

NIXON SAYS U.S. BACKED F.B.I. BUG

Finds That Attorney General Favored Dr. King Wiretap

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 19—The Federal Bureau of Investigation's wiretapping of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was done with the approval of the Attorney General, President Nixon said tonight.

Mr. Nixon said during his televised news conference that he personally checked to see whether J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the F. B. I., had acted on his own or with proper authority in ordering wiretaps on Dr. King and Elijah Muhammad, the Black Muslim leader.

"I found that it [the wiretapping] had always been approved by the Attorney General, as Mr. Hoover testified in 1964 and 1965," Mr. Nixon said.

He made the statement in response to a question that recounted the recent disclosures in court proceedings that the F. B. I. had wiretapped the two Negro leaders, and the ensuing charges in some quarters that Mr. Hoover had acted on his own. [Question 11, Page 20.]*

Hoover Lists Kennedy

WASHINGTON, June 19 (UPI) — J. Edgar Hoover was quoted today as having said that Robert F. Kennedy, when he was Attorney General, not only authorized but also proposed a telephone wiretap on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. because he was worried about allegations the civil

rights leader had Marxist leanings.

In a copyrighted interview with The Washington Evening Star, Mr. Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said he had two memoranda in his files that he said proved it was Mr. Kennedy and not he who had originally proposed the wiretap on Dr. King.

"I have never authorized installation of technical electronic devices without written authority of the Attorney General," Mr. Hoover told The Star.

The newspaper said Mr. Hoover refused to describe the results of the surveillance, which his associate director had said earlier was "strictly in the field of internal security" and satisfied all provisions laid down by the President.

The F.B.I. director did not say when the wiretapping began, The Star said, but disclosed it was discontinued April 30, 1965, nearly three years before Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968.

Neither the F.B.I. nor the Justice Department would comment on the report or the documents cited by Mr. Hoover. Both said it was the other's responsibility to decide whether the memos should be made public.

The newspaper quoted Mr. Hoover as having said he had a memorandum dated June, 1963, from Courtney Evans, then assistant F.B.I. director, reporting that Robert Kennedy had asked about the feasibility of installing listening devices on Dr. King's telephones.

The Evans memo, Mr. Hoover said, said Mr. Kennedy was concerned about allegations that the Negro leader was a student of Marxism and closely associated with Marxist followers, although Dr. King did not espouse these ideas because of his religious ideas.

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11. Hoover and Eavesdropping

Q. Mr. President, against the background of the controversy involving Mr. Hoover, J. Edgar Hoover, it is a controversy which revolves around electronic surveillance and in which one newspaper at least has called for his resignation. May I ask you two questions—one, does Mr. Hoover continue to enjoy your complete confidence, and, two, has there been any decision concerning his tenure?

A. Mr. Hoover does enjoy my complete confidence, and there has been no discussion with regard to his tenure as far as the future is concerned.

I should add further that with regard to the controversy on electronic surveillance that I checked personally into the matter as to whether or not that

surveillance which had been discussed had been conducted by him and the F.B.I., by themselves, or whether it had, as is supposed to be the case always, been approved by the Attorney General.

I found that it had always been approved by the Attorney General, as Mr. Hoover testified in 1964 and 1965.

As far as this Administration is concerned, our attitude toward electronic surveillance is that it should be used very sparingly, very carefully—having in mind the rights of those who might be involved—but very effectively to protect the internal and external security of the United States.

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12. Reconstruction Finance Agency

Q. Sir, the small business people in this country are suffering, and more so now, because of the interest rates. I wonder if any thought to organizing a Reconstruction Finance Agency?

A. I know that interest rates have caused particular trouble. I do not know if the R.F.C. is a pro- or anti-

*The Justice Department revealed the FBI had monitored five...