

CONGRESS RETURNS: TERRORISM, POLITICS, DEFICITS DEFINE SESSION

The second session of the 107th Congress officially began on January 23. Much has happened since the legislators left town in December. The war in Afghanistan has been (mostly) won, and the Enron collapse has reached the status of scandal and returned the campaign finance reform bill to the front burner. What's more, the country's fiscal outlook has changed about as fast as Enron's: the large surpluses once projected for the next ten years have turned into deficits for the next two years; at fault is the recession (the bipartisan rationale), Bush's tax cut (the Democrats' rationale), and increased government spending (the Republicans' rationale).

The pending congressional elections will play a major role in defining the administration-congressional relationship in 2002. The precarious majorities in the House (an 11-seat GOP majority) and Senate (a one-seat Democratic advantage) means that the majority in both is up for grabs in November. This suggests a session where the parties will both posture for partisan advantage and attempt to present the electorate with some accomplishments.

President Bush, whose popularity remains remarkably high, as befits a President who leads his country in a war spawned by a direct attack on the nation, faces a situation reminiscent of his father's administration: high approval for foreign policy success that may not necessarily survive a weak domestic economy. We are told that the current President Bush is very aware of his father's predicament and intends to avoid any repetition.

The President will outline his agenda in the State of the Union address scheduled for January 29. Assigning dollars to his priorities will occur with the release of the President's Fiscal Year 2003 budget on February 4. As with most administrations, speeches and leaks have already indicated what the President expects to emphasize. Clearly, beefing up (see *Congress Returns*, page 6)

SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES TACKLE TERRORISM

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11 there have been many responses from both the policy and scientific communities. The government has fought the war in Afghanistan, enacted legislation enhancing the powers of the Justice Department, and created the Office of Homeland Security. The scientific community has proffered much advice to the government through a variety of vehicles. For its part, the government has responded, establishing committees and reaching out to experts, such as biologists who understand anthrax and smallpox.

The government and the scientific community have also recognized that terrorists are people and acts of terrorism are behavior; therefore, the need for expertise and advice also extends to the social/behavioral science community, which is responding.

The National Academies (of Science, Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine) are coordinating one of the major efforts in this arena.

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They have established a Committee on Science and Technology for Countering Terrorism, chaired by Richard Klausner, former head of the National Cancer Institute, and Lewis Branscomb, emeritus director of the Science, Technology, and Policy program at Harvard's JFK School of Government. Neil Smelser, retired director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and Thomas Schelling, Distinguished University Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, are among the 24 members of this panel. They are expected to present their report in late May.

This committee has promulgated a number of sub-panels, including one on Psychological, Social, and Behavioral Aspects of Terrorism. Smelser chairs this group, which includes Schelling, Robert McCormick Adams, former director of the Smithsonian Institution, now affiliated with the University of California at San Diego, Lisa Anderson (political science, Columbia), Nazli Choucri (political science, MIT), Eugene Hammel (anthropology and demography, UC-Berkeley), Arie Kruglanski (psychology, Maryland), Ira Lapidus (Islamic social history, UC-Berkeley), Phyllis Oakley (U.S. Dept. of State, retired), and Timothy McDaniel (sociology, UC-San Diego).

Working with the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) at the National Research Council (NRC), Smelser and his

colleagues are preparing, by early March, papers on the roots and causes of terrorism and population vulnerability within a societal context. These will feed into the larger committee report. The Smelser panel has also been charged by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) with ascertaining answers to the question of what terrorists value.

The NRC's Committee on Law and Justice has also joined the effort against terrorism by sponsoring a series of roundtable discussions between social/behavioral scientists and government officials. Former Deputy Attorney General Phillip Heymann, now at Harvard Law School and the JFK School of Government, and Michael Chertoff, Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division, will co-chair the sessions. Among the topics to be explored are: terrorist motivation, identification, financing, and organization; how people behave under the threat of danger; and data needs for researching terrorism.

OSTP Joins the Effort

In addition, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), whose head, John Marburger, is playing consultant to the Office of Homeland Security, has also initiated an inter-agency working group for the social, behavioral, and education sciences as part of its Antiterrorism Task Force. Coordinated by James Griffin, OSTP's assistant director for these sciences, the group will be chaired by Norman Bradburn, Assistant Director for the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE), and Raynard Kington, director of NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. This group will identify current SBE research and development activities that can inform the federal antiterrorism agenda, such as terror management, decision-making analysis, and crisis intervention care.

All of these activities will feed off each other to coordinate efforts and enlist participation of academic researchers and policy analysts to help respond to past terrorist activities and future threats.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences.

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LAURA BUSH TESTIFIES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

First Lady Laura Bush testified January 24 before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee on the issue of early childhood education. The First Lady, who has made this subject a centerpiece of her work in the White House, highlighted a joint effort by the Departments of Education (ED) and Health & Human Services (HHS) to revise the curriculum of the Head Start program based on early cognitive development research.

