

NYTimes

MAY 3 1972



Yoichi Okamoto/Rapho Gullumette

J. Edgar Hoover

J. Edgar Hoover, 77, Dies; To Lie in State of Capitol

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 2—J. Edgar Hoover, who directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation for 48 years and built it into a dominant and controversial force in American law enforcement, died last night from the effects of high blood pressure.

Mr. Hoover, who at 77 years of age still held the F.B.I. firmly within his control, died in his bedroom during the night after working a full day in his office yesterday. He was found by his housekeeper at 8:30 this morning, slumped on the floor beside his bed.

Dr. James L. Luke, Washington's Medical Examiner, attributed the death to "hypertensive cardio-vascular disease." He said that Mr. Hoover had been suffering from a heart ailment for some time but gave no details.

He said that death could have been caused by heart failure associated with high blood pressure, but that no

autopsy would be performed because the death was known to be due to natural causes.

Acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst announced the death at 11 A.M., after F.B.I. offices around the world had been given the news and reports of it began to circulate here. Congress promptly voted its permission for his body to lie in state in the Capitol Rotunda—an honor accorded to only 21 persons before, of whom eight were Presidents or former Presidents.

Mr. Hoover's body will be taken to the Rotunda tomorrow morning and will lie in state until shortly before the funeral Thursday. Arrangements for the funeral were incomplete today, but it was learned that President Nixon would deliver the eulogy at 11 A.M. Thursday at the National Presbyterian Church.

As the only director that the F.B.I. ever had, the strong-

Continued on Page 53, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

willed and demanding bachelor molded the bureau in his own image—efficient, incorruptible and rigid.

His death is expected to touch off a major political debate about the proper purposes and functioning of the agency, which has been accused by critics on the political left in recent years of devoting too much effort to pursuing radicals and alleged subversives and too little to combating organized crime and white-collar offenders.

For this reason, there was speculation today that President Nixon might not name a successor until after the November elections or at least not until the current Senate struggle over Mr. Kleindienst's nomination has ended.

It was learned that an acting director would be named tomorrow, suggesting that no nomination would be sent to Capitol Hill for some time. Clyde E. Tolson, the 71-year-old associate director who was said by Justice Department spokesmen to have assumed command of the F.B.I. today as its second-ranking official, is understood not to be in line to become acting director.

In 1968, Congress made the directorship of the F.B.I. subject to Senate confirmation.

This will offer the Senate Judiciary Committee an opportunity when it holds hearings on the nominee, to delve into such festering issues as the agency's secret dossiers on individuals, its surveillance of the radical left and its new computerized criminal record data bank.

At least a score of persons

were mentioned today as possible successors to Mr. Hoover. Most of them were veteran law enforcement figures, such as Evelle J. Younger, Attorney General of California, Peter J. Pitchess, sheriff of Los Angeles County; Jerry Wilson, chief of police of the District of Columbia, and Cartha Deloach, former Assistant Director of the F.B.I. Supreme Court Justice Bryon R. White's name has been suggested frequently, but he has given no indication that he would accept the position.

The mandatory retirement age for F.B.I. directors is 70, but President Johnson waived it and so did President Nixon. Mr. Hoover had frequently given the impression that he hoped to remain on the job as long as he lived, or at least until the huge new F.B.I. building across Pennsylvania Avenue from the Justice Department was completed.

It is scheduled to be finished in three years. Today, the Senate approved a resolution to name it for John Edgar Hoover.

In recent years, Mr. Hoover had come under periodic pressure to resign, usually after some widely publicized public quarrel with figures on the political left. He exchanged insults with the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., accused the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy of ultimate responsibility for the F.B.I.'s wide-tapping when he was Attorney General and called former Attorney General Ramsey Clark "a jellyfish."

The Berrigan Case

His most recent controversy grew out of his charge that the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and other antiwar activists were plotting to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, the President's top foreign policy adviser.

When a jury in Harrisburg, Pa., found no conspiracy, there were renewed demands that Mr.

Hoover retire. But he weathered the criticism. When he testified recently before the House Appropriations subcommittee, he was showered with the usual compliments, and in the ensuing exchange he assured the Congressmen that the F.B.I. contained no activists, "gay or otherwise."

Mr. Hoover appeared also to be in the good graces of the Nixon Administration, although there was talk that he would be urged to step down if Mr. Nixon won re-election.

President Nixon went to the White House press room this morning to comment on Mr. Hoover's "unparalleled devo-

tion and ability and dedication." Major figures across the political spectrum joined in a virtually unanimous chorus of admiration.

Representative Hale Boggs, Democrat of Louisiana, who last year accused the F.B.I. of having tapped his telephones, made a speech on the floor today declaring that he had never criticized Mr. Hoover personally. "I said then, and I say now, that no man has served his country with greater love and dedication," he said.

Dr. Benjamin Spock, the antiwar activist who is the people's party's candidate for President, called Mr. Hoover's death "a

great relief, especially if his replacement is a man who better understands democratic institutions and the American process."

Gus Hall, general secretary of the Communist party, U.S.A., called Mr. Hoover "a servant of racism, reaction and repression" and a "political pervert whose masochistic passion drove him to savage assaults upon the principles of the Bill of Rights."

He charged that the F.B.I. under Mr. Hoover had hunted down Communists but failed to bring to justice "a single lyncher of 5,000 black Americans."