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Largest Rally in Peacefully Protests Washington History Vietnam Conflict

Militants Resume Evening Violence

By Richard Harwood
Washington Post Staff Writer

One of the immense crowds of American political history—a quarter of a million people by police estimate—massed peacefully at the Washington monument yesterday and demanded an end to the war in Vietnam.

Five blocks away in the barricaded White House, President Nixon officially ignored the enormous public demonstration, the largest Washington has ever seen. It surpassed in size the civil rights March on Washington in 1963 and was easily the largest—and was perhaps the youngest—antiwar crowd ever assembled in the United

States.

Police Chief Jerry V. Wilson said his estimate of 250,000 people was modest.

They came from all over the United States and were impressively tranquil except for small radical elements of Students for a Democratic Society and the Yippies (Youth International Party) who clashed with police Friday night and provoked another confrontation at dusk yesterday. It was staged at the Justice Department and was met with tear gas and advancing ranks of policemen after a Vietcong flag had been run up outside the office of Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Demonstrators smashed windows and hurled what appeared to be a paint bomb against the Justice Department building before they were dispersed by the tear gas.

Young, White and Middle-Class

The nastiness of the scene was heightened by the contrasting atmosphere at the monument throughout the day. The 30 grassy acres at the monument site overflowed with people—nearly all of them young, white and appar-

ently middle-class. Many of them compared the dominant mood of the great crowd to the atmosphere at the rock festival at Woodstock, N.Y., last summer.

The crowd had been assembling here all week for two primary events—the monument rally and a 40-hour "March Against Death" that ended at 8:30 a.m. yesterday after more than 40,000 people had passed quietly by the White House, reading from placards the names of Americans killed in Vietnam.

As the marchers placed their last placards in coffins at the foot of the Capitol, they joined the gathering crowds for the long, slow march down Pennsylvania Avenue and down the grassy Mall to the monument.

The day was bright and cold, with temperatures in the low 30s. Long before the march began, an estimated 25,000 people were assembled at the monument where folk singers played and sang peace songs.

On the Mall near the Capitol—the main assembly point for the March—the scene evoked comparisons to a Saturday football crowd. People, bundled against the cold, came in groups. They were cheerful and friendly. They joked and laughed with police officers.

At 10:15 a.m., they stepped off down Pennsylvania Avenue, led by leaders of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam—a melange of radical, Communist, Socialist, and liberal political actors who were the principal sponsors of the antiwar demonstrations here this week.

Three Drummers and a Funeral Cadence

Immediately behind them were three drummers, beating a funeral cadence. Then came a single procession of people carrying the caskets containing the placards from the "March Against Death."

In the following ranks were a handful of dignitaries such as Mrs. Martin Luther King and a small band of congressmen—Sen. Eugene McCarthy (D-Minn.), George McGovern (D-S.D.), Charles Goodell (R-N.Y.), and Representatives Philip Burton (D-Calif.) and James Scheuer (D-N.Y.).

All along the line of march, amateur marshals drawn from the ranks of the demonstrators lined the streets, encouraging the vast crowd to maintain order. Police played a minor role in the crowd control and reacted with tolerance to the few disruptive incidents that took place as the march went on.

The banner of the National Liberation Front (Vietcong), and North Vietnam, and red flags of anarchy were carried by dozens of marchers. They provoked several scuffles. One bystander tried to take a Vietcong flag from a marcher, pulled a knife and was disarmed by a policeman. The officer broke off the knife blade and sent the man on his way.

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PROTEST, From A1

There were other incidents of that nature, although the most disruptive incident was caused by a band of militant marchers, who cursed their peaceful marching companions, called the civilian marshals "fascists," "pigs" and "Uncle Toms." At 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, a contingent of radicals, wearing helmets and carrying the banner of the "Buffalo Nine," tried to break through the line of marshals, presumably to storm the White House. They screamed, "War, war, one more war. Revolution now."

Several marshals were knocked down before the radicals were contained.

Over-all, there was a majestic tone to the march, inspired by the dignity and sheer numbers of the marchers.

They came down the great Avenue and down the Mall in a seemingly endless cascade—thousands after thousands

after thousands.

The largest previous antiwar demonstration in the country was recorded in New York in 1967, when about 125,000 people marched behind the late Martin Luther King. Yesterday's outpouring far surpassed the New York crowd and, in that sense, was a political triumph for the New Mobilization Committee.

