

# Nixon's 'Violence' Claim Supported

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The claim of rising national disorder and political violence in the crucial years 1969 and 1970—used by President Nixon last May to justify expanding domestic intelligence operations—is generally supported by available statistics on violence at the time.

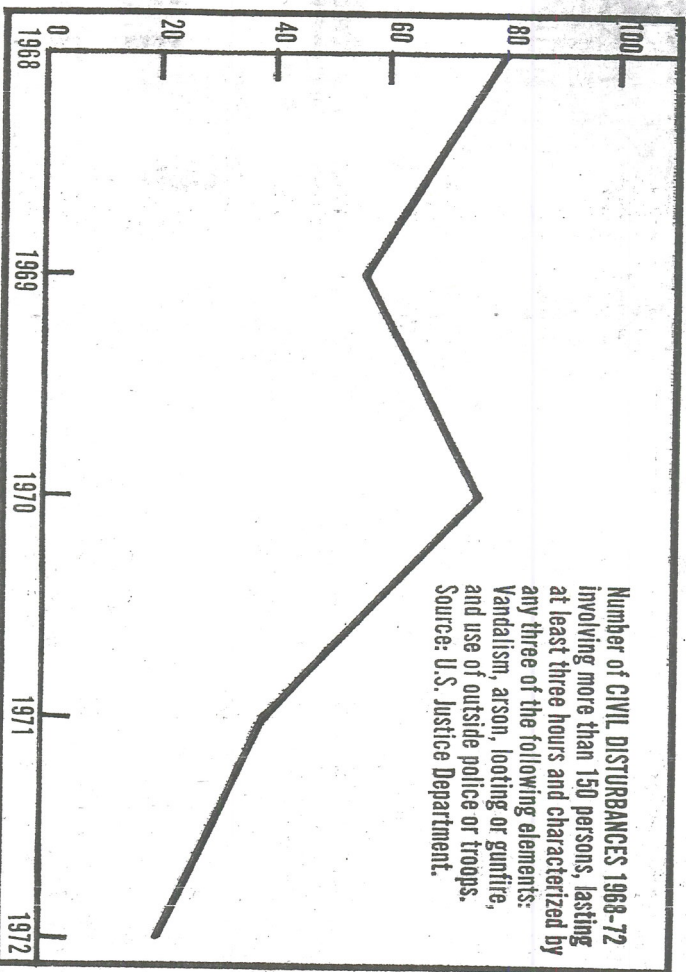
By almost any measure—rioting, arson, bombing, shooting police, theft of dynamite—the figures show a sharp upward climb in that period.

The President's order to broaden intelligence gathering and surveillance of political dissidents, according to some witnesses before the Senate Watergate committee, led to the break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters here and to a vague and more general authorization to commit similar clandestine acts in the name of national security.

How serious was the escalation of violence from 1969 to 1970?

Estimates range from a relatively conservative increase in "civil disturbances" recorded by the Justice Department to a dramatic leap in "guerrilla acts of sabotage and terrorism" reported by the antiestablishment Scanlan's Monthly magazine in 1971.

While all indices are up to



By Joseph P. Mastrangelo—The Washington Post

one degree or another, students of the subject note that the 1969-70 period was a pivotal one in which the massive black urban riots of the earlier 1960s had begun to decline, and an intervening lull occurred before the antiwar disruptions of the white college campuses began to flare across the country.

The number of serious civil disturbances, as defined by the Justice Department, for example, hit a peak of 80 in 1968, the year of the Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination. The total then dropped to 57 in 1969 but jumped back to 76 in 1970, with the rash of campus disturbances. The number has steadily declined since then.

Other statistical measures, though not always compatible with each other in time span or definitions, show these patterns:

- Bombing incidents and attempts nationwide: 602 in 1969, and 586 in the first six months of 1970, reported by the Senate Government Operations permanent investigations subcommittee.

