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Riot-News Restraint Is Urged

ATLANTA, Ga., Nov. 19 (UPI)—The Freedom of Information Committee of Sigma Delta Chi said today that it is in society's best interests for newsmen to be present as "uninvolved observers" to report on rioting such as wracked Chicago during the Democratic National Convention.

But the watchdog committee of the professional journalism society warned that newsmen must use "judgment and restraint" in covering such confrontations and must take care to avoid being identified with either side.

The committee's annual report said that while estimates vary, it would appear that 35 or so television reporters and cameramen and as many newspaper reporters and photographers were clubbed during a five-day period of the "Battle of Chicago."

"Though a number of columnists and some publications have taken issue with the treatment of the convention story by newspapers and television, few will argue that the treatment of newsmen themselves was anything but shocking," the report said.

It also said:

- President Johnson is leaving office with "perhaps the worst record for credibility of any President in our history."

- The information situation at the Pentagon has not improved and, in the opinion of some correspondents, has gotten worse during the last year, with Defense Department officials continuing to suppress and manage the news.

Clark Mollenhoff, chairman of the SDX committee and Washington correspondent of the Des Moines Register and Tribune and Minneapolis Star and Tribune, said the Democratic convention showed a deterioration of a formerly pleasant relationship between police and newsmen into "an antagonistic attitude on both sides."