

Reaction mixed to Harvard case

Richard Higgins

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The resignation of professor Nadav Safran as head of Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies after a probe of his links to the Central Intelligence Agency drew mixed reactions yesterday, with some criticizing Harvard for not acting more quickly and more forcefully.

"I think the report was pretty fair, and those calling for harsher judgment miss the point, which is that it reinforces the principle of academic freedom and openness," said Joseph Nye, professor of government at the John F. Kennedy School.

However, one of Safran's colleagues, Richard N. Frye, a founder of the Center For Middle Eastern Studies, said the report did not adequately address the moral issues involved. He also said the decision to allow Safran to remain until the end of the academic year was "a mistake that will continue to hurt the center."

The report, written by A. Michael Spence, dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, will do little to dispell the "aura of mistrust" that has developed in Middle Eastern countries toward Harvard as a result of the Safran affair, said 4 New York University professor Dale Eickelman. An anthropologist. Eickelman is head of the ethics committee of the 1800-member Middle Eastern Studies Assn.

In the six-page report officially released yesterday, Harvard found that Safran erred by not initially disclosing that he had received CIA money for a scholarly conference last fall, and stated that he would resign as head of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies In July.

The report follows a three-month review to determine whether Safran followed university guidelines when he accepted two CIA grants totaling more than \$150,000.

It also found that Safran acted 1 properly in reporting a book contract financed with CIA funds. In connection with the book contract. It found Harvard s faculty of Arts and Sciences at fault for not enforcing its own research guidelines.

Satran yesterday said that Harvard's investigation into his CIA ties exonerated him and "confirmed" his basic account of his handling of two CIA contracts. He also implicitly criticized Harvard for taking three months to complete its report, during which he said he suffered "pain" from "hasty" and "patently false allegations" by his colleagues and in the press.

In an interview, Safran also ! said he would "weigh carefully" arguments that, because of the volatile nature of the region they study, centers for Middle Eastern studies should adopt more stringent policies concerning intelligence agency funding.

But the embattled 60-year-old professor, a former Israeli who became a naturalized US citizen in I 1962, argued that "scholars are; also citizens" and have a duty to t render service to the government, including its intelligence agencies, in their fields of specialty. This, he said, was a contribution to the "protection of the freedoms they, enjoy."

In October, it was disclosed, that Safran had accepted \$45,700 from the CIA for a conference on Islamic fundamentalism without first notifying the university or, conference participants.

Harvard guidelines do not prohibit CIA sponsorship of research but require full disclosure of the source of research funds to the university, and in the case of institutional grants, to other scholars involved in the research and in any published results.

Safran acknowledged the conference funding only after ordered to do so by Spence, who permitted the conference to go on under the CIA sponsorship.

The Spence report stated that Safran notified Henry Rosovsky, then the dean of the faculty, that he had signed a \$107,000 contract with the C,W to support the writing of a book on Saudi Arabia. Rosovsky said yesterday that "Safran submitted the letter to my office and my office did not send a reply. That as an administrative error and I regret it."

"What we have here," said NYU's Eickelman. "Is not just a disclosure problem, but something more much more fundamental. Middle Eastern scholars must base their relationships with their colleagues and sources on a basic trust, and there is a perception in the Middle East that this Harvard incident is Just the tip of an iceberg. I'm afraid it is going to take a long time for anyone associated with Harvard to work as openly and as effectively in the Middle East as they might have previously."

John Shattuck. Harvard's vice president for public affairs, said the Spence report dealt with more than Just the technical Issues of compliance with university guidelines. He the report was "purposefully devoid of rhetoric." Instead, he said, it was a "careful and specific application of serious and longstanding policies" that address the broader issue of how to prevent academic freedom from being abridged by research support from intelligence agencies.

While insisting that the report "confirmed" his account of the CIA contracts, Safran said, "I recognize I made a mistake in Judgment in not Informing [the conference participants] as soon as the CIA funding came into the picture, ...and I attempted to repair the damage by doing so before the conference began."

Safran said he regretted "the long period of uncertainty" during the investigation, during which "a lot of people fished in troubled waters and made hasty judgments and condemnations."

"I would have thought that as a member of the faculty for 27 years that ... I was entitled certain measure of credibility would have made inquiry less painful. The prolongation of Inquiry gave credence to allegations that were patently wrong and cruel. I felt a great deal of anger about that."

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Boston Globe, pages 1 & 11.
<cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP89G00720R000600620012-4.pdf>

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