

Hoover Seen Cutting

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Undercover FBI operations suspended by J. Edgar Hoover in 1966 included "special programs" involving wiretapping, hidden microphones and mail drops, a ranking Justice Department official said yesterday.

These "programs," which the official said had been in effect for years under both Democratic and Republican Presidents, had long been considered an essential part of the FBI's work in national security and counter-intelligence cases.

He contended that they were especially useful in efforts to identify illegal aliens suspected of involvement in espionage against the United States, but explained that they were also used to forecast "racial riots" in the cities and "uprisings" on college campuses.

Confirming parts of President Nixon's statement Tuesday on the Watergate affair and "national security operations," the official said that Hoover suddenly withdrew authority for the activities in 1966 without giving any explanation.

As a result, he said, "J. Edgar wiped us out in the internal security field."

Within a short period of time, he added, the FBI lost some informants who felt they were not getting enough support from the bureau and "it became very difficult for us to cope with espionage."

FBI sources, as well as the Justice Department official, confirmed that the special program of "specific options for expanded intelligence operations" referred to by the President on Tuesday—which was drafted in 1970 but abandoned at the last moment because of Hoover's unilateral objections—would have reinstated the suspended activities with only "slight variations."

But the official added that L. Patrick Gray III, on his own, resumed some of the "special programs" during his 51-week tenure as acting

FBI director that began shortly after Hoover's death in May, 1972.

Specifically, he said, Gray authorized "some increases" in FBI wiretapping.

It was not possible to determine, however, what policy has been adopted by William D. Ruckelshaus, who was named acting director of the bureau four weeks ago after Gray resigned under fire.

The allegations concerning Hoover's restrictions on what the FBI could do are part of a long-standing debate within the bureau over the priorities of the man who was its director and embodied its image for half a century.

While Hoover was frequently under attack by civil libertarians for the extent to which he plunged the FBI into domestic political surveillance, there is a substantial number of people—formerly with the bureau and still in its ranks—who believe just the opposite: that the director, in an apparent effort to protect his image began to tighten the reins in the late 1960s.

Some long-time FBI officials were shocked to find Mr. Nixon, a perennial Hoover supporter from his earliest days as a Congressman in the late 1940s, coming down Tuesday on the side of the director's critics.

The 1966 cutbacks confirmed by the Justice Department official yesterday apparently remained an internal FBI matter and escaped the attention of Johnson administration officials at the time.

Neither Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, who was Attorney General in 1966, nor Ramsey Clark, his successor during the final years of the Johnson presidency, could recall any major policy action in 1966 which corresponds with Mr. Nixon's statement.

Katzenbach suggested that the President might have been referring to a 1965 directive by Mr. John-

son, which banned all wiretapping and bugging except in national security and foreign intelligence cases.

But Katzenbach, in a telephone interview, said that directive could not have been interpreted as hampering the FBI's counterintelligence function, because of its specific loopholes.

Indeed, in the last several years of Hoover's life, he frequently spoke of the threat to national security from New Left "extremists" and proclaimed that the FBI was successfully monitoring that threat.

One of the documents stolen in the March 8, 1971, raid on the FBI office in Media, Pa., stressed a Philadelphia agent's belief in the value of creating "paranoia" about the FBI among the public and of getting "the point across (that) there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox."

The Washington Post's sources insisted, however, that there was a definite, perceptible shift toward caution on Hoover's part in 1966, which caused considerable furor within FBI headquarters here.

Several present and former Justice Department officials now tell stories of how difficult it was to get Hoover to devote manpower to organized-crime and internal-security assignments.

One of them contended that two women fugitives hunted in connection with a bank robbery and the murder of a policeman in Boston eluded federal authori-

Korea Talks

Reuter

SEOUL, May 23—North and South Korea agreed today to resume their talks on improving relations in Seoul June 12-14. The last meeting of a coordinating committee met in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang March 14-16 but made little progress in settling problems between the two countries.

Activities to Save

ties because Hoover insisted on specific evidence of their travels before he would permit FBI surveillance of a Swarthmore College professor's home they were believed to have visited.

Another implied criticism of Hoover in President Nixon's Tuesday statement concerned the fact that the late director "shut off" the FBI's liaison with the Central Intelligence Agency in May, 1970, and two months later with "all other agencies except the White House."

The Justice Department official interviewed yesterday, who asked not to be publicly identified, complained that in rupturing liaisons, Hoover "wiped out

a whole section" of the FBI, leaving a single agent to maintain contact with the White House.

"It was an irrational thing to do," he said. "The FBI can't function without doing business with the CIA."

But an FBI official, loyal to Hoover and now in charge of a major bureau field office, disagreed. He said that liaison activities had become a "drain on manpower" and that even without a formal structure the FBI maintained "a complete interchange" with the CIA by phone and correspondence.

In any event, it was pointed out, liaison activities were substantially re-

sumed by Gray during his stewardship of the bureau.

Discussing the "special programs" suspended by Hoover in 1966 and almost resumed in 1970, the Justice Department official said he felt constrained from elaborating because of their classified nature, but revealed that they included "planting microphones" and "getting things from inside places" that were under surveillance, as well as the use of covert mail drops.

Mr. Nixon's Tuesday statement made reference to "authorization for surreptitious entry—breaking and entering, in effect—on specified categories of targets in specified situations related

His Image

to national security" as part of the 1970 plan vetoed by Hoover.

The "targets," according to The Washington Post's sources, could have included foreign embassies in this country and the headquarters of alleged "extremists."

The Justice Department official said it was especially perplexing that Hoover's 1966 actions inhibited the pursuit of illegal aliens suspected of espionage. "They don't have any rights of any kind," he said. "They are in this country illegally."

Another result, he said, was that the FBI "didn't get coverage on demonstrations and academic upheavals. We didn't know where to expect

racial riots. We read about the (1968) Columbia University uprising in the papers."

When Hoover instituted the restrictions in 1966, one FBI source said yesterday, "we couldn't understand what got into him." The source suggested that the late director had been motivated less by a concern for civil liberties than by his own "image" and his desire to keep the bureau out of controversy.

As for Hoover's single-handed ability to prevent the White House from launching its 1970 plan, the Justice Department official said, "I don't need to tell you what he had. Everyone was afraid of him."