

Rockefeller Assures Students On State Guard Campus Role

By BILL KOVACH MAY 15 1970

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BUFFALO, May 14—Governor Rockefeller assured students picketing his appearance here today that there could be no repetition of the Kent State University shooting on a New York campus.

"National Guard instructions in this state—and in 12 years I have never called the guard to a college campus—are to go in with no guns and no tear gas," the Governor said, "they are to go in as a body to have a quieting effect—not to bring about more violence."

The statement, made during an impromptu hour-and-a-half discussion with six law and medical students who have joined the strike at the State University here, was the Governor's first comment on orders to the state National

Guard since a review of procedures was begun here in the wake of the killing of four Kent students last week.

In Albany, Maj. Gen. A.C. O'Hara, commander of the New York National Guard, said that a standing order issued by the Governor at least two years ago prohibited guardsmen from carrying guns and ammunition on campuses.

He said his men were under orders to assume a "defensive posture" in any campus confrontation, using only police clubs and plastic face shields in addition to their regular uniforms.

A spokesman for the National Guard later said the standing order had not been made public

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at the time it was issued because it was guard policy never to make disclosures of a tactical or planning nature, except in specially warranted circumstances.

In his meeting with the students, the Governor also promised to look into charges by them of undue force by the city police in controlling antiwar demonstrations on the campus here last week. Specifically, he said he would investigate their charges that 12 students had been wounded by shotgun pellets fired by the police.

Mr. Rockefeller's day here included a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Niagara Frontiers Performing Arts Center at Lewiston, and the presentation here of the annual award of the State Council on the Arts for 12 artistic and cultural efforts around the state.

It was on entering the Statler Hilton Hotel for this last event that the Governor was met by about 30 students

picketing his appearance and protesting the war in Vietnam and the Nixon Administration policies. He arranged to meet with a representative group of the pickets later.

Through much of the meeting, the Governor heard his motives and his sincerity challenged by the intent young students, several of whom had been arrested in recent demonstrations.

"I can understand how you feel," Mr. Rockefeller said. "I agree with your goals and what I'm looking for is your help in developing a structure so there can be instant and continuous communications between my office and the college campuses."

The Governor consistently refused their request that he publicly disavow President Nixon's Vietnam policies and support Congressional efforts to cut off military funds for Cambodian operations.

He implied, however, that his restraints were tied to the timetable for withdrawal of troops from Cambodia by President Nixon.

"If I joined these moves

now," the Governor said, "I would destroy my authority to deal with the President."

Later, in response to the students' complaints that Vice President Agnew's speeches "have made it easier for people to oppose demonstrators and to make us scapegoats for all the problems of the country," the Governor agreed that voices should be raised in defense of dissent.

Though not commenting on Mr. Agnew's role, Mr. Rockefeller told the students he agreed fully that public officials should stand up and publicly "tell them on the street that we have to stop beating on one another and respect one another's rights."

The students seemed pleased with the general tone of the meeting, but they made it clear to the Governor they would "wait for some action" before they drew any conclusions about his desire to "see our point of view."

As Mr. Rockefeller and his staff left the room, one of the students called out: "If you agree with us, you've got to say so. That's what we're asking, we're looking for a leader, that's what we're looking for."