

## Katzenbach Tells How Hoover Imperiled FBI

Washington

Former attorney general Nicholas Katzenbach testified yesterday that J. Edgar Hoover risked the reputation of the FBI — “his life’s work” — in a vendetta against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Katzenbach told the Senate Intelligence Committee that when he was attorney general during 1965-66 he knew of telephone wiretaps against King by the FBI and once ordered a tap on King’s home phone ended.

But he said he learned later the FBI put electronic “bugs” in King’s hotel room without authorization and used other “unlawful and grossly improper” tactics against King.

The committee also was told that Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy authorized telephone taps against King after Hoover insisted that King was under Communist influence.

The committee is investigating FBI harassment of King that allegedly continued for seven years until King was assassinated April 4, 1968.

When questioned about three memos to him written by Hoover in 1965, giving what Katzenbach called “after-the-fact” notification of bugs in King’s hotel room, he said the memos contained initials “that appear to be mine” — but he said he could not recall the memos, and said he did not think he initialed them.

Katzenbach said Hoover held “conservative views” and as he “grew older and the country changed — for the worse, in his view — the intensity of those feelings and the frustrations at what was taking place grew.”

King criticized Hoover and the FBI, Katzenbach said, and Hoover’s “capitulation to personal pique stemming from public criticism of the FBI was particularly reprehensible and clearly contrary to the interests of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, constitutional government and the nation.”

He drew a picture of Hoover: “National hero . . . historical accident . . . served too long . . . overwhelming political power and political autonomy.”

But he said: “I would not have expected him to risk the bureau’s reputation — his life’s work — by resorting to unlawful or improper tactics.”

“His vendetta against Dr. King, if successful, could have led

to a civil strife of frightening magnitude.”

Courtney Evans, who headed the FBI investigative division in the 1960s, told the committee that Attorney General Kennedy approved the tap on King on a 30-day trial basis to see if information received bore out suspicions King was being influenced by alleged Communists.

But he said the assassination of President Kennedy fell within the 30-day period and that the attorney general may have been so preoccupied with his brother’s death that he did not follow up. In any case, wiretaps continued on King until his assassination.

Also testifying was Ramsey Clark who gave no specifics about what he may have known when he was attorney general in 1967-69, but said the FBI was trying “to destroy the desperately needed moral leadership of Martin Luther King.”

Cartha DeLoach, former assistant to Hoover, testified that he once went with Hoover to a meeting of the National Catholic Women’s Press Club, where Hoover called King “a notorious liar.” DeLoach said he passed notes telling Hoover “to either retract it (the comment) or say it was off the record . . . he told me to mind my own business.”

He said King retorted that Hoover was “becoming senile” — but a meeting between Hoover and King and the Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was held and went surprisingly well.

“It was more of a love feast,” DeLoach said. “It was an amiable meeting between the two leaders. Hoover told him to be careful of his associates and King said he would do all possible to help in civil rights investigations.” But, DeLoach said, their “unfortunate feud would not die.”

Meanwhile yesterday, Attorney General Edward H. Levi revealed that he has ordered a review of all “relations” between the FBI and King, including harassment of the civil rights leader as well as the investigation of his assassination.

Levi would not say that individual agents who carried out the harassment should be punished.

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