

STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA
by University of Hawai'i President Kenneth P. Mortimer
March 23, 2000

The only action taken by the administration was to put a contingency plan in place, due to concern for the safety and security of all people on campus – students, faculty, regents and others from the community. I have been through protests on other campuses in which both participants and onlookers were harmed. I do not intend for that to ever happen at any University of Hawai'i campus.

Our Dean of Students and our head of Campus Security were told, in a March 9 meeting with student leaders, that as many as 1,500 student and community protesters could be expected. They were also told that students were committed to a non-violent protest, but that the students could not guarantee peaceful protest from outside protestors who were expected to attend.

We, therefore, decided it was best to be prepared in case activity began that was physically harmful to anyone. We advised the Department of Public Safety of our concern, and asked only that officers trained in such situations be provided to stand-by, should harmful activities take place. Fortunately, they were not needed, and, in fact, I personally asked them to leave campus when it became clear that they wouldn't be. There was no interaction between the protesters and the stand-by Public Safety contingency. And, at no time was the Honolulu Police Department called in by the University. They show up on their own at these things.

The decision to bring canines was made by the Department of Public Safety. When we learned of their presence, we asked that they be removed immediately.

Again, let me emphasize that the administration chose to have this contingency plan out of concern for all, including our students.

MARCH 16 PROTEST AT UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
BACKGROUND FACTS
ON THE PRESENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- On March 9, Captain Don Dawson from Campus Security, and Alan Yang, Dean of Students, met with Pi'ilani Smith and Lance Collins, student leaders of the demonstration. Smith and Collins informed Dean Yang and Captain Dawson that the number of participants expected could go as high as 1,500, and that students could not be held responsible for outside protestors' actions.
- The group agreed that only Campus Security would be present at the sleep-in, as long as there were no criminal acts.
- A back-up force of State deputy sheriffs from the Department of Public Safety was arranged for the Board of Regents meeting scheduled for the following day, given concern about the unknown size or actions of outside demonstrators. According to Public Safety officials, had no advance preparation been made, it would have taken between one and two hours to respond to a call for assistance.
- The University administration made clear with DPS that:
 1. Deployment of the deputies would only be upon the personal direction of President Mortimer or Senior Vice President for Administration Eugene Imai.
 2. That the back-up security contingency was to remain at a distance from the protest area, and that they were not to show themselves in order to avoid any possible intimidation of the protestors.
- The decision to bring canines and paddy wagons was made by DPS, and was unknown to the University administration. When the administration was made aware of their presence, VP Imai immediately asked that they be removed.
- On the day of the Board of Regents meeting, student leaders were informed, prior to the regents' arrival, that they (the students) would be given access to the meeting room through the Ewa door.
- Some students thought they were being denied access when they weren't allowed through the entrance provided for the regents and administration. They blocked access of the regents into the room, and began pushing for entrance through that door.
- In the process, one student shoved a campus security officer to the floor. Other security officers immediately subdued him.

- Once the misunderstanding was cleared up, the students moved through the Ewa door peacefully.