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NEW YORK, NOV. 30 (AP)-NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE SAID TODAY THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAS DECIDED TO REPLACE J. EDGAR HOOVER AS CHIEF OF THE FBI.

THE WHITE HOUSE PROMPTLY DENIED IT.

GEORGE REEDY, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY, SAID:

"THE PRESIDENT NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A PLAN AND NEVER HEARD OF SUCH AN IDEA."

THE MAGAZINE SAID HOOVER "HAS BECOME A FIGURE OF CONTROVERSY-- NOT MERELY TO LONGTIME LEFTISH CRITICS BUT AMONG OLD ADMIRERS WHO WONDER WHETHER HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE MOTTO ON HIS DESK."

THE MOTTO, INSCRIBED ON A SMALL BRASS PLAQUE: "TWO FEET ON THE GROUND ARE WORTH ONE IN THE MOUTH."

HOOVER HELD ONE OF HIS RARE NEWS CONFERENCES NOV. 18, IN WHICH HE TOLD WOMEN REPORTERS THAT CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IS "THE MOST NOTORIOUS LIAR IN THE COUNTRY." HE ALSO DENOUNCED THE WARREN COMMISSION FOR ITS CRITICISM OF THE FBI'S ROLE IN THE EVENTS PRECEDING PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION.

NEWSWEEK SAID:

"ONE SUCH DISENCHANTED FAN (OF HOOVER'S) IS LYNDON B. JOHNSON, WHO HAD DECIDED BY LAST WEEK THAT HE MUST FIND A NEW CHIEF OF THE FBI. IT WAS A TOUGH DECISION . . .

"EVEN TOUGHER PERHAPS IS THE TASK OF FINDING A WORTHY REPLACEMENT . . . SOMEONE AS IRREPROACHABLE AS A RESPECTED JUDGE, PREFERABLY A FEDERAL JUDGE. THE SEARCH IS ON."

THE MAGAZINE NOTED THAT JOHNSON SIGNED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER LAST MAY IN WHICH, IN "THE PUBLIC INTEREST," HE WAIVED THE COMPULSORY RETIREMENT THAT WOULD TAKE EFFECT ON HOOVER'S 70TH BIRTHDAY NEXT JAN. 1.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO HAD ASSURED THE FBI BOSS HE COULD STAY IN HIS JOB "AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WHITE HOUSE."

BUT NEWSWEEK ALSO OBSERVED THAT JOHNSON, IN A NEWS CONFERENCE LAST WEEK, "SEEMED TO DAMN THE FBI DIRECTOR WITH FAINT PRAISE."

THE PRESIDENT SAID OF HOOVER AT THAT TIME, "HE HAS BEEN DILIGENT AND RATHER EFFECTIVE, AND I WOULD HOPE THAT IN THE MONTHS AHEAD WE WOULD HAVE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE OUTSTANDING CAPACITY OF HIS PEOPLE, AND THAT THIS WOULD NOT DEGENERATE INTO A BATTLE OF PERSONALITIES."

THE MAGAZINE ALSO QUOTED, WITHOUT NAMING, "ONE OF THE FBI'S HIGHEST RANKING OFFICERS," AS SAYING OF THE MAN FOR WHOM HE HAS WORKED FOR 20 YEARS:

"HE HAS THROUGH THE YEARS MADE A TREMENDOUS CONTRIBUTION. NOW, WHEN HE IS NO LONGER ABLE TO DO SO, MAYBE HE JUST OUGHT TO RETIRE."

IF HOOVER DOES STEP DOWN VOLUNTARILY, THE AIDE WAS QUOTED FURTHER, A TREMENDOUS UPHEAVAL WITHIN THE FBI WOULD FOLLOW, "BECAUSE MORE THAN 70 PER CENT OF THE 80 TO 100 TOP-LEVEL EXECUTIVE PERSONNEL IN THE BUREAU ARE ALREADY ELIGIBLE FOR RETIREMENT," AND AS A GROUP THEY STRONGLY SUPPORT HOOVER'S VIEWS.

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THE NEWSWEEK STORY ALSO SAID THAT WHEN ROBERT F. KENNEDY WAS ATTORNEY GENERAL HE "WANTED TO BE HOOVER'S BOSS IN FACT AS WELL AS NAME" AND "THAT LED TO FRICTION."

THE MAGAZINE SAID A TRUCE APPARENTLY WAS ARRANGED BETWEEN THE TWO, BUT "ALMOST WITHIN MINUTES AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, HOOVER BROKE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.

"FRIENDS AGREE ROBERT KENNEDY IS BITTER TOWARD HOOVER," THE STORY ADDED. "ONE REASON MAY BE THAT THE FBI DIRECTOR, ALWAYS TECHNICALLY HIS SUBORDINATE (AND AN INVETERATE NOTE WRITER), NEVER BOTHERED TO SEND HIM A NOTE OF CONDOLENCE ON HIS BROTHER'S DEATH."

IN WASHINGTON, HOWEVER, AN FBI SPOKESMAN SAID HOOVER SENT THIS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ON THE DAY OF THE ASSASSINATION.

"DEAR BOB:

"WORDS FAIL ME WHEN I TRY TO TELL YOU HOW GRIEVED I AM OVER THE TERRIBLE TRAGEDY OF THE DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT. I AM HEARTSICK FOR YOUR FAMILY IN ITS LOSS OF A BELOVED MEMBER, AND HEARTSICK FOR OUR NATION WHICH COULD SO ILL AFFORD TO LOSE ITS LEADER.

"SINCERELY, EDGAR."

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