Spring Antiwar Offensive

The biggest question in everyone's mind coming back from the November 15 march, was, What do you do for an encore? It was already apparent that President Nixon had every intention of ignoring the whole thing while reassuring the Silent Majority with vague talk about "timetables" for "Vietnamization". The timetable, of course, is still secret, although over 75,000 troops have been withdrawn to date. The rate seems to have slowed recently, however, and even the press has not made public any sort of timetable.

In the meantime, bombing of South Vietnam and adjacent Laos has been intensified. Last fall the New York Times described the situation as similar to "a lame duck with the communists within South Vietnam - for an indefinite period. -- in all likelihood, the amount of tonnage dropped the bombing of Europe by the Allies in World War II."

Military involvement in Laos, except to admit that the New York Times described the saturation bombing of the cities, on many days? What can you do for an encore after Washington's big meeting on this complicated issue. Perhaps the number of observant students who have been motivated to attend. The number of observant students is not offensively small, as no more than 300 were present.

Perhaps the fact that it was only a "discussion" meeting in which no vote was taken discouraged many from attending. The attendance opportunity was extended to non-faculty members to express themselves in a large meeting on this complicated issue. Perhaps everyone present at the conference will be the decision makers.

How to bring this pressure to bear will be the topic before the conference called in Cleveland by the Student Mobilization Committee, which convenes today. It is not clear what strategy will emerge. We hope that the antiwar movement does not make the same mistakes it made last fall.

Violence also seems no alternative. Too few persons are willing to engage in it, and it becomes apparent that the public's attention from Vietnam to "revolutionary rabbles" - which unfortunately are often just that.

Perhaps there is an answer in nonviolent civil disobedience, which has not been tried on a truly massive scale. Suppose everyone went to Washington on a Monday and sat down in the streets? Would the government remove half a million Americans with fire hoses, police dogs, and clubs, while the cameras caught it all? Somehow we doubt it. Suppose it were repeated in many cities, on many days? The technique was called Satyagraha by Gandhi. From the Sanskrit - "insistence on truth". It worked in India, why not here?

In any case, the "Movement" has become an issue in an electoral year, and is often used as a substitute for policy-making. It is of course grass of which one speaks. Who could imagine the violence, the police brutality, the legal non-violent demonstrations, or illegal violent activities. There are other ways, and if people really want to end the war, they should consider using a little imagination in the process.

Concerning this issue. Hopefully not, for this would indicate a degree of polarization on campus rather than any reality. Most likely, the Silent Majority has not tired of the whole question and would prefer that others make the decisions.

Of the possible reasons this is the most ominous. It is surely not to be underestimated that a fact that one takes to be a matter constitutes a political action in itself.

When the faculty votes on the resolutions this fall, the only opportunity to influence the outcome will be through the Student Senate. There will undoubtedly be a full house. The decisions that are reached will affect us all. Let us hope that the decisions reached are those generated by an informed faculty.

The Faculty, MIRV and You

Alumni Reaction

(Editors note: The following are letters received by President Johnson in reaction to the March 16 letter from the students of the President's office.)

Dear President Johnson:

I have just received a copy of your letter to the students of the University and I wish to make several comments.

First, I congratulate you on your decision to expel Mr. Allen. It has been repeatedly urged against the idealistic students for the crimes they committed. And I hope that you will support the enforcement of strict disciplinary action against those students who initiate the use of physical force on campus.

But this brings me to my second point. Why were the special students allowed to stay in the residence hall? When you report, you imply that I was police action was not taken because of the necessity for careful consideration of the cost of such action to the MIT community. Whose "cost of community" consists only of those who have committed acts of violence, and those who have not. In weighing the costs to these two groups separately, rather than weighing the costs to a generalized, unspecified "community", we ask: what is the cost of police action? Is there a substantial price of non-intervention? - the answer is obvious: no costs; and we ask: what is the cost of police action to those in the community who have committed acts of violence? The answer is obvious again: they (Please turn to page 7)