

MIT- Pres. Steele

February 19, 1969

TO MEMBERS OF THE M.I.T. FACULTY

The enclosed statement, subscribed to by many,
but signed as indicated below, has been released to
the public press for weekend publication.

Martin A. Abkowitz

Lincoln P. Bloomfield

George H. Buchi

F. Albert Cotton

Peter S. Eagleson

Anthony P. French

Edwin R. Gilliland

Elias P. Gyftopoulos

Roy Lamson

Richard C. Lord

James W. Mar

Henry A. Millon

Warren M. Rohsenow

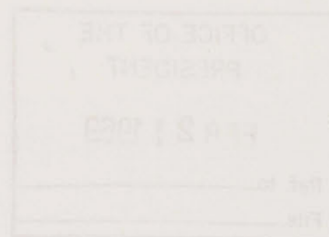
Nevin S. Scrimshaw

Abraham J. Siegel

Gerald N. Wogan

Richard J. Wurtman

Jerrold R. Zacharias



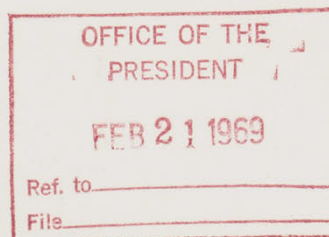
PUBLIC STATEMENT

In recent weeks, plans have been announced for a day of meetings to be held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on March 4 under the auspices of a faculty group called the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). The undersigned, as members of the MIT faculty but not members of UCS, wish to comment on those meetings. Their purpose - to initiate a critical examination of the major political, military and social consequences of scientific and technological research - is one to which all of us, without exception, can subscribe; nobody can be unconcerned about the vast dangers and problems that confront us in these times. The announcement of the meetings has, however, been coupled with a request from the UCS for a symbolic stoppage of research at MIT on March 4. Since this aspect of the program has received wide publicity, we feel bound to make it known that we speak for a large segment of the MIT faculty and students in expressing a strong dissent from the concept of such a research stoppage in this connection.

We object to the call for a one-day research stoppage on three main grounds. First, its most obvious interpretation is as an act of protest with an implied prejudgment of the questions at issue. The fact that the public press immediately headlined it as a "strike" is ample testimony to this. Second, it encourages the inference that the research for which the halt is being called at MIT is itself antisocial, whereas it is overwhelmingly either pure research, of long-range social import, or research directed toward clearly identified socially desirable ends (such as urban systems, pollution control, medical technology, transportation, and aid to developing nations). Lastly, it misrepresents the spirit and character of research in a free academic community. Research is not something to be turned on or off like a faucet; it is a matter of continuing involvement, and its time-scale is years and decades, not days.

We respect the motives of our colleagues in the UCS in setting up the March 4 program. We are certainly not proposing any kind of boycott of the meetings. But we feel bound to declare our belief that the serious and constructive purposes of the occasion are jeopardized by the attempt to dramatize it through a symbolic work stoppage. And although all of us are deeply concerned about the roles of science and technology in today's world, we wish to make it clear that the name and reputation of MIT as a whole should not be linked to the manner in which these questions are being aired on March 4.

February 21, 1969



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In his helpful letter to the Editor (N. Y. Times of Feb. 15), Professor Bethe clarifies how his talk about the planned anti-ballistic missile system will contribute to the discussions to be held at M.I.T. on March 4 of the interaction of Government support with scientific research at the universities. Professor Bethe incidentally refers to "an event planned by the faculty of M.I.T. for March 4" and to "the action agreed on by the M.I.T. faculty". Readers might interpret these phrases as implying that whatever is to happen on March 4 reflects a consensus of the entire M.I.T. faculty. This is not the case. The March 4 manifestation is being organized by a group of the M.I.T. faculty. While there is general concern with the social consequences of scientific and technical research which are to be discussed on March 4, there exist other groups of the M.I.T. faculty who take issue with the organizing group regarding the symbolic character of the planned events.

Walter A. Rosenblith
Chairman of the Faculty
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

The above letter to the Editor of the Times was sent by wire on the afternoon of February 18, 1969.