

Bomb in Capitol Causes Wide Damage

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By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 1—A bomb, apparently planted by a group or person protesting against the Vietnam war, exploded early this morning in the Senate wing of the Capitol, causing extensive damage but no injuries.

The powerful explosion occurred in an unmarked out-of-the-way men's lavatory on the ground floor of the building. It damaged seven rooms, knocking plaster off walls, jarring chandeliers and blowing doors off their hinges.

Mario E. Campioli, the Acting Architect of the Capitol, said the explosion might also have caused some structural damage as it lifted some of the original brick supporting arches of the building.

The explosion took place at 1:32 A.M. in the original part of the Capitol, some 100 feet from the giant central Rotunda.

Warning Reported

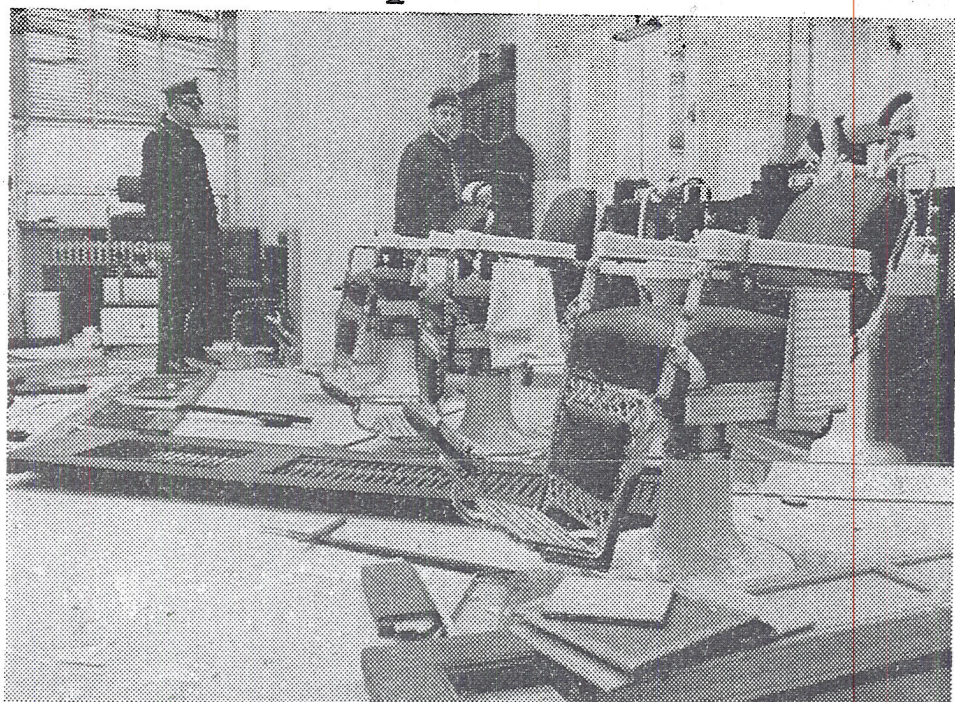
A half hour earlier a telephone caller warned an operator on the Capitol switchboard that a bomb would go off in protest against the Laotian operation. James Powell, chief of the Capitol police force, told reporters that a male voice in a "low, hard tone," told Norma J. Fullerton, the operator:

"This building will blow up in 30 minutes. You will get many calls like this, but this one is real. Evacuate the building. This is in protest of the Nixon involvement in Laos."

The explosion, the first serious act of sabotage against a Federal building here in recent history, provoked cries of outrage from President Nixon and members of Congress and demands for tighter protection of the Capitol.

In a statement issued aboard Air Force One on his way to Iowa, President Nixon termed the incident a "shocking act of

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Police officials inspect debris in barber shop, one of seven rooms damaged by the blast.



Senate leaders, Hugh Scott, Republican, foreground, and Mike Mansfield examining bomb damage in unmarked men's lavatory in basement of the Senate wing of U.S. Capitol.

United Press International

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violence which will outrage all Americans."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was immediately called in to take charge of the investigation, but there appeared to be no immediate leads. Along with members of the District of Columbia police bomb squad, F.B.I. agents sifted through the rubble and dust in the demolished lavatory, hunting for pieces of the bomb.

One of the immediate mysteries was how the person found the unmarked lavatory, which is on a small corridor not used by the general public. As Senator George D. Aiken, Republican of Vermont, pointed out to reporters, there are "a goodly number of Senators who don't even know the room is there."

