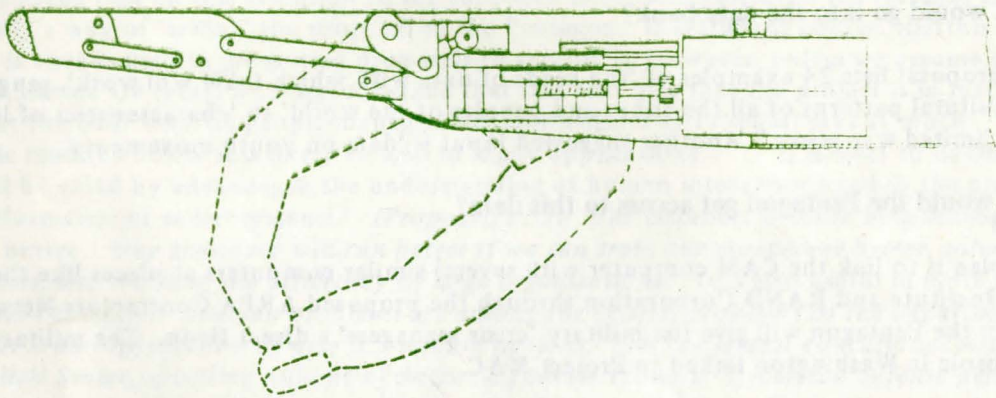


# project cam

# EXPOSED



**Q. What is project CAM?**

A. It is a plan to bring computer time-sharing experts and behavioral scientists together to develop a 'behavior science data management system' at MIT, initially using the IBM 7094 which the Institute already owns, and the CTSS software which it has developed. The interactive information processing techniques which have come out of Project MAC would be added to the latest modeling techniques and a large data bank of social science surveys and statistical information. The resulting behavioral science - computer complex will 'become a model for many subsequent facilities, both in universities and in public agencies,' according to its sponsors. MIT last month asked the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) for \$7.6 million to set it up. ARPA hasn't decided yet. There is still time to stop it.

**Q. Whose idea was it?**

A. Our research reveals that it was conceived jointly by Prof. Ithiel de Sola Pool, Prof. J.C.R. Licklider, and ARPA official Bob Taylor. Licklider used to have Taylor's job at ARPA and is now director of Project MAC. Since its inception, many other professors at MIT and Harvard have been consulted.

**Q. Why is the military interested in it?**

A. In 1966 a Pentagon advisory board put it this way: 'Pacification and the battle of ideas are major segments of the DoD responsibility. The social and behavioral sciences constitute the unique resource for support of these new requirements.' The generals hope behavioral science will supply them with analytical tools to understand their enemies, and thereby to outwit them.

**Q. What would go into the data bank?**

A. The proposal lists 24 examples of 'the kinds of data with which CAM will work', ranging from 'files on cultural patterns of all the tribes and peoples of the world' to 'characteristics of local conflicts and limited war crises.' Another suggested input is 'data on youth movements'.

**Q. How would the Pentagon get access to this data?**

A. The plan is to link the CAM computer with several similar computers at places like the Stanford Research Institute and RAND Corporation through the proposed ARPA Contractors Network. A terminal in the Pentagon will give the military 'crisis managers' a direct tie-in. The military already have a console in Washington linked to Project MAC.

**Q. Why should we oppose it?**

A. There are four main reasons:

[1] The whole computer set-up and the ARPA computer network will enable the government, for the first time, to consult relevant survey data rapidly enough to be used in policy decisions. The net result of this will be to make Washington's international policeman more effective in suppressing popular movements around the world.

[2] The so-called basic research to be supported by Project CAM will deal with questions like why do peasant movements or student groups become revolutionary. The results of this research will similarly be used to suppress progressive movements.

[3] The infusion of so much money into MIT's social sciences program will lead to a further emphasis on computerized people - manipulation. At the same time it will increase the blatant prostitution of social science for the aims of the war machine. Until the military-social science complex is eliminated, social scientists will aid the enslavement, rather than the liberation, of mankind.

[4] MIT already has a bad reputation for war research. We have to put a stop to it.

## SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT CAM PROPOSAL

**Formal title:** 'A Proposal for Establishment and operation of a program in Computer Analysis and Modeling in the Behavioral Sciences, March 1969'

**Contracting parties:** MIT (with J.C.R. Licklider listed as 'principle investigator') and Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense.

