

# Baton Rouge mayor claims riot a plot

BATON ROUGE, La. AP — The mayor of Baton Rouge said Tuesday that Black Muslims trying to overthrow national Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad came here and deliberately provoked the gunfight which cost four lives.

Two policemen and two blacks were killed in the sudden flare of gunfire. About 25 persons were injured, including a television newsman listed in critical condition from a beating.

Mayor W. W. Dumas told a news conference the shootout was part of what he called a planned conspiracy of revolution and said that other cities should be on the alert for similar violence.

The mayor said he didn't know why the militants precipitated the confrontation—or how it tied in with what he described as one of their goals—to "get rid of" Elijah Muhammad.

"This Elijah Muhammad, whoever he is, better watch out for these people," Dumas told newsmen in a partial report on the police interrogation of 20 blacks arrested after the battle with officers on a city street Monday.

The mayor declined to go into any details on his broad statements or to say whether he anticipated further violence, but he announced that the National Guard would be kept in the city and a 9:30 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew would be in effect.

"With the information we have from our own sources and admissions from these men, these people are either members or a splinter group of Black Muslims," Dumas said.

Seven young Muslims in Baton Rouge denied their organization was involved.

Of the 20 blacks arrested during and immediately after the gun battle in front of a movie

theater, eight were charged with murder and placed under bonds of \$500,000 each.

At least five of the eight and one of the blacks killed was from out of state.

Dist. Atty. Sargent Pitcher said police confiscated documents from the arrested men which revealed a travel itinerary beginning in Washington, D.C., and ending in Baton Rouge.

"We have information that there were two units who traveled separately but united in Baton Rouge," Pitcher said.

Officials maintained they had no idea why the alleged Muslim group picked Baton Rouge for the bloody showdown with police.

"This took us completely by surprise," Pitcher said.

Charles Granger, a black civil rights leader, said members of the group did identify themselves to him as Black Muslims.

"They were here to kick off a campaign to die," Granger said. "They said they were ready to die."

The gunfight erupted when sheriff's deputies, who were attempting to remove two automobiles with out-of-state license plates from the middle of the street, approached a line of blacks. The Blacks had short hair and were uniformly dressed in suits and black bow ties.

Killed in the exchange of gunfire were Deputy Sheriffs Ralph Hancock, 30, and Ralph Dewayne Wilder, 27, and two blacks, Thomas Davis, 25, of Chicago and another man who remained unidentified. Bob Johnston, the newsman for television station WBRZ who was beaten by a group of blacks before the gunfight, remained hospitalized in critical condition with massive head injuries.

# State Department official confirms columnist's charges

Washington AP— The State Department Tuesday acknowledged that the United States has pledged \$12.5 million, subject to Congressional approval, for a contribution to a \$25 million exchange stabilization fund for Cambodia.

State Department spokesman Charles Bray III, commenting on a report by columnist Jack Anderson, at the same time denied that the United States government was acting contrary to the instructions of Congress.

Anderson, citing what he described as a secret exchange of messages between Washington and Phnom Penh, said that because of congressional hostility, the Nixon administration has pretended to take no active part in raising funds from other nations to support the "tottering regime of Cambodian strongman Lon Nol."

Anderson quoted a suggested letter the State Department had prepared for Lon Nol to send to

other governments to solicit support for the exchange stabilization fund.

"We have given Cambodia our suggested text of a letter to which Anderson refers," Bray acknowledged.

But he said that this was "part of our technical assistance to get the multilateral exchange stabilization fund off the ground. The department sent the text and if Cambodia approved, it might send such a letter out. The Cambodians have had no experience in arranging a consortium, so we have assisted them," Bray added.

"It would be a mistake to conclude from this that the United States is engaged in some kind of shady deal," Bray said. Cambodia is holding a pledging conference in Phnom Penh on Friday and the U.S. team for that meeting has already departed. It is led by Roderick O'Connor, assistant AID director for East Asia.

Other countries expected to attend include Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Italy and Malaysia. Bray said other nations also may participate.

Anderson said that according to the secret documents he was quoting the Cambodian government is seeking a pledge of \$7.5 million from Japan; Australia, \$3 million; Britain, \$500,000; New Zealand, \$300,000; Indonesia, \$250,000; Malaysia, \$25,000; Singapore, \$250,000; Thailand, \$250,000; and the Philippines \$250,000.

Anderson said one of the secret reports from U.S. ambassador Emery Swank criticized "Lon Nol's haphazard, out of channel and ill-coordinated conduct of military operations."

Bray refused to comment on this part of the report.

"The implication in the story, however, that the U.S. government is acting contrary to the spirit of congressional legislation, I do not think is the case," he said.

WASHINGTON — Over the objection of two Nixon administration appointees, the Supreme Court has given a convicted bank robber a chance at a shorter prison sentence by applying a landmark ruling on the Warren years. The split in the way the court handled the case Tuesday pointed up the conservatism of Chief Justice Warren Burger and Harry Blackmun on criminal law. The two other Nixon appointees, Lewis Powell Jr. and William Rehnquist joined the court too late to participate.

RICHMOND, Va. — The City of Richmond and suburban Henrico and Chesterfield counties were given 30 days by a federal judge on Tuesday to "take all steps . . . necessary" to merge their school systems in September. U.S. District Court Judge Robert Merhige Jr. entered the order as a followup to his landmark decision Monday directing the consolidation as a means of achieving "meaningful integration." Tuesday's order gave the State Board of Education 30 days to name an administrative staff for the new, 104,000 metropolitan school division and 90 days to submit a plan for its financial operation.

WASHINGTON — Florida Secretary of State Richard Stone nominated on Tuesday a field of 12 Democrats—including George Wallace and Sen. Edward Kennedy—for the state's automatic entry March 14 presidential Primary. Stone also listed two challengers against President Nixon on the Republican side of the ballot antiwar Rep. Paul McCloskey of California and conservative Rep. John Ashbrook of Ohio. Under the Florida primary law, Stone based his nominations on general recognition of candidates by the state and national news media. However, these recommendations are not final.

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