Chomsky misuses facts

To the Editor:

Noam Chomsky’s speech at the March 4th offering of the MIT lecture series “The United States Foreign Policy,” was so ludicrously false, both philosophically and historically, that it was amazing to hear it given before my eyes. His position was that the United States has been using aggression, Soviet and otherwise, as a pretext for pursuing a Jingoistic campaign of repression through the non-communist world. Should America, in response to its own invasion of Afghanistan, and arms to Pakistan? No, said Chomsky. We are all dupes to that country, instead of being used for defense, might be engaged against the one rebellious Baluchi in western Pakistan.

Country A, in other words, would not send arms to morally questioned Country B if Country A, instead of using them against imperialist superpower C, might use them against faction D, who, for identical reasons, despises A and may eventually be in C with A? How absurdly: day after day people were faced with mortal threats posed by the USSR must have sent to it and, immediately, Independence must take precedence over everything else.

Should the United States sell arms to Israel? No, said Chomsky. Why? Oh, well, you see, the Israelis use American weapons to assasinate their compatriots in Lebanon. What’s that you may say? The “is” are more “just” in Lebanon in 73? Never heard of them!

To illustrate how the United States uses its arms against the very people it supposedly supports for militarism and repression, Chomsky quoted a report by reporter Hedrick Smith that appeared in the New York Times shortly after our hostages were seized on November 4th in Tehran. The Policymaker magazine, Hedrick Smith, according to Chomsky, declared that the Iranian situation would pull the United States out of its post-Vietnam reticence and make it possible to carry out plans to unified the CIA, build new missile systems, establish a ring of bases around the Indian Ocean and assemble a 100,000-man rapid deployment force.

So, Chomsky’s article, published on December 2nd, said nothing about new missile systems and reported that new bases around the Indian Ocean were, by order of Defense Secretary Brown, ruled out. Though a rapid deployment force was discussed, nowhere does Chomsky’s figure of “100,000” appear. Carter’s request of $300 million for both hardware and personnel would indicate a much smaller force. “For its intelligence efforts,” Smith writes, “though some members of Congress would like to see President Carter take the lead in lifting some of the Central Intelligence Agency too far.”

No Chomsky lecture, no matter how brief, is complete without at least one quotation taken out of context. The March 4th offering was taken from a New York Times editorial of August 6, 1954 published after a new oil agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. The speaker quoted it from memory as follows: “This will be a lesson to underdeveloped countries with rich resources that they barger with fanatical nationalism.” What Chomsky did not say was that there was discussed the Western powers that they had lessons to learn. The paper continued: “The West, too, must study the lessons of how the world has been done — and before and not after great mistakes have been incurred — of the great forces which now move people everywhere in Asia, Africa, and South America. Partnerships, even more in the future than in the past, must be the relations between the industrialized Western nations and some other countries less industrialized, but rich in raw materials, outside Europe and North America.”

Roger Kolb

Cancel the Senior Class Gift

To The Editor:

My residence in the MIT dorm system has been a source of active concern for and participation in the continuing quality of student life. I consider myself to be one of many “experts”(having been a council member and a Nest House Planning group member) who have routine questions with the dormitories. “The Administration.” My discussion with the “administration” modules reaches new levels each week.

I am one senior who has had enough. I find it difficult to express my rage over recent decisions by “The Administration” regarding both dining and housing. Two examples are:

1) The adoption of a mandatory board program for dormitory residents despite the persistence of overwhelming student opposition.
2) The retention of the $50 “Residence Fee” in dorm households to support the dining program despite the return of a mandate to re-establish the dormitory. These are major issues; I could name many minor issues of concern to all dorms and I am sure that my peers from my dorm days could do the same.

In my opinion “The Administration’s” actions are inadmissible. These actions affect people who shall soon be alumni and whose stake in MIT’s future is every bit as real as that of “The Administration.”

“The Administration” has callously abused our friendship. It has fudged and misused its power and our tolerance of that power. As an alumna, I would not give any money to MIT because it has hurt me personally. However, I would only hurt future students. MIT does not! I strongly suggest the only visible form of action possible by student leadership, I call upon the officers of the Class of 1980 to lead the student body through a symbolic act of protest: Cancel the Senior Class Gift to MIT. Use the money elsewhere, for charity or a cause.

When future classes fail to give, MIT will begin to fail. Thank you.

Mary Phin

Graduating Seniors in Laboratory Medicine

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