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Midland, Michigan
August 3, 1966

TO: Midland location employees

Dow has been advised that Monday, August 8, 1966, representatives of an organization known as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) will hold demonstrations in Midland against Dow's production of napalm under contract for the Defense Department. These will probably take place near 256 Building and 47 Building at 7:30 a.m. and around noon. The group is expected to be made up of Ann Arbor chapter members of SDS which has already demonstrated at Dow's plant in Torrance, Calif., and apparently has scheduled further demonstrations there.

This letter will explain what Dow is doing on the production of this product and point out our company policy. Its main purpose, however, is to enlist the cooperation of all employees in helping to prevent any possible conflict with the demonstrators.

Dow does produce napalm under contract for the Defense Department and has done so for several months. This product consists of a special grade of polystyrene mixed with gasoline and benzene. Dow was asked to be one of the suppliers of this material because the company is the largest producer of polystyrene. The napalm formulation was developed in the Department of Defense and not by Dow. Most of the plastic involved is produced in Midland and shipped to our Torrance, Calif. plant where it is mixed with the other ingredients and placed in government-furnished containers for shipment to D.O.P. depots.

Dow accepts this contract because we feel that simple good citizenship requires that we supply our government and our military with those goods they need when we have the technology and capability and have been chosen by the government as a supplier. You will hear charges from the group protesting against us that Dow is a war profiteer on the material. So set the record straight, we have accepted these contracts because we feel dutybound to do so even though it has vastly complicated our ability to supply non-government orders for the plastic involved.

Dow does not make policy on what material is used^{or} for what purposes it is used by our military forces nor should we attempt to decide policy or military strategy. Any answers concerning the use of this material would have to come from military spokesmen. We would like to refer you, however, to a statement in the National Observer of April 29, 1966, which says, "U.S. military spokesmen say the use of napalm in Vietnam is restricted to military targets, and that it's too valuable a weapon to discontinue because of isolated protests."

Our chief concerns with forthcoming protest demonstrations against Dow are that these demonstrators do not in any way interfere with the normal operation of our Midland plant and, by the same token, that no Dow employee or Dow official interferes with the legal rights of the demonstrator.

Past experience with these groups indicates that the demonstrators will probably be peaceful and careful in their protests to stay within the legal limits. They most likely will carry placards and distribute leaflets making quite serious and emotional charges against Dow. They may also attempt to talk to or make speeches to Dow employees or other observers. Their main concern is to attract maximum attention to their reasons for protest.

Since the basis for these protests is highly emotional there is always the danger that any contact with demonstrators could develop quickly into a serious situation. We ask, therefore, that Dow employees refrain from direct contact or conversation with the demonstrators. If, for instance, a demonstrator hands you a piece of literature, there's far less chance of trouble if you simply accept the literature and take it with you. To refuse the handout or to argue with the demonstrator might well provoke an incident. Likewise, if demonstrators address you in any way, you may listen to them or ignore them as you choose. But trying to answer or debate with them will be rather pointless and could lead to an incident.

We will appreciate your cooperation. If you have any further questions please contact this office or your immediate supervisor.

F.C. Peterson
Industrial Relations
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Chemical Demonstrations