By Jerri-Lynn Scofield

Dr. George Zay Kerrworth, former President Reagan's science advisor and director of the Executive Office of Science and Technology, discusses the present and future of science funding at Los Alamos National Laboratories.

Q: I'd like to begin by saying that you're assuming that there has been a problem with STAR, perhaps a perception problem, but also with the NSF. What do you think is the major problem? And how do you see the role of the administration in solving that problem?

A: First of all, I don't believe that there has been a problem with STAR. The reason I say that is because you'll find that MIT has a very disproportionate share of the Federal science and technology dollars. We have a very large program and we are very sensitive to the fact that there are many other major institutions that we support that have smaller programs.

Q: You seem to be saying that the Federal government's role in funding science and technology is in some way different from that of other countries. Can you explain what you mean by that?

A: I think the dominant role is not the federal role, but the role of the educational system. We recognize the magnitude of the manpower problem. That does not mean to say we wish to emulate the Soviet Union or Japan, but we look at it in the needs of our own industry and our own defense. And we are very much trying to stimulate action in the private sector, and we are very sensitive to the fact that there will be a major federal role. But where we're really doing this work is with the private sector.

Q: So, you seem to be saying that the Federal government has a role to play in stimulating science and technology. When comes at an institution like MIT for an undergraduate next year are approaching $14,000 — those cost have risen greatly in the last several years, and I feel, because the Federal government has eliminated an increase in funding undergraduate education in engineering or science, rather than a declining one?

A: I think the dominant role is not the federal role, but I don't wish to eliminate realization of the situation. The Federal government must be in a position of meeting those needs that cannot be met through the private sector, that cannot be met by any other way. What we are saying right now is to develop mechanisms that will lead the longest, best potential for stimulating effective in stimulating training in science and engineering, I right re- mind you that supporting graduate education develops teachers, who, in turn, enhance the undergraduate level of training. And that's what we definitely do need a real responsibility. But I don't do it, by the way, $14,000 — that's a lot of money. But you might remember something: I look forward to the time when technology is in the needs of our own industry and our own defense, for example. And we are very much trying to stimulate action in the private sector, and we are very sensitive to the fact that there will be a major federal role. But where we're really doing this work is with the private sector.

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