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Parallels

IN THE NATION

By TOM WICKER

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20—Looking back over the bloodiest events of the last few years, certain parallels are visible.

The Straw-Man Strategy. After [illegible] to disturbances in Newark [illegible] Cleve-land, officials reported the [illegible] "snipers" firing at the police [illegible] tional Guardsmen. Later, it was [illegible] that there were none. After Jackson State, policemen said snipers had fired at them, too; no evidence to substan-tiate this has been brought forward. At Attica, the first official reports were that prisoners had killed eight hostages by slashing their throats. In fact, all died by gunfire, and the prison-ers had no guns.

Scare Stories. At the Chicago Con-vention in 1968, [illegible] demonstrators were planning to murder Mayor Daley and others and burn down the Conrad Hilton Hotel. At Kent State, the dead students were drug addicts, diseased and subversives, and the National Guard was in mortal danger. Fred Hampton's group of Black Panthers shot it out with the police in a hail of gunfire. At Attica, one prisoner held a blowtorch to the foot of a hostage, another castrated a hostage, and two hostages were killed two days before the assault. All these scare stories received official circulation, and all were false.

The Conspiracy. When the ghetto up-risings began, Congress passed a law against crossing state lines with intent to incite a riot. The Chicago Seven were prosecuted for conspiring to cause the 1968 convention disturb-ances. "Outside agitators" were cited by some officials for what happened at Kent State, as they always used to be for any civil rights demonstra-tion in the South, and for practically every later ghetto disorder. Cleveland Sellers, an "outside agitator" who was shot by the police during the Orange-burg massacre, was the only person to be convicted and jailed for that brutal pacification program.

Getting Tough. Almost across the board, from the ghetto battles, through college upheavals and the Democratic Convention, at Kent State, Orangeburg, and Jackson State, in Augusta and on Mayday in Washington, the authorities have not hesitated to "get tough." When some have tried to restrain the use of force—as in the case of Attor-ney General Ramsey Clark during the Washington riots following Dr. Martin Luther King's murder—they have been savagely criticized. Yet, those who feel themselves aggrieved in American [illegible] urged to [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] forces that [illegible] guard, such as [illegible]

[illegible] found of the Chicago [illegible] an absolutely [illegible] of these bloody [illegible] hatred and [illegible]

Class Contradiction. [illegible] these conflicts there [illegible] inversion of class [illegible] licemen of low economic and social status did the shooting at Jackson State, and poor [illegible] the dying Blacks, wise in the [illegible] ways of the authorities, stood aside from essen-tially white demonstrations at Chicago and Kent State. While poor black, white and Puerto Rican prisoners pro-claimed their solidarity at Attica, low-income whites prepared to assault them at the [illegible] of Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Vietnam. Finally, it is a singular fact that in virtually the same time period, in the bloodiest incident of all, every one of these parallels can be found—the straw man of Asian Communism, the scare story from the Tonkin Gulf, the conspiracy in Peking, getting tough with troops and bombers, lawbreaking at Mylai, the frozen institutions of the cold war and the military establish-ment, the racial conflict of white and yellow, the class inversion of poor Americans and poor Asians killing each other.

When will we face the truth?