• Arson or bombing of federal government buildings: 13 in fiscal 1969, 38 in fiscal 1970, reported by the Senate subcommittee. There also were 46 bomb threats against federal buildings in fiscal 1969, and 383 in fiscal 1970. Incidents of vandalism increased from 43 to 98 in the same period.

• Reported thefts of dynamite and other explosive materials: 55 in 1969, and 32 in the first five months of 1970, reported by the Senate subcommittee. The thefts totaled 12,381 (in explosives in 1969, but almost 19,000 pounds in the first five months of 1970.

• Policeman killed by ambush or other felonious attack: 86 in 1969, 100 in 1970, reported by the FBI. The number of law enforcement officers killed has steadily increased since the mid-1960s, reaching a peak of 126 in 1971. The total dropped to 112 in 1972, but stood at 79 at the end of the first seven months of this year. The total number of full-time officers in the nation's cities has increased from an estimated 190,005 in 1965 to almost 269,000 in 1972.

• Guerrilla acts of sabotage and terrorism: 514 in 1969, and 471 in the first six months of 1970, reported by Scanlan's Monthly.

All sources reporting statistics cautioned that their figures are not necessarily complete and that differing definitions among researchers on key words such as "disturbance," "sabotage,"

and "bombing incendiary" could cause variations in reporting procedures.

"There are all kinds of data collection problems," says Ralph Lewis, associate director of the Lemberg Center for the Study of Violence at Brandeis University. "What's a riot to me may not be a riot to you.

"In 1968, five black kids running down a street and throwing a rock through a window — that's a riot. Five white kids doing it — it's malicious mischief."

Also, he said, a report of one bomb doing \$1 million in damage may be given more public attention than 25 poorly made bombs that are thrown in a single incident but fail to ignite. "I would consider the 25-bomb incident much more serious," he said.

The Scanlan "guerrilla terrorism" study, based on exhaustive research of accounts in 17 major daily newspaper over a 5½-year period, depicts a rapidly escalating campaign of radical left hooliganism that supports the "climate of violence, alarm voiced by President Nixon in his statement last May more fully than the relatively restrained public reports of his own Justice Department.

The study catalogues 1,324 acts of "sabotage" or "terrorism" against federal buildings, corporations, schools, colleges, private homes and police and military installations between 1965 and July 1, 1970 specifying each one by date and

type of damage or personal injuries involved.

Incidents totalled only 16 in 1965, but quickly increased to 33 in 1966, 56 in 1967, 234 in 1968, 514 in 1969, and 471 in the first half of 1970, according to the study.

Police installations took the brunt of the violence, the study claims, with 178 acts of terrorism or sabotage against them in 1969 alone. Colleges and universities were bombed, burned and shot up in 155 separate incidents in the first half of 1970, said the study, in the aftermath of the Cambodian incursion by U.S. troops early that year.

In his statement last May, President Nixon cited the "wave of bombings and ex-

plosions" on college campuses as a primary reason for strengthening intelligence operations.

During the 1969-70 college year, he said, nearly 1,800 demonstrations were staged on campuses, and 250 cases of arson were reported.

The Scanlan report shows only 129 incidents of arson or use of molotov cocktails on college campuses between Sept. 1, 1969, and June 1, 1970.

Lewis of the Lemberg Center said that both President Nixon and ex-White House chief of staff H.R. (Bob) Haldeman in his recent testimony before the Watergate committee were factually correct in claiming an increase in national violence in the 1969-70 period.

But they failed to note the decline in "black ghetto events" and the subsequent rise in "white campus events," he said, and tended to lump them together.

"Also, there have been many 'events,'" he said, "and I don't think Nixon and Haldeman made much attempt to distinguish the violent and nonviolent events."

Their language, he said, often combines references to gun fire and vandalism with such peaceful actions as demonstrations or sit-ins as though they were all roughly equal in seriousness.

From his studies of violence by the radical left, Lewis said, "I haven't felt any threat to internal security . . . I didn't don't and probably never will see the escalation (of violence) as justifying what the White House did."