Majority of Congress Boycott March

The whole point of the activities here during the week had been to mass such numbers of people that the President would be forced to take notice and radically alter American policies in Vietnam. But Mr. Nixon conducted the routine business of the White House yesterday. The demonstrations also were boycotted by the overwhelming majority of the members of Congress.

Nevertheless, the rally organizers were more than satisfied. The crowds were larger than they anticipated. Sidney Lens of the New Mobilization Committee surveyed the masses on the streets and declared that the occasion was historic.

By midafternoon, the monument grounds were so filled with people that thousands of latecomers turned around and went back into the city or back to their homes.

There were many speeches—largely ignored by the crowd—the first of which came from Sen. McCarthy at the end of the "March Against Death."

"We who are here today," he said, "do not claim that we are a majority. Neither do we deny that we are a majority. We are here to witness in person by our presence . . . our position in opposition to the war. . . ."

McGovern and Goodell spoke later at the monument.

"We are not here," said Goodell, "to break a President. We are here to break a war and to begin a peace. . . . We appeal to the reason, conscience and good sense of the American people."

Said McGovern:

"We love America enough to call her away from the folly of war to the blessings of peace. We meet today because we cherish our flag. . . ."

U.S. Flag Ripped Down and Burned

There was not unanimous agreement on his last point. Vietcong flags were far more prominent in the crowd than American flags and at the Justice Department confrontation the U.S. flag was ripped down and burned.

Nonetheless, it was not a radical crowd, by and large, despite its youthfulness.

It was a youth culture happening and was carried off in a city essentially relaxed and calm despite the violence of Friday night and despite the security measures that had been taken by the government.

The Friday night ruckus was organized at DuPont Circle and broke out at about 9 p.m. at Sheridan Circle as SDS radicals tried to break through police lines to storm the South Vietnamese embassy.

It went on for several hours and was contained by police who used tear gas liberally and night-sticks sparingly.

When it was over, 26 persons had been arrested, 10 policemen and 18 civilians had suffered minor injuries, 50 to 60 store windows on Connecticut Avenue had been broken by the marauding radicals, and the sidewalks had been littered with glass and rocks.

Troops were stationed, out of sight, in government buildings all over town; at least 9,000 of them were from combat units at various East Coast bases. The White House area was off-limits to both pedestrians and motorists. A solid line of buses was parked all around the White House as a barricade.

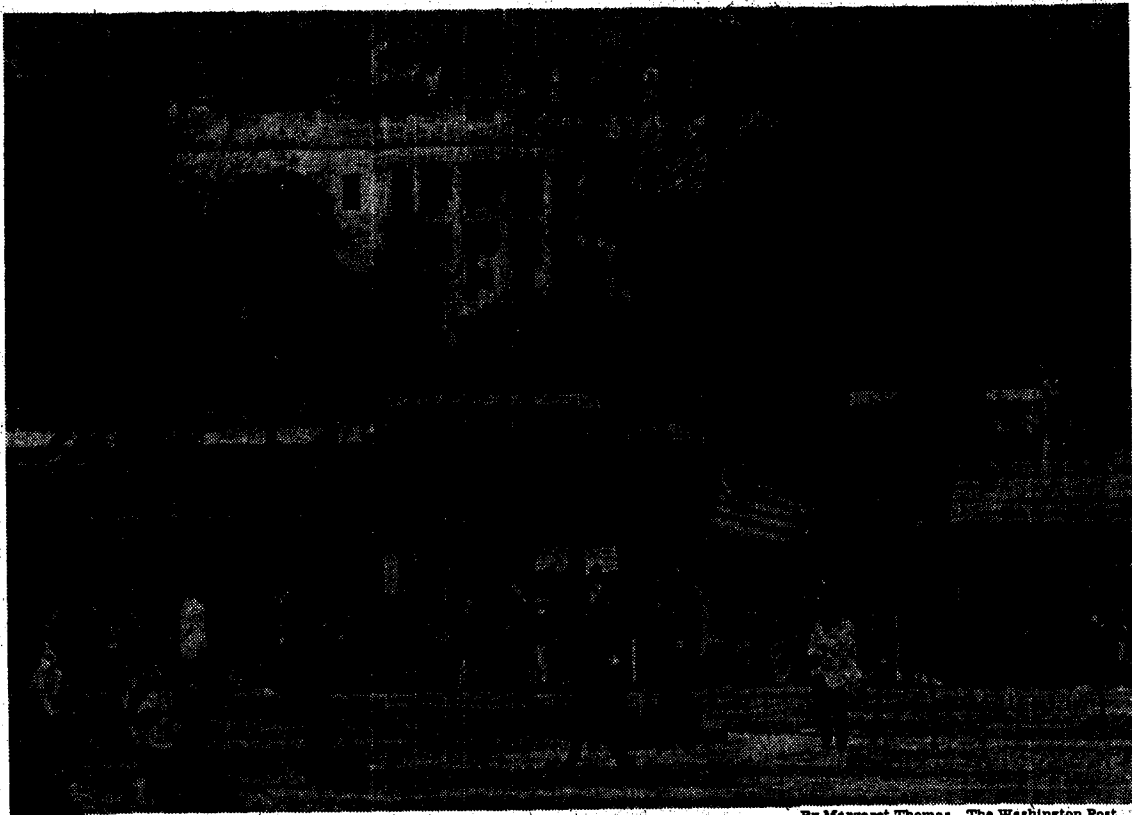
As the great crowds passed within a block of the White

