Letters to the Editor

Freedoms require protection

I am astonished at Craig Abernathy's misinformed attempt to pass off incredibly unfair and shameless rhetoric as fact. "[MFT's] focus on education lacks compassion with aims of ROTC," April 3.

I will note first that I am a professional naval officer who has served my country for the past seven years and am proud of it. It is a privilege to defend the United States and its constitu- tion, but this, I do not expect any special award for so doing. Nor do I have any apologies for anyone in my profession. I have no burning desire to die for my country, but I am prepared to do so if it is necessary to defend freedom against tyranny and op- pression.

Abernathy's casual statements about the public good reflect a selfish, shallow, and shortsighted view of many people in the United States today that freedom is theirs by birth. Sorry to inter- fere with the world history books, but history shows that freedom must be fought for, that single-minded pursuit of the despots and egomaniacs in this world who would like noth- ing better than to sacrifice your or my life for their own selfish purposes.

Mr. Abernathy, see if you can get the people of France, Norway, or the Philippines who were con- quered in World War II to agree with you that the Allied military personnel who risked and often lost their lives to liberate them were not committed to the public good.

Since you brought it up, what do you suppose the people of Panama really think about the US servicemen who gave their lives to rid their nation of an oppressive despot, who refused to recognize the results of legitim- ate elections and terrorized all who opposed him? Is selfishness and unchecked desire to destroy human life that motivates soldiers who regularly depart on six month deployments near the heart of the military personnel who spend up to a year in Germany and South Korea? Cer- tainly it is not the low pay and extended family separations that are the focus of this debate.

While I would be the last one to restrict the responsible mis- sions committed by Oliver L. North and John M. Poindexter, it is extremely superficial and un- fair to judge the entire US mili- tary and its recent changes by their mo- rality. Do the members of the medical professions still serve the public good even though some doctors are incompetent? Of course they do.

Certainly, the United States has learned some painful lessons about the limits of military force, but let us not forget that it is the non-military executive branch of government and not military offi- cers that dictates when and where combat forces will be used.

Finally, Abernathy claims in- compatibility between an educa- tion environment and the goals of the US military, but makes no attempt to let us in on just what he perceives those goals to be. Let us be clear about this, the goal of a nation's armed forces, should be first to deter aggres- sion against that country. Failing that, the next goal better be to win if committed to conflict since anything less would be a disas- ter for whatever nation's resources.

If my freedom is at risk, I would rather be defended by a group of professionals who spe- cialize in "destroying human life" than excellent chefs, plumbers, Ralph T. Soule

Minority scholarships do not discriminate

I was very offended by Marc S. Block '90's letter "Discrimina- tory policies prevalent within the Institution because of its singling out of the National As- sociation for the Advancement of Colored People as a "discrimina- tory scholarship sponsor." The scholarship he was refer- ring to was the United Negro College Fund. As a student of color on campus, I feel his letter demonstrated the ignorance that exists here at MIT. He used this example to make a point that if scholarships geared toward black students exist here at MIT, then the Reserve Officers' Training Corps should not be singled out for its discriminatory policy against homosexuals.

First of all, no black student on this campus is supported by the United Negro College Fund. They do not qualify for it. In or- der to receive this scholarship, the student must attend a pre- dominantly black institution. This is a discriminatory consid- eration that black colleges have far less tax resources than their white counterparts. Scholarship programs like the United Negro College Fund only help ease out the financial aid gap between white and black schools.

Secondly, any student, regard- less of race, religion, or heritage, is qualified for a scholarship from the United Negro College Fund. If only help eases out the financial aid gap between white and black schools.

Thirdly, scholarships directed toward disadvantaged groups of people give them equal opportu- nity with the majority. Certain groups of people have been, and still are, discriminated against. Because of this discrimination, they do not receive certain schol- arships. We do not get into certain schools because, though they are qualified, they do not meet its quota of a particular race, or they may not have the finances.

Therefore, any programs or scholarships that single out groups of people only serve to bring these groups on an equal footing with their white peers at white schools. Similarly, if a white student attends a black college, they are offered special scholarships and privileges like the ones offered to people of color on predominantly white cam- puses. So, in reference to ROTC, it is quite different to help out a minority group on campus than to directly suppress a specific group such as the gay commu- nity.

Marc Block's analogy of the United Negro College Fund to ROTC's discrimination policy, on several counts, is inaccurate. I would rather be defended by a group of professionals who specialize in "destroying human life" than efficient chefs, plumbers and their like.

Johanna Hardy '93

Terrorist attack on Islamic Center threatens constitutional freedoms

I am writing to express my grave concern and outrage at the recent attack on the Islamic Cen- ter of New England in Quincy, MA, on March 30, 1990. When America is in- creasingly concerned aboutfighting ter- rorism abroad, acts of ter- rorism are occurring right here in the United States.

The arson at the Islamic Cen- ter represents a violent inter- national that thermostrates just Mus- lims, but also the citizens of this country. We all must guard against this free expres- sion of our own beliefs and religion. Moreover, it was no co- incidence that the attack oc- curred on the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday at the time of the Muslim youth, Ramadan. Coming at a time of heightened sensitiv- ities, the assault was meant to in- fringe the greatest peace and justice for its people. The attack occurred on the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday at the time of the Muslim youth, Ramadan. Coming at a time of heightened sensitiv- ities, the assault was meant to in- fringe the greatest peace and

damage. A Boston television station, WCVB Channel 5, reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had prior knowledge of ter- rorist threats against Muslim places of worship. Yet this infor- mation was not communicated to the local police department.

The arson at Quincy was not the first occurrence of an attack on places of worship. In Massa- chusetts alone, over a dozen churches, synagogues, and mosques have been vandalized in recent months. If religious re- sistance and discrimination is to be eliminated, and freedom to worship guaranteed, then it is im- portant that such incidents be condemned and thoroughly inves- tigated by law enforcement agencies.

Vigal All '85

Opinion