Overt violence worst

To the Editor:

Lukas Ruecker's guest column ("Reagan played Rambo in hijacker interception," Oct. 29) was philosophically lacking on several major issues. His main points seemed to be that the United States had violated the concept of international law by sending Navy jets (not the Air Force, by the way) to intercept a terrorist hijacking. The hijackers to a "tribal war" in the Middle East.

The exact motivations surround- the hijacking remain veiled, but it is definitely suspected that the crime was premeditated and not a spontaneous decision by the hijackers. From the beginning of the ordeal, it was clear that the act was directed primarily against the Americans on board. This was shown by the more brutal treatment of the eleven American passengers and the eventual selection of an American for execution. Leo Klinghoffer, an American for execution.

The collapse of yet another Italian government cannot be blamed on the United States, considering the fact that Italy has had nearly forty governments since the end of World War II, each with a lifespan of two or three years. Italy and Egypt have never been a strong ally of America.

The United States simply pur- sued its avowed track of foreign policy, and if either Italy or Egypt looked too weak, as Luskin claims, it was because they both behaved foolishly in dealing with the issue of international terror- ism.

Daniel Pugh '88

Firm stand is terrorism's only deterrent

To the Editor:

There are several points in Lu- kas Ruecker's column ("Reagan played Rambo in hijacker interception," Oct. 29) with which I disagree. My interpretation of the crust of his statement is that the impression the Egyptian airman was left was that the United States does not have any intention of defending itself—just as all travelers should defend themselves. Marilyn, Leon's wife, later claimed that on the orders of the order on Oct. 25, reported by The New York Times. She hypothesized, as is essential, that all of us become soldiers in the battle against terrorism.

Under anybody's standard of international law, an overt act of violence is more serious than a threat of violence. Thus, the murder of Leon Klinghoffer, an American, is the most serious crime of this affair. The hijacking comes next, as a threat of vio- lence, again being directed primarily against Americans. De- spite the fact that the cruise ship hijacking was the main victims of the hijacking, and not a threat to primary jurisdiction over the crime and the trial of the ter- rorists, and was perfectly justified in bringing them to justice.

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Daniel Pugh '88

James Ionson is far from reassuring

To the Editor:

I have grave doubts about the feasibility of a Strategic Defense System (SDS), and about the merits and influences of the Strategic Defense Initiative as a fund- ing vehicle for academic research.

I therefore eagerly attended Dr. James Ionson's talk on the topic of "Superweapons: The Threat of Risk" on Tuesday, Nov. 17. His words were the princi- pal reason for my attending Dr. Ionson's talk, but after listening to his arguments, I was completely dis-veled.

James O'Toole '91

David Sullivan explains honor

To the Editor:

I would like to take this oppor- tunity to respond to Peter Wendy's letter in The Tech ("Citic council candidate is using untruthful MIT credentials,"). Nov. 11, I would like to say that I am proud to have been elected as a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and I regard that as a high honor. On that ba- sis the statement in question is entirely correct.

Andrew Chang '87

Pao's abilities in this particular area of elementary mathematics. Dr. Ionson stated that if the fea- ture stage of an SDS had a 95 per- cent chance of destroying individ- ual warheads, and was presented with 17 such warheads, there would be an 80 percent chance that only one warhead would reach its target. How this figure of 95 percent was obtained is a mystery to me. It seems to me that the chance of destroying all 17 warheads is exactly (0.95)17. Those chances, being 0.418 and 0.274 respectively, the chance that only one air- warhead is in 99.6 percent, not 82 percent, not 95 percent. An inter- esting discrepancy, to say the least.

Another way to interpret these numbers is that even with an SDS composed of multiple layers (each of 90 percent effective- ness) there is a 51.2 percent chance that at least one warhead will strike an enemy "on the 1400 missiles. Reassuring, isn't it?"