Opinion

Senior Essay: preparing for hard times

Jerri-Lynn Scofield

Remember that you'rerequently the most traditional form of a ceremony, MIT is no exception to this rule. When the Class of 1982 gives their final toast at a special gala in Killian Court Tuesday to receive their degrees, they will follow a tradition set by their predecessors graduating classes, yet this year's ceremony will differ from recent ones in one significant way. Although the mit Commencement, which has been the university's president, this year, however, Katharine Graham, published the Tech on Tuesday, will fulfill this role. Although some have questioned the choice of Graham as Commencement speaker at such an innovatively technology institution, a newspaper published by journalists and engineers, she is the ideal choice to address graduates in 1982. In two significant ways, political actions have closed the future for this year's graduates. Since Graham's newspaper lies in the nation's capital, she may be well-prepared to comment on these problems. This year's graduates are entering the job market of an economy in deep recession. Reagan Administration policies have produced the highest post-Depression unemployment rate ever, of about one percent. Fortunately for the class of 1982, the job picture for MIT graduates is not so bleak. Nevertheless, it is a sobering thought to be entering an economy that may be shrinking as much as the Great Depression. And in the Depression, even many engineers and professors lost their jobs.

For those members of the Class of 1982 who choose to continue in school, the situation is not much more promising. Funding for education at any level, is extremely uncertain. The Reagan Administration continues to advocate cutting aid to education significantly for graduate students. The poor economic situation makes individuals and corporations less able to contribute to universities, creating a drain on reserve funds. Both factors contribute to problems in finding an adequate budget for those with jobs in school.

Graham will not be one to promote MIT until one has left the Institution. Graham's presence at this year's Commencement exercises may help bring a larger world perspective to MIT. As this year's graduates prepare to enter the protective shelter of MIT, they will be entering a difficult environment. It is a popular to complain about MIT while one is there; however, once graduates may be even more error prone than those that MIT can conjure up.

The Tech

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Katz's column distorted facts

To the Editor,

Katz's quest column in the May 1 issue believes that the Soviet's intrusion distortion of fact and a number of questionable judgments. Katz's column cites an article by Robert D. Hofstadter that has standing policy of "threatening a nuclear first strike in response to an unfounded Soviet Aggression in Europe." A "first strike" in the jargon of nuclear war normally means a strike directed at the enemy homeland in order to destroy their strategic nuclear weapons before they can be used. The U.S. has avoided acquiring the capability to make such an attack and makes no secret of it. It does threaten to use tactical nuclear weapons in Europe against attacking Soviet troops. The weapons would most likely, on West German soil, the West German government supports the policy because no one wants to build conventional forces capable of defeating the Warsaw Pact.

Katz goes on to suggest that U.S. policy is less a deterrent to Soviet conventional aggression than a potential cover for Western adventurism. In fact, Mr. Katz's column's leadership have the best possible evidence that the U.S. is not interested in adventurism. After WWII our exclusive possession of nuclear power made it possible for us to prohibit others from developing them, enforce our prohibition by on-site inspection and establish a world empire. Unlike Mr. Katz, the United States, based on land-based missiles are nearly all liquid fueled. Since they cannot be readily converted to the type of fueling system that the U.S. has, it is not possible for us to prohibit our development of new, more powerful nuclear weapons.

However, McNamara, et al, do make a sound argument for retrenchment, not rejection, of the jargon of nuclear war. The jargon of nuclear war of tactical nuclear weapons. Thanks to growing Soviet nuclear strength, we will be compelled to be believed by Russians, who may attack, while it provides the Europeans with an escape for relied on us to defend. If we reinforce first line, we can contribute little to European defense: our army is too small, too ill-trained and too far away to rely on themselves, and given time and will, the West Europeans could probably build forces capable of deterring any aggressor. Of course, that has been true the last two times Western Europe has served in war. Further, a European defense would almost certainly include our bases in Western Europe.

All this is speculation on an unknown future. Past predictions about war and peace have been wrong. The only certainty is that if we come to physics, it is a powerful weapon capable of eliminating all opposition. Of course, that has been true the last two times Western Europe has served in war. Further, a European defense would almost certainly include our bases in Western Europe.

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