

ZERHOUNI CONFIRMED AS 'FIRST NIH DIRECTOR IN CENTURY OF LIFE SCIENCES'

On May 2, the Senate via a voice vote confirmed Elias A. Zerhouni as the 15th director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The full Senate's confirmation vote followed the unanimous approval of Zerhouni earlier in the day by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Overwhelmingly supported by Committee members, the time between the President's announcement of his intent to nominate Zerhouni and the confirmation was significantly shorter (37 days) than that of former NIH directors Harold Varmus and Bernadine Healy.

At the April 30th confirmation hearing, Senators Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Paul Sarbanes (D-MD) introduced Zerhouni to the Committee. Mikulski thanked Acting NIH Director Ruth Kirschstein for "the outstanding job that she has done." The Senator recognized that for the past two years, Kirschstein guided "the NIH during its transition time of more." "This Committee, this Congress and this nation owes Dr. Kirschstein a debt of gratitude for her stewardship," Mikulski said.

Noting that if confirmed, Zerhouni would become the "first NIH Director in this new century of the life sciences," Committee Chairman Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) lauded the NIH. "NIH research not only gives us information about what keeps us healthy or makes us sick but it reveals new insights into who we are as human beings. . . No less important than basic genetic studies are the recent findings from NIH scientists that structured lifestyle change can significantly reduce the risk of diabetes, sparing millions of American from this deadly disease," Kennedy noted.

New Strategies May Be Required

Sharing his "perspectives" about what research should be in the 21st Century, Zerhouni informed (see *Zerhouni*, page 6)

DOUBLING NSF BUDGET GAINS SUPPORT OF HOUSE SCIENCE PANEL

With the five year doubling of the National Institutes of Health's budget about to come to a successful end, the focus has shifted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) and its budget needs. For the past two years, Senators Christopher Bond (R-MO) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) have enunciated their support for doubling NSF's budget over five years. Unfortunately, financial constraints and competing spending priorities have kept them from delivering on this promise from their perches as Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate VA, HUD, Appropriations Subcommittee (both have held each position in the past two years due to the shift in Senate control caused by the defection of Sen. Jim Jeffords (I-VT) from the Republican party).

On May 7, the House Science Committee led by its Chairman Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) jumped into the fray with a bill to reauthorize the NSF for three years that would provide a 15 percent increase each year, thus placing the Foundation on a doubling track. The legislation, H.R. 4664, received bipartisan endorsement from Rep. Ralph Hall (D-

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TX), Ranking Democrat on the Science panel, as well as Research Subcommittee Chair Rep. Nick Smith (R-MI) and Ranking Democrat Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX). Johnson had introduced her own doubling reauthorization bill last year.

At a press conference, where Reps. Vern Ehlers (R-MI), Connie Morella (R-MD), and Lamar Smith (R-TX) also endorsed H.R. 4664, Boehlert proclaimed: "This bill will help NSF get the real money it needs to succeed in all its tasks." He further justified the increased spending by asserting that "NSF has the broadest research mission of any Federal science agency and the clearest educational mission. It needs the funding that goes with that expansive – and expensive – mandate." Many representatives of the science and engineering community, most of whom, including COSSA, issued press statements supporting the budget doubling, attended the press conference.

The legislation would authorize NSF budgets of \$5.515 billion for FY 2003, \$6.343 billion for FY 2004, and \$7.294 billion for FY 2004. The President's FY 2003 request for the Foundation is \$5.036 billion. Unlike past NSF authorization bills, H.R. 4664 does not provide specific authorized spending for the research directorates, including the one for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE). The bill does set out spending levels for

current NSF initiatives in networking and information technology research, Nanoscale Science and Engineering, and Mathematical Sciences. It omits the current Biocomplexity initiative and SBE priority area. The bill also has language that underscores the concern physical scientists and engineers have expressed about their relative underfunding in recent years when compared to life scientists.

