

Nixon Gives Up On Gray for FBI

by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Washington - The White House has privately - and not at all tearfully - given up hopes that the Senate will confirm L. Patrick Gray as the second director of the FBI, believing that Gray buried himself with his own blundering.

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While some Republican senators complain Nixon cruelly undercut Gray by restricting his testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the White House feels he undercut himself by talking too much - believing Gray blundered by not seeking counsel from his superior, Atty. Gen. Richard Kleindienst, prior to the confirmation hearings.

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In sum, Nixon has no hopes of Gray being confirmed but prefers to have the Senate kill him off rather than withdraw his nomination. The White House counts on Chairman James Eastland of Mississippi to force a Judiciary Committee vote that, barring startling changes, would reject Gray.