

Army Readies Riot Equipment Across Nation

By GAYLORD SHAW

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army is stockpiling riot control equipment in strategically located depots across the country, officials said today, and is ready to airlift it to any city if civil disorders break out next summer.

Details of the military establishment's riot duty preparations were disclosed after sources reported the President's Commission on Civil Disorders is dissatisfied with the National Guard's performance in quelling last summer's violence, and is considering recommending creation of a specially trained federal riot-control force.

A commission source said the National Guard's effectiveness is limited by lack of proper training and by "the fact most of the Guard is lily-white." He said discussion of a special force has centered on whether it would amount to a national police force; whether it would be a regular Army unit; and at what point it would step into a disorder.

Army and National Guard officials said their planning has been extensive as well as diverse, ranging from obtaining maps of subway, sewer, water and electrical systems in potential trouble spots to preparing menus for mobilized national guardsmen. The North Carolina guard, for example, will have fish with tartar sauce for dinner on the third day if called out).

Strategy sessions have involved thousands of individuals, from the Pentagon's top brass to policemen on the beat.

"I personally feel assured the planning is adequate," said Maj. Gen. Francis Greenlief, deputy chief of the National Guard Bureau, Greenlief and the Guard chief, Maj. Gen. Winston P. Wilson will tour 40 states this spring, reviewing state and local preparations.

From interviews with Pentagon, National Guard and other officials, these major points emerged:

—The Army is stockpiling special equipment in a half-dozen or so depots, but officials refused to give the exact number or say where they are. "That's classified," one officer said.

Greenlief said "the Army has developed a plan for providing very, very rapidly any additional communications equipment required by the states." He also mentioned search lights and riot-control agents, such as tear gas. Another source said M79 grenade launchers were among the stockpiled equipment.

There also has been "preplanning for air delivery" of the equipment, Greenlief said. Local National Guard commanders know, he said, that "all they have to do is pick up the phone" to request special equipment.

—Training has been broadened. Several hundred Army, National Guard and police officials are taking week-long special courses in riot control at Ft. Gordon, Ga., home of the Army's military police.

In addition, the Army has supplied Guard units with detailed riot training plans. These include lessons learned last summer in Detroit, Newark and other cities.