This effort, in the form of a federal task force, was announced by Education Secretary Rod Paige last July during the final session of the White House Summit (see following story) on Early Childhood Cognitive Development. According to Mrs. Bush, the President has asked Paige and HHS Secretary Thompson to use the task force to “identify priorities for research to address [the] critical issues [of early childhood development].” To this end, a team of experts from ED and HHS (including the National Institutes of Health) “is moving forward with plans to produce materials that will help parents, preschools, and child care programs know more about enhancing cognitive development.”

The Senators at the hearing took turns thanking the First Lady for her appearance before the Committee and for her ongoing work on reading and education programs. This was most noteworthy in that Mrs. Bush’s predecessor, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY), is a member of the HELP panel. The two women chatted briefly after the hearing, their first public interaction since President Bush took office a year ago. The hearing had originally been scheduled for September 11th, but was postponed by that day’s acts of terrorism.

Mrs. Bush’s full testimony can be accessed at www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady.

SUMMIT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INDICATES IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

On January 24, G. Reid Lyon provided the National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council with a summary of the White House Summit on Early Childhood Cognitive Development held last July. Lyon was scheduled to

present at the September Council, which was cancelled due to the events of September 11. The Council advises the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

The Summit, Lyon explained, was part of a larger process with which the administration has asked NICHD to become involved. It served to inform the country of what we know about the keys to sending children to school ready to learn.

According to Lyon, the Summit discussions made it clear that children require informed and systematic interactions and experience with adults who will take the time and effort “to teach vocabulary and other oral language concepts, phonological concepts, letter knowledge, and other print and emergent literacy concepts.”

He cautioned that many would see this call for a science of early childhood as just another plea for more research for its own sake. But the way to reduce and eventually eliminate the achievement gap and prepare all children for school, challenged Lyon, is to gather and “disseminate the best evidence about the social interactions and educational strategies that lay the most solid cognitive, social, emotional, and motivational foundations.”

In response to the President’s directive, trans-department/trans-agency early childhood research programs were created. They are designed to develop and examine specific types and effects of preschool curricula, programs, and strategies that enhance the acquisition of cognitive, social, and emotional abilities so that all children are motivated and prepared to learn.

NICHD Director Duane Alexander explained that this is a time of enormous opportunity for education research. It is also, he indicated, an opportunity to put into practice the principles that research finds to be effective (see *Update*, December 10, 2001).

Funding Opportunity

Accordingly, on January 7, 2002, NICHD, along with the National Institute of Mental Health, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), and Department of Education, issued a request-for-applications (RFA): “Early Childhood

Education and School Readiness Planning Grants” (RFA-HD-02-005).

The primary goal of the RFA is to understand the complex combination of individual and contextual factors that interact with curriculum components to influence effectiveness. The solicitation encourages the establishment of researcher-practitioner partnerships in the context of early childhood programs developed at federal, state, and community levels to include Head Start, Early Head Start, or other state early childhood initiatives serving populations at risk for school failure. Partnerships with center-based child care and family day care settings are also encouraged.

Letters of intent are due **April 15, 2002**. Applications are due **May 14, 2002**. Questions about scientific/research issues should be directed to Melissa K. Welch-Ross, rossm@mail.nih.gov; Michael L. Lopez, milopez@acf.dhhs.gov; or Cheryl A. Boyce, cboyce@nih.gov.

PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON BIOETHICS NAMED, HOLDS FIRST MEETING

In unveiling his stem cell decision last August, President Bush announced the creation of a President’s Council on Bioethics, to be chaired by University of Chicago bioethicist Leon Kass. Two weeks ago, the panel began work in earnest, as the White House named 17 members to the body and the Council convened its first meeting in Washington.

Several prominent social scientists are among the appointed members (see list below). Carter, Dresser, George, and Glendon are all legal scholars, Fukuyama is a professor of international political economy, and Sandel teaches contemporary political philosophy and the history of political thought. Wilson, a UCLA professor of Management and Public Policy emeritus, is also a former president of the American Political Science Association.

At the first meeting, Kass laid out his vision for the Council, saying that he expected it “to provide an adequate moral and ethical lens through which to view particular [technological] developments in their proper scope and depth.” President Bush – in his Executive Order creating the Council – also directed the panel to “be guided by the need to articulate fully the complex and often competing moral positions on

any given issue, rather than by an overriding concern to find consensus.”

Cloning, discussion of which began at the meeting, will be the body’s short-term focus, but it may eventually turn its attention to issues of more direct concern to social scientists. The Bush Executive Order named the protection of human subjects in research as a potential area of Council study. The panel’s agenda picks up on the mission of the recently expired National Bioethics Advisory Council, an entity appointed by President Clinton which issued its final report in September (see *Update*, September 24, 2001).