**What it costs the taxpayers:** \$7.69 million over five years.

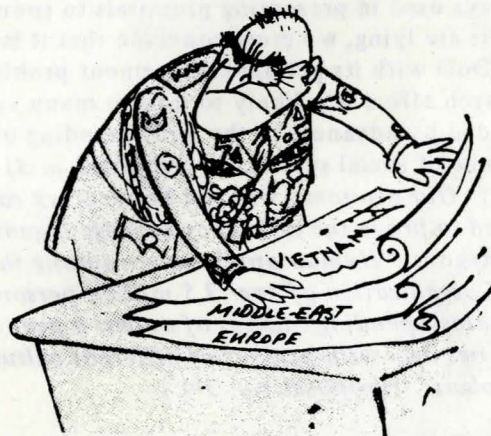
**What is the reason for the proposed project?** 'This proposal is based on a straight-forward line of reasoning: The U.S. government and Department of Defense face many problems that are in large part behavioral science problems, and they need pertinent behavioral science information in solving those problems.' (*Proposal, p. 2*) What this means is that the project is being undertaken in order to help the Pentagon carry out its self-defined global 'mission' more effectively. Later the proposal mentions two other major reasons: 'The facility will, we believe, become a model for many subsequent facilities, both in universities and public agencies.' Also: '...we submit this proposal with a strong belief that with the aid of the computer we can now achieve for the behavioral sciences at least some of the sharpness, clarity, and applicability that have for many years characterized the physical sciences.' (*Proposal, p. 6*) The claim that similar centers may arise elsewhere which follow the lines of project CAM is an important statement. It undoubtedly reflects the very real possibility of a decentralized network of military-social science centers throughout the country. We shall have more to say later about this so-called basic research, and the possibility of making basic theory through computers.

Some may argue that all this attention to the supposed needs and desires of the Defense Department is only a way of 'selling' the proposal to the Pentagon. It is true, of course, that this type of argument is always used in presenting proposals to sponsors. However, unless we assume that the projects initiators are lying, we must conclude that it is also true that the project is in fact designed to help out the DoD with its people-management problems. The Proposal says as much: 'While it is a basic research effort it is likely to lead to many applications. . . . it is clear to us that public policy will be aided by advances in the understanding of human interactions and in the prediction in the performance of social systems.' (*Proposal, p. 3*) For instance, it could help manage our economy better: '*Our economy will run better if we can train our manpower better, solve industrial disputes, and improve the efficiency of large organizations.*' It is also useful in more prosaic ways to the Pentagon: '*Human problems are among the central problems of the department of defense. It is an organization of over 3.5 million persons. It is the largest educational institution in the United States, spending billions of dollars a year on training. American defense personnel in foreign countries deal with persons of different cultures and values. Facts about foreign areas affect strategic plans.*' (*Proposal, pp. 3-4.*)

**Relation to other Institute projects:** The Cambridge Project (Project CAM) has developed fairly directly out of MIT's big computer development operation, Project MAC, also paid for by the Pentagon. In the words of the proposal: 'We take Project MAC and several other ARPA-supported projects in the computer sciences partly as our foundation and partly as our model. In them, ARPA supported and continues to support the development of general-purpose time sharing and interactive information processing with great benefits to both DoD and other users of computers. Now we propose that ARPA support, as a logical next step, the development of behavioral data analysis and modeling via time-shared interactive computing.' (*Proposal, pp. 5-6*) In conversations with SACC members, Dr. Licklider, the initiator of the proposal, has argued that it is only a proposal for computer development, concerned only with further developing interactive techniques. Yet here it is justified as support for analysis and modeling of behavioral science data. As is clear from the great detail with which potential data are listed later, the real purpose is to support (i.e., pay for) this analysis.

In the section on 'examples of non-methodological research uses of the Cambridge Project', the proposal lists nine different projects whose data will probably be used in the analytical and modeling work. They are: (1) The ComCom Project, directed by Ithiel de Sola Pool, of MIT's political science department and Simulmatics. This project has developed a series of communications models for the Soviet Union, China and some underdeveloped countries. The models enable a

