

As Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote in 1966, "Once you give a nervous, hostile and ill-informed people a theoretical justification for using violence in certain cases, it's like a tiny hole in the dike; the rationales rush through in a torrent, and violence becomes the normal, acceptable solution for a problem A cardinal fact about violence is that once initiated it tends to get out of hand. Its limits are not predictable."

A corollary conclusion is that violence rewarded spurs further violence and perpetual violence ultimately produces a brutal counter-reaction.

Capitulation to violence, either to keep the peace or from misguided compassion, is suicidal for a society. While hardening of attitudes and polarization are paralyzing, equally unconstructive is the new national pastime of intellectual immolation of which the Kerner Report could be considered a classic example.

This phenomenon could be described as collective breast-beating masochism where a nation indulges itself in self-flagellation on everything from Vietnam to violence. Guilt immobilizes and fear polarizes; let us search for a new unity based on strength which energizes.

For all of its dramatic departure in analyzing the cause of the problem, the Kerner Report's recommendations for its solution were surprisingly unoriginal and undramatic. I for one cannot believe infusing more money into the so-called ghetto is the answer. Our goal should be to eliminate ghettos altogether, not to build better ones.

Insofar as the specific Kerner Report's recommendations to provide immediate and short-term solutions to alleviate pressures in the ghetto, each state must measure them against standards of benefit and waste. A case in point would be the call to create two million new jobs. Right now Maryland is experiencing an acute shortage in unskilled manpower. While the jobs in many cases could be considered menial, the work is steady and the pay approaches minimum wage levels. We are presently engaged in a comprehensive survey of unskilled employment practices to get to the root of this problem. Where employers are exacting unrealistic requirements, we hope to revise employment standards. At the same time, we want to be sure able-bodied persons are not drawing welfare while jobs go begging.

Decentralization of city agencies and improved police-community relations are critical. I do not think we will improve public attitude toward law enforcement until we dispel public antipathy toward law enforcement officers.