

Lawmen Told to 'Keep Cool'

By John P. MacKenzie
Washington Post Staff Writer

Attorney General John N. Mitchell yesterday called on police and National Guardsmen to "keep their cool" under the pressure of civil strife and use only the minimum physical force necessary to maintain order.

Mitchell, whose previous public utterances have focused on society's "dissident" elements, gave the advice in a statement announcing "highest priority" federal investigations of the shootings at August, Ga., at Jackson State College in Mississippi and Kent State University in Ohio.

The attorney general announced the investigations, all under the personal supervision of Assistant Attorney General Jerris Leonard, shortly after an ad hoc investigating committee led by Sens. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) and Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.) urged Mitchell to convene a federal grand jury in Jackson, Miss.

Mitchell's statement said the department is "prepared to take appropriate action" in its investigations if "legal process" proves necessary "in order to develop all of the evidence." The term "legal process" is usually associated with the orders of a grand jury to summon witnesses and compel them to produce evidence.

Saying he expected "the full cooperation of all appropriate state agencies," Mitchell added that the investigations could help develop "new guidelines for law enforcement agencies generally in the field of riot and crowd control." If so, he said the government would take the lead in

"encouraging" their use at federal, state and local levels.

Meanwhile, said Mitchell, "I would remind all law enforcement agencies, whether they be local police, state police or National Guardsmen, that the first requirement of professional law enforcement agencies, whether they be local police, state police or National Guardsmen, that the first requirement of professional law enforcement officers is the protection of the public. One can recognize the provocations which often accompany civil disorders, but trained law enforcement personnel have responsibility to 'keep their cool' and to utilize only such minimum force as is required

to protect the safety of the general public, the bystanders and themselves."

Like Mitchell, the ad hoc congressional committee returned from Mississippi where Mitchell met with local officials and the committee held public hearings on the shooting deaths of two Jackson State students, Bayh and Mondale were accompanied by Reps. William Clay (D-Mo.) and Don Edwards (D-Calif.), NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins and attorneys Joseph L. Rauh Jr. and Clifford Alexander.

The committee told Mitchell that his statement in Cleveland, Miss., "about violent

demonstrations and repressive reactions" could not have applied to Jackson State "since—and we cannot emphasize the point strongly enough—there was no provocation to warrant the bloodbath that took place." They called it a "mass lynching" by police.

Earlier, Mitchell defended the legality of the grand jury report criticizing, but not indicting, Chicago police in the December shooting deaths of two Black Panther leaders. Sen. John L. McClellan (D-Ark.) told a House committee on Wednesday that grand juries are limited under present law to indicting or exonerating individuals.



Associated Press

Attorney General John N. Mitchell chats with Reps. William McCulloch (R-Ohio) and Emanuel Celler (D-N.Y.) before testifying at House panel on crime.