'policy-maker' to predict the flow of information and thereby judge the best techniques to use in U.S. psy-war strategy. For instance: 'Simulations have shown that short-wave radio has made the Soviet Union totally permeable to important information. Virtually everyone in the Soviet Union is exposed very rapidly. The Czech crisis showed that the Russians can re-establish jamming. It would be interesting to know under what conditions of information need that capability would be significant.' (*Proposal, p. 41*) At least the proposal makes very clear why DoD would be interested in data from this project! (2) Frederick Frey's project on Human Factors in Modernization. Like Pool's ComCom project, this one is also supported by ARPA. However, due to problems in doing research overseas these days, the project has been 'terminated' by the Defense Department as of Sept. 1969. What is interesting is the description of what until now has been described as the most basic of basic research projects, dealing with nothing of immediate relevance to anyone. 'A major part of this comparative study will be a study of peasant attitudes. What are the conditions under which peasants are strongly patriotic as in Turkey, and the conditions under which they are purely local in their orientation as in Viet Nam? Under what conditions do peasants' protests become violent.' *Well, well.* (3) 'A great deal of work is being done in the Cambridge community on *problems of the underdeveloped countries* and on the *conditions of stability* in these areas so marked by turmoil. (*Proposal, p. 42*) (4) Manipulation of text for computerized bibliographies. (5) Computerization of Prof. William Griffith's files on international communism. This project, formerly CIA funded, is now supported by the Ford Foundation. (6) (This is for real.) 'A major documentary collection on Communism that will grow rapidly in the next couple of years and that can be integrated into any document system concerns Vietnam. In the next year or two, several thousand detailed interviews with Viet Cong will be released by Rand. There also will be many thousand Viet Cong documents released in the next few years. Others currently working on Vietnamese documentary materials include Professors Ithiel Pool and William Griffith and several doctoral candidates.' (7) Cross national opinion surveys and surveys of the 'performances of national governments'. (8) Public opinion polls from the U.S. and Western Europe. (9) Data on different types of representative systems.



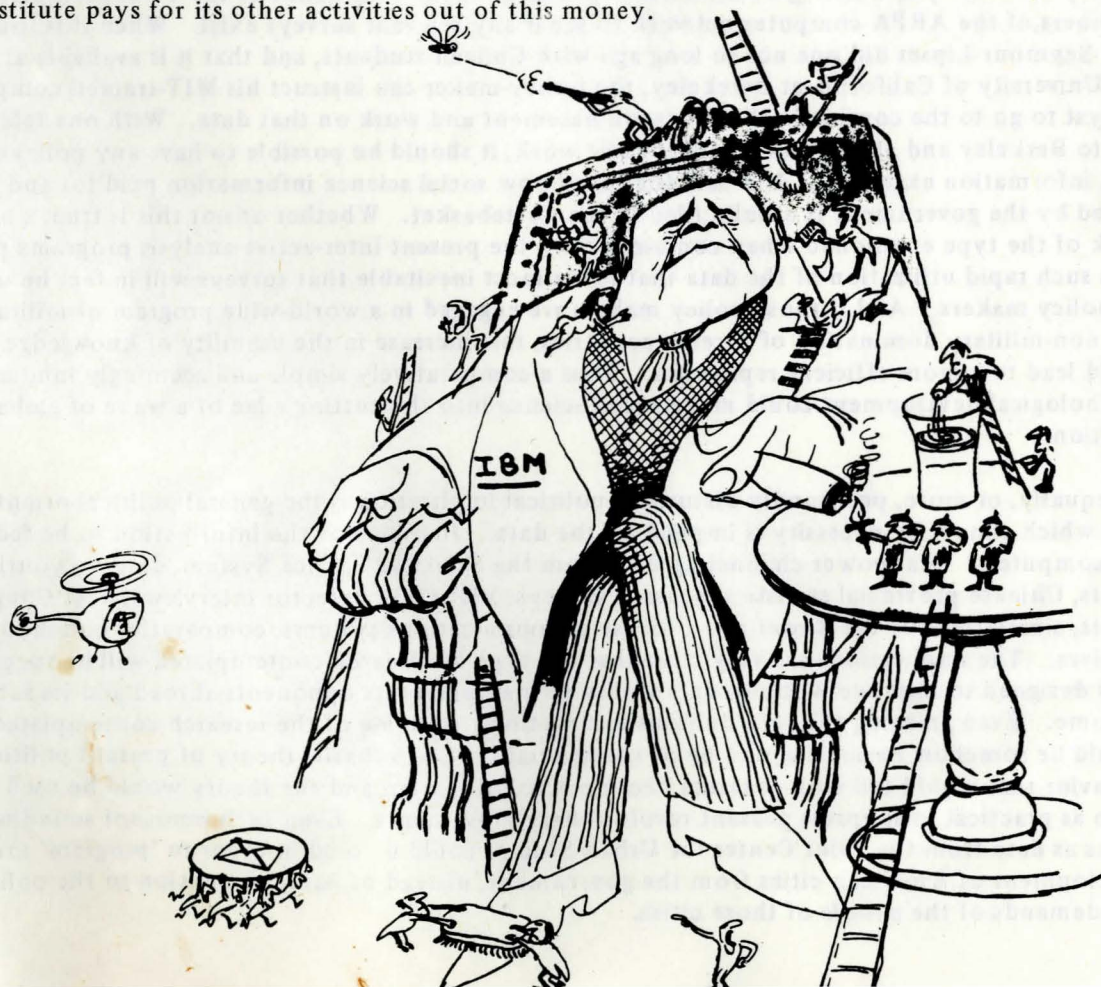
The proposal goes on to list some 24 'useful collections of data' which, it is implied, might be used in the project. In addition to that related to the previous nine projects, it mentions: World economic statistics, U.S. economic statistics, data on arms acquisitions by developing countries and their arms expenditures, 'the Human Relations Area Files on cultural patterns of all the tribes and peoples of the world' (!), world-wide election data, UN voting records, Chinese provincial statistics (!!), characteristics of local conflicts, population data, historical data on Latin American countries, U.S. selective service manpower channeling data, comparative urbanization data, Joint Center for Urban Studies data, development indicators for underdeveloped countries, comparative political participation data, 'data on youth movements' (!!!), 'mass unrest and political movements under conditions of rapid social change' (!!!!), international propaganda output, and general survey information on peasant attitudes and behavior. (*Proposal, pp. 51-57*)

