Does ROTC belong in the academic community?

By Joe Kahl, Alex Makowski and Duff Malhotra

The Reserve Officer's Training Corps will be facing a challenge to their academic standing, if not their existence, when the faculty convenes in a special meeting May 14. Before the faculty will be two motions: one that would strip credit from ROTC courses; and a second that would terminate that activity.

The two motions reflect the question currently being debated on many campuses—does military training belong in any place in an academic institution? Or, more specifically, does an external agency whose primary purpose is to recruit have the right to set academic policies independently of the academic structure itself?

The question is not simple, for it ultimately reduces to defining the relationship between MIT and the military, with this in mind. The Tech is presenting the background of the issue as well as at position paper of a faculty member who is arguing against the very existence of ROTC at MIT. A similar paper defending ROTC at MIT will be granted equal space in a future issue if someone chooses to submit it.

"The general purpose of the Army ROTC program is to bring young men and women of character and quality intelligent, well-rounded, and mature, and to train them as a potential for service as commissioned officers of the United States Army," began a report from Colonel Marshall Becker, Head of the Department of Military Science, in a report to the Committee on Educational Policy.

"The number of freshmen who sign up each year has been 17.51 and 21.545 are required in Army ROTC. During the fourth year, the students receive a monthly $50.00 compensation until 1915. At present, since 1865 when "Small arms and ammunition" begins a report to the Institute, the portions of the report which is so basic to the freedoms we seek their confidence, and to supervise the student's junior and senior years in developing a more challenging and suitable curricula." According to Professor William Watson, as required by law, the Commander of the naval unit is awarded the full title of professor, while the rest of the teaching staff is given associate professorial status.

The criteria

As required by the Command- er of the naval unit on campus are presented in Professor William Watson's report. The military arguments have been detailed in various memos and conferences.

The Army report previously mentioned discussed some of the benefits and drawbacks the student derives from the ROTC program. Besides being a co- opted officer, rather than a solely private, if drafted, "The student learns the basic ability to make men, to seek their confidence, and to supervise the system of induction which is the foundation of success in any line of work." And "The student is then much pointed out that a large number of students feel that it is an obligation to continue their duty full through to ROTC." As for the nation, the Army report maintains that ROTC "serves the preservation of the citizen-soldier concept which is so basic to the armed forces and the national defense of the United States." It thus describes the professional development of the "General Staff" mystique associated with Germany during the early 20th Century. And the report presented "The continued impact of the high level of educational and scientific and technical expertise so necessary to define the modern world."