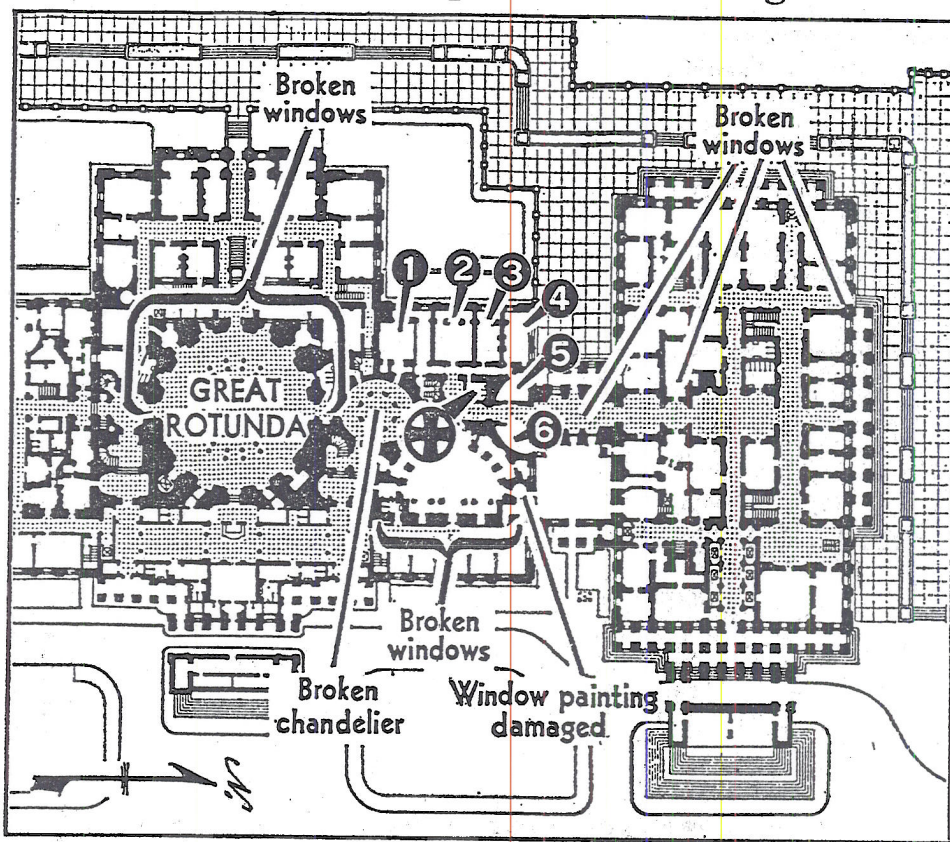
The relative obscurity of the lavatory led Senator Aiken to speculate, along with other Senators, that the bombing was the work of "a professional who had complete knowledge of the layout of the Capitol."

Access Not Difficult

Access to the loosely guarded Capitol would have been easy, even for someone carrying a package. As is customary on a Sunday afternoon, the Capitol was open to tourists until 4:30 P.M. During the public hours, the Capitol police normally make no check of persons entering the building or of the packages they are carrying.

The Capitol police presume that the explosive device was a time bomb implanted in the lavatory—apparently either in

Where Capitol Bomb Exploded and Damaged Rooms



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WASHINGTON, March 1—The bomb that exploded in the Capitol building early today was placed in a lavatory on the building's ground floor, indicated by a cross on the diagram above.

The blast caused extensive damage to the lavatory and six nearby rooms: a hearing room of the Senate Appropriations Committee (1 on the diagram); the Senate barber shop (2); hideaway offices

used by Senators John J. Sparkman, Democrat, of Alabama (3), B. Everett Jordan, Democrat of North Carolina (4) and J. Caleb Boggs, Republican of Delaware (5) and a room (6) whose function could not be determined tonight.

There were broken windows in the Great Rotunda and several other rooms, including the old Supreme Court chamber, now a storage room, just below the lavatory, and a broken chan-

delier in a smaller rotunda shown to the right of the Great Rotunda. A painted window in the old Supreme Court chamber, depicting George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette of France and General von Steuben of Germany, both of whom aided the colonists' cause in the Revolutionary War, was also heavily damaged.

The principal floor of the Capitol is the second, one floor above the one in which the bomb was placed.

the one toilet or behind a partition—before the building was closed to the public.

