Never restrict research

To the Editor:
A long time ago, Thomas J. Watson, Chairman of the Board of IBM said, "There is a world market for about five computers." The vast majority of people at MIT are skeptical of such technological pessimism. Today, however, some people are making a similar type of statement: "SDI will never work." Then these same people use this pessimism to justify limitations on SDI research. We oppose any limitations on unclassified research at MIT.

The freedom of the faculty and students to research new concepts is and always has been a cornerstone of academia. If we restrict SDI research, the next logical step is to restrict any other controversial research such as artificial intelligence. Academic ownership is a hallmark of a totalitarian society. The opportunity to do any research area of many freedoms we enjoy in our American society. They are worth defending. Anything that increases the security of this society while respecting the rights of the individual is fundamentally good. SDI is pure defense. Its implementation would not supply the US with a first strike capability. Its only purpose is to destroy ICBMs. It cannot be used to kill people. The accuracy of Soviet ICBMs is increasing and they will soon be able to threaten the US with a first strike. Soviet planning for such an attack would be complicated by an even more effective SDI system - so complicated that they could not depend on destroying all of our retaliatory capability.

It is important to stress that our primary intention in writing this letter is to dissuade MIT faculty and students from restricting SDI or any other research. Such closed-mindedness presents a danger to US advancement and competence in all technological areas. It also may endanger our security. America was built on the pioneering spirit and it is imperative that we not lose the edge.

Mark Kelley '88
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The national press and media have allotted an enormous amount of coverage to the problems of South Africa in the last few months. Race riots and deaths have carried the headlines daily. Groups have jumped to condemn any business which dares to deal with South Africa. apartheid could become another of a string of issues which dominate the news briefly and then fade into obscurity. Yet in most cases the underlying problems remain essentially unchanged. It was one such situation between 1979 and 1981. After the Iranians released the American hostages, the press stopped coverage of the still volatile situation in the country. Even during the early years of the Carter administration, the human rights condition in Iran was poor. Amnesty International had exposed the terrible conditions there for years, including the antics committed by the Soviet, the Iranian secret police. Early in his first term, Carter sent a Christmas in Tehran to encourage a better human rights record. He was the first president to try to deal with the problems. Despite these human rights difficulties, Carter called Iran an "island of peace" in the Middle East region because there were no wars going on. That was 1979.

In early 1979, the Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran to spearhead a religious revolution. After 15 years of exile in France, he returned to his native land. He vowed to remove the communist leaders of the Shah, and to introduce an Islamic state. When the hostage crisis ended, the Ayatollah was able to the well being of the US and the world. Moreover, all members have equal voting rights and all members who are full time MIT students are eligible for office positions.

Firstly, the purely technical issue of membership: Club Latino does NOT bar members on the basis of ethnic origin. This may also apply to Latin-Americans. Article III of our constitution and bylaws, "All American citizens for 444 days while the rest is history: militant Moslems captured the US Capitol.

We would like to make two remarks regarding our membership policy in case the article by Mary Condelle and Harold Stern ("GSC reviews activity policy," Nov. 19) leaves a wrong impression with your readers.

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