

Domestic Violence Is Nation's Primary Issue

By MARIANNE MEANS
Examiner Correspondent

WASHINGTON — The assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy has made — at least for the foreseeable future — the issue of domestic violence and its related aspects paramount over the war in Vietnam and all other campaign questions.

The attack upon the senator is not regarded by most people as an isolated incident, but rather as a supremely horrible deed in the context of troubled, violent and divisive times. And the act has intensified a sense of outrage already mounting in the country against urban looting and looting, an increasing crime rate, and the spread of civil disobedience.

CALL FOR ORDER

Over and over, in the immediate hours of shock after Senator Kennedy was shot, congressmen and other public figures called for restoration of law and order

across the country.

The reaction of more ordinary folk was also to include the entire Nation in the blame: "What is this country coming to?" was an oft-repeated plaint.

In its revulsion, the country is crying "enough." Public tolerance of disorder, no matter whether in the name of student dissent or revenge for old wrongs or alienation from society, is rapidly fraying.

LAW AND ORDER

The shooting of Senator Kennedy has prompted a heightened feeling of anti-militancy and anti-extremism in all forms, including defiant white students and hippies as well as black power advocates.

And it guarantees that both candidates for president next fall are certain to be strong law-and-order men. A number of political leaders, particularly Democrats reliant upon heavy Negro support, have until now been reluctant to stress the urgent need

for more efficient law enforcement.

Such a position was usually interpreted by civil rights militants to mean that the politician wanted to punish the Negroes for the current racial unrest.

Now, however, the rationale for improved law enforcement is so powerful that such accusations become relatively incidental.

A CHANGE

It is possible that the horror of all this may work in favor of the GOP nominee, who will in all likelihood be Richard Nixon. It was during a Democratic regime that the climate was permitted to develop under which such a violent and brutal act could take place.

Indeed, it has been an integral part of Nixon's campaign strategy to present himself as a staunch advocate of law and order, attacking court decisions which he feels handicap law officers and calling for programs to expand and improve local police units.