Guest Column/Paul E. Gray

School should not act politically on research

The issue of research funded by the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is a matter of considerable discussion and debate within the research universities in the United States. Indeed, the national debate on how the SDI issue should be legislated and illuminated by discussion and reaction by discussion within the universities.

Some faculty are opposed to the program on the grounds of its technical and political implications, and are choosing not to accept funding from the SDI. As individuals, they have every right to make that choice. Having said that, I must also say that it would be wrong for a university — as an institution — to proscribe certain research sponsors on grounds which are essentially political in nature if the research is proposed by a member of the faculty and if it is in accord with generally accepted university policies and practices. There should be no political tests for research.

Obviously there are situations in which it is appropriate for a university to speak with an institutional voice on public issues. The test is whether the issue at hand has a clear, unambiguous, and direct connection to the essential activities of the university. Every time a university moves beyond speaking publicly on its behalf, it would be to endorse institutional policy in the context of the SDI debate — it involves political treatment of its own interests and the technical viability of the institution whose views are different.

The dual missions of the research university are education and research, both conducted in an environment which encourages the free exchange of ideas and opinions. Our continued effectiveness as educational institutions, as focal points for research and as places in which the views of all members of the community are afforded respect and credibility, depends on our holding fast to the principles of open expression. (Please turn to page 5)

Column/James F. Kirk

Terrorists dominated 1985

Prepare yourself for another of these year in retrospect articles. The chill winds of January keep writers inside, hunched over type- writers and maps of hot tea.

The year ended with a bang as it was, with terrorists using machine guns and grenades to sound a macabre counterpart to the airport Christmas background music. These acts came in the same year that the Palestine Liberation Organization fighters gained recognition for the shooting death of an elderly paraplegic. Americans are slowly forming their own conception of Middle Eastern values; it wears the face of Charles Manson, however, not the face of Sylvester Stallone.

This year we discovered what the drought has been doing to Ethiopians. Bronx cheers were heaped on any who dared to point out such dire developments. The year also visited on the Ukrainians in the early 1950s, China in the late 1950s and Kampuchea in middle 1970s. Mother Nature has scant respect for Heri Marx and Comrade Lenin.

American imperialism, of course, is never still when such an opportunity arises. We turned our backs on the government in Addis Ababa. Instead, we urged the gunsm and ammunition they needed to forward the revolution and to put down the rebels. This is the velvet glove that hides the lead fist of imperialism.

There were some bright spots in 1985. For one, Heri Marx is on the way to being declared person of the year in China. Deng took a look at the open marketplace and the result was a 20% increase in his expected lifespan. The year saw from an otherwise unwanted world the (enigmatic) insertion of White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan's $10 million plus shoe into his own.

Another bright spot was Ronal Reagan's abstention from giving away the store when he finally met Mikhail Gorbachev at the Geneva summit. The result was saved from an otherwise uneventful

Column/V. Michael Bove

Parker's lot not a happy one

Parking around MIT, we are told, is an impossible proposition. Yet those of us who, for various reasons, rely upon cars for transportation soon discover the regular rhythms that campus traffic follows; one quickly develops a sufficiently acute feel for the situation to know instinctively when he should park his car and when he would be wise to continue cruising around, wasting time, perhaps, but at least not ingiting a backfire in the minds of his fellow sufferers. The river side of Memorial Drive (on which it is illegal to park before 10 am) has been packed solid at 9 instead of its usual 9:30. My secret, last-ditch, when-all-else-fails parking space is usually taken. Some poor soul, no doubt, having reached a hitherto unattained state of frustration, left his Fiat in Lobby 10.

It was while postulating a relationship between my observations and the report of C. B. Parker that I encountered my Harvard friend, self-styled follower of obscure science, Dr. Kendall L. Pihey IV, hopping out of a Saab on Ames Street. Stephan Bove isn't quite his real name, but self-styled eetaries are there to be keyPressed.

"Pihey! What brings you here? You aren't interested this term, are you?"

"No, I just did some shopping out in the "burbs" (or in catching the Red Line back to Cambridge Square. Like my new car? Just got it two weeks ago. Opticoptics, I own, had only 30,000 miles on it."

"Wait a minute! You bought a car but you're learning on it. Ames Street and taking the T back to Harvard?"

"Well, sure. Have you ever tried to park near Harvard? It's faster to leave it here and take the subway than to cruise around the Square in heavy traffic three or four times till something opens up."

"You ALWAYS leave it on Ames Street?"

"Oh, no. Saturdays and Sundays I put it in that garage on Vassar Street. It's safer there, and it stays cleaner, too."

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