

THE FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT PUT OUT BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE FOLLOWING THE ATTACK ON THE SMC BY J. EDGAR HOOVER IN HIS "OPEN LETTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS" OF SEPTEMBER 21, 1970. LOCAL SMCS SHOULD CONTACT THE LOCAL MEDIA WITH SIMILAR STATEMENTS AS WELL AS HOLD PRESS CONFERENCES IF THIS IS POSSIBLE.

NATION'S LARGEST STUDENT ANTIWAR GROUP ASSAILS J. EDGAR HOOVER'S "OPEN LETTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS".

The Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam condemns J. Edgar Hoover's "Open Letter to College Students" as a blatant attempt to stifle free speech and opposition to the war in Southeast Asia. Although couched in supposed recognition of the right to "legitimate" dissent, Hoover's letter is clearly aimed at the millions of Americans who have united in massive, peaceful protests in the streets against Nixon's criminal "commitment" in Indochina.

In response to Hoover's attack on our constitutional rights, we declare our intention to redouble our efforts to mobilize millions in the streets to force the Administration to end the war in Indochina NOW.

Hoover claims to be directing his remarks only against "extremists." But the American people know from bitter experience that such McCarthyite red-baiting attacks are really nothing but a smokescreen for attacks on the democratic rights of all citizens--of unions, of Blacks, Chicanos and other oppressed minorities, of women, and of all groups who need to utilize their constitutional rights to fight for their rightful place in American society. And the American people are also painfully aware that the "extremists" in this society are not those who fight to have our men brought home from Southeast Asia now, but those like Mr. Hoover, who force hundreds of thousands of men, against their will, to kill and die in a war which is in the interests of neither the Vietnamese people nor the American people; those who sanction the Mylais and the tiger cages; those who would turn millions of Vietnamese into refugees in order to "save them from communism." The simple truth is that the American people know all too well, without J. Edgar Hoover's advice, who the "extremists" in America are--and that is exactly why they, and we, have taken to the streets in the first place and will be in the streets in ever-increasing numbers until every last G.I. is withdrawn from Indochina.

In his remarks Mr. Hoover expresses concern about the widespread "disrespect" for universities, "law enforcement agencies," and other institutions. We would point out that if students are disillusioned with the universities it is because the universities have too long sanctioned ROTC, war research and discrimination against minority students. If Americans have lost respect for the police and National Guard it is because these agencies have been used to murder students at Kent State and Jackson State; they have been used to break strikes and occupy ghettos in city after city.

The violence and repression perpetrated by Hoover and the forces he represents is the real "extremism" in America -- and if Hoover is really concerned with "disrespect" for authority, he should realize that the "problem" will not go away until he and Nixon and Agnew put an end to their attacks on the rights of the American people and until ALL the troops are brought home from Indochina.

-30-

IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT IN ALL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRESS, AND WITH OTHER ACTIVISTS, THAT BUILDING THE OCTOBER 31 DEMONSTRATIONS IS THE BEST WAY TO ANSWER ATTACKS LIKE THIS ONE!

NO SECOND VIETNAMS -- NO U.S. TROOPS TO THE MIDEAST!

The SMC has been in the forefront of the fight to put an end to U.S. aggression in Vietnam. We were among the first to fight for the demand of immediate withdrawal, to emphasize the importance of working with GIs, to come up with a consistent and coherent projection of the antiwar university. We have been the most persistent and consistent in insisting on continued mass actions in the streets. In short, the SMC has played a key leadership role in helping make the antiwar movement the powerful force it is today and in helping it successfully meet the various tests it has confronted.

The situation in the Middle East, especially as it took form between September 17 and September 27 with the threat of direct U.S. intervention in Jordan, poses another serious test for the antiwar movement. Those who fight for an end to U.S. aggression in the Far East must respond to the threat of more of the same in the Mid East. While there may be deep differences among us about the broader issues involved in the Mid East conflict, we must be able to agree--and act on that agreement--that the U.S. has no more business sending troops to Jordan (or Kuwait, or Lebanon, etc.) than to Vietnam. When Nixon sent troops into Cambodia, we knew that the GIs didn't want to die there any more than in Vietnam--and we protested the blatant American interference in Cambodian affairs. Similarly, we know today that American GIs don't want to be brought home from the Far East to die intervening in somebody else's business in the Mid East. And we know that the American people, sick of years of costly adventures in SE Asia are not prepared to accept another aggressive and costly involvement in the Mid East.

We therefore have a responsibility to mobilize the antiwar sentiments of the masses of Americans to ensure that the Mid East does not become America's second Vietnam.

We in the SMC are in an excellent position to take the lead in the antiwar movement's response to any attempt by Nixon to invade the Mid East. Our experience in the anti-Vietnam war movement has taught us that the government lies, that the Administration plans its interventions without any regard for the interests of either the American people or the supposed "beneficiaries" of our "help", that the whole history of U.S. intervention abroad has been one of attempting to impose social, political and economic forms which control rather than liberate the peoples involved. We must draw the lessons from the Indochina war and make clear to the American people that the U.S. has no more business sending troops to the Mid East than it does to Vietnam.

Of course, our opposition to U.S. intervention in the Mid East does not solve the larger questions involved there. These larger questions are ones on which those of us in the antiwar movement may differ, even while agreeing on our opposition to the U.S. landing troops there. Despite our differences, however, the SMC and the antiwar movement in general have an obligation to the American people and the people of the Mid East in relation to these larger questions. Specifically, we have an obligation to continue to uncover the truth. The American press' coverage of the Middle East crisis has been no more candid than its coverage of the Vietnam war--and that goes double for the government's "explanations" to the American people. As with the beginning of the anti-Vietnam war movement, a central task now is to bring the facts to light.

The SMC should take the initiative to bring together broad coalitions to hold teach-ins on the Mid East, teach-ins in which all points of view, from Zionist to Palestinian, can be represented and have an unrestricted platform to make their case. Such an open discussion, where all the facts can be brought to public attention, is an absolute necessity if the American people are to fully understand and make decisions, independent of government propaganda, about the larger questions involved in the Mid East.

We should be particularly clear on the importance of the anti-Vietnam war movement as such to the prospects of U.S. intervention in the Mid East. October 31 is coming up. We're already deeply involved in building those actions. The potential of U.S. intervention in the Mid East makes a massive protest against the Indochina war on Oct. 31 more important than ever--and not only in the sense that the SMC should have a portion of its banners on the 31st read "No 2nd Vietnams--No U.S. troops to the Middle East"--although we certainly should do that. More importantly, we must understand that one important factor that Nixon and his warhawks must take into account when they contemplate an invasion of the Mid East--or anywhere else--is the state of the American antiwar movement.

If the antiwar leadership makes it clear that it will meet threats of a new foreign adventure with a united all-out effort to mobilize the American people to say "hell no!", then that is a significant factor for Nixon to consider. In other words, every blow against the SE Asian war helps to stay the hand of Nixonian intervention in the rest of the world. Therefore we must redouble our efforts to make October 31st and the continued mass actions against the Indochina war which are sure to follow it as massive and successful as possible.

Don Gurewitz
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SMC