Executive Order 11365
Establishing a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders

- Signed: July 29, 1967
- Federal Register page and date: 32 FR 11111; August 1, 1967
- Commission to terminate by July 29, 1968

220.11 Records of The National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders (Johnson Administration)
1952-68 (bulk 1967-68)

History: Established by EO 11365, July 29, 1967, to recommend measures for averting and controlling civil disorders of the type that had occurred in various cities that summer. Chaired by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner. Terminated upon submission of final report, March 1, 1968, published as Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

Related Records: Record copies of publications of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in RG 287, Publications of the U.S. Government.

Organization Name:

Administrative History Note:
In the summer of 1967 as riots broke out in Newark, New Jersey and Detroit, Michigan owing, in part, to political, economic, and social factors including police abuse, lack of affordable housing, urban renewal projects, economic inequality, black militancy, and rapid demographic change. These followed similar outbreaks in Los Angeles and Cleveland the year before. In reaction the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission, after its chairman, Gov. Otto Kerner of Illinois, or less frequently, as the Riot Commission) was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson under Executive Order 11365, July 29, 1967. The Commission was instructed to investigate and make recommendations concerning the origins of civil disorders, the development of means to avert or control such disorders, the appropriate roles of local, state, and Federal authorities in dealing with them, and any other matters the President placed before it. The other commissioners were New York City mayor John V. Lindsay (vice chairman), labor leader I.W. Abel, U.S. Senators Edward W. Brooke and Fred R. Harris, U.S. Representatives James C. Corman and William M. McCulloch, Atlanta police chief Herbert Jenkins, Kentucky state official Katherine Graham Peden, business executive Charles B. Thornton and civil rights leader Roy Wilkins. David Ginsburg was executive director of the staff, and Victor H. Palmieri was deputy executive director.
During 20 days of hearings in Washington, D.C., from August 1 to November 10, 1967, the Commission heard testimony from local, state, and Federal officials, civil rights leaders, ghetto residents, business and labor leaders, and scholars. The Commission also visited eight of the cities where the greatest violence had occurred to interview local officials and ghetto residents. Commission staff and consultants undertook a number of research projects and analytical studies. Field research included interviews and investigations in 23 cities and detailed studies of 10 of the disorders (“riot profiles”). The role of the news media was the subject of a quantitative analysis of reportage in 15 cities from around the time of the disturbances by Simulmatics Corporation, and a conference in Poughkeepsie, NY, from November 10-12, 1967. The Commission formed two advisory panels to investigate specific economic aspects of the riots. The Advisory Panel on Private Enterprise, chaired by Commissioner Thornton, studied “the appropriate role of the … free enterprise system in helping to alleviate the causes of civil disorders” and issued a report that was presented as an appendix in the full Commission report. The President’s National Advisory Panel on Insurance in Riot-Affected Areas, chaired by Gov. Richard J. Hughes of New Jersey, was formed on August 10, 1967, and issued its report, Meeting the Insurance Crisis of Our Cities, in January 1968. The Commission terminated upon the delivery of its Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to the President, dated March 1, 1968.