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STANFORD —

The prolonged duration of the Vietnam war threatens democracy in "a deadly fashion," President Richard W. Lyman of Stanford said Friday, Feb. 19.

Ever since they became old enough to be politically conscious, today's college students "have experienced an unending spate of misinformation and false prophecy with regard to Vietnam," he added.

"The tortured elaborations of Pentagonese have brought palpably closer the notorious era of Doublethink foreseen by George Orwell in his book, *1984*.

"This comes about, not because of a unique villainy on the part of the protagonists in this particular war, but because war itself is antithetical to democratic values."

A historian, President Lyman noted that "if the growth of cynicism and doubt continues through another period of years, we will suffer further subtle but ineradicable wounds here at home that will make American democracy in the 20th century as much a casualty of prolonged warfare as was Athenian democracy in the Fifth Century B.C.

"That is part of the reason why slogans like 'Vietnamization' mean so little on the campus today, and why hope is so rare a commodity there."

In a letter published by *The New York Times*, and signed as President of the University, Lyman declared that "eight years of war abroad have produced a marked deterioration in the political life of our own country. This deterioration is nowhere more marked than on the leading campuses, where the argument that only force counts is heard from young people whose cynicism in this regard is a deadly threat to the future of a democratic polity."

"In particular," he continued, "students today are either disgusted by or themselves infected with the disease of prevarication and contempt for honest dealings."

"In any war," President Lyman said, "a democracy polity incurs certain inescapable damage. War by its nature requires secrecy; democracy thrives on full disclosure. War causes people in authority not only to withhold the truth upon occasion; it tempts them to twist and distort it. Democracy requires that disagreements be thrashed out in argument and resolved by voting; war requires that disagreements be minimized or obscured in the face of the enemy at the gates—no matter how far away those gates may be—and encourages appeals to emotion and brute force. . . .

"We have survived previous wars with democracy largely intact. But major involvement in war has often been followed by a political aftermath of reaction and repressiveness, from the Alien and Sedition Acts of the 1790s, through the Mitchell Palmer raids following World War I, to the era of Joe McCarthy after World War II.

"The Vietnam war has doubtless been a limited one, for Americans if not for Vietnamese. But its duration now threatens us in deadly fashion. . . ."