

Police Stockpile Weapons, Preparing for Riots

WASHINGTON, March 1 (AP)—In city after city across America, the police are stockpiling armored vehicles, helicopters, high-powered rifles.

They are recruiting civilians as ready reserves. They are sending undercover agents into the slums.

Quietly, an Associated Press survey shows, they are preparing for summer and the riots they hope will not occur.

Even riot veterans are awed by some weapons developed in the aftermath of Watts, Newark and Detroit.

In Los Angeles, policemen watched the demonstration model of a 20-ton armored personnel carrier crush a barricade of abandoned cars.

Can Carry 20 Men

The tank-like vehicle can carry 20 men in bulletproof safety. It can be equipped with a .30-caliber machine gun, tear-gas launchers, a smoke-screen device, chemical fire extinguishers and a siren that can disable rioters with its sound.

"When I look at this thing," said Deputy Chief Daryl Gates, "I think, my God, I hope we'll never have to use it."

"But then I realize how valuable it would have been in Watts, where we had nothing to protect us from sniper fire when we tried to rescue wounded officers."

"We might as well be prepared."

Policemen in most cities are tempering this show of firmness, however, with efforts to improve their relations with slum dwellers—"our first defense against riots," said Chief Thomas Reddin of Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles police admit they are seriously interested in buying the armored vehicle. One drawback is the price: \$35,000, without optional equipment.

The Los Angeles sheriff's office overcame the cost factor by purchasing a surplus Army M-8 armored car for \$2,500, then outfitting it as a "rescue vehicle."

Five armored vehicles cruised Detroit's streets last summer during the riot that left 43 dead. Since then, the Detroit police have stocked up on 100 pairs of binoculars, 2,000

tear-gas grenades and 1,200 gas masks, and have asked for 25 special antismoke rifles, 500 carbines, 300 shotguns and 150,000 rounds of ammunition.

In neighboring Monroe county, the sheriff is spending his \$50,000 riot-control fund on a \$13,500 armored truck, 15 walkie-talkies, 100 rifles, 15,000 rounds of ammunition, 500 tear-gas canisters and flak vests.

Oakland County, a Detroit suburb, also is obtaining an Army half-track. Prosecutor S. Jerome Bronson said: "We have learned from mistakes made elsewhere in the country that there is no substitute for firmness."

A thousand miles to the south, Police Chief James G. Littleton of Tampa, Fla., put it another way:

"We have taken off the kid gloves with these elements who cause riots."

The Tampa arsenal, he said, includes 162 shotguns, 150 bayonets, 5 sniper rifles, 25 carbines and M-1 rifles, 300 gas masks. And State Attorney Paul Antineri has recommended that Tampa policemen "shoot to kill" persons observed committing, or about to commit, felonies during a riot.

Back in Michigan, Gov. George Romney and Mayors of 18 cities adopted this week a multipoint plan to head off riots. Mr. Romney has asked the Legislature for \$1-million to finance police riot training and hopes to get \$500,000 more from Federal sources.

The Michigan state police has hired 225 new patrolmen, plus 20 men for its intelligence section, and wants to buy a helicopter.

Copters in Chicago

Chicago has already acquired helicopters and is training four pilots. The department's highly mobile 600-man task force has been instructing the city's 11,500 other policemen in crowd control and use of heavy weapons.

Elaborate plans have been made in Chicago to head off trouble when the Democratic National Convention is held there in August.

"We are now able," said Police Superintendent James B. Conlisk, "to mobilize 6,000 uni-

formed policemen and detectives within several hours in any location in the city."

Chicago has been in the forefront of controversy springing from recruitment of civilians for possible riot control duty.

A Chicago court has blocked Sheriff Joseph I. Woods's plans to recruit a 1,000-man volunteer riot control posse. Detroit has already recruited 600 civilians as police reserves. And Wayne County Sheriff Peter L. Buback reported a "very favorable response" to his proposal to train volunteers from the ranks of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as an emergency task force.

In the District of Columbia, the City Council is expected to get a proposal that would authorize the arming of a 100-man civilian contingent to patrol quieter beats when policemen are needed in an emergency.

Johnson Administration officials are participating in the drafting of plans to employ city policemen, National Guardsmen and Regular Army troops to quell any disturbance in the capital quickly.

As if to underscore this determination, a gray telephone with a red light instead of a dialing mechanism—a "hot line" to the Pentagon—has been installed at City Hall.

Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, told Congress recently that the Army had seven brigades within the United States "specifically earmarked and available for civil disturbance duty."

Security Aim Cited

Many police officials are reluctant to discuss specific preparations.

"It doesn't make for good security," said Detroit Police Commissioner Ray Girardin.

"So much talk about riots that may not occur creates tensions which could lead to riots," added Police Chief Michael Blakwell of Cleveland.

Instead of riot preparations, police officials prefer to emphasize community relations programs.

In another tactic aimed at prevention, law enforcement agencies are trying to infiltrate militant organizations in the slums.

"We're following through on the military concept in attacking this problem," said Maj. Eugene Olaff, New Jersey State Police operations officer in disclosing that the state police had been doing undercover work.

On a larger scale, Federal experts are feeding data submitted by cities across the nation into a computer in the basement of Justice Department headquarters. The computer will help decide what, if any, Federal response is required to meet trouble this summer.

Mobility is basic in police riot-control plans.

Philadelphia Police Chief Frank L. Rizzo keeps busloads of policemen scattered throughout the city, poised to speed to any area if trouble breaks out. He also has specially trained teams equipped with shotguns and machine guns ready to take over rooftops in riot zones.

The Los Angeles police have 15 special weapons and tactics teams and are training 30 more. Each four-man team is composed of a sharpshooter armed with a scope-equipped rifle, a spotter and two men armed with shotguns or hand guns to provide covering fire.

The police department also has bought a \$45,000 mobile command post to house its field commander. The post is a blue-and-white trailer with paneled walls, upholstered chairs, maps, telephones and television.

The Newark police are testing a closed-circuit television system. Cameras scanning riot scenes can relay pictures to the safety of command posts where officers will make tactical decisions.

Last summer's riots in Newark and Detroit spurred development of a variety of non-lethal weapons, including a chemical nicknamed "instant banana peel" that makes streets icy slick, a foam that can submerge crowds and tranquilizer darts to subdue individual rioters.

"Don't throw your guns away," Chief Reddin in Los Angeles advises his colleagues. "Let us not be seduced by the naive philosophy that foam dispensers or slippery substances can summarily pacify rioters, looters and arsonists."