House, they were led in a chant: "Peace now! Peace now!"
Other elements in the politically diverse crowds had other slogans and chants:

"One, two, three, four—Tricky Dick end the war."

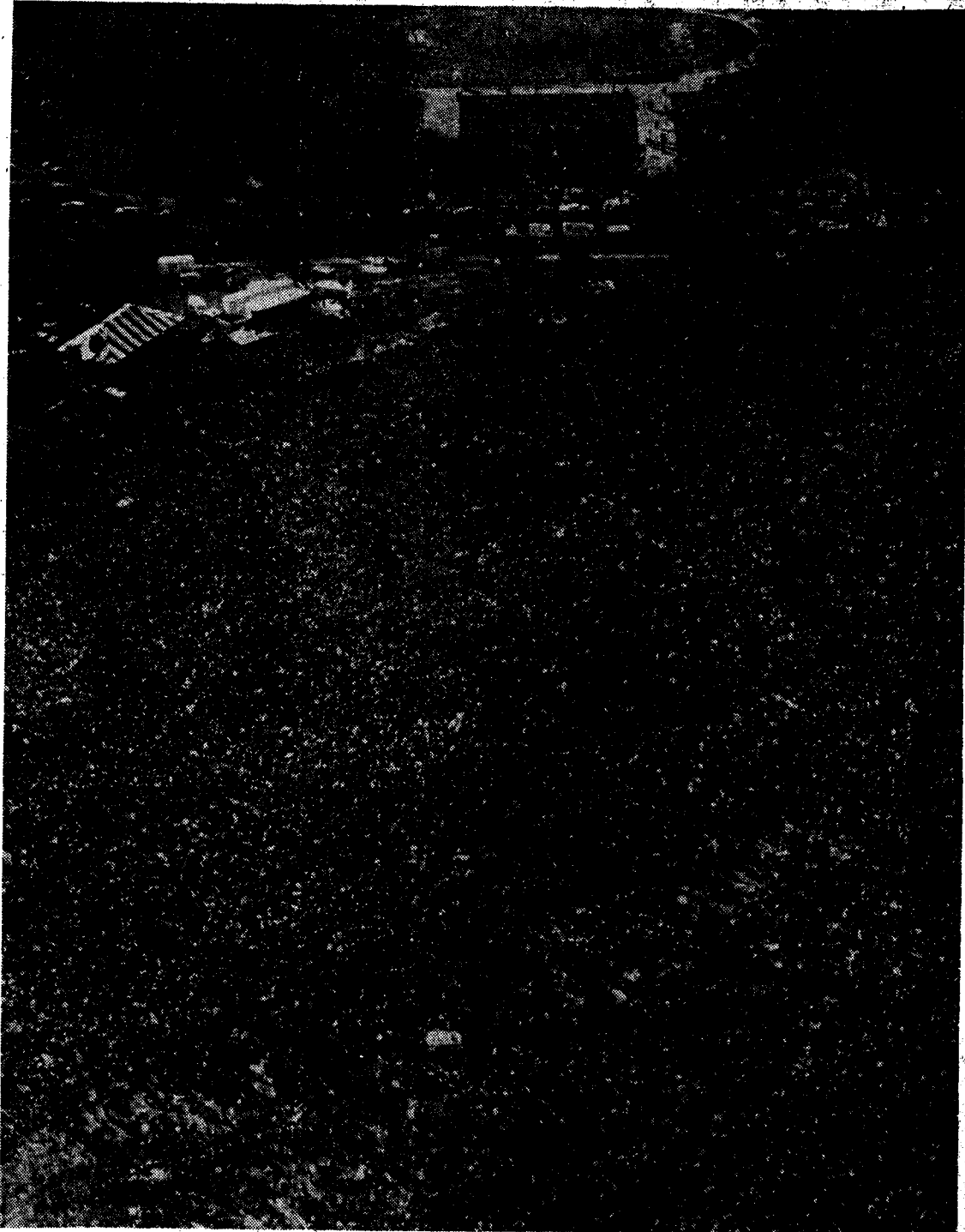
"Ho, Ho, Ho, Chi Minh, NLF is gonna win."

