

# U.S. Puts Ban on Public Gatherings In Five Streets Around White House

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The Interior Department announced yesterday that public gatherings have been banned along five streets ringing the White House and that permits now will be needed for demonstrations at Lafayette Square and all but six other Washington parks.

Placed off limits to demonstrators, including those merely passing out leaflets, were East, South and West Executive Avenues, State Place and Alexander Hamilton Place.

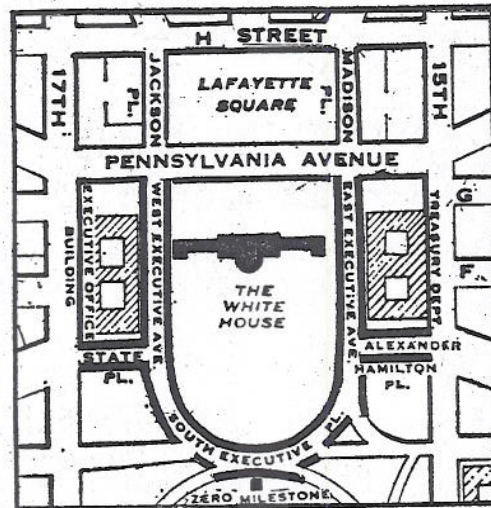
An Interior official said the ban was imposed at the request of the Secret Service. The Interior Department has jurisdiction over the White House grounds and bordering streets.

The directive does not affect Pennsylvania Avenue along the north side of the White House, where picketing regularly has been carried on for years.

The order regarding gatherings and speeches in the parks says that permits for such meetings shall be issued unless there exists "a clear and present danger to public health or safety."

The decision is left to the director of the National Capital Region, National Park Service, who is T. Sutton Jett.

Permits can also be denied if the event



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"is of such nature or duration that it cannot reasonably be accommodated in the particular area applied for" or if another event has been scheduled for the same time and place.

In addition, permits can contain conditions "reasonably consistent with protection

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and use of the area for the purposes for which it is maintained and otherwise consistent with the regulations."

The directive does specify six park areas where public gatherings of limited size can take place without a permit.

The areas and number of participants permitted are: Judiciary Park, 4th and F Streets nw. (500); McPherson Square, 15th and I Streets nw. (500); Garfield Park, 2d Street near Virginia Avenue se. (1000); U. S. Reservation 31, east of 18th Street and south of H Street nw. (500); Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, west of 23d Street and south of P Streets nw. (1000), and U. S. Reservation 46, bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, 8th Street and D Street se. (25).

### Replace Fuzzy Policy

The new park regulations replace an old policy that had become fuzzy in the past year.

The old regulations forbade demonstrations in the parks. But in March, 1965, sponsors of a mass demonstration to protest what they felt was Federal inaction in the Alabama racial crisis sought permission to hold their rally in Lafayette Park.

Attorneys for the Interior Department felt that the prohibition on demonstrations, if tested in court, might be found unconstitutional.

So in spite of the regulations on the books, the group was issued a permit. Since then, other protest meetings have been held there, some with permits and some without.

The most recent was two weeks ago, when a group of Mississippi farm workers set up tents in the park to dramatize their request for anti-poverty funds to build homes.

An Interior spokesman said the demonstration had the effect of speeding the issuance of the revised regulations by reminding officials that no clear policy had been adopted.

### Rules Are Explained

Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall made this comment in announcing the amended requirements:

"These rules have been carefully considered and drafted with a view toward maintaining, and in many respects widening, the opportunity for the exercise of the constitutional rights of free speech, free assembly and petitioning the government for redress of grievances within the District of Columbia.

"At the same time we have included provisions aimed at protecting park areas for their principal purpose — as parks for use and enjoyment by all the people."