Immediately after the warning call, the 15 policemen on duty in the Capitol searched the building, including the general area of the lavatory but not the lavatory itself. Chief Powell explained to reporters that a policeman, on routine patrol of the building, had inspected the lavatory just a few minutes before the warning call and had found nothing suspicious.

Some Suspect Conspiracy

Suspicious among many Senators and the Capitol police that the bombing was part of a conspiracy were strengthened by the disclosure by Leonard H. Ballard, a captain in the Capitol police force, that within an hour after the explosion two telephone callers—one from Chicago and one from Spokane, Wash.—asked if there was any damage.

"That was almost before it was on the air and before it was known nationally," Mr. Ballard observed.

The explosion caused damage 250 feet away, blowing out windows on both sides of the Capitol and upsetting tables in the Senators' dining room.

The vaulted, 15-foot-high lavatory was demolished, the toilet blown to pieces and the concrete floor split into large chunks. Large cracks were evident in the lavatory's thick brick walls, built as part of the supporting structure for the original Capitol.

Jordan Office Damaged

The senators' private barber-shop, across the hall from the lavatory, was strewn with debris and one barber's chair was broken by the force of the explosion. But most of the damage was to nearby offices used

by Senators for private meetings.

One of the most seriously damaged was the office across the hall occupied by Senator B. Everette Jordan, Democrat of North Carolina. The door on the office was blown off the hinges, across the 20-foot-long room and out a window on the opposite wall.

A preliminary report by the Capitol architect's office gave no estimate of the damage, but Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate majority leader, predicted it would run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In its report the architect's office said, "The damage consists primarily of cracked and otherwise damaged walls, blown-out doors and windows, destruction of trim, paneled jambs, weakened and damaged masonry floor, arch construction and damage to chandeliers."

"Some of the weakened arch construction undoubtedly will require shoring," the report said.

Old and New Cracks

Mr. Campioli told reporters that some of the brick arches and walls, which are about five feet thick, were lifted by the explosion and then settled back in place. He also reported that some old cracks were reopened and new ones developed in the west front of the Capitol, which because of its weakened condition is reinforced with wooden shorings.

"It's a good thing it was in an inside room," the acting architect observed.

Senators and House members described the bombing as outrageous, sacrilegious, tragic and the work of a revolutionary or a madman.

"Vice President Agnew declared, "The bombing of the United States Capitol building early Monday morning was a calculated act of outrage which will be neither tolerated nor condoned by Americans who value our system and its institutions."

Senator Mansfield described the bombing as an "outrageous and sacrilegious" action against "a public shrine." Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the minority leader, said it was a political act of terrorism by groups "who believe that if they cannot persuade by reason or by logic, perhaps they can terrify the American people."

'Our Vietnam Madness'

Describing the bombing as "barbaric," Senator George S. McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, blamed "our Vietnam madness."

"The massive bombardment we are continuing year after year against the peoples of Indochina has its counterpart in the mounting destruction of humane values in our own land," he said. "It is not possible to teach an entire generation to bomb and destroy others in an undeclared, unjustified, unending war without paying a terrible price in the derangement of our society."

More Calm Than Surprise

The Congressional reaction was generally restrained, with a notable absence of appeals for action against terrorist groups. Unlike Senator McGovern, most of the Senate doves were unwilling to link the bombing to a moral reaction to the Vietnam war.

The bombing, in a floor below the Senate chamber, was greeted with more calm than surprise by Senators, many of

whom explained that they had expected such a development in view of repeated threats. The Capitol police chief, Mr. Powell, estimated that 15 to 20 bombing threats against the Capitol are received each month.

Six hours after the explosion, Mr. Powell reported, an employe in the office of William Miller, the House doorkeeper, received a call warning that there would be additional bombings. In midafternoon, he reported, another bomb threat was received from a woman caller. Searches by Capitol police turned up no devices.

There were three office bomb scares in Washington today. About 7:30 this morning, an anonymous caller to The Washington Post said a bomb had been placed in an office building on Pennsylvania Avenue. About 9:40 a caller to the Department of Housing and Urban Development said three bombs had been placed there. Around 2:30 P.M., a caller to the Federal Reserve Board warned of a bomb there. In each case, the building was evacuated and searched without a bomb being found.

Except for the cordoned area around the bombing site, life quickly returned to normal in the Capitol. The Senate and House met as scheduled, and by midday the tourists, after being temporarily banned from the building, were once again filling the corridors on guided tours.