

# White House Kills FBI Chief's Speech

Washington

The White House, apparently acting out of pre-election concern over offending the national news media, ordered FBI director Clarence M. Kelley yesterday to abandon a proposed speech sharply critical of recent FBI news coverage.

In the speech, originally intended for delivery to a group of New Mexico news executives, Kelley had planned to announce that the FBI would no longer cooperate with certain unnamed reporters who had "journalistically bludgeoned" the bureau with selective

news articles and "heavy-handed interpretation."

Following a telephone conversation with Attorney General Edward H. Levi, who reached Kelley in Chicago during a stopover on his flight to Albuquerque, Kelley issued a statement on his decision to discard the prepared speech by saying that it appeared "to give the wrong impression and does not truly reflect my feelings about the press."

Margaret Earl, a White House press officer, said later that neither President Ford nor any of his aides

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had had any knowledge of Kelley's intended remarks until the FBI made an advance text of the speech available to reporters here yesterday afternoon.

Philip Buchen, the president's counsel, telephoned Levi to discuss the matter, and both men agreed, according to Earl, that Kelley's criticisms did not coincide "with the President's policy toward the media."

After Levi passed that word to Kelley, the FBI director released his statement saying that he would delete "most of the prepared text" for his Albuquerque appearance.

In a direct departure from the language in his discarded speech, which blamed the unidentified reporters for having unfairly highlighted the FBI's current difficulties and having ignored what Kelley termed its "successes," the FBI director acknowledged in his statement that the bureau's first activities had been "rightly" pointed out

by news accounts.

The original speech contained the sharpest criticism of the news media by Kelley in his three years as FBI director.

"If a journalist continually displays an obsession to support his own hostile notions about our agency, or to support a boilerplate editorial policy without regard for objectivity," the speech said, "Then he cannot expect to continue to enjoy any sort of productive relationship with us."

Kelley recalled that when he took over the FBI in July, 1973, "one of the policies I instituted was one of openness."

But Kelley concluded that his efforts in that direction had "something less than a small success," and he maintained "that element of the news media that has come to be known as 'national news media' must bear a fair share of the responsibility for that."

"Granted, some skeletons from the FBI's past have come out of the closet," he said, "and we fully expect to be clobbered by the news media when there is clear evidence or wrongdoing."

"The question," he concluded, "is do you kill the piano because he strikes a few sour notes in an otherwise magnificent performance that spans so many years?"

He cautioned the nation against becoming "so afflicted with scandal-mania that its credibility is suspect," but declared that he had been "most heartened by the objective, common sense judgment" he said had been given the FBI by news organizations of Washington.

*New York*