

Nixon Asks Action to Ban 'Saturday Night Specials'

Washington

President Nixon described the shooting of Senator John C. Stennis as a senseless act and said yesterday he hoped that now Congress will "get some action on legislation to ban the small handguns known as Saturday night specials."

The presidential comment came as senators shocked by the shooting called for prompt action on a variety of anti-crime measures including increased penalties for criminals using guns.

At a closed meeting, Democratic colleagues of the Mississippi senator endorsed Majority Leader Mike Mansfield's call for immediate action on a bill to aid innocent victims of crime.

Mansfield also said he has asked Senators James O. Eastland, (Dem-Miss.) and John McClellan (Dem-Ark.),

chairman of the Judiciary Committee and its criminal law subcommittee, "to move with utmost dispatch" on crime proposals.

DEFINITION

The President, at his news conference, said a "precise definition" was needed so guns could be kept out of the hands of criminals, without impinging on the rights of those who wish to use guns in legitimate ways, such as for hunting.

Many senators denounced the attack on one of the most respected U.S. senators as an example of the crime problem in the nation's cities.

However, Senator Strom Thurmond (Rep-S.C.), the senior GOP member of the Armed Services Committee, told the Senate "it is possible that it was not an ordinary attack, that the assailants knew his identity."

Stennis was the fourth

U.S. senator held up in Washington in the past four years — but the first to be hurt. Last May, Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.), talked two men out of blowing "my head off" near his home by telling them a false story that he was about to die of incurable cancer.

In 1969, then Senator Len B. Jordan, (Rep-Idaho), knocked down a youthful robber in his apartment house elevator. The same year, Senator Harrison A. Williams Jr. (Dem-N.J.), was robbed at gunpoint in his apartment house garage.

In calling for actions, Mansfield pointed first to an omnibus measure that compensates crime victims but touches only generally on the questions raised by the Stennis shooting.

Other provisions would provide added benefits to policemen and their survivors who are killed or maimed in the line of duty. It also provides incentives to all law enforcement officers who are specially exposed to crime.

Senator Henry M. Jackson (Dem-Wash.), called for reconsideration of the Supreme Court decision banning the death penalty. Senator Russell B. Long (Dem-La.), called for a constitutional amendment if necessary, to restore capital punishment.

Senator Robert C. Byrd (Dem-W. Va.), urged stiff penalties against persons who use guns in committing felonies.

There were relatively few calls for restrictions on handguns, a position that the wounded Mississippi senator has opposed.

Senator Jacob K. Javits (Rep-N.Y.) however, said he favors a bill providing licensing of all hand-gun owners and registration of all hand guns.

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