

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Center's founders sought to bridge the social sciences and the hard sciences. They believed the complexities of the post-WW II world required the insights of both working together. In their 1954 Mission Statement, they wrote

"we hope to carry further... the integration of problems of social science with those of natural science and engineering. An important criterion of project selection will be the relevance of scientific and engineering considerations to the problem at hand."

CIS's first director, Max Millikan, personalized this goal, with his degrees in physics and economics. Two early CIS research initiatives, the programs in International Communication and Economic and Political Development, incorporated technological issues into their research agendas. During the 1960s, scientists, engineers and social scientists collaborated in work on defense and arms control questions.

Later, under the directorship of Professor Eugene Skolnikoff, a political scientist who had studied engineering and was an enthusiastic proponent of expanding CIS's science and technology-related efforts—the groundwork was laid for a variety of other science-related projects on international issues.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

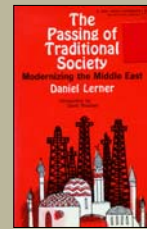
The International Communication Program was led by political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool. Other key contributors were sociologist Daniel Lerner, whose work centered on the importance of communication and attitude change in modernizing societies and in Europe, and Harold Isaacs, whose work included an examination of changing perceptions of group identity among Americans of Chinese and African origin.

During the 1950s, the program concentrated on the ways in which elites of different nations developed beliefs and attitudes about international affairs and pursued their foreign policy preferences. In the 1960s, the program focused on communication within the Soviet Union and China, and between the communist and non-communist worlds. During the 1970s, it emphasized research on new communications and computing technologies, such as satellite broadcasting and electronic media. The program also made use of some of the earliest computerized public opinion polling, and published present studies of the communications technologies that were to launch the "Information Age."

Ithiel de Sola Pool

"As computers become the printing presses of the twenty-first century, link marks on paper will continue to be read, and broadcasts to be watched, but other new major media will evolve from what are now but the toys of computer hackers. Videotapes, integrated memories, and data bases will serve functions that books and libraries now serve, while information retrieval systems will serve for what magazines and newspapers do now. Networks of satellites, optical fibers, and radio waves will serve the functions of the present-day postal system.... Computers, telephones, radio, and satellites are technologies of freedom, as much as was the printing press."

—"TECHNOLOGIES OF FREEDOM" (1983)



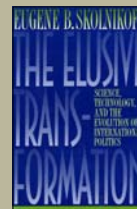
In this influential book, Professor Ithiel de Sola Pool, Director of the International Communication Program, addressed free speech in the electronic age.

Eugene B. Skolnikoff

Director of CIS from 1972-1987 and assistant to three presidential science advisers. An electrical engineer who later took a Ph.D. in Political Science, Professor Skolnikoff wrote extensively on the impact of science and technology on international affairs.

Some new issues and relationships tied to science and technology may come to challenge the existing [international] system. The most significant candidate is the threat of substantial global warming... If the threat proves to be catastrophic in scale, it could lead to a fundamental reordering of interstate relations...

—"THE ELUSIVE TRANSFORMATION" (1993)



Eugene Skolnikoff, second from left—as assistant to presidential science adviser Jerome Wiesner (MIT President, 1971-1980, center)—at an event with President Lyndon Johnson.

POLITICAL ECONOMY & TECHNOLOGY

Under the direction of Kenneth A. Oye (CIS Director, 1992-2000), the Political Economy and Technology Program deploys methods from the field of political economy to contribute to debates on controversial issues in science and technology policy. Educational and research initiatives have been developed in partnership with the School of Engineering's Technology Policy Program and Laboratory for Energy and the Environment.

ENVIRONMENT

CIS affiliates have joined debates over the effects of environmental regulations on growth, trade, and investment; over how to respond to uncertainty associated with environmental problems; and over tradeoffs across local and global environmental priorities.

Kenneth A. Oye



Professor Kenneth A. Oye (center) and colleagues inspect a power plant in Xian for a CIS project on international aid and coal combustion in China.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Global System for Sustainable Development (GSSD) is an Internet networking tool developed under the direction of Political Science Professor Nazli Choucri. A "cyber library", GSSD makes a wide range of information on sustainable development readily accessible for a variety of users and in a number of languages. It has a worldwide patent—the first at MIT to come from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Nazli Choucri



Professor Nazli Choucri's work focuses on conflict, connectivity and the global environment.



Richard J. Samuels

Ford International Professor of Political Science, founding Director of the MIT Japan Program, and a specialist in Japanese politics and public policy. Author of the prize-winning book, *Rich Nation, Strong Army: National Security and the Technological Transformation of Japan*. Became CIS Director in 2000.

