

Change in Hoover's Image

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WASHINGTON — FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's blasts at Martin Luther King and the Warren Commission may have kicked up a storm that will affect his 40-year tenure as chief of the FBI.

And it is almost certain his action will bear on the image he has built as the Nation's No. 1 gang-buster.

During a Wednesday press interview he not only called King a liar but took umbrage with the Warren Commission for what he maintained was "unfair and unjust" criticism of the FBI.

'RESTRICTIVE VIEW'

In its report, released Sept. 27, the commission, named by President Johnson to investigate the Dallas assassination of President Kennedy, noted that the FBI failed to forward the names of potentially dangerous persons in the area to the secret service. By its omission, the commission said, the FBI showed "an unduly restrictive view of its responsibilities."

Such criticism by the commission, Hoover told a group of women reporters, was "a classic example of Monday morning quarterbacking."

Hoover's sharp reaction to the commission's report has long been known. But never before had he expressed himself in such blunt language.

DULLES COMMENT

For the most part, the members of the commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, declined to comment on Hoover's statements.

However, Allen Dulles, former CIA director and a commission member, had this to say:

"I regret this, naturally. I have the highest regard for Mr. Hoover and what he has done for the country. . . . But the report was the work of the commission and I stand back of the report. I regret Mr. Hoover's reaction to it."

Hoover, who reaches the mandatory civil service retirement age of 70 on Jan. 1, was given a waiver to continue at his post by Johnson. During White House ceremonies May 8 celebrating Hoover's 40 years as FBI chief, the President announced he had signed an executive order exempting Hoover from compulsory retirement.

JENKINS CASE

The President hailed Hoover as "a hero to America's decent citizens" and referred to him as "My close personal friend for 30 years." Then, turning to Hoover, the President said:

"The Nation cannot afford to lose you."

Yesterday, however, the White House had no comment on Hoover's pointed criticisms, although White House press secretary George Reedy said that so far as he knew there was no change in Johnson's attitude.

Hoover, who has long enjoyed a sacrosanct position as FBI director, suddenly has become a center of controversy.

He recently released to a Washington newspaper testimony he gave before the Warren Commission in which

he defended his bureau's actions prior to the assassination.

When former White House aide Walter Jenkins was hospitalized shortly before disclosure he had twice been arrested on morals charges, Hoover sent a bouquet of flowers. The gesture was questioned, inasmuch as the FBI had been asked by the President to investigate the circumstances surrounding Jenkins' arrests.