The Research Subcommittee marked up H.R. 4664 on May 9 and sent it on to the full Science Committee. At a hearing preceding the markup, Rep. Gil Gutnecht (R-MN), noting his membership on the Budget Committee, threw some cold water on the euphoria of the past few days. He reminded people of the many competing interests, such as defense and homeland security, that could make it difficult for the appropriators to enact actual spending levels for NSF that would match the authorization levels.

The full Science Committee will take up the bill on May 22. There has been some question as to whether the House leadership will allow this legislation, which comes in at a significantly higher amount than the President's budget request and the House budget resolution, to reach the House floor. In the Senate, NSF reauthorization goes through both the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Senate action may occur in June.

MARBURGER: 'NSF MOST IMPORTANT SCIENCE AGENCY WE HAVE'

Presidential Science Adviser and Office of Science and Technology Policy Director John Marburger paid a visit to the National Science Board (NSB) meeting on May 9. The Board heard him call the National Science Foundation, which the Board oversees, as the "most important science agency we have." He would not commit himself, however, to supporting the doubling-the-budget effort.

He also reiterated his earlier statements (see *Update*, April 15, 2002) about the importance of the social sciences, again suggesting their underutilization in examining the critical cultural and societal problems facing this country and the world. He stated that these disciplines are benefiting

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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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from the advances in the enabling technologies that have transformed the conduct of science, particularly enhancements of computer capacity. "Something is happening" in the social sciences "that bears watching," Marburger concluded.

Asserting that science and technology are at the "frontier of complexity," Marburger suggested that we are faced with a wealth of new opportunities and that choosing areas to support is going to be difficult. He called for "strong planning" and "tough management." In addition, he urged more inter-agency science coordination within the federal government.

The Science Advisor expressed concern about the availability of people to do the work of science. Marburger focused on the now familiar argument regarding the heavy reliance on what he called "foreign intellectual capital." He posed the dilemma of science that is increasingly globalized and yet continues to focus on heightened issues of national security. Thus, it is necessary to work out policies on foreign student visas and these individuals' ability to take all courses at American universities. In addition, we need to figure out why American students resist physical science and engineering careers.

Marburger also urged more attention to the "process of education." Again, he bemoaned the lack of connectivity of education research results to teacher training and classroom practice. He indicated that more inter-agency collaborations, such as the Interagency Education Research Initiative, might be in the offing.

Science Board Appoints New Chairman, Seeks New Members

The National Science Board appointed Warren Washington, a meteorologist and Senior Scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research as its new Chairman. Washington replaces former Tulane President and economist Eamon Kelly, who served two terms as Chairman, and who has rotated off the Board. Diana Natalicio, President of the University of Texas, El Paso and trained as a linguist, is the new Vice Chair, a position she has held previously.

With the vacancies created by Kelly and seven others whose terms expired, including University of California, Santa Cruz President M.R.C.

Greenwood, the NSB is now short on members. Marburger assured the remaining members that President Bush would announce their new colleagues soon. However, since these positions require Senate confirmation, it is unlikely the Board will return to its full complement of 24 members any time soon.

NSF Grant Size and Duration Survey Released

The National Science Board also heard Janice Ballou, Vice President of Mathematica Policy Research, explain the results of the Congressionally mandated survey of National Science Foundation (NSF) grant size and duration. In recent years, NSF Director Rita Colwell and others have argued that NSF grants were too small and too short. They justified advocating for a significant budget increase by espousing the goal of increasing grant size and duration.

The results from 5,200 principal investigators (PI) who held FY 2001 grant awards indicated that NSF grants should be increased from their current median of \$83,000 to a median of \$250,000 per year. The length of the grant, the PIs concluded, should be boosted from the current three years to five years.

Increasing grant size and duration, according to the respondents, would enhance their pursuit of innovative ideas, augment their collaboration with researchers in their subject area, allow them to achieve their research objectives in the specified time, boost their capacity to attract more graduate students, and increase their collaboration with researchers in different subject areas.

Ballou noted that the survey team is continuing to conduct an analysis of more than 500 pages of PI responses to open-ended questions concerning this issue. She expects this analysis to be available in June.

