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Tense Summer May Arrive Early This Year; U.S. Officials Stress Prevention, Defense

Only one thing is certain about summer. It will, in terms of tension, come early this year.

Some apprehensive federal officials think it may have already arrived, having begun in Orangeburg, S. C., with the shooting of three Negroes on the night of Feb. 7.

Whatever the weather, summer may open in Washington April 15, as soon as Dr. Martin Luther King leads his troops on an uncertain mission to "plague Congress."

In other cities, Army men in civilian clothes are surveying the streets for defense purposes. A tank suitable for ghetto action has been announced. According to The Associated Press, the Army has begun stockpiling riot control equipment in strategically located depots.

The Justice Department has set up a riot-watching computer similar, it is supposed, to the Defense Department's Vietnam pacification computer.

These ominous preparations have given rise to the impression that the government will seek a military rather than a political solution to the troubles that lie ahead.

Not so, says the Justice Department. Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark is taking the lead in urging on local law enforcement officers a progressive approach to racial disorders.

Mr. Clark appeared four successive times before 115 police chiefs, who gathered for a month-long seminar on summer problems at Airlie House under Justice Department auspices, and told them that the stress should not be on "riot control" but "riot prevention."

Once they started talking about control rather than prevention, Mr. Clark told the chiefs, "failure has begun."

The "sensitivity training" for the police chiefs was conducted by a private group called "Leadership Resources." After some discussion, it was decided not to bring in civil rights leaders on the theory that "policemen do not listen to outsiders."

Roger Wilkins, director of the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department and nephew of Roy Wilkins, addressed the chiefs. He spoke as



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an official, but did make some mention of his Harlem boyhood.

Most officials agree with one baffled Cabinet officer who says that "We know no more about

what causes riots than we do about what causes cancer."

Supposedly, the President's Commission on Civil Disorders, which will issue a report early in March, will provide enlightenment on the underlying causes, a subject which Congress refuses to discuss.

But Mr. Wilkins holds that one lesson at least was learned from last summer's agony — and that is that the business community must be involved in solutions. He has been holding a series of meetings with top executives of corporations who are cooperating with the government's effort to break the rock of hard-core unemployment in the slums.

Such action, Mr. Wilkins thinks, will help to counter the growing apprehension that the federal government is using the interlude only for an arms buildup. The Army stockpiling is being conducted in a semi-public fashion. Why the buildup is going in the slums among the militants and those who may only wish to protect themselves against the violence that is glumly regarded as inevitable, no one knows.

No healing words have come from the highest levels. A President immersed in Vietnam on Lincoln's Birthday compared himself to Lincoln, the war president, with no reference to what in some quarters takes on the look of civil war brewing before his eyes.

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