They were unified by their common opposition to the war, by their age and backgrounds and dress—blue jeans, ponchos, army jackets and lots of hair.



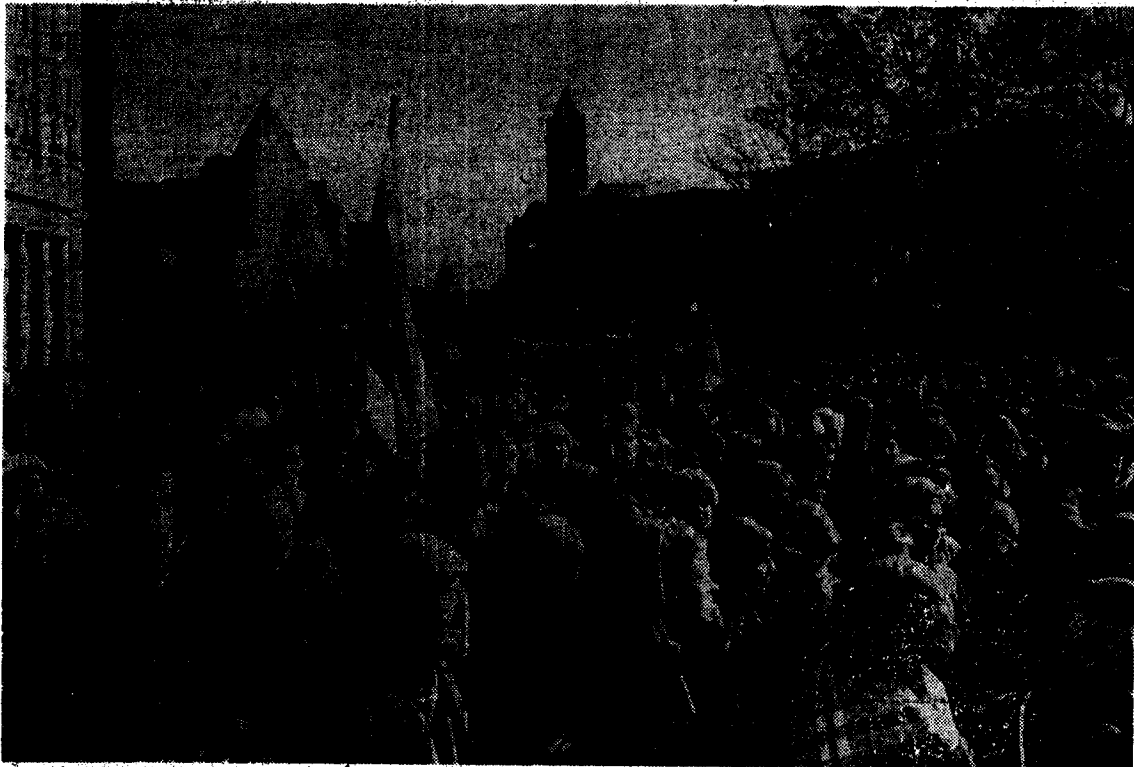
By Margaret Thomas—The Washington Post

Hundreds of peace marchers keep up their vigil along the south side of the White House.



By Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post

Thousands and thousands of Vietnam war protesters overflowed the grassy slope of Washington Monument grounds.



by Matthew Lewis—The Washington Post

Dressed to ward off the bitter cold, peace marchers carry assortment of flags on Pennsylvania Avenue.