

Hoover's Memo on FBI Spies in Media

Washington

J. Edgar Hoover, the late FBI director, ordered the bureau in 1969 to use its confidential informants within news organizations to determine the source of a New York Times report of secret American bombing raids on Cambodia, according to a memorandum from Hoover to his top associates.

The document, dated May 9, 1969, has never been made public, but it was provided by the FBI to lawyers representing Morton H. Halperin, the former National Security Council aide whose telephone was tapped by the FBI from 1969 to 1971.

Halperin is suing the federal government for damages in that case, and in a deposition taken recently, in that lawsuit Cartha D. DeLoach, formerly the third-rank-

ing official at the bureau, referred at length to the Hoover memorandum.

The memorandum, DeLoach said, contained the names of "newspaper people friendly to the FBI" who were to be asked "if they could shed any light on" how the information was obtained by William Beecher, then the Times' military correspondent.

His article, which appeared on May 9, 1969, touched off a search for the sources of such unauthorized disclosures within the Nixon administration and led President Nixon to order wiretaps on the home telephones of four newsmen and 13 government officials, including Halperin and Beecher.

The names of the newsmen to be contacted were deleted by the

FBI from the Hoover memorandum provided to Halperin's lawyers, and the Justice Department lawyer present at DeLoach's deposition said he believed that the identities of the reporters should remain a secret.

They would be "less inclined to be helpful in the future" if their identities were revealed, he said.

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