

Bell defends his record on civil rights decisions

WASHINGTON (UPI) Attorney General-designate Griffin Bell Tuesday defended his handling of southern school desegregation cases in the 1960s and called himself a moderating influence who ruled "with an even hand" in a turbulent era.

But he admitted that he had made "wrong" decisions on denying admission of black legislator Julian Bond to the Georgia House and the use of federal wiretap procedures.

Reciting his record on school desegregation cases during nearly 15 years as a U.S. Court of Appeals judge, the Atlanta attorney told the Senate Judiciary Committee that he "never defied the law. I always tried to carry out the law."

As the committee began its first day of hearings on Jimmy Carter's nominee to head the Justice Department, Bell's record on civil rights—including his support of G. Harold Carswell to be a member of the Supreme Court—underwent careful scrutiny from the panel's liberal members.

At the same time, Bell outlined plans to restructure the Justice Department and institute a merit system for the selection of judges. He also revealed that, if confirmed, he will appoint U.S. District Judge Wade H. McCree Jr. of Detroit, a black, to be solicitor general.

"I've never professed to be an activist. I've never professed to be an extreme liberal. I've always professed to be a moderate," Bell said.

Asked by Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., why the poor and minorities should

"have confidence in him to protect their rights," Bell replied. "I would have confidence in a judge who has desegregated 141 schools...and, who took over 30 Mississippi school cases in which the Supreme Court ordered desegregation at once."

"I think I did it with an even hand," Bell said. "I think people who were there on the scene will have confidence in me. And I think that others, as they come to know me, will have confidence in me."

Bell said he never endorsed Carswell—President Nixon's Supreme Court nominee who was rejected by the Senate for his stands on school desegregation—but had only "recommended him."

In retrospect, Bell said, a three-judge ruling in which he participated against Julian Bond's seating in the Georgia legislature was the wrong one.

"It is quite obvious that we were wrong, and the Supreme Court was right" in ruling that Bond should be seated, he said.

Bell also said that he planned to give the deputy attorney general broader responsibilities over all crime matters, including the FBI; proposed that U.S. attorneys be retained on a career service basis under a new merit system in an effort to "depoliticize" the department in their selections, and suggested that federal judges be selected by a merit commission which would screen applicants and recommend five possible nominees for each post.

House delays decision on assassination funds

WASHINGTON (UPI) The House, wary of the costs and methods of its Assassination Committee, refused Tuesday to decide whether to spend \$13 million to investigate the killings of President Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The committee went out of business Jan. 3, saying it had a great many unanswered questions about the Kennedy and King assassinations.

Instead of suspending the rules and giving the committee new life without debate, House leaders decided to turn the request over to the Rules Committee, meaning that a decision could not be made at least until after the committee is formed next week.

Minutes before the resolution to suspend the rules was scheduled to come up, House Democratic leader Jim Wright, D-Tex., told reporters: "Rather than try to cram this thing down the throats of the members, we have decided to go to the Rules Committee."

Wright said he had conferred with House Republican leader John Rhodes adding, "a great many of their members have many questions."

"Some Democrats," Wright continued, "have also expressed some reservations."

As part of its \$13 million budget request over the next two years, the committee wants

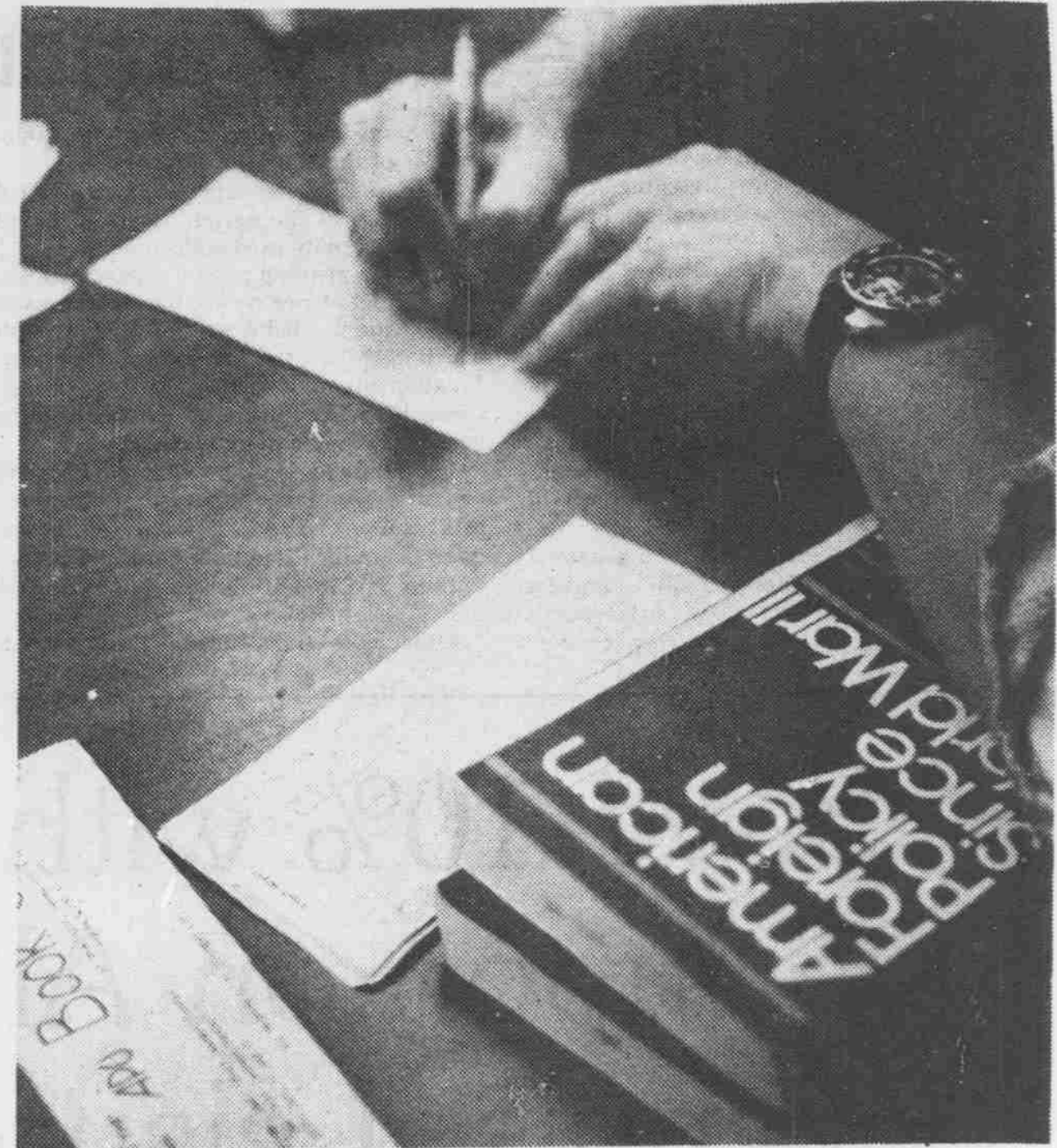
to buy lie and stress detecting apparatus, two tiny radio transmitters that can be concealed in clothing for \$2,000 each and equipment to monitor two incoming telephone lines at the panel's office.

