

STANFORD UNIVERSITY NEWS SERVICE

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STANFORD - No Asian experts were consulted prior to President Nixon's decision to enter Cambodia, Prof. John Lewis of Stanford told a luncheon audience of 500 attending the 1970 Campus Conference Saturday (MAY 16).

In a calmly worded talk with strong emotional overtones, Lewis said specialists in Southeast Asia, both in and out of government, had been isolated and ignored by policy makers.

Early this month, both Presidential Foreign Policy Adviser Henry Kissinger and Elliott Richardson of State Department told Lewis that Asian specialists played no part in the events preceding the President's decision.

Yet among both policy makers and academicians there is unanimity in awareness that certain "absolutely relevant" factors in the history and culture of Southeast Asia "cannot be overcome through the application of military force," Lewis declared.

Failure to understand these factors or weigh them in decisions will leave America "locked in" militarily, he warned. Increased costs, both in money and manpower, will then be used to justify a continued American presence there.

Lewis and several other Stanford professors led a week-long seminar on Indo-China at Stanford last week which grew steadily in attendance from 700 to 1500 students. Last year, a course in Vietnam which Lewis offered attracted only five students---primarily because individuals knowledgeable in this field were regarded as irrelevant in government, he suggested.

Lewis said there was "strong consensus" among Asian specialists in the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, and on campus regarding Indo-China. As early as July, 1964, the CIA Board of National Estimates expressed "serious doubts" at any prospect of victory there, anticipating a "prolonged stalemate" or negotiated settlement at best, he related. But the author of this report was isolated from government and denied access to policy makers---as were other specialists, Lewis said.

He served in the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research during the Kennedy Administration.

"What we know has to be put in the policy-making process," he added. Material available in books and other open literature is reinforced ---not contradicted---by classified documents concerning the region.

Scholarly frustration and student disinterest stem from awareness that policy-making has been "totally unresponsive" to this knowledge. "Our policies were more clearly understood by the students than by Washington," he declared.

The strikes which followed announcement of the Cambodian invasion symbolized the "total frustration" felt on campus. But this was quickly followed by a transformation, as faculty, staff and students joined in a massive educational effort on Indo-China.

This stemmed from "an underlying act of faith" that meaningful political action could be based on knowledge, and that the campus might not be "left in isolation" from the rest of society.

"There's more going on here than before," Lewis told the predominantly alumni audience. "We need your guidance, understanding, and support" for highly constructive activity now taking place on campus and spreading from there out to the community, he concluded.

Sustained applause followed his informal commentary.

Prior to the luncheon program, a group of 15 radicals left the nearby Tresidder Memorial Union, chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh---NLF Is Going to Win" as they went up a walkway about 50 yards from the conference. "No, No, No" several alumni chorused in reply. There were no other incidents.

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