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Hoover-Riots Bjt 450

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WASHINGTON AP - Director J. Edgar Hoover said Tuesday the FBI neither possesses nor seeks national police power to act in controlling riots.

Hoover made the comment in the May issue of the FBI's "Law Enforcement Bulletin," a monthly publication distributed free to about 56,000 police officials and judges.

The long-time FBI chief explained that he felt it necessary to clarify the FBI's role in civil disorders because it is frequently misunderstood.

There are those, Hoover said who "insist that the FBI is obligated to step in and usurp the power of local law enforcement and police the areas where, in their opinion, a breakdown of law and order has occurred.

"The FBI has no lawful authority or jurisdiction to take this action and certainly does not seek such national police power."

Hoover added that the bureau "has no jurisdiction to protect persons or property or to police and control riotous conditions. These are obligations of local and state police agencies."

He said that basically the FBI's role in civil disorders "is the development and dissemination of intelligence information, at the same time being alert to any specific violations of federal laws over which it has investigative jurisdiction."

Hoover said that "If the FBI has been consistent in any one commitment over the years, it is in its awareness of the exacting limitations within which it must operate. We have meticulously avoided infringement on responsibilities belonging to local and state authorities."

Hoover predicted that individuals would continue to criticize the FBI for refusing to exceed its authority. Some extremists, he said, have accused the FBI of racism when the bureau has refused, as he put it, to exceed its authority. "Many times," he added, "it is determined that these bigots are the same agitators and exploiters who provoked the disorder in the first place."

On the other hand, Hoover said, there are those who insist that the FBI in performing its duties encroaches on the authority of state and local law enforcement authorities.

Hoover forecast that during the coming months "if riots occur, unwarranted criticisms will again be directed against the FBI and other enforcement agencies by those who are eager to mislead the public and to negate effective police cooperation by misrepresenting the facts."

In the same issue of the FBI bulleting, an anthropology professor at the University of Minnesota urged police not to take sides in racial disputes.

Luther P. Gerlach said police are in the middle in racial disputes and are subject to attack by both sides. He wrote:

"There are those who proclaim Black Power, and there are those who proclaim white power. let us join to proclaim center power-power to hold the middle ground and stand firm against the forces of deadly division, the power to help the minority to achieve true justice and true equality, and also to prevent the extremists from turning to civil disobedience and their inevitable civil distruction."

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