

S.S. No. 1 (Filmsy)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

Special Report }

SPECIAL BRANCH

11 day of May 19 72

SUBJECT

Vietnam
Solidarity
Campaign

Reference to Papers
400/71/105

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:

2. "Members of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, in the light of the recent escalation of the Vietnam War by America, have agreed to meet privately on Tuesday 16 May 1972 at the George IV Public House, Pentonville Road, NI, at 7.30 pm to decide what action they should take in the form of demonstrations or pickets in this country."

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HN338

Detective Constable

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Submitted

HN294

Senior Inspector

3

Chief Superintendent

ENC

TO

REF

OF 2049

BOX 500

0f2049

Students' peaceful plea for peace

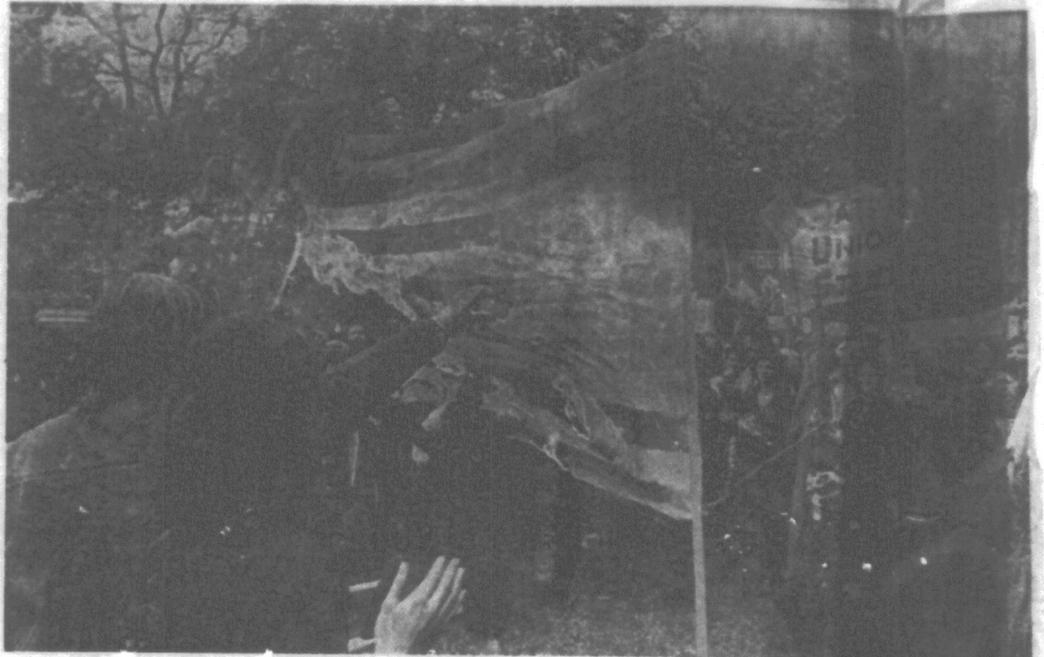
By Dennis
Barker

ABOUT 500 demonstrators turned up for the National Union of Students' march to the American Embassy in London yesterday to protest against President Nixon's Vietnam strategy. Five thousand had been expected. The marchers included representatives of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and other sympathetic groups. At least two people were arrested in minor scuffles with the police.

Student leaders admitted they were disappointed with the response. Mr Digby Jacks, NUS president, who spoke to one section of the march as it formed up outside University College, thought the small turn-out was due to a lack of understanding about the "historical significance" of the background to the mining of the harbours.

The fact that Mr Jacks was often interrupted by cries of "Out! Out!" indicated that fragmentation among Vietnam campaigners, and a certain lack of freshness in the long-running cause, may also have played their part. The majority of protesters came from the London School of Economics contingent, marching behind the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign flag, and Mr Tariq Ali, denim-suited and comfortably plump, who also came in for his share of mild barracking.

As the marchers moved into Grosvenor Square and sight of the embassy, there seemed almost as many police as demonstrators. Ten busloads of police stood at points round the square, while several mounted police, cars, and vans waited behind the embassy. They blocked the



Students burning a daubed American flag during the anti-Vietnam demonstration yesterday

embassy entrance, ringed the central grass reservation of the square at the embassy end, and cordoned off the approach road.

Mr Jacks and two others were allowed through the cordon to take a protest letter into the embassy. The letter said the NUS, representing 500,000 students, "strongly condemned" the mine blockade and renewed bombing attacks, and was concerned because the escalation of the war created an extremely grave situation for the prospects of world peace.

They emerged a few

minutes later and reported to the marchers, penned in to one side of the square, that the ambassador was out of the country, that he fully supported the President's actions, and would bear the marchers' views in mind.

The march might have dispersed quite peacefully if there had not been an argument about picketing the embassy. Mr Mike Terry, national secretary of the NUS, said that 200 would stay behind to picket. The police said only 20 would be allowed to do so, and this only after the others had dispersed.

A girl then tried to get through the cordon, about 30 marchers sat down in the road, and after asking them to move on, a police officer warned that they were obstructing the highway and "we will be obliged to move you."

Most of the 30 got up again and the rest were squeezed by lines of police out of the square. In a handful of muted scuffles, three men were dragged into a police van and one of the quietest Vietnam protests ever was over. There is another march today from Hyde Park Corner.

Also today a petition signed by more than 150 Americans at Oxford University, including several professors, will be presented at the embassy. It condemns the "rare" decision to mine and blockade North Vietnamese ports and to escalate the bombing of South Vietnam.

Before the march yesterday the embassy received a letter from the Monday Club expressing support for Mr Nixon's strategy. It was handed in by Conservative MPs and was signed by Mr John Birch, Mr Harold S. Davison, Mr Harold S. and Lord Hinchinbrook.