

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1971

## White House Sets a Quiet Tone For Today's Antiwar Protest

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23 —

The White House set a tone of official forbearance today toward the antiwar demonstrators who will gather tomorrow to conduct their fourth mass protest here since President Nixon took office.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said there was no information to suggest any violence by the 100,000 or more protesters expected to march from the Eclipse, behind the White House, to the Capitol grounds.

But Attorney General John N. Mitchell told a group of college editors and journalism students that he had "no doubt" that some demonstrators would, during protests over the next few days, engage in "physical confrontation."

The Attorney General's remark was the only discordant one on the eve of the largest of the planned spring rallies to urge an immediate American withdrawal from Indochina.

Intelligence experts at the Department of Justice and at the District of Columbia Police Department said they did not have any indication that there would be difficulty during the march and rally tomorrow, which is sponsored by the National Peace Action Coalition.

That attitude was reflected as well in the Government's preparations for the mass rally. Mr. Ziegler said the President had instructed his Administration "to proceed in a way that would not lead to possible violence of any sort and with the understanding that people have a right to express themselves."

Mr. Ziegler also said the President saw nothing objectionable in the gathering of a group of active duty servicemen tonight in Washington National Cathedral, in their uniforms, to "pray for peace."

### President Away

The President will not be at the White House for the mass protest tomorrow. He flew by helicopter tonight to Virginia Beach, Va., to join Mrs. Nixon and Ens. and Mrs. David Eisenhower for dinner. Then the Nixons and their daughter and son-in-law flew to the Presidential retreat at Camp David, Md., for the weekend.

The Department of Defense announced that it had placed an undisclosed number of troops on alert at the request of the Justice Department. But, in contrast to its practice in previous mass rally situations, the Pentagon did not position any troops in downtown Washington.

Last May, when President Nixon's decision to send United States troops into Cambodia was protested by a rally on the Ellipse, the White House set up a barricade of bumper-to-bumper buses. Tomorrow it will depend on the police and goodwill.

"We're not looking for trou-

ble," said a White House official. "We're not seeking a confrontation."

Mr. Ziegler said that, "to the best of my knowledge, we have not been made aware of any intention to take actions that would purposefully lead to violence."

At the Justice Department, the college students asked Mr. Mitchell for his assessment of the risks of trouble over the next few days.

"There is no doubt in my mind," the Attorney General replied, "that some of the individuals who will participate in some of those activities at some time during that period are inspired by outside interests, and we do feel that we have a substantial possibility of physical confrontation and possibly substantial physical harm within the District of Columbia."

Mr. Mitchell did not elaborate. Justice Department officials have expressed some concern about the avowed aim of the People's Coalition for Peace and Justice to disrupt Government business during the first week of May.

### 'Scare Tactics' Charged

Jerry Gordon, a coordinator of the National Peace Action Coalition, charged in a statement that Mr. Mitchell was engaging in "scare tactics" to lower the attendance at the rally.

"The march in its size and in its representation will prove historic," Mr. Gordon said.

Justice Department officials said the interdivisional Information Unit, intelligence center for the rally, had received estimates on the turnout that ranged from 50,000 to 250,000. They said the best estimate was about 100,000.

The unit will gather data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the district police, news agency tickers and Justice Department lawyers in touch with rally leaders.

A Pentagon spokesman said Army intelligence groups, which have been criticized for surveillance of civilians, would not be involved in intelligence activities tomorrow.