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Proof of the Pudding

The appointment of Science Officers to serve at several of our embassies (see page 1561, this issue) prompts us to take another look at the role of science in the Department of State. The revival of the science office, which began nearly a year ago with the appointment of Wallace R. Brode as Science Adviser to the Secretary of State [*Science* 127, 175 (24 Jan. 1958)], indicated that the Department recognized the need for a mechanism to ensure that scientific factors would be taken into account in decisions affecting foreign policy and that contact between foreign and American scientists needed to be facilitated.

The general pattern for the organization of the Science Adviser's Office is now clear. At the base is a Washington staff of which the principal officers, in addition to Brode, are as follows: Deputy Science Adviser L. H. Farinholt, who was formerly professor of chemistry and director of the chemical laboratories at Columbia University and science attaché in London in 1954; Assistant Science Adviser Mary E. Corning, physical chemist, who was formerly with the National Bureau of Standards; Raymond L. Zwemier, zoologist, who was for three years chief of the Division of International Cooperation for Scientific Research at UNESCO in Paris; and Assistant to the Science Adviser Walter M. Rudolph, who has been in the science program since its beginnings in 1947.

The Science Officers (who appear to be equivalent to the attachés under the earlier program) will serve for two years and will be backed up by Deputy Science Officers, who will serve similar but overlapping terms to provide for continuity. These officers will be assigned only to certain major and centrally located countries, but they will be expected to keep abreast of developments that bear on foreign policy in neighboring countries. Provision is being made for carrying out similar functions in countries beyond the purview of the Science Officers by the designation of foreign service officers, who have the requisite familiarity with science, to cooperate with the science office.

This is the formal structure. How it will work in practice will depend less upon its table of organization than upon a number of unspecified and informal relations. However favorable the predisposition of the old-line foreign service officers may be to the newly appointed Science Officers, the latter will still have to work out their precise role in the embassies and gain an accepted place. So also, the Science Adviser's office will have to maintain and improve its working relations with such other branches within the Department as the International Cooperation Administration and the Technical Cooperation Administration and with outside agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the National Academy-National Research Council, and the Killian Committee.

The new office has its work cut out for it. Not the least of its tasks will be that of avoiding the gradual attrition that afflicted its predecessor, an attrition which was the more readily brought about by the short-term appointments of scientists; when their terms came to an end, no successors were appointed. The new office has a greater assurance of continuity in that its Washington base is permanently staffed, but the Science Officers are still vulnerable by virtue of their limited terms of appointment. Perhaps the best remedy is to establish career appointments for at least some of the Science Officers, who would thus become scientist-diplomats. A permanent cadre of this kind would give greater continuity of experience and increase the chances that the work would be maintained when the political winds blow cold.—G.DuS.