feedback

CIA represents US interventionism

To the Editor:

Do MIT graduates have the honesty, superior intellectual ability, and unimpeachable integrity to voluntarily oversee those democratic governments? I was quite disturbed to see this thesis seriously asked in the October 20 issue of The Tech. It appeared in an advertisement for the Central Intelligence Agency. Ironically, the ad was located next to an article about US intervention in Nicaragua ("Historical drama meets stark reality in Nicaragua").

I found the following facts by looking up "CIA" in a textbook on American foreign policy:

- Faced with the elimination of the banana trade and the prospect of having to come out of the banana market in Guatemala, the United Fruit Co. complained to the Eisenhower administration about "communism" in Guatemala. In response, the CIA overthrew the government in 1954, replaced it with a coup that hardened conditions and led to many bloody years for the people of Guatemala.

- In 1964 the people of Chile democratically elected Salvador Allende as their president. He was destitute $3 million in aid which the CIA funneled to the opposing candidate. Nixon saw Allende only as a Marxist who did not represent the interest of the United States, particularly the giant corporation of ITT, which offered the CIA $1 million to defeat Allende.

Following Allende's popular rejection in 1973, the CIA did succeed in ousting Allende by bombarding his Presidential Palace, killing him. The new military regime of General Augusto Pinochet seized control of the universities, disbanded political parties, and suppressed the press. Pinochet ended about 100 years of democracy in Chile, and is still in power, violating human rights right and left.

I personally had assumed that students as well-educated as those at MIT would be familiar with such atrocities of US foreign policy. I began discussing them with my friends. My disappointment with the gaps in Americans' knowledge of their own history has compelled me to write.

The injustice did not start with, nor has it ever been limited to the CIA; it has become an integral part of American foreign policy. America's worst enemies are Iran and Uganda to South Korea and the Philippines. America's foreign policy has often been to support governments that have become known for brutal treatment of dissidents.

From Vietnam to Nicaragua and countless other nations of the Third World about which the American public knows very little, agents of the United States have made life very unpleasant, preventing the success of alternative economies.

In the examples I have listed it is quite clear that America is intent on pursuing not liberty in foreign countries, but the interests of US corporations and the expansion of US political and military power.

The scariest thing is that we have not outgrown our old ways. The Reagan Administration is currently sponsoring an aid package in Central America which provoked a representative from the human rights groups Americas Watch to remark, "We're getting back the busines of helping governments crack down on their own people."

The worst thing that we can do about such seemingly big problems, however, is to give up hope, for by doing so we give the foot of human rights a free hand. Ordinary people like you and me can change the world and fight the oppression symbolized by the CIA. The public outcry during the Vietnam War was notable in preventing policymakers from escalating hostilities to the point of using nuclear weapons.

Clearly student demonstrations have saved countless numbers of lives, everywhere. So I urge you to educate yourself, join support political groups, demonstrate, and above all, care. But by all means don't let your years at this most influential of American institutions pass you by without enriching your concern for the preservation of peace and freedom throughout the world.

Michael J. Mills '89

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Senate persecuted Bork unfairly

To the Editor:

I am concerned about the reason behind the rejection of Judge Robert Bork from the United States Supreme Court.

The most common reason given for rejecting Bork, it seems, was the belief that he is an "extremist" who was "outside the mainstream of American judicial thought." See, Edward Kennedy (D-MA) led the attack on Bork with his statement that "Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions [and] blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters."

It is not necessarily true that Bork's confirmation would have the effect of making abortions illegal. It is not clear how he would vote on the issues, that is, whether he would vote according to the precedent of Roe v. Wade or according to his personal view that the Constitution does not guarantee the right to abortion.

The reason for Kennedy's remark about Bork's extremism is that Bork, in 1963, wrote an article criticizing the section of the Civil Rights Act which would prohibit Watson's owners from refusing to employ black people or admit them to their establishments.

Bork opposed the law because, he reasoned, it violated the property rights of business owners and was based on the idea that a person has the right to be served or employed by someone, whether or not the latter wishes to employ or serve him.

Bork's view is certainly rational, and it is not evidence that one socially supports racial segregation. Kennedy's statement implied that since Bork opposed the law, he supports segregation. In my judgement, Kennedy committed an act of intellectual dishonesty.

Bork later changed his position on this issue. In fact, he has changed a number of his positions. To me, this shows that he is a dynamic thinker who is not afraid to change his views if he thinks he has been wrong.

The most frightening aspect of the campaign against Bork was the criticism of him as an extremist who is outside the mainstream of judicial thought. In other words, only a narrow range of ideological positions is acceptable; anything outside this range is not.

Christopher, Galileo, and Thomas Jefferson were all outside the mainstream of thought of their time, but are not regarded as evil. Now, E. J. A. R. said that the concept of a "mainstream" might be appropriate to a dictatorship, but not to a free society. But many senators rejected Bork, a highly intelligent, qualified judge, as being outside this mainstream. They won this time. It is my hope that they will not win next time.

Alan Maceri '88

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