HOUSE PASSES OERI OVERHAUL; SENATE COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING MAY 23

The House passed H.R. 3801 (see *Update*, March 18, 2002) by voice vote on April 30. The bill reauthorizes the Department of Education's research programs, but would replace the Office of

Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) with a new Academy of Education Sciences (AES).

The Academy would be headed by a director appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. This individual would be charged with proposing research ideas to an advisory board, but the bill specifically mandates the AES to carry out two studies – one to measure the contributions of illegal drugs and alcohol to school violence and the other to assess dropout rates.

Action now turns to the Senate, where the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a hearing on the topic May 23rd. The hearing was originally scheduled for April 30 then May 8, but it was pushed back both times by scheduling conflicts.

NATIONAL ACADEMY PANEL EXPLORES TERRORISM

Leading up to its anticipated report in early June, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) presented a panel on terrorism at its annual meeting at the end of April. The session featured Neil Smelser, distinguished sociologist and former head of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences; Thomas Schelling, Distinguished University Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland; Arie Kruglanski, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Maryland; and Martin Marty, Professor Emeritus of Religion at the University of Chicago.

Smelser, who is chairing the NAS terrorism sub-panel on the social and behavioral sciences, and who, along with Schelling, sits on the full committee producing the report, spoke to the cultural trauma created by the September 11 attacks. Noting the horror of the event, Smelser suggested that the textbook manifestations of cultural trauma were clearly present in the aftermath. Such attributes as heightened group consciousness, emotional numbing, collective mourning, national brooding, and references to the sacred were all part of the post-event reactions. Other signs of the cultural trauma phenomenon included: communal solidarity evidenced by a rallying around New York, increases in trust in government, evocation of super-patriotism, and the dehumanization of the perpetrators.

Kruglanski focused on the motivations and social psychology of terrorism and terrorists. Much of his discussion was based on studies of ETA Basque terrorists in Spain and the Bader-Meinhoff gang in Germany. He suggested that a terrorist lives “life on the edge of a cliff.” Terrorists are generally not psychopaths and they have often come from middle-class backgrounds. Terrorism has a strong ideological foundation, often with grandiose goals. The ideology provides terrorists with a base of support and a list of collective grievances that they believe can only be overcome with acts of terrorism, which they see as glorious. Terrorists are indoctrinated and strongly influenced by the terrorist groups they join. Those who become terrorists are often kept in isolation, dehumanized, made to adore leaders, and brainwashed into intolerance of doubt and ambiguity.

Marty focused his remarks on what he called religious “fundamentalisms.” He traced their origin back to the 1920s, when the Muslim Brotherhood and various Hindu groups were born. These fundamentalisms were reactions to modernity, although Marty noted the irony that many of today’s groups rely on modern technology to foment their ideas. He asserted that these groups are reacting against what they perceive as forces arrayed against them such as pluralism. Establishing a we/they dichotomy, fundamentalists identify those not with them as “the other” and see these outsiders as a total threat to their identity. They believe that they are “representing the divine,” usually based on a sense of a direct call from God.

Finally, Schelling wondered why there haven’t been any more terrorist attacks on the U.S. since September 11. One hypothesis is that the attacks in Afghanistan and other anti-terrorist actions since then have incapacitated Al Qaeda and deterred their state sponsors because of the fate of the Taliban. Schelling, however, does not really accept this. He suggested that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon “set a high standard” and are “an impossible act to follow.” He also noted that although the attacks certainly publicized U.S. vulnerability, panic and major disruptions did not occur. He is concerned that the next attack, especially if it involves biological or chemical weapons, will expose the inadequacy of U.S. preparedness, particularly in its public health system, to cope with such a disaster. He recommended the establishment of networks of researchers and others

to utilize the knowledge culled from previous disaster studies to help prepare the country.

