

April 12, 1965

Dean McGeorge Bundy
Presidential Advisor
White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dean Bundy:

For the past ten years events in Southeast Asia have been matters of profound concern to all persons committed to the welfare of America and the maintenance of world peace. During the last two months the crisis appears to have reached an unprecedented intensity. As human beings we wish to minimize the dangers arising from this crisis. As scholars we wish to understand its roots and are willing to assist in the task of finding solutions.

Examination of the Vietnamese problem has been impeded by failure on the part of the Administration to make a clear and unambiguous statement of its policy. We are therefore uncertain about the aims which the continued bombings of North Vietnam are intended to accomplish, about the circumstances under which negotiations might commence, and about the range of Vietnamese governments which would be acceptable to the United States.

In addition, we have found it extremely difficult to obtain reliable information about what is actually happening.

As persons trained in critical analysis and accustomed to supporting our intellectual and political positions with factual data, we find the circumstances mentioned above extremely frustrating. Frequently persons from outside the academic community have indicated their confusion vis-à-vis Vietnam and have requested our guidance. Usually we have been unable to provide such guidance, since the information vacuum has confused us as well.

The government of a democracy must, we believe, clearly communicate its foreign policy and provide its citizens with the information necessary to evaluate, and if need be criticize this policy. As a former member of the academic community, you should, we feel, be especially aware of this responsibility. We therefore invite you to discuss and answer questions about the war in Vietnam before an open meeting of the University of Michigan faculty. This meeting should be held as soon as possible, preferably no later than the end of April. Within this period we shall accommodate the demands of your schedule.

We sincerely hope that you will avail yourself of this opportunity and will thereby enable us to meet the responsibilities of our role as intellectuals.

Respectfully,