

Weicker's Role In Ousting Gray

Washington

Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep-Conn.) said yesterday he forced the resignation of acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III last April when President Nixon "made no move" to fire Gray for destroying Watergate-related documents.

Weicker, a member of the Senate Watergate committee, acknowledged during televised hearings that it was he who leaked the story of Gray and the documents to newspapers that published the account April 26. Gray resigned the next day.

"I made sure that the story was laid out in front of the public as soon as I got it," Weicker said. "It wasn't something that could be withheld from the American public."

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"But certainly in no way did it ever occur to me was this something that could be left unattended to, that he (Gray) could remain as acting director of the FBI."

The Senator was angered when former White House adviser John D. Ehrlichman testified that Mr. Nixon learned of the incident on April 15 — ten days before Weicker heard of it — and took "precisely the right step" by asking Assistant

Attorney General Henry E. Petersen to investigate.

According to the Weicker account, his old friend Gray attended a White House meeting with Ehrlichman and then White House counsel John W. Dean III on June 28, 1972, nearly two weeks after the Watergate break-in.

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At that meeting, Weicker reported, Gray was given a sealed envelope containing documents taken from the White House safe of E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the five men arrested June 17 in the Watergate, and was told it was "political dynamite" that should never be made public.

Gray was said to have hidden the documents in a closet at his home until July 3, when he had them destroyed at the Justice Department.

Weicker said Gray got the impression he had been instructed to destroy them, but both Ehrlichman and Dean have denied they told him to do so.

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