BROOKINGS RELEASES HOMELAND SECURITY REPORT

As the Bush Administration continues to debate its homeland security strategy, the Brookings Institution convened a session on April 30 to release a report on approaches the government should take to deal with this important issue. The report was co-authored by Brookings scholars Ivo H. Daalder, Robert E. Litan, Michael E. O'Hanlon, Peter R. Orszag, and James B. Steinberg; University of Maryland Professor I.M. Destler; and Brookings Research Assistant David Gunter.

Steinberg moderated the discussion, which opened with special remarks from Senator Fred Thompson (R-TN) and Congresswoman Jane Harman (D-CA). Both officials commented on the Administration's ongoing work to complete the report on homeland security that it has promised by July 1. Thompson praised the Brookings effort as a "major aide to the Administration as they work to finalize their report." Harman was equally flattering of the Brookings, but she criticized the Bush team, saying that the issue of homeland security is being addressed in a "piecemeal fashion." She also emphasized that "the Administration owes us a strategy."

The assembled scholars then took time to spell out the contents of their report, which recommends the followings measures:

- Major improvements and expansions in the Coast Guard and Customs Service, well beyond those already suggested by the Bush Administration.
- Substantial expansions in domestic law enforcement agencies (again, well beyond those proposed by the Administration) and in linking together and modernization of their databases.
- Various measures for reducing the odds that biological agents could circulate through air intake systems of major buildings and other large facilities.

- Changes in the nation's food safety programs.
- Additional measures for protecting buildings against conventional explosives and fires.
- Improved security measures for the nation's nuclear power plants, toxic chemical plants, and biological research facilities.
- A new approach to monitoring and protecting the nation's airspace.
- More background checks for drivers of trucks carrying hazardous materials and other related safety measures.
- Numerous specific protective measures for other types of public and private infrastructure.

The report also addresses how the Federal government could be organized to oversee homeland security issues. It notes that a cabinet department or lead agency approach would provide a clear starting point for Federal undertakings and enhance accountability, but this would be outweighed by the fact that too many critical functions would be outside of this agency's jurisdiction. These include the military assets of the Department of Defense, the law enforcement capabilities of the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the biological attack response functions of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the terrorist tracking abilities of the intelligence community.

The report also dismisses the idea of an agency established within the Executive Office of the President. It explains that such an agency would take shape much in the way of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and that few previous "Drug Czars" (as the ONDCP head is known) have had notable success. Instead, the authors argue that the current Bush model may be best for the job. They assert that Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge and his office should be maintained and strengthened statutorily.

The full report can be accessed online at <http://www.brookings.edu>.

(ZERHOUNI, from page 1)

the Committee that he believes that “biomedical research in 2002 is at a turning point that may require new strategies.”

Referencing the stem cell controversy, Zerhouni emphasized that he believes that “the NIH Director should not be, or be made to be, factional, but must always remain factual.” My role as NIH Director will be to inform the debate by developing and communicating the most objective scientific data, he said.

He underscored that the most important role for the NIH director is to reestablish morale and momentum and the vision and energy to recruit NIH institute directors and key staffers that will make the agency even more effective than it has been.

Responding to Kennedy’s probing of what, if any, changes that he might want to see in NIH under his leadership, Zerhouni stressed that it “is important to identify what are the bottlenecks for science today.” The Nominee also emphasized the translation of research into clinical reality.

Kennedy asked Zerhouni what the role of the NIH should be in strengthening human subject protections and noted the recent hearing by the Subcommittee on Public Health regarding “the serious gaps in our current protections for human subjects and research.” (See *Update*, April 29, 2002). Declaring it “a very, very important issue,” Zerhouni stressed that the problem could “really slow down medical progress if not handled well.” Zerhouni acknowledged that the one thing that he learned from the recent tragic experience of having a research volunteer die is that it made him understand that “we have to change the emphasis from research to protection. And, to do that we need to change the culture more than just the regulations.”

‘Very, Very Little’ Disease Prevention

While noting “the NIH has made astonishing progress in diagnosing and treating disease,” Kennedy expressed his disappointment that “very, very little” is done on disease prevention. Millions of Americans still suffer from diseases that are preventable. “I think this is an enormously important area,” related Kennedy. We’re going to

be interested in trying to find ways of working with you on this area as well, he told the Nominee.

