

81-7,264

From the People Who Brought You Vietnam . . .

The Cambridge Project

Quietly and with little fanfare, the Pentagon, Harvard University, and MIT are in the process of setting up a computerized foreign policy joint-operations center in Cambridge. To be known as the "Cambridge Project," it will provide, according to the informative brochure issued by the Defense Department, a vastly more convenient and direct computer hook-up between Harvard-MIT social scientists and the crisis-managers in Washington who produced and directed such earlier "hits" as Guatemala, Greece, and - lest we forget - Vietnam.

The Cambridge Project, already approved for MIT and now proposed for Harvard, involves \$7.6 million in funds from the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) over a 7-year period. The plan is to link the MIT computer with several similar computers at places like the Stanford Research Institute and RAND Corporation and about 15 other universities, including - if approved - a console at Harvard. A terminal in the Pentagon will give the military crisis-managers a direct tie-in. An additional possibility is that professors and businessmen with sufficient cash and prestige may be able to purchase their very own consoles - for office or home.

For several years social scientists at MIT and Harvard and other universities have been collecting countless (and until now probably useless) volumes of data on movements for social change around the world. This contract will provide the funds to develop the computer "software" - programs and techniques - which will yield quick, reliable information on how people in any given village anywhere are affected by a number of social variables - mass media, education, their "distressing" living conditions, etc. These data will now be made instantly accessible to the Pentagon via computer link-up.

Why is the Defense Department Interested in the Cambridge Project?

The first university program is the Cambridge Project which seeks to provide tools needed to determine trend and interaction effects in complex DOD systems. System examples include designing hardware for effective human operation, training and educating personnel, organizing manpower, and allocating resources. We have more than enough data, but we lack tools to enable us to extract patterns and raw inferences from them. The work takes advantage of existing ARPA-funded interactive computing capability at MIT and will have wide participation by MIT and Harvard scientists.

(Cong. Rec., 8/12/69)

Translated into English, this means that simple brute force is no longer adequate to deal with the innumerable "threats" from around the Third World, as millions of tons of bombs in Vietnam eloquently demonstrate. Guns no longer suffice, they must have usable ideas. And who better than our revered professors to give them those ideas?

Most important, at what point do those ideas become converted into action? To cite an overused, but illustrious, example, can the average Harvard student discern the point at which Prof. Huntington's "research" on South Vietnamese politics magically becomes "action" (trips to Vietnam on government funds, advice to same, writing a "constitution" for Thieu and Ky) ??? The IBM 7094

Cambridge Project computer at MIT would effectively transform ideas (data on peasants, political structures, loyalty values) directly into usable military intelligence, thereby further blurring the distinction between Cambridge and Washington. The Cambridge Project will help make a brand-new Vietnam possible in Latin America, Africa, or some other, unbombed, portion of Asia.

Should You and I Be Worried?..... To The Point of Action?

The Cambridge Project would provide instant information for the Pentagon to suppress peasant uprisings in Latin America, as the CIA did to Ché in Bolivia; it would give to the military fingertip control over the sort of political expertise necessary to manipulate the political systems of other nations, as Prof. Huntington does right now in South Vietnam, but without the aid of a direct computer tie-in.

The Cambridge Project would, in fact, be a highly sophisticated weapon in the foreign-and domestic-policy arsenal and thus indispensable aid for the continuation of 20 years' American hegemony (imperialism for short) in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Iran, and elsewhere.

What to do?

In this case, appeals to "academic freedom"—the sacred right of the mandarin-intellectual-bureaucrat-professor to do "his thing"—are totally beside the point. Academic freedom cannot be a cover-up for murder. In reality, the Cambridge Project is a straightforward, politically committed, and integral part of the American government.

The project is nothing less than a flimsily disguised license to kill for the government; and the participation of academics in it (even if they do not literally push the button or pull the trigger) is absolutely reprehensible. They become, in effect, paid murderers.

Equally important, the Cambridge Project more clearly places the universities in collusion with the practice and goals of American foreign policy. Vietnam is hardly an extraordinary exception, and we can certainly look forward to more of the same in the future. The passive acceptance of the Cambridge Project would, then, make all of us willing and conscious accomplices to still more horror.

Can there be any other conclusion? The Huntingtons, the Pools, the Popkins have long since passed from thought to action. We must do the same. The Cambridge Project must be stopped dead in its tracks at Harvard and reversed at MIT, before our honorable professors are given the opportunity to program new mass murders, 5,000 miles away, by remote-control computer. *There is still time to stop it.*



The good is evil's last invention. Thus
The maker of catastrophe invents the eye
And through the eye equates ten thousand deaths
With a single well-tempered apricot, or, say,
An egg-plant of good air...

Wallace
Stevens,
"Extracts
From
Addresses
to the
Academy
of Fine
Ideas"



—Jon Livingston and Jim Morrell, members of the *Committee to Stop the Cambridge Project*, a coalition of anti-imperialist groups and individuals at Harvard and MIT. For further information, call 547-8046.