

# Saxbe Says Top Officials Knew Something of F.B.I.

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**SPECIAL, ETC.** WASHINGTON, Nov. 13—Attorney General William B. Saxbe said today that some knowledge of F.B.I. efforts to disrupt domestic political groups had been made available to some Congressmen, senior Justice Department officials and possibly some Presidents.

Mr. Saxbe, in making public a report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's secret counterintelligence operations known as "Cointelpro," said at a news conference that the Justice Department had believed until recently that the program's existence was unknown outside the bureau.

"We have since found memoranda to indicate that there were some fragmented information available to some Attor-

neys General and perhaps to the President" about the bureau's undercover efforts, Mr. Saxbe said, adding that similar data had been provided to members of the Congressional Oversight Committees.

Mr. Saxbe was accompanied by Clarence M. Kelley, the F.B.I. director, who said in a statement that the late J. Edgar Hoover, his predecessor, had informed every Attorney General since 1958 of some of the techniques used by F.B.I. agents against groups selected as targets of its Cointelpro activities.

Mr. Kelley defended the pro-

gram, which the Saxbe report said was made up of seven distinct efforts, as an appropriate response to "the anarchistic plans and activities of violence-prone groups whose publicly announced goal was to bring America to its knees."

"For the F.B.I. to have done less under the circumstances would have been an abdication of its responsibilities to the American people," Mr. Kelley said.

Justice Department officials confirmed after the news conference that the targets of the disruptive activities, some of

which Mr. Saxbe termed disturbing and "improper," included such civil rights organizations as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Congress of Racial Equality and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

According to the 21-page report, the first Cointelpro efforts undertaken at Mr. Hoover's order were in 1956 against suspected members of the Communist party.

The program was later expanded to include the Socialist Workers party, so-called "white hate groups" such as the Ku-

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## Drive on Various Groups

Klux Klan, "black extremist" organizations such as the Black Panther party and "new left" groups such as Students for a Democratic society.

### Kelley Comments

Mr. Kelley said that information about the Cointelpro activities had been furnished to Attorney General William P. Rogers in May of 1958, Attorney General-designate Robert F. Kennedy in January, 1961, and successive Attorneys General in 1965, 1967 and 1969.

Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, who served as Attorney General in 1965, said in a telephone

interview that he had never heard the term Cointelpro, an abbreviation of Counterintelligence program.

Mr. Katzenbach said that he had known of "some of the activities that the bureau was doing with respect to the Klan," but that he was surprised to learn that such organizations as CORE, the S.N.C.C. and the S.C.L.C. had also been subjected to covert disruptions.

Ramsey Clark, who succeeded Mr. Katzenbach, said that "all I know about it is what I've read in the papers."

"The idea that I would have

tolerated any Government agent engaging in any disruptive activity is false and unthinkable," Mr. Clark said.

pro was ordered discontinued by Mr. Hoover following a burglary in 1971 of the F.B.I.'s field office in Media, Pa., in which several sensitive bureau documents regarding the surveillance of political groups were taken and subsequently made public.

He said that as far as he knew, there had been no requests from the F.B.I. to resume such activities and that he could not foresee circumstances under which he would approve such requests.

"It is not something that we in a free society should con-

dine," Mr. Saxbe said.

He added that the Justice Department and the F.B.I. would continue disruptive techniques against foreign intelligence agents.

Henry E. Petersen, head of the Justice Department's Criminal Division who directed the Cointelpro study, expressed concern over some of the techniques used by F.B.I. agents in the program.

### Japanese Ship Released

PORTLAND, Me., Nov. 18 (AP)—A fishing vessel is steaming toward its home port in Japan after two months of detention in Portland Harbor on charges of violating United States coastal fishing limits.