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CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — The CIA will no longer require university researchers sponsored by the agency to keep its support secret, unless the work involves classified information, a CIA official said Thursday.

However, Robert Gates, CIA deputy director for intelligence, accused Harvard University of threatening academic freedom with its policy dealing with faculty contacts with the intelligence organization.

The university steps on precarious ground and threatens academic freedom itself by restricting what organizations a scholar may talk to, especially if one of the organizations is a branch of the government," he said in a speech at the university's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Gates said the agency now will permit disclosure of CIA funding for research unless the scholar wishes the matter to remain confidential and unless disclosure involves classified information.

He said participants in CIA-backed conferences will be told ahead of time about the agency connections.

Joseph S. Nye, Jr., acting director of Harvard's Center for International Affairs, told the audience he regarded Gates' speech as a really major speech. You've just heard a bureaucracy move."

Gates said that since 1982, the CIA has sponsored 300 academic conferences in the United States.

The CIA has been an important and useful supporter of area studies as well as language studies in the United States," he said.

The announcement came as questions about CIA funding at Harvard were raised for the second time in recent months after another professor acknowledged doing research for the spy agency without notifying university officials when the work was commissioned.

Samuel Huntington, a professor of government and director of the university's Center for International Affairs, said he believes he did not violate any guidelines because he only was assisting another scholar, who was not a Harvard employee.

He said the research on the demise of authoritarian rulers was commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1984.

A condensed version of the report, entitled "Dead Dictators and Rioting Mobs," appears in the winter edition of the journal International Security, which is edited and sponsored by Harvard.

Harvard Dean A. Michael Spence said in a brief written statement Thursday that Huntington verbally notified him of the CIA-funded research in the fall of 1985. Spence was in Florida and could not be reached for further comment.

Harvard officials said Thursday afternoon that they were preparing a more detailed statement.

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Harvard does not prohibit its professors from working for the CIA, but it does require them to notify the school in writing about such activities.

In addition, the university strongly discourages professors from accepting two kinds of CIA grants: those that allow the agency to review and edit research before it is published and those that prohibit professors from acknowledging the agency's financial support in print.

Huntington told The Harvard Crimson that he and scholar Richard K. Betts, then a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington and an occasional CIA consultant, had agreed to both of the CIA conditions discouraged by Harvard.

He added that his relationship with the CIA was a private arrangement with Betts and did not involve Harvard as an institution. He would not disclose the amount of the CIA grant.

"I didn't inform anyone at Harvard at the time — there was no reason to," Huntington said. "I do not believe there are any university guidelines regulating this sort of activity."

Huntington said he decided to tell Spence of the funding in October after a controversy involving the CIA and another professor gained national attention.

In that case, Professor Nadav Safran, director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, acknowledged accepting two CIA grants totaling \$153,000. The professor used the money to write a book about Saudi Arabia and to conduct a conference on Islamic fundamentalism.

Safran's admission sparked a three-month university investigation and led to Safran's resignation as director of the center, effective in June. He will remain as a tenured professor at Harvard.

Last month, Spence issued a report concluding that Safran was wrong not to disclose the source of both his grants, but said Harvard was also at fault for failing to act when Safran notified the school about one of them in 1982.

Huntington, 58, served as coordinator of security and planning for the National Security Council during the Carter administration. He has written several books on democracy and international security.

Betts is now a part-time visiting professor at Harvard.