

Mitchell Warns on Protests

Urges Cities To Use D.C. Police Tactics

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Attorney General John N. Mitchell, drawing a parallel between the antiwar demonstrators here last week and Hitler's brownshirts of the 1920s, said yesterday he hoped other cities would follow Washington's example of "decisive opposition to mob force."

Mitchell termed the Mayday exercises in civil disobedience a "growing threat to civil rights in this country" and warned that if the government yields to such a "wretched tactic" it will contribute to its own destruction.

The attorney general called the demonstrators "rights robbers" and said that the "ring-leaders" charged with organizing the disobedience will be prosecuted.

Mitchell's tough posture on the disorders that beset the nation's capital in the last of three weeks of antiwar activities was taken in a speech to the California Peace Officers' Association in San Francisco.

Referring to the four-day arrest total of more than 12,000 demonstrators, 7,000 of whom were arrested in one day, Mitchell said, "Nothing else could have been done unless the police were to let the mob rule the city."

Without identifying the sen-

ator by name, Mitchell referred to a speech in New York last week by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) in which Kennedy said police were forced by "high-level political decisions" to use mass arrests as a tactic to dilute the effectiveness of future demonstrations.

"This assumption, eagerly made by the senator in an effort to make political capital out of the Washington disorders, is absolutely false," the Attorney General said. He said the "courageous decision" to make mass arrests was made at the scene of the disturbances by Police Chief Jerry V. Wilson.

In response, Kennedy said yesterday, "The Attorney General apparently believes that it is a model of law enforcement fairness to arrest masses of innocent pedestrians, to detain people against whom there is no evidence of criminal conduct, to hold them incommunicado . . . and to manufacture fraudulent arrest papers."

"But if the Attorney General is so pleased with these activities, I wonder why he is so anxious to disclaim the administration's responsibility for them . . ."

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Mitchell said the police "presented to the world a picture of police fairness and effectiveness" in its handling of "the spectacle of some 20,000 disrupters deliberately attempting to shut down a city . . ."

"Let the critics of the Washington police choose to make martyrs out of the mob which tried to rob the rights of 800,000 Washingtonians and injured 34 policemen in the process," Mitchell declared.

"As for myself, I will choose as heroes the valiant Washington policemen who kept the city of Washington functioning and protected the rights of their fellow citizens."

While endorsing the mass arrests of lawbreakers at the scenes of demonstrations, Mitchell did not directly address himself to what critics of the administration called the tactic of "preventive arrests" of young protesters and bystanders who had not appeared to be involved in civil disobedience.

But he did respond to complaints of civil libertarians that due process in court was denied some arrested protesters and that poor sanitary conditions and overcrowding existed at the police detention centers.

Saying he was quoting television commentator Eric Sevareid, Mitchell declared:

"Those arrested could be asked why they are furious at delays in the legal processing of their cases when they had set out to put a full stop to all processes of government here. Or why they resent the unsanitary conditions in their deten-

Don't know who arrested the chief of the Washington mob arrested by Mitchell & Mitchell had Turner

tion centers when, had their own plans succeeded, there would be no sanitation anywhere in the city. . ."

The Attorney General added, "I am proud of the Washington city police. I am proud that they stopped a repressive mob from robbing the rights of others. I am proud that they did so in the best tradition of the peace officer—with firmness and restraint. . ."

Saying that comparisons had been made between the police and the Nazis, Mitchell recalled "another group of civilians who roamed the streets of Germany in the 1920s, bullying people, shouting down those who disagreed . . . and denying other citizens their civil rights.

"They were called Hitler's brownshirts and if they had been called to account for their theft of the rights of others . . . the world might have been spared a whole era of violence and misery," Mitchell declared.

In another development yesterday, a sense of the Senate resolution commending the metropolitan police department and other law enforcement agencies for their handling of the demonstrations was passed by a voice vote.

Introduced by Sen. Carl Curtis (R-Neb.) and sponsored by 21 other senators, the resolution praised Chief Wilson's leadership and his men's "consistent, just, calm and efficient action under strenuous conditions."

Sen. Lee Metcalf (D-Mont.), who was presiding at the time, said "the chair votes 'no'" after the voice vote. On Wednesday, when police arrested 1,000 protesters at the Capitol, Metcalf scuffled briefly with a policeman when he was not permitted to cross police lines.

Also on the Senate floor, Sen. James L. Buckley, New York Conservative, assailed Kennedy's New York speech as a "flight from reason and responsibility.

"I suggest that those who aspire to national leadership ought to understand by now the dangers that come from flattering the mobs," Buckley said.

Meanwhile, the president of the D.C. Bar Association said he had requested two of the association's standing committees to determine whether mass arrest procedures used last week were legal.

Herbert J. Miller Jr. said, "Whether the circumstances surrounding the Mayday demonstrations warranted this action and whether the arrests themselves were within the framework of legitimacy are questions that must be resolved." The committees are to report by May 28, he said.