

Buffalo, New York  
May 26, 1972

Mr. L. Patrick Gray, III  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Gray:

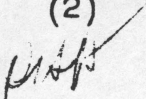
At the recent conference of SACs you stated that you would like our opinion concerning the creation of a Director's Advisory Committee made up of various individuals from outside the Bureau. Following is being submitted for your consideration.

It appears that we have within the FBI the expertise, or access to expertise, equivalent to any which might be assembled in an advisory group. Therefore, the formation of such a group would merely serve to placate certain critics who complain of the FBI's hidden power and fear of its autonomy. This is basically an unjust fear of the unknown.

It is my opinion that the disadvantages of such a group far exceed the advantages. It is very conceivable that members of such a group would not have the same interests, loyalties, obligations and responsibilities as the Director or the FBI. Undoubtedly it would ultimately make recommendations which the Director, in his judgment, would have to veto. It would then be possible that members of this group might release the issues involved to the public to the detriment of the FBI and its responsibilities.

One of the problems the FBI has experienced over the years in defending itself against unjust criticism has been its obligation to sources and the sensitivity of the information gathered. Frequently, we are unable to set the record straight because to do so would compromise our sources, injure third parties, or be in violation of the confidential nature of certain of our records. This unflagging refusal to compromise our sources is one of the things that has gained us great favor with those who are in a position to furnish us with the information we so badly need. Such loyalties and restrictions in all instances might not apply to an advisory group and they in turn would injure us by mishandling some of our own information.

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There is the possibility that such a group could become very political in its membership. Quite likely the members would be under extreme pressure to possible influence from various interest groups from which the FBI itself is buffered. Once such a group is constituted, any possible attempt to change the membership could very possibly be misunderstood and cast doubt in the eyes of the public, especially if one of the deposed members were to argue the case in the press.

It is also foreseeable that the advisory group could make recommendations, be accepted by the FBI, and be implemented, and later found to be faulty. The public very likely would continue to hold the FBI and the Director solely responsible. The attempt to dilute criticism of the FBI by sharing the responsibility with such a group would not, in my opinion, be accepted or understood by the public.

The esteem of the FBI and public respect has been attained by our achievements and our record as an unbiased, independent, professional, efficient, apolitical agency. Our strength has been the acceptance of the FBI by the over-all constituency, the grass roots, the heartland of American society. These people expect and want the FBI to continue to serve the American people as a hard hitting, indefatigable, efficient, trustworthy group of men. Over the years, in my contacts with the public, it appears there is an overwhelming opinion that the people have hoped and prayed that the FBI will continue as an independent agency. It has long been their fear that after J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI will be manipulated by forces many of these people fear: intellectuals, academicians, sociologists, politicians and, believe it or not, lawyers. In the eyes of many, regardless of the amount of control or the limited influence such an advisory group might have over the FBI, the functioning of the group would be misunderstood and would detract from the prestige we now have.

Some of these same fears would be present in the minds of many of our own employees and could cause considerable misunderstanding and pressures within the FBI which would adversely affect morale and efficiency.

Therefore, it is my honest opinion that such a commission or advisory group should not by our own hand be created. We in the FBI are under the scrutiny of the Congress, the President, the Department of Justice and other governmental

agencies. We are in fact responsible to and responsive to the people. We should be willing to accept our responsibilities, perform our duty, and answer only to those constituted authorities. To intervene an advisory group would, it seems to me, detract from the efficiency, respect and responsiveness for which the FBI has long been esteemed.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Ash

FILE

4/30/73

SAC RICHARD H. ASH

DIRECTORSHIP, FBI

SAC RALPH J. RAMPTON, Charlotte Office, read the following proposed telegram to me on the phone and asked for my concurrence so that a telegram could be sent today to President NIXON. I readily concurred with the contents.

"TO THE HONORABLE RICHARD M. NIXON  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

"MR. PRESIDENT:

"THIS MESSAGE, BY UNANIMOUS ADOPTION, IS FROM THE ACTING ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, ALL ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AND ALL SPECIAL AGENTS IN CHARGE OF THE FBI FIELD OFFICES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. THE HALLMARK OF FIDELITY, BRAVERY AND INTEGRITY AND OF DEDICATION TO CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES OF EQUAL JUSTICE AND PRESERVATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL CITIZENS HAVE MADE THE FBI A REVERED INSTITUTION IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE. J. EDGAR HOOVER'S PRECEPTS OF CAREFUL SELECTION OF AGENT PERSONNEL AMONG HIGHLY QUALIFIED CANDIDATES, RIGOROUS TRAINING, FIRM DISCIPLINE AND PROMOTION SOLELY ON MERIT HAVE DEVELOPED WITHIN THE FBI LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS OF PROFESSIONAL STATURE RESPECTED WORLDWIDE. IN THE SEARCH FOR A NOMINEE FOR THE FBI DIRECTORSHIP, WE URGE CONSIDERATION TO THE HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS WITH IMPECABLE CREDENTIALS OF INTEGRITY WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF. WE DO NOT SUGGEST THERE ARE NOT MANY OTHER HIGHLY QUALIFIED LEADERS OF PROVEN INTEGRITY, BUT IN THIS CRITICAL TIME IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE FBI NOT FLOUNDER OR LOSE DIRECTORSHIP IN ITS SERVICE TO THE NATION BECAUSE OF LACK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERTISE OR OF OTHER QUALITIES ESSENTIAL TO THE FBI DIRECTORSHIP. NONE OF US SEEK PERSONAL GAIN -- THERE IS A VAST RESERVOIR OF QUALIFIED EXECUTIVES WITHIN THE FBI'S OFFICIALDOM FROM WHICH A NOMINEE COULD BE SELECTED. WE ARE MOVED TO ADDRESS YOU THUSLY BECAUSE OF OUR DEVOTION TO OUR SWORN DUTY

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TO THE PEOPLE OF THE NATION, BECAUSE OF OUR LOVE FOR THIS GREAT INSTITUTION, AND BECAUSE WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION OF CONSIDERATION OF FBI OFFICIALS AMONG WHOM THERE IS AN INHERENT NONPARTISANSHIP AND A DEEP REVERANCE TO THE CALL OF DUTY TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR NATION.

"RESPECTFULLY,

"ALL FBI OFFICIALS"