

# Hearst Case 'Stumps' FBI

By Austin Scott

Washington Post Staff Writer

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley broke with the tradition of his only predecessor to hold an open news conference yesterday, and declared "we are stumped" by the kidnapers of Patricia Hearst.

"We don't know where she is," he said. "In the event we do determine where she is in the future we're going to go in (and get her). We will exert every effort not to injure and certainly not to kill anyone . . . It's going to be well planned, but we're going to go in."

Kelley's meeting with reporters marked the first time a permanent FBI director has invited unrestricted questioning from reporters.

Most of his remarks were in response to questions, including his disclosure that the FBI is still actively investigating the 18½-minute gap on one of President Nixon's taped conversations.

Kelley commented rather extensively on the case of Patricia Hearst, who was kidnaped from her Berkeley, Calif., apartment Feb. 4 by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

"I have no report as to recent successful developments," Kelley said. "Eventually, of course, we think we will have this case concluded . . . We are, I think, in good shape to do the job."

Asked whether he agreed with Attorney General William B. Saxbe's characterization of Miss Hearst as "a common criminal," Kelley said, "It has not yet been proved to me or our bureau that she is a willing participant."

Unless that proof comes, he said, the FBI will stick with its warrant for her arrest as a material witness in last month's San Francisco bank robbery where cameras photographed Miss Hearst and members of the SLA.

Kelley said he did not know why Saxbe spoke as he did. The Attorney General's comments may have stimulated the SLA to further activity, he said, but he knows of "no harm to the investigation this has done."

Asked why it was taking the FBI so long to break the Hearst case, Kelley commented, "I've asked several of our people the same question."

The SLA is "a close-knit group," he said. "They have friends who support them. They're very tight in security. I think the fact that they have restricted their activities [helps them hide] . . . As described to me, they didn't get out of that apartment very much. It was a shambles."

"You are stumped, then?" a reporter asked.

"We are stumped," Kelley replied emphatically.

Kelley refused to answer many questions about mention of the FBI in some of the edited transcripts of presidential conversations released by the White House, on grounds that he was working closely with Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski in an investigation.

The FBI has not questioned the President, he said. "We do not plan to. Mr. Jaworski says if that becomes necessary, he will do it."

The FBI has, however, questioned many people at the White House about the 18-minute tape gap, he said.

"We have not completed the investigation."

"Do you think you know how the erasure took place?" a reporter asked.

"No sir," said Kelley.

"Do you think you'll be able to find out?"

"I'm not a technical expert," Kelley replied.

Conversations in the presidential transcripts indicating

some presidential aides did not trust the FBI, or thought it could be used for White House errands, "have not hurt me personally," but "harmed to some extent the general performance of the FBI," he said.

"We have been hurt to some extent by attacks on our credibility."

Asked about the degree of FBI cooperation with the House Judiciary Committee impeachment inquiry, Kelley called one of his aides to the

microphone, who said, "We will have to be guided by what the Attorney General will permit us to give to the committee."

The news conference appeared to another step in Kelley's promised lifting of the secrecy that J. Edgar Hoover had insisted on.

When someone asked him to account for a rise in crime during the first quarter of this year, Kelley joked, "I'd like to say it's because I've left local law enforcement."