**Hardware:** The initial computer facility will be the IBM 7094 computer which MIT bought recently. This computer, which will be totally obsolescent in the not-too-distant future, will be fully depreciated by the end of 1969. (Remember this when you read the figures later on what

MIT is charging the taxpayers just in order to have access to this computer.) This computer would, by the end of the first year of the contract, devote 85% of its time to three ARPA activities, namely, the ARPA computer network, Project MAC and Project CAM. Like Project MAC at present, it would have a terminal at the Pentagon. According to Dr. Licklider, other potential users of the ARPA computer network would be the University of California (Berkeley), UCal (Santa Barbara), UCLA, Stanford Research Institute, Rand Corporation, Carnegie Institute of Technology, University of Michigan. After the first two years or so operations would be switched to another, as yet undetermined, computer.

**Software:** Project MAC was the pioneer in the development of time-sharing, and its CTSS system would be the basic framework. The various social-science related programs would be used. The ADMINS and TROLL programs are presently used in political science and economics respectively. TIP is used for computerized bibliographies. DYNAMO is used in modeling simulation. Essentially these programs are fairly well developed, although they would undoubtedly be modified and improved in the course of operations. The bulk of the budget goes to pay for access to, rental or and maintenance of the computer, and to the staffs associated with the development of these programs, languages and routines. Yet apparently relatively little development is anticipated in these areas. The only major computer-related methodological advances anticipated are those related to modeling. Prof. Pool is reportedly interested in this area, after his Com - Com project terminates in Sept. 1969.

**Budget:** The total estimated cost is \$7.69 million over five years. In the first year, some \$1.51 million are to be spent. Of this, \$670,000 will be for access to the computer (\$520,000 alone), maintenance, operations, auxiliary computers and data communications equipment. In personnel costs, \$150,500 will go for academic staff, \$107,000 for research staff and \$166,000 for supporting staff. Including student employment and benefits the total wages bill comes to \$500,500 and then, at a 50.5% rate, \$200,600 is calculated as an overhead cost. Another \$138,000 goes to general operations such as space rental, utilities, materials and supplies, etc. This procedure is apparently standard for MIT, and the only point about it to be made is that the overhead cost (of \$200,000) is pure overhead, since all the directly attributable costs are paid for elsewhere. The institute pays for its other activities out of this money.



## WHAT'S WRONG WITH PROJECT CAM?

### General

The Cambridge Project (Project Cam) has to be seen as a whole, as a combination social science data bank - modeling and simulation experiment - computer facility complex. And it must be seen in the context of the proposed ARPA computer network of which it is to be a part. It should be recognized for the important proposal that it is. For a long time some of the more prestigious behaviorists in the social sciences have believed that basic theory could come from computer analysis. This project represents the culmination of this fantasy. For some time it has been apparent that a national computer network could be established to serve the government. This is the social science counterpart of the national data archive project. They will both raise the level of possible social control to a qualitatively higher level. This is clearer when individual data such as criminal and tax records are involved. But it is equally true of social science data if the desire of the government is to control and manipulate large aggregates of people. The large aggregates of people in Vietnam, Dominican Republic and Harlem can attest to the fact that this is the government's desire. Viewing Project CAM as a whole, there are three general reasons for objecting to it. First is the whole area of its general implications for US foreign and domestic policy. Secondly the increasing militarization of social science. And thirdly the implications of this type of research and development for the Institute and American universities in general.

