

APPENDIX

STAFF MEMORANDUM, MAY 15, 1968—THE APRIL 1968 CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN WASHINGTON

Beginning on the evening of April 4 of this year, the District of Columbia experienced a widespread outbreak of rioting, looting, arson, and destruction of property. When the last Federal troops were withdrawn from the city on April 16, many blocks of the city were a burned-out shambles, with a total of 645 buildings and 283 housing units badly damaged or destroyed. Also, some 909 commercial establishments and their contents were destroyed or damaged.

The commercial areas of 14th Street and 7th Street, N.W., and of H Street, N.E., were particularly hard hit by this wave of vandalism and arson. As a result, many small business establishments in these sections were badly damaged or totally destroyed by fire. Many of the men and women who owned these businesses have lost not only their property, but their sole means of earning a living and their entire life savings as well. While some have recouped a portion of their loss through insurance, few if any of these people will ever be completely reimbursed.

The District estimates that the cost of demolishing and removing these unsafe damaged buildings or parts thereof will be approximately \$300,000.

Total losses of property in the riot-torn areas may never be completely calculated. The latest estimate of losses or damages to "insured" properties alone in the concentrated areas of looting and destruction has been fixed by insured underwriters at \$25 million.

Job losses, business losses, and hotel, restaurant and sightseeing losses, during this the busiest season in Washington likewise have been appalling and presently not determined.

Widespread reports have been received by the Committee of innumerable instances attested to by witnesses, seen personally or on the various TV channels, of looting and plundering in the presence of the police, and subsequently in the presence of troops, with no apparent attempt being made by the police or troops to prevent or control same. What actual orders were issued to the police or troops is not clear from preliminary inquiry.

Estimates of losses from the April 1968 civil disturbances in Washington

ESTIMATED REAL PROPERTY DAMAGE

No. of Buildings Damaged or Destroyed.....	645
No. of Housing Units Damaged or Destroyed.....	283
No. of Commercial Establishments Damaged or Destroyed.....	909
No. of Public and Institutional Establishments Damaged or Destroyed.....	8

These are estimates of losses in the concentrated areas of destruction; scattered damages outside thereof would run 15% of those figures, according to D.C. Government estimates.