"A good many members raised the question of bringing it up under suspension of the rules," said Wright. "One concern of the members is how much money the committee will cost. Another was the methodology to be employed by investigators."

Several members of Congress said the spy-type apparatus could be used for illegal gathering of evidence although Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Tex., the committee's chairperson-designate, said the equipment would only be used with the consent of witnesses and approval of interrogators.

When it became evident the vote would not come up, Rep. Robert Bauman, R-Md., said, "I hope all members will have a chance to debate the merits of this resolution and offer amendments to circumscribe the scope of the investigation and the activities of the staff."

"I am not opposed to the investigation, but I want the integrity of the House upheld and the postponement today is a small step in that direction."



Staff photo by David Dalton

APO officially coed

Alpha Phi Omega (APO), a campus service organization which sponsors a book co-op each semester, recently changed its bylaws to allow women members. Women comprise 50 per cent of APO's present membership. Administration officials had informed APO that barring female members was a Title IX violation.

Ford requests consolidation of federal energy agencies

WASHINGTON (UPI)—In another late bid to leave his imprint on U.S. policy, President Ford asked Congress Tuesday to consolidate top federal agencies into a "Department of Energy"—a step Jimmy Carter suggested in the 1976 campaign.

Ford proposed that the new Cabinet-level department include operations of the Federal Energy Administration, the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Federal Power Commission and two Interior Department agencies—the Bureau of Mines and the Rural Electrification Administration.

Under Ford's plan, the Energy Resources Council now headed by Commerce Secretary Elliot Richardson would be abolished and its responsibilities shifted to the new department. The council, created shortly after Ford took office, has been his administration's chief energy policy

coordinating body.

In a 78-page report to Congress that contained proposed legislation, Ford said the present federal layout does not work as effectively as possible toward achievement of A.S. energy independence goals by 1985.

He said a new department is needed to create "a more effective and efficient management structure for providing leadership and carrying out the federal role in national energy affairs."

At a news conference, Richardson acknowledged Ford's idea was "similar in many respects to the proposal that was put forward by President-elect Carter during the campaign."

He said the Ford administration didn't make a "deliberate attempt to coordinate" its approach with Carter's, but "I don't think the consistency of the approach was accidental."

France frees Olympic killer

PARIS (UPI)—A French court rejected arrest warrants from West Germany and Israel Tuesday and freed Palestinian leader Abu Daoud, the suspected mastermind of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre. He flew first-class to Algeria.

Israel bitterly protested France's "shameful surrender to the pressures of Arab governments and the threats of the terrorist organizations" and recalled its ambassador from Paris.

The West German justice ministry said Daoud's release was a defeat for "the fight against international terrorism," but officials in Bonn said privately they were relieved the Black September commando leader was freed, avoiding any reprisal attacks by Palestinian guerrillas.

Daoud, accused of a leading role in the Olympics attack that resulted in the deaths of 11 Israeli athletes, five Palestinians and one West German policeman, said he is not a killer and testified he is an Iraqi named Youssef Raji Hanna.

Israeli military sources have said he was born near Jerusalem, and his mother confirmed his identity there last week.

Syria, Libya, Algeria and Iraq had protested Daoud's arrest, and police

tightened airport security earlier Tuesday to prevent any reprisal attacks by Palestinian guerrillas.

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