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This Week . . .

- ✓ ● NSF and Congress: The Waltz Continues
 - ✓ Subcommittee Adds \$3 Million for Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - ✓ Senate and House Appropriations Committees Hear Bloch
 - ✓ Senate Budget Committee Draft Includes NSF Increase
 - ✓ Science Committee Chairman Announces Retirement
- ✓ ● Gammon Testifies on Library of Congress Cuts
- NIA: Looking Good for FY 1987
- ✓ ● JEC Examines Quality of Economic Statistics
- ✓ ● The CIA and Academia: A View from the Agency
 - EVIST Still Alive at NSF
 - Sources of Research Support: Department of Health and Human Services

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NSF AND CONGRESS: THE WALTZ CONTINUES

Subcommittee Adds \$3 Million for Social and Behavioral Sciences

The House Science, Research, and Technology Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Doug Walgren (D-PA), added \$3 million to the Directorate for Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences (BBS) and \$4 million to the Directorate for Science and Engineering Education (SEE) during its markup of the FY 1987 authorization bill for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The \$7 million was shifted from the Antarctic program.

Calling the administration's proposed NSF budget "extremely sound," Rep. Walgren was happy the Subcommittee could authorize the full request of \$1.685 billion, a 16% increase over the FY 1986 post Gramm-Rudman-Hollings spending figure. The extra \$3 million for BBS would be split among the Division of Social and Economic Science (\$2 million) and the behavioral science programs in the Division of Behavioral and Neural Sciences (\$1 million).

The additional funds were for individual investigator research projects which the Subcommittee felt had been short-

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changed in the past few years. In the early 1980s, close to 70% of funding in the social and economic sciences went to individual investigators; in the proposed FY 1987 budget, it is estimated that only 62% of funds would go for individual-based research projects as the costs of maintaining data bases continue to escalate. The Subcommittee wants the social and behavioral science programs to constitute 5% of the NSF budget. In the FY 1986 revised current plan they are 3.4%. In the administration's requested budget for FY 1987 they were 4.7%.

The Subcommittee recommended spending the extra funds for Science and Engineering Education to strengthen the college science instrumentation programs and to expand it to include two-year and community colleges.

Senate and House Appropriations Committees Hear Bloch

On March 5, Erich Bloch, Director of NSF, appeared before the Senate HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee chaired by Senator Jake Garn (R-UT). Bloch made the case for increased funding for his agency proposed by the administration. Senator Garn responded by noting that the Subcommittee will have "a difficult time with your budget." Other Senators echoed this. Senator Jim Abdnor (R-SD) said: "We will do the best for NSF as humanly possible in these difficult times." It was clear that the Senators felt the significant increase for NSF in the "era of GRH" was going to be difficult to sustain.

On March 11 and 12, the House HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Edward Boland (D-MA), scrutinized the proposed NSF budget in much more detail than the Senate. Chairman Boland made it explicit: "We will have a serious problem defending this kind of budget on the floor." He particularly was concerned with giving NSF a big increase, while other programs within the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee were proposed for substantial decreases and in some cases elimination. Boland asked Bloch point blank: "Why should we give NSF an increase, while other programs are cut to zero?" Bloch replied that "economic competitiveness is a war we are fighting," and that basic scientific research was an important weapon. He also said we "cannot afford to leave a generation [of scientists and engineers] behind." Boland asked Bloch to provide the Subcommittee with NSF's reaction to an appropriation at the current services level which would be \$1.516 billion, about a \$30 million increase over FY 1986 post-GRH funding level.

Rep. William Green (R-NY), ranking Republican on the Subcommittee, asked Bloch questions about the social and behavioral sciences. Bloch acknowledged that the social and economic sciences were less of a priority this year than last year, although they would participate in the special emphases on computational science and biotechnology. He also noted that social and behavioral scientists would have a role in research conducted at the engineering research centers supported by NSF. He blamed Congress for the small increases that occurred last year, after the large increases proposed by the Foundation.

It was also noteworthy that Bloch did include one sentence about the social and behavioral sciences in his written testimony for the Subcommittee. He had neglected to do so in earlier testimony, which COSSA called to his attention.

Senate Budget Committee Draft Includes NSF Increase

A draft budget resolution released by Budget Committee Chairman Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) includes a proposed increase of \$100 million for the NSF within a \$600 million increase for the Science Function (#250). This action would allow the Senate HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee some leeway to help NSF. COSSA would like to thank those social and behavioral scientists who responded to our request for letters to members of the Senate Budget Committee. The Committee is still deliberating, and hopes to report a resolution by the end of this month. Their counterparts on the House Budget Committee are still talking about freezing the Science Function at FY 1986 funding levels.

