

Hoover Denies Agreeing To Promotion Of White

By JACK BELL
WASHINGTON (AP)—FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's dramatic disclosure that he opposed—but bowed to—former President Truman's decision to keep Harry Dexter White in government today rained new political controversy in what for him was precedent-breaking testimony. Hoover told the Senate internal security subcommittee at a crowded, televised hearing yesterday that he advised against retaining White, who had been named in an FBI report as a spy suspect.

The ruddy-faced FBI director said firmly he had never committed himself to any such arrangement, which he said would have been "inconceivable" for it and "not within my purview." He said FBI efforts to keep an eye on White were hampered after Truman let White's appointment as U.S. director of the International Monetary Fund go through Feb. 19, 1946.

"At no time was the FBI a party to an agreement to promote Harry Dexter White and at no time did the FBI give its approval to such an arrangement," Hoover declared.

But he confirmed that Truman, as the former President had said, permitted White to transfer from the Treasury to the monetary fund post with the idea of continuing surveillance of him. Truman had not contended the FBI had approved this course.

Hoover also said two Truman cabinet members involved did not favor keeping White in government service.

The Senate inquiry continued today.

Atty. Gen. Brownell, who preceded Hoover as a witness yesterday, said any "reasonable man" would have to conclude that Truman knew White was a spy when he appointed him.

But the attorney general conceded, under sharp questioning by Sen. McClellan (D-Ark.), that it was a matter of "judgment." He said he was not "impugning Truman's loyalty as the former President had claimed in asserting that Brownell 'led to the American people.'"

Brownell said, rather, that Truman was guilty of "blindness" and "laxity" toward Communists in government. It was Brownell who first made the accusations against Truman in a speech Nov. 6.

In Kansas City, Mo., Truman shrugged this off with the comment, "Why waste words?"

Truman said he had watched Brownell's testimony on TV but not Hoover's. He added the FBI director: "I'm sure he told the truth."

Miss Fanny White, 70, a sister of Harry Dexter White, said in Boston, Brownell's charges are "false, all false." She said her brother, who died in 1948 after swearing he was not a spy, "loved this country" and "had no respect for Russia."

Although Truman seemed disposed to stand on his radio-televised statements of Monday night, there was discussion among Democratic members of the Senate committee about asking him to volunteer a reply to the statements of Brownell and Hoover.

Chairman Jenner (R-Ind.), noting these suggestions, had the blunt comment: "I'm not interested."

Sen. Knowland of California, the Republican Senate leader, jumped into the controversy with a statement that Truman was "lax in his official duties and showed great disrespect to the Senate" in not permitting it to know of the FBI report about White before it confirmed the latter's appointment.

Knowland said that as a witness, Brownell was "factual and devastating in showing the carelessness with which the Truman administration proceeded in dealing with security problems."

Sen. Olin Johnston (D-Sc.), an internal security subcommittee member, said he didn't think anything new had been brought out by the day's testimony.

Rep. Moulder (D-Mo.), a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee, asserted that Brownell before the Senate committee "was permitted to make another political speech without being subjected to cross-examination."

Hoover, greeted with applause as he took the stand, unfolded a carefully worded story of backstage maneuvering in the Truman Cabinet during February 1946. For him it was unusual testimony about an individual case. He previously has limited himself to discussion of legislation and funds to operate his department.

Testifying in a firm voice, he said that on Nov. 7, 1945, Elizabeth Bentley had detailed to the FBI her activities as an espionage ring courier and that a letter, dated the following day, was sent to Brig. Gen. Harry H. Vaughan, then Truman's military aide, listing White's name among others as possible members of an espionage ring. He said this was followed Nov. 27 by a 71-page memorandum on Soviet espionage activities, delivered to Vaughan.

Hoover said that when he learned White's nomination to the monetary fund post had been submitted to the Senate Jan. 23, 1946, he sent Vaughan on Feb. 4, a 28-page report on White. He said that in the period from Nov. 8, 1945, to July 24, 1946, seven communications were sent to the White House mentioning White's name.

Truman has confirmed that on Feb. 6, the day the Senate approved White, an FBI report was called to his attention by South Carolina's Gov. James F. Byrnes, then secretary of state.

Hoover said that on Feb. 21 Atty. Gen. Tom C. Clark, now a Supreme Court justice, discussed the White appointment with him.

"I told the attorney general I felt it was unwise for White to serve," Hoover said.

Hoover met at lunch the next day with Clark and the late Fred M. Vinson, then secretary of the Treasury. Hoover said that "Judge Vinson did not want Mr. White to serve as a U.S. delegate to the

International Monetary Fund and, in fact, he did not want him to continue as assistant secretary of the Treasury."

But he said Vinson voiced belief Truman could be forced to sign White's commission. Hoover said he advised Vinson and Clark that the evidence was such that it could not be disclosed at that time because it came from confidential sources.

Hoover quoted Clark as telling him on Feb. 26, the day Truman signed White's commission, that "he felt that White would go into the job and then would be surrounded with persons who were especially selected and were not security risks."

"He further stated that the President was interested in continuing the surveillance," Hoover said. "I stated if that was the desire, we would continue the investigation."

Hoover said if there was any agreement to move White to the monetary fund "and surround him with persons who were not security risks, then the agreement would have been broken very early."

The FBI director said Virginia Frank Coe, a close associate of White who became secretary of the international fund in June 1946, was dismissed Dec. 3, 1952, when he invoked the Fifth Amendment in refusing to answer questions about his relationship with White.

Brownell bore down hard on this point in his testimony. He said the Truman administration failed to take even "minimum precautions" toward keeping secret documents out of the hands of White and other suspected persons.

"The record fails to show that anything was done which interfered with the continued function of the espionage ring of which White was a part," Brownell said. Hoover said, in response to questions by Sen. John Marshall Butler (R-Md.) that his agents were "certainly hampered" in keeping tabs on White in his new job because they couldn't invade the international precincts of the fund's headquarters.

Referring to evidence against White, Hoover said that in 1946 he "opposed the production in court, or presentation to a grand jury, of some of this material because of its highly confidential sources."

Brownell said some of the evidence was acquired by wiretaps and thus could not be used in court. He urged a change in the laws to permit wiretapping in some espionage cases.

White's case was eventually presented to a grand jury in 1948 but the jury did not indict him. He died later that year.

Brownell said some allegedly incriminating evidence against White, papers identified as written in White's own handwriting, did not come to light until after White died.

Brownell disputed Truman's statement that the monetary fund job was not especially sensitive, could cost 33 per cent of the votes of the entire organization.

The attorney general said White of the entire organization.

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