

(300) POLICE BOARDS

WASHINGTON, DEC. 30 (AP)-FBI DIRECTOR J. EDGAR HOOVER SAID TODAY CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARDS ON POLICE ACTIONS "REPRESENT A BACKWARD STEP FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TOWARD INEPTNESS AND MEDIOCRITY."

HE EXPRESSED HIS VIEW IN HIS CUSTOMARY MESSAGE TO ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS IN THE MONTHLY FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN FOR JANUARY.

"A QUESTIONABLE MOVE CURRENTLY BEING CHAMPIONED IN SOME LOCALITIES IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARDS TO HEAR COMPLAINTS AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS," HE SAID.

HE CALLED THIS DRIVE AN ILL-ADVISED MANEUVER, AND ADDED:

"IT IS A PRACTICE WHICH COULD DAMAGE EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND REDUCE THE ORDERLY PROCESSES OF COMMUNITY LIFE TO PETTY BICKERING, SUSPICION, AND HATRED. THE POLICE EXECUTIVE CANNOT BECOME A MERE PAWN OF BUREAUCRATIC COMMITTEES. HE MUST HAVE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PERFORMANCE, DISCIPLINE, AND CONTROL OF HIS OFFICERS."

HOOVER SAID THAT TO A LARGE DEGREE THESE PANELS WOULD CONSIST OF APPOINTED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE GENERALLY INEXPERIENCED AND UNINFORMED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND POLICE ADMINISTRATION.

ONE OF THE WEAKNESSES OF THESE BOARDS IS THEIR INHERENT POLITICAL OVERTONES, HE SAID.

"IN MANY INSTANCES, APPOINTMENTS WILL BE MADE FOR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY RATHER THAN MERIT, AND EVERY FACTION, CLIQUE, GROUP, AND ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS AN AX TO GRIND WILL DEMAND REPRESENTATION," HE SAID. "IF THERE IS ONE THING CAREER POLICE EXECUTIVES HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS, IT IS THAT POLITICS HAS NO PLACE IN EFFECTIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT."

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HOOVER SAID THAT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO PUBLIC RIDICULE AND PENALIZED IN SALARY, PROMOTION, AND PERSONAL CAREER ON THE BASIS OF DECISIONS REACHED BY OUTSIDE OVERSEERS TO WHOM PROFESSIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC PROTECTION MAY BE OF SECONDARY INTEREST.

HOOVER HAS CRITICIZED THE REVIEW BOARDS BEFORE. IN HIS SEPTEMBER REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON LAST SUMMER'S RIOTS IN SEVERAL CITIES, HE