“It has to have a role, Senator,” Zerhouni responded. This isn’t something that we can ignore. Many of the diseases we suffer from are often almost self-inflicted because of lifestyles and dietary intake and other characteristics, he continued. “How we do the research to address these aspects of behavioral modification . . . the better we’ll be able to prevent these preventable diseases.” Acknowledging that he is aware that there are diseases that cannot be prevented, Zerhouni argued that for those diseases that are preventable “we need to do a lot more than what we’re doing.”

Diversity

Mikulski, noting that the issue of diversity is very important to her, asked Zerhouni of his plans to create a “new demographic profile” at the NIH. The loss of talent is the number one problem NIH needs to examine, he answered, and highlighted that in the pre-graduate and graduate training programs the diversity of individuals is more than what you see later on. He stressed that he has a “very specific sense about the issue, and will focus on the retention mechanisms used by the NIH as Director of the agency.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS**COSSA Welcomes New Contributor**

COSSA welcomes the University of Miami as our newest contributor. We look forward to working with the University on issues of interest to its social and behavioral scientists.

COSSA to Hold Briefing on Welfare Reform

COSSA will hold a briefing entitled *Welfare, Children, and Families: Results from a Three Cities Study* on May 17 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in Room 1539 of the Longworth House Office Building. For more information or to RSVP, please send an e-mail to coffa@coffa.org.

GIS Science Conference Seeks Papers

The second international conference on Geographic Information Science (GIS) will be held in Boulder, Colorado from September 25-28, 2002. Those wishing to present papers must submit extended abstracts of 500-1000 words to papers@giscience.org. For more information about the conference go to www.ncgia.ucsb.edu.

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.

NIH Seeks Applications for Research on Ethical Issues in Human Studies

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is soliciting research grant applications to investigate ethical issues in human subjects research in order to inform and optimize protections for human participation in research. The program announcement (PA-02-103) is designed to support empirical research addressing the ethical challenges of involving human participants in research. Topics appropriate for applications include: minimizing risks in human research; issues in informed consent; and oversight of research and research data. For more information contact Della M. Hann, NIH Office of Extramural Research at (301) 402-2725 or hand@od.nih.gov. A website also provides additional information about Institute/Office specific research interests that will be supported by the PA: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/ethics_contacts.htm.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) is seeking applications for educational activities related to the NICHD mission to support research on the processes that determine population size, growth, composition, and distribution, and on the determinants and consequences of population processes. Activities designed to address three key objectives are encouraged. These include: 1) the effective dissemination and use of complex data sets; 2) the

extension of interdisciplinary science related to population; and 3) other methodological tools to population research.

Inquiries regarding the program announcement (PAR-02-099) are encouraged. For more information contact: Christine Bachrach, Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch at (301) 496-9485 or cbachrach@nih.gov. E-mail communication is preferred.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NIOSH announces the availability of funds for FY 2002 for grants to support innovative research designed to reduce future health and safety impacts associated with violence in the workplace. The purpose of the announcement is to enhance existing knowledge by supporting research on workplace violence that addresses risk factors, development of new interventions, and evaluation of existing interventions.

A letter of intent is due by June 11, 2002 and the application receipt date is July 11, 2002. Inquiries are encouraged. For more information see www.cdc.gov/niosh under funding opportunities and/or contact Lee M. Sanderson, Office of Extramural Programs at (404) 498-2546 or lsanderson@cdc.gov.

Identification and Prevention of Middle Childhood Precursors of Risky Sexual Behavior

The NICHD, National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute of Nursing Research and the NIH Office of AIDS Research invite applications proposing biobehavioral and neuroimaging studies of children ages six to 12 years to identify precursors of risky sexual behavior. The Program Announcement (PA-02-101) is designed to identify antecedents of risky sexual behavior, understand and encourage healthy sexual development and behavior, and prevent sexual behavior before the child or adolescent is cognitively, emotionally, and physically prepared for the potential consequences.

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-02-101.html>.