### Political implications

The first area deals with essentially two aspects of the proposal, namely the tie in with a national computer network, and the nature of data and analysis to be treated. The national computer network for the first time makes it possible for a policy maker in Washington to request an analysis of survey data relevant to a particular crisis and have the information presented within a matter of hours. For instance, if a student rebellion should take place in Chile tomorrow, it would be easy to look up in a listing of the surveys available in the data banks of the 12 contemplated members of the ARPA computer network to see if any relevant surveys exist. When it is found that Seymour Lipset did one not so long ago with Chilean students, and that it is available at the University of California at Berkeley, the policy-maker can instruct his MIT-trained computer analyst to go to the console in the Pentagon basement and work on that data. With one telephone call to Berkeley and about four hours console work, it should be possible to have any policy-relevant information extracted. It is said that until now social science information paid for and received by the government is usually filed in the wastebasket. Whether or not this is true, a network of the type envisioned when combined with the present inter-active analysis programs permits such rapid utilization of the data that it is almost inevitable that surveys will in fact be used by policy makers. And if those policy makers are engaged in a world-wide program of military and non-military domination of foreign countries, this increase in the usability of knowledge could lead to a more efficient repression. Thus a comparatively simple and seemingly innocent technological development could make social science into the cutting edge of a wave of global reaction.

An equally, or more, profoundly disturbing political implication is the general political orientation which almost by necessity is implied by the data. Just look at the information to be fed into the computers: Manpower channeling data from the Selective Service System, data on youth movements, Chinese provincial statistics, peasant surveys, Viet Cong defector interviews, Viet Cong documents, simulations of the Soviet and Chinese communications systems, comparative communism archives. The implications are very clear that the type of research contemplated will be specifically designed to improve Washington's ability to manipulate its opponents abroad and its subjects at home. Even granting the very dubious assumption that some of the research contemplated would be somehow basic, it would be of the general type of a 'basic' theory of peasant political behavior that would tell why peasants became revolutionaries, and the theory would be used as soon as practical to suppress peasant revolutionary movements. Even such innocent sounding items as data from the Joint Center for Urban Studies could be used in order to 'program' the development of American cities from the government, instead of paying attention to the political demands of the *people* of those cities.

The authors of the proposal argue in the document that the research will be open (not classified), and that anyone (with a little money) can use the facility. This may be the case. However, given the fact that for radicals (or anyone else fundamentally opposed to the present system) to use it, they would first have to find money to do some kind of survey. Then they would have to be willing to be publicly associated with ARPA. And basically, they would have to be convinced that survey research will tell them something. The probability is very high that they would either be convinced that this type of research is useless to them, or they would not want to be associated with the U.S. military, or they would not have the money to do the survey research, *or all three*. And we already know what kind of information is intended to be put in there. Formal openness and neutrality in this case is a smokescreen for objective partiality.

### **Militarized social science**

The second main reason we should oppose Project CAM is its impact in further militarizing social science. This does not mean that the behavioral sciences aren't overwhelmingly militarized today. In fact, quantitative social science research was born in the military, resulting from the World War II studies of the American soldier and the strategic bombing surveys. This relationship continued into the late 1940's and the 1950's as well. It was no accident that Harvard's Russian Research Center had as its first job interviewing refugees from E. Europe for the Air Force. Nor that MIT's very own Center for International Studies (CIS) was started by the CIA in order to improve the impact of US propaganda on the Soviet Union. Though in the late 1950's and early 1960's the foundations began to be interested in social science research (without basically changing the direction or political content of that research), the next big jump was that caused by the Vietnam war. Financed through the Defense Department ARPA, Project Jason was set up to coordinate social science intelligence gathering on Vietnam itself. Large contracts were farmed out to Rand Corporation and Prof. Pool's Simulmatics in particular. At the same time, the big counterinsurgency project known as Project Camelot was started by the Army at American University. The Navy had its Project Michelsen which specialized in political gaming and the Soviet Union. And all of this was carried out with the enthusiastic support and supervision of Techmen, from ARPA and Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) head Jack Ruina to globe-trotting counterinsurgents Pool and Pye, members of Defense and State Department advisory panels respectively.

