

# TURBULENT TIMES

Although MIT was not among the most radicalized of university campuses, during the turbulent years of the late 1960s, both the Institute and the Center for International Studies eventually became targets of anti-war protests.

The Institute was a target primarily because of its heavy reliance on defense department funding—most notably, for the defense-related work conducted at its prestigious research laboratories. By 1968, many on campus had concluded that universities should not engage in government-sponsored, national security research.

Like MIT, CIS was considered to be contributing to the war effort. Critics noted that in the mid-sixties, several CIS faculty members had expressed support for the war. They took issue with research conducted by Ithiel de Sola Pool (despite the fact that the work was not done on behalf of the Center). And they objected to CIS programs in communist studies and national security.

In the view of some protesters, another mark against CIS was the Center's relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency. CIS had worked on a variety of government-sponsored projects since its founding in 1952, and until 1966 had accepted funds from the CIA that it was unable to acknowledge publicly.

CIS weathered the Vietnam years, however, and in 1972 became an Institute-wide interdisciplinary center focusing on the intersection of science and technology with international affairs.

## THE LATE 1960s

The national debate over the war in Vietnam intensified in 1968, the year of the Tet offensive, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., the announcement by President Johnson that he would not run again, and the riots at the Democratic convention in Chicago.

At MIT that year, a coalition of activists and academics, including 48 faculty members, protested the militarization of university research. They eventually called for a work stoppage at the Institute's research laboratories.

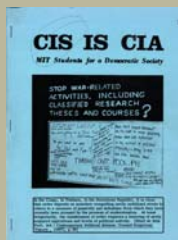
A year later, during the fall of 1969, the war came to CIS when members of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) crowded into the fourth floor of the Center's headquarters in the Hermann Building, voicing their objections to various CIS activities.

Soon after, a three-day "November Action" of coordinated protests was planned by a loose coalition of other antiwar groups. One of the activities was a mock trial of several CIS scholars, and one of the protesters' chants was, "We won't die for Pool and Pye"—two well-known senior faculty members. The activists circulated a "WANTED" poster featuring the photographs of four CIS professors, accusing them of "serving U.S. imperialism." The poster also called for the Center to be abolished.

The demonstrations had the effect of uniting faculty and student moderates who were also against the war but opposed attacks on the Center. On Nov. 4th, as protesters made their way toward CIS, this group linked arms in front of the Center, in a spontaneous show of solidarity.



Student protesters marching toward CIS in October 1969.

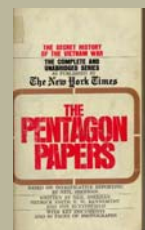


## THE EARLY 1970s

The Vietnam crisis continued to affect the Center during the early 1970s. In 1971, CIS attracted headlines when Daniel Ellsberg, then a visiting research fellow, leaked to the *New York Times* the classified report on Vietnam that would become known as The Pentagon Papers. At a campus protest on March 16, 1971, members of the MIT branch of SDS shouted, "Meet your local war criminal: come to CIS!" A few days later, a small group chanted "CIS is CIA! Smash the CIS!" before meeting with Center Director Everett Hagen. No one was hurt by the bomb that exploded at CIS headquarters later that year, but it nevertheless served as a violent punctuation mark to a tumultuous time.



Bomb damage at CIS (1971).



Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers while a visiting research fellow at the Center.



A letter to the *New York Times* in support of U.S. policy in Vietnam, written in 1965 by several CIS professors.