

# The FBI and Burglaries

## Washington

An outgoing top FBI official said yesterday he assumes that former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover directed some agents to conduct burglaries to gather intelligence.

He denied charges that such activities were "laughable" or violated civil liberties.

The statement by William A. Sullivan, who retired Saturday as assistant FBI director, drew immediate criticism from Representative Don Edwards (Dem-Calif.) a former FBI agent and chairman of a House judiciary subcommittee which oversees the FBI.

Edwards called on Attorney General Edward Levi to disavow Sullivan's defense of such FBI counterintelligence to explain why Congress has never been told about FBI-authorized burglaries.

Sullivan, in an interview on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation," strongly defended Hoover and insisted that no FBI director would ever threaten civil liberties. He said some recently questioned FBI activities were necessary at the time as a wedge against Communism.

Asked if the FBI agents ever conducted any burglaries, Sullivan replied that he

had never participated in a burglary or ordered one.

"But," he added, "I would assume that in the national intelligence field that has occurred in some offices. I think that this decision in the past was made by the top officials of the FBI, the director of the FBI, it's had his approval. I think that to-

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## HOOVER

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day it probably would have to have the approval of the attorney general."

Sullivan clearly was referring to approval by Hoover, who died in 1972 after many FBI counterintelligence programs were terminated in the face of public criticism.

Referring to those counter-intelligence programs, Sullivan said they could be criticized in only a "very few" instances. He also disagreed with Levi, who described them as foolish.

"On the contrary," Edwards said in a statement issued later, "it is difficult to imagine more than a few COINTEL (counterintelligence) actions as anything but outrageous, many subjecting the government to civil liability, many clearly illegal."

And, Edwards added that he agreed with Levi that "some of them are just a scream."

Sullivan specifically defended "Operation Hoodwink," a program designed to pit the Communist party against the Mafia, which he assumed was "thought out very carefully."

"I don't think its laughable at all," he said. "It's

very easy to criticize here in 1975 where the program was tried here several years ago. I don't think there's anything laughable about it regardless of what the attorney general may have said about it."

Sullivan described Hoover's much criticized personal files on the private lives of public officials as a "public relations program" to provide information for personal correspondence.

He also defended an anonymous letter the FBI once wrote to the boss of a young school teacher, disclosing that she was a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

"The only mistake I think we made in an instance like that was sending an anonymous letter and not signing J. Edgar Hoover's name," he said. "I think we owe the American people this type of information."

Edwards said Sullivan's statement that Hoover approved burglaries was "contrary to testimony before congressional committees and the Justice Department will be asked to explain this fully to my subcommittee."

"In all the testimony, there never has been any testimony to the effect that there have been burglaries," he added.

*United Press*