Full biographies on the appointees and the Executive Order creating the Council are available on the White House website, www.whitehouse.gov.

The President’s Council on Bioethics

Leon Kass, University of Chicago, *Chairman*

Elizabeth Blackburn, University of California, San Francisco

Stephen Carter, Yale Law School

Rebecca Dresser, Washington University School of Law

Daniel Foster, University of Texas Southwestern Medical School

Francis Fukuyama, Johns Hopkins University

Michael Gazzaniga, Dartmouth College, Director of fMRI Center for Brain Research (an NSF SBE infrastructure project)

Robert P. George, Princeton University

Alfonso Gomez-Lobo, Georgetown University

Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard University

William B. Hurlbut, Stanford University

Charles Krauthammer, *The Washington Post*

William F. May, Southern Methodist University

Paul McHugh, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Gilbert Meilaender, Valparaiso University

Janet D. Rowley, University of Chicago

Michael J. Sandel, Harvard University

James Q. Wilson, University of California, Los Angeles

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brintnall to Lead APSA

The American Political Science Association (APSA) has named Michael Brintnall as its new Executive Director. Brintnall replaces Catherine Rudder who left APSA to become a Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University. Brintnall begins his tenure on February 1. Robert J-P Hauck has been Acting Director since Rudder's departure in October.

Brintnall is currently Executive Director of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), a position he has held since 1997. He will be returning to APSA, where he was Director of Professional Affairs from 1990 to 1996. Prior to his previous service to APSA, Brintnall served on the faculty of Brown University and Mount Vernon College, as a research analyst and program director in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Mount Vernon.

Brintnall has a B.A. from Amherst and a Ph.D. in political science from M.I.T.

Kington to be Acting Director of NIAAA

Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Director Raynard Kington has been named acting director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) at the National Institutes of Health. Kington's appointment, effective January 1, 2002, follows the retirement of Enoch Gordis. While directing NIAAA, he will continue to serve as NIH Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research and Director of OBSSR.

Talbott Elected President of Brookings

Former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott is to assume the Presidency of the Brookings Institution on September 1, 2002. Brookings Chairman James A. Johnson remarked, "In addition to his keen intellect and deep background in key public policy issues, he will provide the energy, the judgment, and the sense of balance and fairness that our unique institution requires."

Talbott is currently the Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. He served in

the State Department from 1993 to 2001, as a Special Advisor to the Secretary of State for the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union for a year, and then as Deputy Secretary of State for seven years. Before entering government, Talbott was *Time* magazine's Editor at Large and foreign affairs columnist.

Talbott will succeed Ambassador Michael H. Armacost, who has served since 1995.

SURGEON GENERAL ISSUES CALL TO ACTION ON OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

"Overweight and obesity may soon cause as much preventable disease and death as cigarette smoking," suggested Surgeon General David Satcher at the December 13 release of *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Satcher called for research, among other efforts, to address the growing problem.

According to Satcher, about 300,000 deaths per year are associated with overweight and obesity, only 25 percent less than the 400,000 annual deaths associated with cigarette smoking. "Left unabated, overweight and obesity could wipe out the health gains made in areas such as heart disease, diabetes, several forms of cancer, and many other chronic health problems," warns the report.

Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson remarked that overweight and obesity are "among the most pressing new health challenges we face today." Urging people to "go out to play," the Secretary indicated that prevention will be the focus for the Department in 2002.

Research Needed

Taking action to address this issue, Thompson and Satcher maintained, will greatly increase the quality and length of life and reduce health disparities in the U.S. To these ends, the report sets priorities and establishes strategies and actions to reduce overweight and obesity. In addition to outlining strategies that communities can utilize to address the problem, the report reveals the need for research: to better understand the causes of overweight and obesity, to assess the effectiveness

of interventions, and to develop new communication and action strategies.

Body weight is determined by a range of factors, according to the report, and tackling behavioral and environmental factors may yield the greatest opportunities for prevention and treatment.

Communication, Action, Research, and Evaluation (CARE), the report argues, are the keys to action. Within these areas, the report suggests that successful efforts must focus not only on change at the individual level, but also on group influences, institutional and community influences, and public policy. While the public tends to think of overweight and obesity as a strictly personal matter, Satcher stressed that there is much that communities can and should do to address these problems. He cautioned that "action aimed exclusively at individual behavioral change, while not considering social, cultural, economic, and environmental influences, are likely to reinforce attitudes of stigmatization against the overweight and obese."

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity is available at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity.

