

...and the Home Front

The tragic nature of the division of this country, exacerbated by escalation of the war, was underscored yesterday when four students were killed during a confrontation with National Guardsmen and police at Kent State University in Ohio.

Whoever was responsible for the fatal shots must be brought to justice promptly and steps must be taken to make sure that the forces of "law and order" do not themselves become the instruments of further anarchy. Whether or not the fatal shootings were triggered by snipers, it is evident from the eyewitness account of this newspaper's correspondent (who saw and heard no sniper fire) that the National Guardsmen shot at the students without warning in an unconscionable act of military panic. "The troops had run out of tear gas," said the commanding general by way of explanation.

Student provocation through arson, rioting and rock-throwing was great and was also unpardonable. The violence instigated by some antiwar protesters is in no way justified by the violence practiced by their Government overseas.

But more violent self-destruction at home will be the inescapable fate of this great nation unless an Administration elected to uphold the law at home and to bring peace abroad lives up to its commitments—or is held to its promises by the representatives of the people in Congress. At home, as in Indochina, responsible political action is the only sane solution to a dual crisis that is threatening to get out of hand.