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30 NOV 1964

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A5WX (HOOVER)

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NIGHT LEAD HOOVER (PRECEDE NEW YORK DAY)

BY GARDNER L. BRIDGE

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON, NOV. 30 (AP)-THE WHITE HOUSE SAID TODAY THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON "NEVER HEARD OF" A REPORTED PLAN TO REPLACE J. EDGAR HOOVER AS DIRECTOR OF THE FBI.

PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY GEORGE REEDY MADE THIS COMMENT IN DENYING A NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE ARTICLE DESCRIBING JOHNSON AS A "DISENCHANTED FAN" OF HOOVER'S "WHO HAD DECIDED BY LAST WEEK THAT HE MUST FIND A NEW CHIEF OF THE FBI."

REEDY SAID THE PRESIDENT "HAS NEVER CONTEMPLATED REPLACING MR. HOOVER."

NEWSWEEK STOOD BY ITS STORY. IN A ONE-SENTENCE STATEMENT BY EDITOR OSBORN ELLIOTT, DISTRIBUTED TO WHITE HOUSE NEWSMEN, IT SAID:

"THE REPORT IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK THAT 'THE SEARCH IS ON' FOR A SUCCESSOR TO MR. J. EDGAR HOOVER CAME FROM A MOST RELIABLE SOURCE WITHIN THE WHITE HOUSE, AND NEWSWEEK STANDS BY THE STATEMENT."

REEDY TOLD NEWSMEN:

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

A SPOKESMAN SAID THERE WOULD BE NO COMMENT FROM THE FBI.

THE NEWSWEEK ARTICLE 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: "TWO FEET ON THE GROUND ARE WORTH ONE IN THE MOUTH."

SOME CIVIL RIGHTS LEADERS DEMANDED HOOVER'S RESIGNATION AFTER HE REFERRED TO ONE OF THEIR NUMBER, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, AS "THE MOST NOTORIOUS LIAR IN THE COUNTY." KING VOICED NO SUCH DEMAND.

HOOVER ALSO ATTACKED THE WARREN COMMISSION REPORT FOR ITS CRITICISM OF THE FBI'S ROLE IN EVENTS PRECEDING THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY. NEWSWEEK SAID KENNEDY'S BROTHER, FORMER ATTY. GEN. ROBERT F. KENNEDY, IS DESCRIBED BY FRIENDS AS BITTER TOWARD HOOVER.

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"ONE REASON MAY BE," THE MAGAZINE SAID, "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."

AN FBI SPOKESMAN SAID HOOVER SENT THIS NOTE TO ROBERT KENNEDY 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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JOSEPH RAUH, NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN OF AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION, SAID HE AGREES WITH NEGRO LEADERS THAT THE FBI HAS BEEN INEFFECTUAL IN ENFORCEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE SOUTH.

INTERVIEWED ON THE WESTINGHOUSE BROADCASTING CO. RADIO PROGRAM "WASHINGTON VIEWPOINT," RAUH SAID:

"I THINK THAT WE'VE EITHER GOT TO DO ONE OF TWO THINGS, EITHER CHANGE THE FBI INTO ONE THAT DEEPLY BELIEVES IN CIVIL RIGHTS OR GET A NEW INVESTIGATIVE AGENCY FOR BURKE MARSHALL, THE ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL IN CIVIL RIGHTS, FOR HIS OPERATION . . .

"I THINK IT'S UP TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON NOW EITHER TO ASK DIRECTOR HOOVER TO STEP DOWN OR TO GIVE BURKE MARSHALL THE TYPE OF INVESTIGATIVE AGENCY HE NEEDS."

TECHNICALLY THE FBI CHIEF IS AN APPOINTEE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, WHO HAS DIRECT SUPERVISION OVER THE AGENCY, AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO SENATE CONFIRMATION AND SERVES AT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S PLEASURE.

LAST MAY, ON HOOVER'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE JOB, JOHNSON SIGNED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER EXEMPTING HIM FROM THE LAW REQUIRING RETIREMENT AT 70. HOOVER WILL BE 70 ON JAN. 1.

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THE SUBJECT CAME UP AGAIN AT REEDY'S SECOND NEWS BRIEFING OF THE DAY, AND THE PRESS SECRETARY STOOD ON HIS EARLIER STATEMENT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS HEARD OF NO PLANS TO REPLACE THE FBI CHIEF.

ASKED WHETHER JOHNSON HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH HOOVER PERSONALLY DURING THE DAY, REEDY REPLIED: "NOT THAT I KNOW OF, NO." HE SAID HE THINKS THE WHITE HOUSE POSITION ON THE MATTER HAS BEEN MADE VERY CLEAR.

REEDY REPEATED THAT HE HAD SAID THE PRESIDENT HAD ENTERTAINED NO IDEA OF A REPLACEMENT WHEN ASKED WHETHER JOHNSON HAD GIVEN HOOVER ANY PRIVATE ASSURANCES THAT THE FBI DIRECTOR COULD CONTINUE ON THE JOB AS LONG AS JOHNSON IS PRESIDENT.

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AND HE SAID HE WOULD LEAVE THE MATTER OF INTERPRETATION TO REPORTERS WHEN ONE OF THEM ASKED WHETHER IT SEEMS THAT JOHNSON'S STATEMENT OF LAST MAY THAT HE WAS EXEMPTING HOOVER FROM COMPULSORY RETIREMENT "FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME," IS NOT ON ALL FOURS WITH ANOTHER BY HOOVER THAT HOOVER HAS BEEN ASKED TO REMAIN ON WHILE JOHNSON IS IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

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