

SIGNATURE SHEETS ARE AVAILABLE IN ROOM 500A, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
(AT THE FOOT OF WHITE PLAZA)

YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THE COLLECTION OF SIGNATURES WOULD BE APPRECIATED

The President
The White House

Stanford University
Stanford, California
May 4, 1970

Dear Mr. President:

It has become increasingly clear that our great universities have become stages for display of deeply rooted national discontent. Our youth, educated in the great American ideals of freedom, openness, tolerance, and respect for individual life, struggle to see these ideals in national practice. The frustrations of a brutal and ambiguous war feed distrust of our governance, our economics, our education, and even our rights and responsibilities.

The strength of the anti-ROTC, anti-research, anti-technology movements on our campuses is evidence of this growing national distrust. University communities are becoming deeply split between those who have begun to lose faith in the American system and those who cherish its success in brighter times. University administrations struggle to find a middle ground on which their institutions can survive. Students press hard for university reform, hoping somehow to affect the war. Faculties normally receptive to reform often hesitate to act in this emotional atmosphere.

The extreme leftists openly advocate violence on our campuses. They know full well that escalated violent protest will bring escalated violent response. They use this to create an atmosphere of tension and thus polarize the community. Frustrated by their inability to influence what they regard as a disastrous national policy, moderates are supporting the protests in increasing numbers, and are beginning to tolerate their violence. Other moderates, angered by the violence of recent demonstrations, are becoming more violent in their reactions. The middle ground is being evacuated, and armed camps are beginning to take ominous form on either side.

Deprived of a moderate base, our universities will be unable to serve as bastions for rational discourse. Revolutionary elements have long recognized that destruction of our universities is essential to their plans for national conquest, and events now play into their hands.

We recognize the impending disaster of this situation. It is now essential that you see the peril before us. It is essential because there are suggestions that you soon may order a deeper involvement in Cambodia. We sincerely believe that this act could be decisive in turning great numbers of minds away from moderate positions. The resulting division of our university communities would be irreparable. Violent protest and violent response could then escalate beyond the wildest hopes of the militant revolutionaries, very likely beyond control. Our university system could be shattered, and this we believe would signal some tragic form of national collapse.

We ask you to consider these grave and real concerns in reaching your decision. No foreseeable rationalization would make intervention in Cambodia acceptable to the people of this community. Don't permit inevitable chaos in Asia to bring about preventable civil conflict in America.

Most respectfully,

MEMBERS OF THE STANFORD COMMUNITY