

U.S. Fails in Move to Curb Protesters

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Concerned with the current upsurge in impeachment-Nixon and other demonstrations planned near the White House, the government yesterday unsuccessfully sought to block a recent court order enlarging the maximum number of demonstrators permitted in the area.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals refused to stay the effect of a lower court order issued last Aug. 28, raising the permissible limits from 100 to 500 demonstrators on the sidewalk in front of the White House and from 500 to 3,000 demonstrators in adjacent Lafayette Park.

Acting on an urgent note, the U.S. Attorney's office here in concurrence with

the Secret Service cited a half-dozen assorted protests and demonstrations scheduled near the White House today and Sunday.

It asked that an Aug. 28 order, issued by District Judge George L. Hart, be stayed pending a full appeal by the government. Failing at the Court of Appeals level yesterday, spokesman said early last night the government was still considering an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court, but "the crush of other events" made such a move unlikely.

Two major demonstrations are scheduled today:

- A rally and teach-in sponsored by the Committee to Impeach the President, starting at 11 a.m. at the Ellipse followed by a march around Lafayette Park and a possible silent vigil last-

ing until 4 p.m. Organizers expect 5,000 participants.

- Daylong leaflet distribution and talk sessions on the White House sidewalk sponsored by the Washington Area Impeachment Coalition. Up to 500 persons expected.

On Sunday afternoon, workers for the Divine Light Mission, the organization of the 15-year-old "perfect master" Guru Maharaj Ji, say some 15,000 persons will attend a "Soul Rush" concert at the Sylvan Theatre followed by a nighttime candle light "procession of peace" of up to 3,000 followers to Lafayette Park. Rennie Davis, veteran antiwar leader and now a Divine Light convert, will be on hand.

Asked at yesterday's hearing by Appeals Court Judge

Harold J. Leventhal if any violence is expected, Assistant U.S. Attorney Gil Zimmerman said only that some counter groups may show up at the impeachment-Nixon events, and there is no way of determining "what kind of people" the impeachment-Nixon appeal will draw.

The limit on the numbers of demonstrators at the White House, set by Interior Department regulations, has been fought in the courts for four years by attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union. Judge Hart's order raising the limit last Aug. 28 followed a full-dress trial on the constitutionality of the regulations.

Arguments centered on balancing the security of the White House with First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly.