

'68 RIOT WARNING GIVEN TO CHICAGO

Official Memo. Is Disclosed at Conspiracy Trial

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CHICAGO, Jan. 20—More than a month before the 1968 Democratic National Convention here, a United States Assistant Attorney General warned there might be a "national disaster" in Chicago's streets unless city officials and demonstrators developed a "working relationship."

Portions of a memorandum outlining this and other views were read into the record of the Chicago conspiracy trial today as a formal "offer of proof" by the defense.

The offer was made out of the presence of the jurors after Judge Julius J. Hoffman ruled that the memorandum was "hearsay" evidence and could not be considered by the jury.

The eight-page document was submitted July 19, 1968, to the then United States Attorney General, Ramsay Clark, by Roger W. Wilkins, then an assistant attorney general and director of the Justice Depart-

ment's Community Relations Service.

Wilkins Testifies

Mr. Wilkins, now an official of the Ford Foundation, was on the witness stand this morning to testify about his efforts to avoid a violent confrontation here during the convention.

He told of a meeting July 17, 1968, with Rennie Davis, one of the seven defendants charged here with conspiracy to incite a riot during the convention.

Mr. Davis, he said, told him that the Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam had been making unsuccessful efforts to open communications with Chicago officials.

Mr. Wilkins said that Mr. Davis expressed fears that unless city officials were willing to negotiate with the committee there was a danger of serious "police violence" during the convention.

Prosecution Objects

Following this testimony, the defense sought to introduce Mr. Wilkins's memorandum, but the prosecution objected and Judge Hoffman upheld the objection.

Leonard I. Weinglass, a defense attorney, then read the last page and a half into the record. It recounted Mr. Wilkins's conversation with Mr. Davis, particularly the concern about the uncooperative attitude of city officials and the fear of police violence.

"Davis said that the Mobilization leadership believes on balance that their chance of success will be enhanced by a lack of violence," the memorandum said. "Whether this view will change depends in some measure, I gather, on the nature of the dealings between the Mobilization and the city of Chicago."

Assumptions Listed

The memorandum then listed several "assumptions," among them the following:

"That no matter what we do, the Mobilization and other organizations cited above will in-

deed produce in Chicago tens of thousands of people who are hostile to the political process in America; that Rennie Davis is an honest, intelligent man who was being candid with me in our conversation; that large-scale violence in Chicago at the time of the convention would be a national disaster and a national disgrace; that such violence is possible, and that our best chance of averting violence is developing the closest possible working relationship between the Chicago authorities, Democratic party officials, Federal officials and the Mobilization.9'

On the basis of these assumptions, the memorandum recommended that President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey be apprised of the Mobilization's plans and urged to accept the proposed strategy; that one of them or someone clearly acting in their behalf call Mayor Richard J. Daley and outline the strategy; and that the Mayor be informed that Mr. Wilkins was coming to Chicago to work out such coordination between the city and the Mobilization Committee.

Meeting With Daley

Mr. Wilkins testified that as a result of the memorandum, Attorney General Clark arranged for him to meet with Mayor Daley on July 25.

The prosecution objected to any testimony about the conversation at this meeting, and Judge Hoffman upheld the objection.

But Mr. Wilkins was allowed to testify about a meeting later that day at which he told Mr. Davis that his meeting with the Mayor had been "quite unsuccessful."

At a news conference after completing his testimony, Mr. Wilkins gave more details of the meeting. He said Mayor Daley had listened to him "for about three minutes" and then began a long denunciation of "outside agitators" that consumed the rest of the meeting.