Science Committee Chairman Announces Retirement

Rep. Don Fuqua (D-FL), Chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee since 1979, announced that he will not seek another term this November. Fuqua, who has been the driving force behind the Committee's two-year study of U.S. science policy, has been in the House since 1963. Next in line to chair the Committee is Representative Robert Roe (D-NJ), an engineer whose major interest has been in water resources policy.

GAMMON TESTIFIES ON LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CUTS

Calling the cutbacks at the Library of Congress "ill-conceived" and "the height of folly," Samuel Gammon, Executive Director of the American Historical Association (AHA), testified on behalf of the AHA and COSSA before the House Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations, Rep. Vic Fazio (D-CA), Chairman, on March 4. He urged the Congress to restore funds to "this venerable institution of learning."

Gammon joined other witnesses from the National Humanities Alliance and the Association of Research Libraries in decrying the "disastrous consequences" for the Library of the current budget cuts induced by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. Those consequences include: reductions in hours, closing the Library on Sunday and all weeknights (except Wednesday); reductions in acquisitions; and staff reductions, particularly in the cataloging division.

In earlier testimony to the Subcommittee, Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin made an impassioned plea on behalf of the Library's importance to the nation. Meanwhile, as the Library implemented the reduced hours last week, many sit-ins and arrests took place.

NIA: LOOKING GOOD FOR FY 1987

Calling the figures "totally inadequate," Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-CT), Chairman of the Senate Labor/HHS/ED Appropriations Subcommittee, gave a clear indication that the administration's FY 1987 budget request, at least as regards the National Institutes of Health, was in trouble again this year. Weicker's comment came in a Subcommittee hearing on the budget for the National Institute on Aging (NIA), held March 6, during which he told Dr. T. Franklin Williams, NIA Director, that his committee put great emphasis on the work of NIA: "nothing is more critical than your work." The Senator further commented that if Social Security payments are protected -- something he favored -- but the NIA's budget is cut, "you are not helping the elderly."

In recent years, Congress has raised administration budget requests for the NIH agencies. For FY 1986, for example, the administration request for NIA was \$135.1 million; the appropriation was \$156.5 million, with considerable emphasis placed by Congress on centers for research on Alzheimer's disease. For FY 1987, the administration figure is \$146.6 million, considerably under the NIA's current spending level (after Gramm-Rudman-Hollings) of \$149.8 million. (The administration has also proposed a recession for NIA during this fiscal year, which would bring it to \$147.1 million, but that is highly unlikely to be accepted by Congress.)

Dr. Williams, in his testimony before the Subcommittee, emphasized not only Alzheimer's disease but the importance of research in molecular genetics, in osteoporosis and osteoarthritis as these processes relate to bone fractures in the elderly, to the burden on families of the elderly ill, and to the need for powerful economic models for calculating the costs of illness in this age group. For example, he estimated the cumulative cost of current levels of hip fractures (about 200,000 new cases per year, of which some 80 percent occur in persons over 85 years of age) at about \$7 billion, but pointed out that such estimates are based on inadequate knowledge. Senator William Proxmire (D-WI), also a member of the Subcommittee, inquired further about the costs of illness among the elderly, and responded to Dr. Williams' estimates with a wry summary: "not in the same class as Star Wars, but still very alarming."

Sen. Proxmire's questions focused not only on the cost of illness but on the larger structure of care-giving, prevention, and social support -- for example, mechanisms for avoiding hospitalization, on the one hand, and minimizing family stress on the other. He asked specifically about NIA's level of activity in health costs research and service planning.

The March 6 hearing was one of many indications that the congressional appropriations committees are hard at work this year. In the NIH arena, the outcomes are likely to be familiar: necessary increases from the point of view of Congress, budget-busting from the viewpoint of the White House. How much this process contributes to reaching the brink of an FY 1987 GRH across-the-board deficit-reduction cut remains to be seen.

JEC EXAMINES QUALITY OF ECONOMIC STATISTICS

The Joint Economic Committee, led by Rep. David Obey (D-WI) and Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), held a hearing on March 17 to discuss the "deteriorating quality of our economic statistics." The hearing was centered around a study, "Opportunities for Improving Economic Statistics," prepared for the Committee by Dr. Courtenay Slater, President of CEC Associates.

The report suggests that "too many statistical series are outmoded, and there are too many data gaps." As a result, information about new industries and rapidly growing economic sectors is often scanty and sometimes misleading. In addition, measures of economic well-being are incomplete and, in some cases, distorted. Slater blames these problems on the combined effect of tight budgets, denial of reasonable management discretion in the allocation of funds (exacerbated by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings across-the-board reductions), and weakened coordination among statistical agencies.