OBSSR URGES INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Continuing the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) efforts to continue to integrate social, behavioral, and biological research, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) Director Raynard Kington is publicizing the recommendations of a series of key reports to the 27 Institutes and Centers within the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Speaking most recently at the National Advisory Council for Nursing Research, Kington informed the members of the various advisory councils of a host of recommendations made in a series of reports by the National Academies of Sciences. The reports include:

- *New Horizons in Health: An Integrative Approach* (2001)
- *Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral, and Societal Influences* (2001)

- *Promoting Health: Intervention Strategies from Social and Behavioral Research* (2000)
- *Cells and Surveys: Should Biological Measures be Included in Social Science Research?* (2001)
- *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* (2000)
- *Bridging Disciplines in the Brain, Behavioral, and Clinical Sciences* (2000)

Kington is also discussing the recommendations submitted in conjunction with the OBSSR-sponsored conference, *Toward Higher Levels of Analysis: Progress and Promise in Research on Cultural Dimensions of Health* (see Sources of Research Support on page seven). He observed that, given OBSSR's relatively modest budget, it cannot achieve its goals without working with the Institutes and Centers.

Kington focused on the most recent *New Horizons* report, commissioned by NIH to set social and behavioral science research priorities across the institutes. He discussed the ten areas identified in the report: predisease pathways, positive health, gene expression, personal ties, healthy communities, inequality, population health, interventions, methodology, and infrastructure (see *Update*, February 12, 2001).

OBSSR strongly endorses the areas outlined in the report, according to Kington, and argued that they are worthy of funding by NIH.

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defense, improving homeland security, and repairing the economy will take precedence.

The administration expects discretionary spending to increase by 9 percent, but most non-terrorism related items will face budget difficulties. As noted, deficits are back, with estimates ranging from \$21 billion to \$80 billion for the current FY 2002 budget, and \$14 billion to \$100 billion for FY 2003. (The discrepancies arise from projections based on current policies versus projections based on anticipated policy changes and spending increases.)

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In science and technology, the administration remains committed to doubling the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget. The National Science Foundation, dubbed a model agency by Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels, is also expected to do relatively well. The science and technology community may also benefit from its help on the terrorism issue (see related story). In addition, the administration faces a slew of unfilled positions, particularly at NIH (see *Update*, November 5, 2001).

With the "No Child Left Behind Act" reforming the federal role in elementary and secondary education, Congress and the administration can turn in 2002 to the issues of education research, statistics, and assessment as they ponder the future of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement. In addition, preliminary discussions concerning reauthorization of the Higher Education Act will also occur this year. The welfare reform law expires in 2002 and evaluations and assessments of its operation over the past five years should play a role in the reauthorization deliberations this year. The new Farm Bill still needs enactment, as does the attempt to reform the election procedures and machinery, an issue so much in focus at the beginning of 2001.

Thus, it should be an interesting year. As always, events can change agendas. Unlike last year, let's hope for more pleasant change-inducing activities.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the sponsoring agency for further information. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health

The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) and 15 Institutes and Centers of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are soliciting applications for research examining the social and cultural dimensions of health (PA-02-043). The program announcement is based on the recommendations submitted to the NIH in conjunction with the OBSSR-sponsored conference, *Toward Higher Levels of Analysis: Progress and Promise in*

Research on Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health (see *Update*, July 10, 2000).

The four goals of the announcement are to: 1) elucidate basic social and cultural constructs and processes used in health research; 2) clarify social and cultural factors in the etiology and consequences of health and illness; 3) link basic research to practice for improving prevention, treatment, health services, and dissemination; and 4) explore ethical issues in social and cultural research. The overall goal is to encourage further development of health-related social sciences research relevant to the missions of the NIH Institutes and Centers.

Participating NIH institutes and centers include: Cancer; Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine; Eye Institute; National Heart, Lung, and Blood; Human Genome Research; Child Health and Human Development; Dental and Craniofacial Research; Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Environmental Health Sciences, Mental Health; Aging; Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Arthritis, Musculoskeletal, and Skin Diseases; and Drug Abuse.

A summary of the conference can be obtained from OBSSR, NIH, Bethesda, MD 20892 (ask for publication NO. 01-5020) or viewed on the web at http://obssr.od.nih.gov/Conf_Wkshp/higherlevel/conference.html. Direct general inquiries regarding the scope and content of the PA to Ronald P. Abeles (301/496-7859 or abeles@nih.gov).

NIJ Graduate Research Fellowship Program

The National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) Graduate Research Fellowship Program provides dissertation research support to outstanding doctoral students undertaking independent research on issues in crime and justice. Students from any academic discipline are encouraged to apply.

The research must focus on a topic relevant to filling key gaps in scientific knowledge, especially those relevant to criminal justice policy or to the concerns of criminal justice agencies and other agencies focusing on crime and justice problems.

Application deadlines are **January 15, 2002**; **May 15, 2002**; and **September 16, 2002**. More information is at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/funding.htm.