

New Blasts In Hoover, Bobby Feud

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Senator Robert F. Kennedy said yesterday there is no indication that FBI director J. Edgar Hoover ever asked Kennedy, when he was Attorney General, for authorization for any electronic eavesdropping device.

And Hoover yesterday called "inconceivable" an earlier statement by the Senator in which Kennedy had said Hoover was "apparently misinformed" as to the extent of Kennedy's knowledge of the eavesdropping methods.

Kennedy also challenged Hoover to make public his entire file on the matter.

The Hoover-Kennedy exchange began when Representative H. R. Gross (R-Iowa) made public a letter and accompanying documents sent to him by Hoover. Hoover said in this letter that Kennedy as Attorney General approved policy for use of hidden microphones, showed great interest in them, listened to the results of some surveillances and raised questions about obtaining better equipment.

Hoover also said Kennedy

From Page 1

was responsible for a marked increase in the use of eavesdropping equipment during his tenure as Attorney General.

Kennedy said yesterday, "It may seem 'inconceivable' to Mr. Hoover that I was not aware of the 'bugging' practices of the FBI during my term as attorney general, but it is nonetheless true. Perhaps I should have known, and since I was the Attorney General I certainly take the responsibility for it, but the plain fact of the matter is that I did not know. I believe that this will be confirmed by every deputy attorney general, assistant attorney general, and head of the organized crime division during my administration of the Department of Justice."

"The first time I became aware of these eavesdropping practices," Kennedy added, "was when they were described in the press in connection with the Las Vegas investigation, and I promptly ordered it ceased. It is curious that Mr. Hoover does not recall this."

"On two occasions, I listened to what appeared to be

recorded conversations with respect to organized crime, there any indication that these had been obtained illegally or that they had been obtained by any Federal agency, and other high Justice Department officials who were present support this recollection.

"Although Mr. Hoover said that this activity was 'intensified' while I was Attorney General, and implies that we discussed it, that fact is that he never discussed this highly important matter with me, and no evidence exists supporting his recollection that we did. Indeed, there is no indication that Mr. Hoover ever asked me for authorization for any single bugging device, in Las Vegas, New York, Washington or anywhere else."

"Since Mr. Hoover is selectively making documents public, I suggest that he make his entire file available, and indicate under which Attorney General this practice began, whether any prior Attorneys General authorized it, and whether or not they were as uninformed as I was . . ."

Kennedy said he believed

assistant FBI director Courtney Evans was telling the truth in a letter sent him last February 17.

Evans's letter to Kennedy, made public by the Senator's office, drew a distinction between telephone taps and the listening devices commonly called "bugs." Evans wrote "since prior Attorneys General had informed the FBI that the use of microphones, as contrasted to telephone taps, need not be specifically approved by the Attorney General, I did not discuss the use of these devices with you in national security or other cases, nor do I know of any written material that was sent to you at any time concerning this procedure, or concerning the use, specific location or other details as to installation of any such devices in Las Vegas, Nevada or anywhere else."

But Hoover attached to his statement yesterday what he said was a copy of a memorandum Evans wrote July 7, 1961, describing a conference that day with Kennedy, then Attorney General.