Senator Sarbanes noted that spending on all of our statistical programs accounts for less than 0.2% of the federal budget. He stated that "for very minor savings in budget terms we are risking inappropriate decisions in both government and private business that could cost the country billions."

Other witnesses included Joseph Duncan, chief statistician for Dun & Bradstreet Corporation and a former director of the government's statistical policy coordinating office, who condemned the neglect of the quality of federal statistical series and key indicators upon which countless investment decisions are made. Katherine Wallman, Executive Director of the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS), expressed concern with the high turnover rates in government statistical agencies, which made it more difficult to attract and keep talented people to serve the federal statistical system.

THE CIA AND ACADEMIA: A VIEW FROM THE AGENCY

The relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and researchers in academia has been a controversial one throughout the history of the agency. Robert M. Gates, Deputy Director for Intelligence, reviewed this history in a speech at Harvard University last month. He also announced changes in CIA policies regarding prepublication review of scholars' manuscripts and the public acknowledgement of CIA support for their work.

The new policy on prepublication review states that scholars who wish to publish books or articles based on findings from CIA-funded research are required to submit the manuscript for review only if they had access to classified information. Previously, all manuscripts were subject to a prepublication review.

In addition, CIA will henceforth permit acknowledgement of research funding for work that is later independently published by

a scholar unless: 1) the scholar requests privacy, or 2) it is determined that formal, public association of CIA with the research would prove damaging to the United States.

Gates noted the role academic scholars had played in the early days of the CIA, and the decline of that relationship, beginning with the Bay of Pigs in 1961, through the Vietnam War era, and the revelations of the Rockefeller Commission and Church Committee during the mid-1970s. In recent years there had been improvement in this relationship, which Gates attributed to developments abroad, recognition that CIA, together with the Departments of State and Defense, has been an important supporter of area studies and foreign language training, that CIA has become a primary source of employment for specialists in these areas, and the recognition of the role CIA played in supporting a congressionally approved endowment for Soviet studies.

EVIST STILL ALIVE AT NSF

The National Science Foundation (NSF) this week put forth a special call for "preliminary proposals" for studies "to examine ethical or value issues associated with current U.S. scientific or engineering research or its use." The issuance of the circular puts to rest lingering doubts in the research community about whether any ethics and values studies would be supported in this fiscal year by the NSF -- except insofar as proposals for such studies might be supported by the various NSF programs, in competition with traditional research proposals directed to those programs.

Last year, Ethics and Values in Science and Technology (EVIST) was a separate program in the Foundation, and spent about \$1 million. NSF Director Erich Bloch had planned to terminate the program entirely. Faced with criticism in the research world and in Congress, he decided to continue the level, but not the format, of funding in FY 1986, expecting the four NSF research directorates to contribute half of those funds and to make decisions by some kind of inter-directorate procedure. Although congressional authorizing committees called for EVIST activity, House Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Edward Boland (D-MA) directed NSF not to spend FY 1986 funds for that purpose. In recent weeks, a compromise has been negotiated in private.

The brief call for preliminary proposals does not use the EVIST title per se, nor does it spell out how proposals will be reviewed. It does name Rachele Hollander, former EVIST program officer, as the contact person for pre-proposals. Although Hollander is now part of the Biological, Behavioral, and Social Science Directorate, the announcement emphasizes that ethics and values studies can be addressed to the research activities of any NSF directorate. The Update understands that about \$0.5 million will be available for ethics and values studies this year. What level of support will be available in FY 1987 may depend partly on the number and quality of proposals and inquiries received in coming months.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Division of Maternal and Child Health
(Bureau of Health Care Delivery and Assistance)

The Division of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) provides funding for research and training; genetic disease testing, counseling, and information projects; hemophilia diagnostic and treatment centers; and demonstration projects of regional or national significance. Research support is available for applied projects in a broad array of topics in maternal and child health. Projects may range from very applied clinical research to broad behavioral science topics. General interest areas include: validation of currently accepted health care practices; studies of innovation before they are widely adopted; family, economic, cultural, and environmental factors in disease etiology; effects of federal and state health care policies; continuation and expansion of on-going data collection programs; and improvement of research methods.

The announcement of FY 1986 funding availability specified several priorities, including low birth-weight infants, neonatal and postneonatal mortality, barriers to initiation and continuation of breastfeeding, and services for handicapped and chronically ill children and young adults.

Budget: The Division has an FY 1986 budget of \$13.6 million for new and competing renewal grants. In FY 1985, approximately \$2.5 million was spent for research.

Disciplines Supported: Appropriate fields include psychology, sociology, anthropology, and health economics.

Review Process: Applications are reviewed by a standing committee of nonfederal members.

Deadlines: Deadlines for 1986 are April 1 and August 1.

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