

the crime-ridden areas of the city until order is restored. Semi-martial law is not a pleasant idea. There seems, however, little choice.

The lack of choice is demonstrated by the arson rate alone. Not counting the 488 intentional fires during the four-day riot period, there were 178 arsons or suspected arsons during April. This compares to 87 in the same month last year—an increase of nearly 100%. The wave of burning continues this month.

In the face of such evidence, we are forced to conclude that use of troops is the only immediate and practical way to restore order.

[Washington Post, May 17, 1968]

An Open Letter to the President of the United States and the Mayor of Washington

It can happen here. The District of Columbia has become a disaster area and a battleground. The field of combat is clearly defined. It is in the minds of the lawbreakers—and those who are tempted to break the law. Our most powerful weapon must be knowledge that the law will be enforced—fairly and firmly.

The ultimate restraint for the lawless is not jail. It is the possibility of jail. When that possibility is diminished by lax law enforcement, crime becomes a way of life. When lawlessness is blinked at, we're eyeball to eyeball with anarchy; "window shoppers" are encouraged—to break the window. Give a potential criminal an inch and he'll take everything he can get, along with human life.

There are those who think that to deplore the increase in the spiral of crime brands one a reactionary. We are not reactionaries but if we did not react to

the growing lawlessness in our city with alarm and protest, we would be irresponsible citizens.

We respectfully urge you, Mr. President and Mr. Mayor, while you seek from Congress the needed legislation for the disadvantaged, to seek also laws which will protect all citizens from irresponsible elements in the community—and to seek the means, if in your opinion you do not have them, to enforce those laws. We ask you to enforce and reinforce the law's presence—to alter the present climate which keeps businessmen of national manufacturers from visiting our stores in the Washington area because of danger on the streets and prevents the law-abiding from going about their lawful pursuits. Escalate the war against robbers, arsonists and murderers—to achieve safety in our city and peace at home.

Greater Washington Division of
MARYLAND-DELAWARE-DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JEWELERS' ASSOCIATION
Affiliate of Retail Jewelers of America