NSA monitors MIT

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According to Dr. Louis Menand III, a member of the committee and special assistant to the provost, MIT received one or two letters annually in past years, he said.

The State Department is attempting to control export of technology by monitoring Chinese students in the United States, Menand speculated. He said he was worried the government may recommend certain students be removed from specific areas of research.

The information committee reported that approximately one third of the graduate students in major US universities are not American citizens. "I think it's very short-sighted to prohibit these people from doing research," commented Dertouzos.

"The government wishes to protect information which it deems vital to the national security of the United States...[so] where that research is clearly classified, that work should not be done on campus," he recommended.

Qualified research at MIT has been hampered since 1966 to offer campus work at the Lincoln Laboratory and the Instrumentation Laboratory - now the independent Charles Stark Draper Laboratory.

Five university presidents -- including MIT President Paul E. Volcker -- wrote a letter to government leaders Feb 27, 1981, expressing concern over government regulations which could restrict "the flow of information among scientists and engineers.

The committee's report reaffirmed the presidents' concerns and suggested voluntary submission of sensitive research to the government. There should be continuous communication between MIT and government agencies, the report concluded, to establish the criteria for such controls.

President Francis E. Low established the committee in October 1980 to "identify major issues and questions related to the changing nature of information" and to provide recommendations to the MIT community on these issues.

Dertouzos predicts "the information revolution will affect mankind more importantly than the industrial revolution."

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