

Plot to Kill Nixon

--Search Goes On

Washington

The Secret Service continued yesterday to press its investigation of what was described as a "very serious, very large" conspiracy by "non-mentals" to assassinate President Nixon during his visit to New Orleans Monday.

Sources familiar with the investigation said the Secret Service used the term "non-mentals" to distinguish the reported assassination plot from the more common threats to the President from mentally unbalanced individuals. Most such threats prove empty.

The Secret Service, in an

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unprecedented move, announced early Monday that the agency had "strongly recommended" to the White House that the route of Mr. Nixon's motorcade through a short section of downtown New Orleans be changed.

White House aides said later that the President himself had ordered that the motorcade be canceled, but in San Clemente, where Mr. Nixon flew after his brief, uneventful visit to New Orleans, reporters overheard him say to Rose Mary Woods, his personal secretary: "They called me last night. They canceled. They'll never cancel another time."

But Gerald L. Warren, the president's deputy press secretary, said at San Clemente yesterday that the cancellation mentioned by Mr. Nixon referred to another matter that Miss Woods was working on with the President.

SEARCH

Meanwhile, Secret Service agents and a score of heavily

armed state and local officers searched through rugged territory near Taos, N.M., yesterday for Edwin M. Gaudet, a bearded, 29-year-old, former New Or-

leans policeman who has been charged with making a separate threat against Mr. Nixon's life.

An arrest warrant issued by the Secret Service Monday alleged that Gaudet, a sometime resident of the "Morningstar" commune in Taos, had said in a New Orleans bar last week that "somebody ought to kill President Nixon. If no one has the guts, I'll do it."

Secret Service officials said that they had found no evidence to connect Gaudet to the reported assassination conspiracy, but would not preclude the possibility that a connection might turn up.

GUNFIRE

John Paul Jones, chief of the Secret Service in New Mexico, said yesterday that local officers had exchanged gunfire Monday afternoon with a man they believed to

be Gaudet, who disappeared into a nearby Arroyo after firing two shots from a high-powered rifle.

Federal authorities here and in New Orleans were closed-mouthed about the details of the reported plot against the President, which apparently came to light from intelligence information gathered by the New Orleans Police Department.

Officials of the FBI, whose New Orleans field office is working on the case, referred questions to the Secret Service, which is coordinating the investigation. The Secret Service would say publicly only that the matter was being "aggressively" pursued.

But officials of both agencies, all of whom asked not to be named, insisted that the alleged conspiracy was both broad and intensely serious and that its threat had not been "blown out of proportion," as some New Orleans policemen reportedly complained yesterday.

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