

ARMY HAS 15,000 FOR RIOT CONTROL

Troops Organized in Task
Forces for Duty in Cities

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 5—The Army has about 15,000 specially organized troops available for riot control duty in other cities in addition to the 2,000 Regular Army men who were committed to Washington today, military sources said.

Orders have been issued to unit commanders to be prepared to put their troops on alert for possible movement to urban areas where riots may erupt, the sources said.

They said the warning orders were among the "precautionary actions" announced by the Army headquarters at the Pentagon this morning.

As of late afternoon, however, the sources said they believed that except for the troops sent into Washington and a Marine battalion on alert at nearby Quantico, Va., no other regular troop units, including elements of the 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N. C., had actually been placed on formal alert status.

The Army headquarters announcement this morning also said there had so far been "no requests for any troop assistance" from any state Governors. The sources said they believed this was still true as of midafternoon today.

About 2,000 District of Columbia Army and Air National Guardsmen, whose commander in chief is technically President Johnson, are the only National Guardsmen federalized so far. They will operate alongside 2,000 Regular Army troops committed to the capital.

The Army headquarters said the "precautionary actions," which it did not explain in detail, were taken "in accordance with plans developed over the past months among Federal, state and local authorities" for riot control.

The 15,000 troops available for duty elsewhere, the sources said, are organized into seven small, brigade-level task forces of more than 2,000 men each, which have been tailored for riot control work.

Gen. Harold K. Johnson, the Army Chief of Staff, first disclosed the existence of these task forces in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February.

4-6-68
NYT

Riot Control Duty

He said that in the event they were committed to riot-torn cities they would work in conjunction with National Guard and police forces to restore order.

National Guard units, such as the 4,000 men who have been sent into Memphis, remain under the Governor's command until he requests Federal intervention and President Johnson assumes responsibility for restoring order. The National Guard units are then federalized.

General Johnson and Under Secretary of the Army David E. McGiffert were believed to be at the Army Operations Center at the Pentagon this evening supervising the deployment of Federal and National Guard troops in the capital and maintaining a watch on outbreaks of violence in other cities.

The Army Operations Center, on the Pentagon's second floor, serves, in effect, as a national command post for riot control purposes.

The XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, which controls the 82d Airborne Division elements that would form part of the seven brigade task forces, opened its emergency operations command center last night.

The United States Strike Command at McDill Air Force Base, Fla., under the command of Gen. Theodore J. Conway, is also prepared to begin marshalling the separate brigade task forces and to provide the transport aircraft to rush them to riot areas.