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John Hastings, Director

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Last night's necessary evacuation of Hamilton Hall and the arrest of the demonstrators were gratifyingly peaceful. While we deplore such demonstrations, we wish that last night's activities could have ended there.

Unfortunately they didn't. After the clearing of Hamilton Hall mob action developed with a reported 1,000 people ranging through the campus in uncontrolled violence. Reports as of early this morning indicate extensive damage in seven buildings, consisting mainly of broken windows and the results of fires set by the demonstrators. The broken windows were caused by the throwing of over 100 bricks which had been dug out of campus walkways. At least some of the fires were set by burning manuscripts and other valuable -- perhaps irreplaceable -- papers taken from professors' offices. While there were many other reprehensible actions that could be listed, we cite only this additional one -- our reports indicate that a potted tree was dragged 20 yards across a terrace and dropped on a police vehicle parked in an interior court almost 100 feet below.

In case there remains any doubt in anyone's mind about the motivation behind last night's actions, the Strike Committee's statement this morning clearly demonstrates that theirs is a political action -- one that goes far beyond their grievances with the University.

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When they called for citywide support, and when they asked for risings on other university campuses throughout the country, they showed the true nature of their objectives.

The fundamental reason why the University's officials were compelled, on April 30, to call in the police to clear the demonstrators from the occupied buildings was that the overwhelming majority of our faculty and students were being forcibly prevented by a small minority from pursuing their normal academic activities.

The infinitely precious academic freedoms of both faculty members and students cannot be exercised if the University is subjected to further riotous demonstrations, occupations of buildings, and violence and wanton vandalism of the kind that occurred on this campus last night.

During the past weeks all of us in the University have made every effort to avoid imposing drastic penalties that would permanently remove a large number of students from this community.

But all who are genuinely concerned about academic freedom and the rights of students to learn and professors to teach must now see that the University is compelled to use all measures necessary to restore peace in the face of continuing and expanding violence.

The essential activities that constitute the life of this and every other university -- teaching, discussions among faculty and students, scholarly and scientific investigation -- cannot be carried on in an atmosphere of actual or threatened violence.

There may have been some disbelief on the part of some of the rebellious students that the University would ever discipline large

numbers of students. I think it important for me to state that if disciplinary probation, suspension, or even permanent expulsion must be dealt to any number of students, this action will be taken. Columbia University must and will honor its commitment to educate those students who genuinely want what a great university can provide them.

End of statement by Dr. Grayson Kirk, president of Columbia University, at a press conference in the Rotunda of Low Memorial Library, Wednesday, May 22, 1968.

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