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Kennedy Deplores Tolerance of Rise In Level of Violence

Special to The New York Times

CLEVELAND, April 5—Senator Robert F. Kennedy asserted today that Americans "seemingly tolerate a rising level of violence that ignores our common humanity and our claims to civilization as well."

The New York Democrat, more somber than in many months, spoke at noon to the Cleveland City Club. He scrapped a political text and delivered instead a subdued eight-minute essay whose topic had been suggested by the assassination last night of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis.

"What has violence ever accomplished?" Mr. Kennedy asked. "What has it ever created? No martyr's cause has ever been stilled by his assassin's bullet. No wrongs have ever been righted by riots and civil disorders. A sniper is only a coward, not a hero; and an uncontrolled, uncontrollable mob is only the voice of madness, not the voice of the people."

Mr. Kennedy conceded that the "mindless menace of violence" could not be "banished with a program nor with a resolution."

The Senator began by saying that today was "not a day for politics," and he canceled rallies and motorcades here and in Louisiana.