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Students at A&M

Christmas holidays or summer they have to come in and get papers from us so they can get back in the country again when they leave," she says.

She says her office has had to send certification letters and call immigration to get students back into the country.

"Sometimes it takes a couple days before we can get them back," she says.

Watkins says the FBI keeps tabs on students from several countries. Recent front page news suggests that these students probably include the Libyan, Iranian, Palestinian, Syrian and Nicaraguan students at A&M.

"One day we had two big FBI agents come in and stand in front of my desk with their coats open showing their guns," she says. "It was really scary.

"They picked up one of our students who I think is one of the nicest guys we have. Then they . . . put him in jail in Houston and kept him for two days. I was calling everybody, trying frantically to find what they'd done with him.

"Finally they said, 'Oh, there was nothing wrong,' and let him loose. But they left him in Houston. . . . He didn't have any money with him. They had just picked him up in class.

"We never could find out what the charges were."

But Watkins adds that events of this kind are rare.

Watkins says the next biggest problem for international students is money. Two factors have dug deeply into their pockets in recent years.

One was the tuition increase in 1985 that raised the rate foreign students pay from \$40 to \$120 per unit.

"When tuition went up we lost quite a few students," Watkins says. "We have two or three who are just hanging on. I think they're eating nothing but rice and living ten in an apartment just to finish."

Also, fluctuations in the foreign exchange rate hurt students who get caught on the wrong side.

"Maybe they had plenty of money when they first got here," she says, "but the rate dropped in their country.

"If they were getting \$800 a month, then all of a sudden they're getting

maybe \$400 a month."

International conflicts can also trap foreign students.

"Occasionally a government will no longer allow students to get money out of the country," she says.

"Banks won't loan them money. The university doesn't loan them money. Everyone here's afraid that they'll leave the country without paying them."

Just like any group of students, foreign students get their funding from a variety of sources. Most are supported by personal and family funds. Some get scholarships and loans from universities in their own countries, private industry in the United States and abroad and international organizations.

Watkins says the University does not recruit foreign students.

Many international students in the International Week booths said they want to correct wrong impressions many Americans have of their country.

The Palestinian students painted symbols of their hopes on their booth. There is a map of Israel with three symbols painted on it together — the star of David, the Moslem crescent and the Christian cross.

Jamil Hamdallah, who is half-Palestinian and half-Columbian, says these paintings and the dove in the center of the booth are attempts to say that all Palestinians are not terrorists, just as one American who commits murder doesn't represent the views of all Americans.

At the Saudi Arabian table, Mansour Almalik, a Ph.D. candidate in petroleum engineering, says the recent seminars on Islam and terrorism the group organized were intended to combat ignorance about his country.

The Indian students modeled their booth on a monument built by 16th century Moguls.

Anant Mehendale, a Ph.D. candidate in mechanical engineering, says they wanted to say that although the majority of Indians are Hindu, they can get along with students of other religions.

Roberto Morales, a senior industrial engineering major from Venezuela, says many Americans think the United States is all that matters.

"We just want to say, 'Give us a chance to show you what we can offer,'" he says.