The problem is obviously a global problem. If you look at American social science today you are horrified at the percentage of projects which are very clearly linked to U.S. foreign and domestic policy goals and their more effective implementation. And if you look at MIT social sciences, you see the problem in its most magnified form. MIT's program in social sciences is probably by far the most pronounced case of a general disease. This means not only recognizing the long period of secret collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency. In fact, if one looks at the list of research projects carried out by the Center one is struck by the fact that almost every item is directly related to U.S. foreign policy. When projects range from keeping tab on the Sino-Soviet split through studying the relation of the black liberation movement to 'international communism' to studying how to control insurgency and local wars, it is pretty clear what's up. This all has a serious impact on the whole MIT educational program in the social sciences. Political science is not merely overwhelmingly quantitative and survey oriented, but it is substantively oriented towards training the cadres to man the various government agencies. The defense studies program serves as a virtual manpower conduit into the Defense Department planning offices. Also, many graduate students end up doing their theses on topics derived from their professors' research, such as the current group working on Vietnam. Of course, the reputation of the department and the Center mean that predominantly one kind of student is attracted to it. But the military influence is not limited to indirect relations. One might easily walk into a class room to hear Prof. Kaufman lecture on defense management problems. Next door Prof. Pye might be explaining how military rule can be 'functional' for 'development'. Or, then again, they might be found conducting their business in Washington that particular day.

Thus no one can maintain that Project CAM will seduce a virgin. Social science has been pretty badly mauled over at MIT since the beginning. But Project CAM, by injecting a sizeable hunk of money, and through the associated plans for a program in quantitative behavioral science alluded to briefly in the proposal, will make the military-quantitative-survey influence even greater. You have to stop somewhere.

## Implications for MIT and the academic community

The university, as an institution of the society, cannot help reflecting the divisions and struggles of that wider society. That there are serious struggles going on in society and in the university is clear to anyone with eyes and ears. And just as there is struggle, there are vested interests and people who defend them. For us the potentiality of the university is as a center where truly critical thought and action can develop. Potentially this could have revolutionary implications. But there is counter to this potential the actual reality, where the institutions of higher 'education' become service stations for the dominant interests - training the operators, producing the ideologies, sophisticating the techniques. The universities have sold out to the military - industrial complex. It should be fairly obvious that even if it did nothing else, and it does quite a bit else, the infusion of \$7.69 million in Defense Department money will strengthen the already outrageous military takeover of MIT. It is no secret to anyone that MIT, the nation's largest educational war contractor, owes its very soul and existence to the Pentagon. Consistently year after year something more or less than one-half of the total Institute budget comes from the Department of Defense alone. This money then builds power within the institution, as those who have the best access to Daddy Warbucks rise in stature and number of graduate assistants. Ideologically it has an equal influence. Subtly and sometimes directly the combination of monetary self-interest, prestige and influence tend to smooth down the sharp edges of critical analysis.

### WHAT TO DO?

We have argued that the Cambridge Project (Project CAM) will have a distinctly negative impact on MIT when considered in its totality. There is no other way to consider it. It makes no difference if the incriminating appeals to military self-interest are deleted from the proposal - as some have suggested. The military knows what the project is about and they can figure out whether it serves their purposes or not. There is no use to talk about safeguards, such as excluding ARPA itself from the Defense Department computer network - as has been suggested. Aside from being an obvious absurdity, there are plenty of professors right here quite capable of doing the Pentagon's work for them, if necessary. It does not really matter that the facility is open to all, for those who will in fact use it represent a very distinct and politically not too heterogenous section of the social and human sciences. The project as a whole should be stopped.

Memo to: the members of Project MAC  
From: a friend at SACC

Hi. While visiting your nice labs over in Tech Square the other day, I was disturbed to learn how little most of you know about the politics of your project. Who's funding it, and why? How could the military use this stuff, and do you approve? Do you *really* think the Defense Department is the disinterested, benevolent patron of 'pure research'? Without moralizing, I just want to say I think it's your duty to study these questions and discuss them with your bosses. Many people who worked on the atom bomb had no idea what they were contributing to. We feel your efforts may be contributing to the manipulation of millions of unsuspecting people. Do you care? Or would you say, in the immortal words of Werner Von Braun, 'that's not my department'!

