**Soldier seeks conscientious objector status**

To the Editor:

Daniel Cobos, a US Air Force sergeant applying for conscientious objector status in response to his missions in Central America, was the prime speaker at the MIT Committee on Central America's evening of lectures and discussion. He spoke to overflow crowds in 32-100 last Thursday. "Assuming locked me in the eye and said, 'So you are the one who bombed my country.'" So Cobos recounted as he told of his political evolution in the Air Force. In fact, Cobos was not in the US planes that regularly bomb the Salvadoran countryside. His job was to sit in American spy planes overheading the region.

For legal reasons he could not comment on his actual duties in the Air Force, but Todd Little, of Citizen-Soldier, gave the idea. Every spark that can be seen on the radio from Nicaragua was transmitted, stored, and analyzed by the intelligence community. Thus the intelligence community knew every move the Nicaraguan guerrillas were making during the Congress hearings on "invisibility in the United States." Cobos said he was instructed to follow the dictates of conscience.

Cobos also witnessed the "racism, greed, and corruption" of many US soldiers. His job was to sit in American spy planes overheading the region. Upon returning to the States, further contacts with refugees led to much soul searching. He realized that the same Salvadoran officers who tortured his refugee friends were trained at Ft. Benning, Georgia. At night came dreams of trees of blood.

Clearly he could not continue missions that were an integral part of US-backed bloodshed in the region. But how can an active-duty serviceman refuse his assignment? Finally, with the help of Citizen-Soldier, an organization that counsels military personnel, he filed for conscientious objector status.

It was a brave step, resulting in an Air Force investigation and a guard that accompanies him everywhere, even to the bathroom. Military justice is designed to discourage action such as his, but Cobos is confident that he will eventually be accepted as a conscientious objector.

Due to illness, Professor Noam Chomsky was unable to speak as scheduled, but will appear later in the term. On Tuesday, a professor from the Harvard Human Rights Program, spoke about recent developments in El Salvador. He warned that despite the country's invasions in the United States, Salvadorans continue to suffer with impunity.

While in El Salvador this summer, Tobin told us that the government affiliated "death squad" appears to remain in place. Political murders are more selective than during the massacres of 1979-1982, but the Right continues its violence. Despite an annual half billion dollars in US aid, the Duarte government is isolated and increasingly besieged. Tobin expects the superficial stability of the present "low intensity" guerrilla war to disappear at any time. Anything can happen, from another massacre to an escalating US involvement (including possible introduction of US airpower).

The final speaker, Charlie Cather, ended on an optimistic note. He expressed hope for the success of the present "Arabian Peace Plan," endorsed by all Central American governments.

To demonstrate its sincerity, the Sandinista government of Nicaragua announced its most vocal internal opponent, Archbishop Obando y Bravo, to the presidency of the national Reconciliation Commission. After a decade of war, a shadow of hope still remains.

Barry Klinger

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**COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS AT MIT**

**Grants Program 1987-88**

The Grants Program of the Council for the Arts at MIT is now accepting applications for its first deadline of this academic year, **Friday, October 2.**

The Grants Program has been established to promote cultural activity at MIT by providing financial and technical support to arts projects in all disciplines. The Program welcomes proposals which allow members of the MIT community to experiment, participate in, and learn about the arts. Typical projects include the creation of new work, performances, exhibitions, readings, and film/video screenings. Grant awards may range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. Applications submitted by students require primary consideration in the review process. Previous experience in the arts is not a requirement for funding.

Other deadline dates for 1987-88 are: **November 19, February 11 and April 14.**

Please stop by the Council office (E15-205, Wiener Building) for application forms and Grants Guidelines brochures, or call Mark Palmgren for more information (x3-4003.)

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