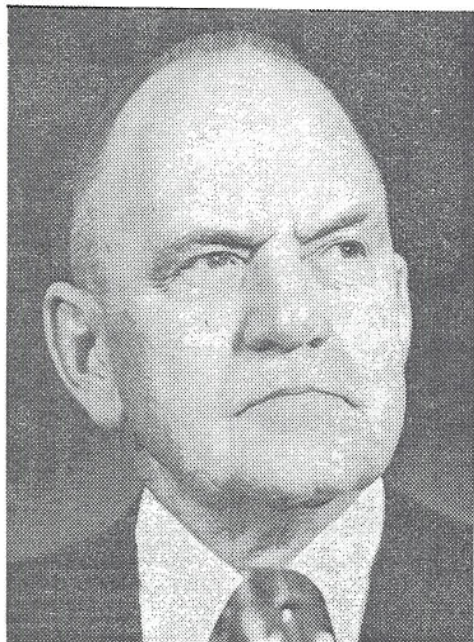
Even after Hoover died the bureau was not wholly passive in its defense. The nomination of Gray and his conduct of the Watergate investigation touched off a form of guerrilla warfare against the administration from within the ranks of the FBI.

One highly placed FBI executive acknowledged that FBI agents may have been instrumental in getting the initial Watergate revelations into public print. Reporters who covered the case acknowledge the role of the agents in opening up the initial peepholes in the cover-up facade some administration officials were trying to erect.

"It wasn't a matter of getting rancorous leaks dumped in your lap," said one Watergate reportorial specialist. "You'd have to go to them and say, what about this or what about that? They'd respond, 'Yes, that's right.' I can think of one guy in the bureau without whom we wouldn't have gotten anywhere."

Acting FBI Director Ruckelshaus acknowledged that "some of our agents were getting nervous about the pace of the Watergate investigation and probably talked to the press. It's against bureau regulations but not against the law."

Former White House domestic counselor John D. Ehrlichman charged in recent congressional testimony that the bureau was "hemorrhaging" with leaks under Gray. The White



—The Washington Post

Temporary successors to J. Edgar Hoover, L. Patrick Gray III, left, and William D. Ruckelshaus, who feel confirmation of Clarence Kelley will help raise morale.

House, he said, "strongly suspected that Time magazine had a freely running leak at the top of Gray's staff."

In the days immediately

after the Watergate arrests in June, 1972, former White House counsel John W. Dean III was on the phone to Gray with repeated complaints about bureau leaks.

Dean has been pictured in Watergate testimony as a key presidential operative for insulating the White House from the scandal.

"When Gray first arrived

we all wanted him to succeed," said a recently retired senior official with more than a quarter of a century in the bureau. "Then we became aware of those speaking trips, the frequent absences from Washington. That's when he got the nickname, 'Two-Day Gray.' Whatever you say about Hoover, he never missed a day of school."

Now Gray is under investigation by the FBI to determine what role he played in the Watergate cover-up.

One of the major ironies of Watergate's impact on the FBI was the apparent inversion of Hoover's reputation as an obsessive anti-Communist warrior who kicked the door down and asked questions later.

Some of Hoover's longstanding liberal critics have acclaimed him for stopping the 1970 intelligence plan with its burglary, mail-opening, bugging and wiretapping provisions.

But as one of the chief lieutenants of the departed director emphasized in an interview, Hoover had not become a sudden convert to civil libertarianism.

"For Mr. Hoover, jurisdiction was paramount. He felt this plan was whittling away at the essence of the FBI and its responsibilities. He didn't object to clandestine entries. We opened mail but we never talked about it or wrote memos. We cracked safes when we felt it was a case of compelling national security. Hoover's law was that you didn't get caught and bring embarrassment on the bureau," said the veteran Hoover loyalist.

The FBI documents burglarized from a bureau office at Media, Pa., in March, 1971, showed that late in 1970 the FBI was wiretapping Black Panther activities and trying laboriously to infiltrate the ghettos with thousands of informants.

The intensity of FBI surveillance against black organizations with the slightest political overtones suggests that at least one part of the 1970 White House plan may have continued in effect through the year.

But is also a matter of widespread agreement, in and outside the bureau, that as Hoover brooded increas-

ingly on his place in history, he became more fastidious about legal procedure.

Bag jobs — burglaries — were out. So was mail snooping. Phones were tapped only on written authorization of the Attorney General. The same with electronic bugs, concealed microphones.

"I was very confident of Hoover in the wiretap area," says former Attorney General Ramsey Clark. "He knew we'd prosecute if we found anything wrong. Hoover was protecting the bureau."

But even Hoover's staunchest loyalists concede that the bureau was not keeping step with the violent political activism in the campuses and ghettos that swept to its peak in the 1968-1970 period.

"We still haven't solved the Capitol bombing or the Pentagon washroom bombing," admitted one retired senior bureau official loyal to Hoover. "We've still got fugitives from the Weathermen and SDS even though they've been on the 'Ten Most Wanted' list. We did a great job on the Communist Party and the Klan. This was different."