

Johnson offers federal help

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WASHINGTON — President Johnson yesterday offered federal assistance if it should be needed to suppress rioting in Newark.

White House Press Secretary George Christian said President Johnson made the offer to Gov. Richard J. Hughes during a telephone conversation at 9 a.m. yesterday.

Hughes, however, did not request any help, Christian said.

Just as Christian met reporters at 5 p.m., an aide of Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-10th) disclosed that the Newark congressman narrowly escaped injury during a visit to the riot-torn area. Rodino's car was stoned as he drove along Springfield Avenue, his aide said.

FULL REPORT

Christian said the President received a "full report" on the riot from Hughes, with details of what state and city officials were doing to maintain order.

The presidential secretary said Johnson told Hughes that if any federal help was needed he would be "glad to receive any additional information and to consider it."

Christian then told reporters after the formal press conference that Johnson was prepared to order assistance if Hughes wants it.

In cases such as this, National Guard units in New Jersey could be federalized and United States marshals sent to the area if needed.

HUGHES CALLED

Hughes initiated the telephone call to the President, Christian said, adding that the President had received earlier reports through other channels.

Just prior to their telephone conversation, it was learned, U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark received a full report of the Newark crisis from Thomas McTiernan of the Justice Department's criminal division. The White House declined to say whether Johnson conferred with Clark or FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

The FBI said it was probing the arrest Wednesday night of a 40-year-old Negro cab driver, John William Smith,

that allegedly sparked the riot.

At the same time, on-the-scene reports of the riot were flowing into the Justice Department's center for urban riots, commonly known here as the "war room."

The dispatches were being fed by two members of the department's Community Relations Service, James Norton and Lawrence S. Hoffheimer. They have set up headquarters in the U.S. attorney's office in Newark, and are trying to keep lines of communication open between all factions in the city.

Rodino, in a statement issued through his Washington office, said he has requested federal aid to repair the riot-torn area.

"I am exploring every area in order to give aid where aid is needed most," said Rodino.

"However, it cannot be emphasized enough that criminality shall not be rewarded. Extortion won't work!" he said.

The Newark congressman said he was "sick" about the violence and rioting, and said "lawlessness, hoodliganism,

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Guardsmen crouches behind jeep

Johnson says he'd send help

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and wanton destruction are criminal actions that must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

Such violent action is not the way to alleviate poverty and human deprivation, he said.

Calling for a restoration of peace in the strife-torn area, Rodino praised "dedicated civil rights leaders" and others who were trying to bring order. He denounced what he said were people who have come into Newark to "incite and antagonize" a situation that civil rights leaders have been working to alleviate.

ASKS REPORT

Rodino asked federal anti-poverty officials to assess the amount of personal injury and destruction and report back to Congress on what steps the Office of Economic Opportunity could take "to assure this will never happen again."

Rodino called on the Department of Housing and Urban Development to approve Newark's application for planning funds to participate in the Model Cities program. The application should be approved, he said, so the "city can quickly begin to build and reconstruct the impoverished Negro areas that have been hardest hit."

The Newark congressman also asked the Small Business Administration to grant emergency loans to enable businesses burned and destroyed to "get back on their feet as quickly as possible."

"The first order of business is to restore the peace and then begin to rebuild essential enterprises and services to reconstruct the progressive spirit of Newark," Rodino said.

Sen. Clifford P. Case (R-N.J.) charged that the Newark situation has been "festering" for years and that "legitimate grievances have been shockingly neglected."