To the Editor:

I would like to respond to an opinion of April 30, and to the 15 MIT protestors of the Spacefair '85 conference session on space military. Spacefair '85 was not designed nor did it act as a platform for promoting the military use of space.

The decision to include the Military session as one of fifteen career sessions was not taken lightly — rather, a number of discussions among the Spacefair Executive Board concluded that the conference would fairly present a cross-section of all space related careers. None of the organizations involved with Spacefair are pro-military. It is because the military hires more space related employees than the majority of other fields that we thought it might be logical to present the session at a conference focused on "Careers from Space."

I will not pretend to lecture you on the benefits of spy satellites for superpower stability, and personally, I do sympathize with the concern of putting offensive military weapons in space — but the actions of the protestors on April 15th were disgusting, immature and downright stupid!

Profanities shouted out during the presentation were plainly rude, while defacing MIT property and injuring an invited guest speaker is an embarrassment to every student at the Institute. Why didn't those concerned wait for the Q & A period to ask questions and make a point in a somewhat intelligent manner? Was the drive solely emotional without thought? I hope not!

A poll taken at MIT by the Spacefair staff showed that 75% of the students interviewed were interested in a space related career. The organizers of Spacefair worked hard for a year, without compensation to present this conference for your benefit. I don't expect a thank you, but I do expect that you'd have the decency and the intelligence to think before acting. By stating that Spacefair was significantly oriented towards military applications you either didn't bother to attend the conference or didn't take the time to get your facts straight.

The point made about Spacefair Sponsors being military contractors is by far no great surprise since almost all major aerospace corporations take on military contracts. After soliciting over 150 corporations to raise the $25,000 required to fly in the 45 speakers, we did not have the luxury of turning any donors away. I hope it isn't necessary to state that the companies supporting the Spacefair Conference are also, by no coincidence, the leading contractors in the peaceful, non-military space program.

In closing I'd like to say that Spacefair was highly successful, attracting the highest quality speakers, and students from across the East Coast. I'd also like to say thank you to the student volunteers and administration which made it work.

Peter H. Diamandis G
Spacefair Chairman

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