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Ehrlichman 370

NEW YORK AP - Time magazine said Saturday that presidential adviser John Ehrlichman asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation for "expert advice to aid Republican campaigners" on law and order issues last month and that FBI acting director L. Patrick Gray forwarded the request as an order to 21 FBI field offices in 14 states.

Time said there is no public record of the FBI being asked previously to initiate a political study for campaign purposes, and it called Gray's order "a violation of the FBI's nonpartisan tradition."

The magazine emphasized, at the same time, that the requested service was "far different from espionage activity like the Watergate affair," and it said the FBI was not asked to eavesdrop, spy on candidates or disrupt campaigns.

Time said Ehrlichman, informed of the story, stated that the request for information had gone from his office to the Justice Department and was not intended for the FBI.

If it was acted upon by the bureau, Ehrlichman was quoted as saying, it would violate administration policy and "would not be condoned by the White House."

Time said Ehrlichman's request was teletyped to 21 field offices under Gray's name on Sept. 8 and that agents were required to respond on two points - identifying law and order issues and recommending a list of possible campaign events related to the criminal justice field.

Time said the memo began: "In order for John Ehrlichman to give the President maximum support during campaign trips over the next several weeks, the following information is required for each of the states listed."

The directive went to offices in New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, California, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Missouri, Connecticut, Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Texas, New York and Michigan, Time said.

On Friday, Gray announced that he had ordered the bureau to terminate a program that involved maintaining biographical files on congressional members and candidates, saying it would be misinterpreted as "a program to investigate Congressmen and congressional candidates."

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