



November 15, 1969

By Joseph P. Mastrangelo—The Washington Post

The mass march Saturday will follow Pennsylvania Avenue as indicated. White House area will be closed to traffic.

Downtown Becomes Huge Traffic Jam

Washington's usual rush-hour headaches became migraines yesterday evening as thousands of peace demonstrators tried to drive into the city while thousands of commuters headed out. And then there was a bus strike going on. And the rain came down.

U.S. park police reported 90 minute delays on the George Washington Memorial Parkway. It took a motorist two hours to cross the 14th Street bridge from National Airport. Another man spent 50 minutes driving five blocks in downtown Washington.

Several city policemen trying to answer routine calls for help reported that they could not reach their destinations. Even with officers directing traffic at virtually every major intersection, few downtown motorists drove faster than they could have walked.

The afternoon rain and hail-

storm compounded the problem, as did the continuing AB&W bus strike in Virginia.

The tieup was particularly acute in the Memorial Bridge area, where both the U.S. Rte. 50 bypass and the George Washington Memorial Parkway were blocked off by police. West and northbound motorists were directed to alternate routes.

Seven tents pitched by peace demonstrators—with official permission—in the parkway just north of Memorial Bridge on the Virginia side of the Potomac made the detours mandatory.

Eight motorcycle patrolmen of the U.S. park police tried, without marked success, to unscramble the tangled mass of honking autos jammed in the Memorial Bridge Circle and surrounding area. Elsewhere, it seemed they could do little more than blow their whistles and despair.

One peace marcher who accompanied friends driving in from Maryland for the "March Against Death" reported that she finally got out and walked after her group's car had been halted at Thomas Circle for 25 minutes.

An hour later, she was still waiting for her friends to arrive at Mobilization headquarters at Vermont Avenue and L Street NW.

Confronted with the continuing arrival of demonstrators from every direction, police offered no cherry prognosis.

The permit for the tents pitched on the parkway expires at noon, reported a spokesman for the park police.

But the tents need not be removed, he said, until Sunday at 5 p.m., when the roadway will be opened to traffic once again.