Traffic Court

The final report of the special grand jury that investigated the operations of the traffic division of the Municipal Court has now been released for public study and consideration. Much of that report in detail appears elsewhere in The Sunday. What should be noted here is that the public now has an opportunity to consider the facts as developed and adjudged by a special grand jury over a period of about 10 months.

The actions taken by a regular grand jury in the matter of indictments against persons of high responsibility in the traffic division are not involved in the report of the special grand jury. Those actions are not open for comment, since the trials have yet to be held.

What we have in the report are a presentation of faults, weaknesses and invocations to suspicions in the operation of a division of the state’s judicial set-up.

Welfare Bill

For some time now, public officials concerned with the state of welfare in this country have agreed on one thing—a basic change must be made at approximately $1.7 billion a year.

Pakistan Story

The extent of the Pakistani tragedy in March, when the two parts of the country were brutally torn apart, is bit by bit becoming known, with the most substantial information to date provided by a group of six foreign correspondents admitted to East Pakistan for an officially conducted look. As a whole these observers have written guardedly, through censorship, but one of them, Mort Rosenblum of the Associated Press, has instead left the country and filed his dispatches from Bangkok. The story he tells is one of hatred and horror, in “a civil war of staggering butchery,” of a national economy on the brink of ruin and of political chaos.

The deaths, by Mr. Rosenblum’s rough estimate, may number half a million. The devastation, he says, defies belief. Millions of people face starvation, from famine and from the halted distribution of relief for earlier, and natural, disasters. The picture could not be more grim.

From Mr. Rosenblum and other sources it is clear that an unknown but huge amount of aid has gone to East Bengalis, in hatred and vengeance against West Pakistanis, and against other non-Bengalis in the population. But it is clear also that the savage tearing apart of the nation is to be laid first of all on the army of Pakistan and those who gave it its orders.

One tale is that the deaths from army action in Dacca, the East Bengali capital, came to about 150, a gigantic lie, and that in any case the army struck to avert an armed rebellion scheduled for the early morning of the day after the army went into action. Of this no evidence has been brought forward.

The fact still seems to be, as it seemed to be at the first, that the government of Pakistan was determined not to let the East Bengal Awami League assume the power it had won in a National Assembly election, and that from this determination stemmed the carefully planned onslaught of March.

While its full consequences are yet to be known, it is plain already that Pakistan as conceived by its creators has ceased to exist, that another economic structure has been brought near to the point of no-repair, that a generation of hatred has been assured and that new opportunities have been opened to political elements whose purposes have little to do with the national good of Pakistan.

If our political leaders can be taken at their word, the present Republican administration in Washington talks a lot about wiretapping, but does less of it and the two previous Democratic administrations didn’t talk about it very much but tapped a lot. President Nixon and Attorney General Mitchell seem to give great importance to wiretapping even as they insist they strictly limit it; their counterparts in the John Kennedy and Johnson administrations made us think that they were strongly opposed to wiretapping, although they apparently managed to tolerate a good bit of it.

There are impressions rather than hard facts. The facts on the number of taps in being at any given moment, as announced at times by various officials, have a limited significance by themselves since they can be manipulated accurately only in the light of the full record, and there is no likelihood that the full record will be made known to anyone outside the restricted number of government people who deal with it.

The problem is that two areas of wiretapping—a word used here to include the new ones in operation and the ones now available—are involved. The legal procedure in domestic criminal cases is quite clearly prescribed. If the federal government proposes to use wiretapping evidence in court proceedings it must apply to a judge for express, advance permission in each case.

There isn’t too much argument about this type. But there is another area of unstructured wiretapping—that is, unauthorized by specific court warrants—and a serious argument breaks out whenever this type of activity is based on suspicion of which government prosecutor would like to use such wiretapping information in building their evidence but are unwilling to disclose its source publicly.

This is the shadowy area of government espionage and counter-espionage. Governments tap their own phone lines, break other phone lines, spy on each other through paid and unpaid agents and informers, and so on endlessly, in the name of national security. They exercise what is considered an inherent right to defend themselves against possible attack from outside and from internal subversion possibly financed or directed from outside.

It should be pointed out that wiretapping is a very difficult art and requires a great deal of finesse. It is not possible to do this kind of thing without someone in the room, for there is no way to alter the soundproofing of a room to fool the microphone. The police in New York City, for instance, have sometimes been caught in their own wiretapping equipment.

Federal Wiretapping

By Gera

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Letters to the Editor

Kim A. Day

same Department of Defense used in court without the court’s permission. If it is obtained by a court warrant, the evidence obtained could not be used in court without disclosing this to any duly authorized government work or any state, federal or local government agency.

The Supreme Court’s decision in the case of the war on wiretapping and other electronic eavesdropping.

Thanks and Regrets

Sir: Congratulations are most assuredly due to Baltimore’s men in blue (for the exemplary restraint they exercised during the Flower Market Every citizen can be justly proud of the job they did. Unfortunately, those whose actions necessitated the necessity for the posh numbers were all little pride,