ing to similar but individual action. Rather, united action tends to degrade scientists in the minds of those to whom we have entrusted our political and military activity and does harm to the cause and to science. I strongly believe that all persons, individually or collectively, should make such protests if they so desire, but they should not do so in ways that imply that they are beings having superior views because of their training or background. I am sure that our country is as safe in the hands of our duly elected and appointed representatives as it would be in the hands of scientists, engineers, physicians, or persons of any special discipline. If any scientist wants to participate in the administration of this country, let him get himself elected or appointed to an appropriate government office.

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As a member of AAAS I was not pleased to read the resolution on Vietnam of the AAAS Council (7 Jan., p. 55). I believe the Council has misused the prestige of scientists to promote a point of view on a matter unrelated to the interests, responsibilities, and competence of scientists as a special group. Bakers, plumbers, ballet dancers, dentists, and scientists, as citizens, are all entitled to an opinion on the conduct of the war in Vietnam, but despite the Council's embarrassing effort to make it seem otherwise I fail to see why there is a scientist's position any more than a dentist's position or a plumber's position. . . .

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Preservation of Privacy in Testing

In line with Wolfle's editorial, "Psychological testing and the invasion of privacy" (31 Dec. 1965), I would like to suggest that a solution to the dilemma might be possible through "on-line testing" by a computer. Two approaches are possible now.

1) The test questions could be stored in a computer and presented to the subject privately, one question at a time, via a typewriter printer or a visual display. The subject would key in his response and be presented with the next question. After the subject has answered all questions, the computer would be programmed to score the tests, present the results in proper form, and erase the subject's responses to the individual questions from its storage unit.

2) Another approach would be to use an answer sheet for the subject's responses. The subject himself would insert the sheet into an optical scanner for direct input to a computer or scoring machine programmed to score the test. The summary scores (not the individual responses) would then be supplied in the appropriate format for interpretation, and the subject would destroy his answer sheet.

In both of these approaches the responses of the subject would be known only to the subject. This, I believe, would minimize one of the main objections to psychological tests and would probably lead to more accurate responses by the subject.

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Metric System: Congressional Study

Joseph Mayer ("Where does the metric system prevail?"—Letters, 22 Oct.), disputing a claim that 90 percent of the world's population operates under the metric system, tallies the dominant systems country by country. But it is beside the point to estimate the prevalence of the metric system in terms of geography. On the one hand, metric countries must use English measures in order to do business with us. On the other hand, even in the U.S. certain industries use metric measures as much as they can, and the metric system is used by all scientists, by the medical profession, and by many agencies of government. The metric system is used worldwide. It prevails wherever the need for scientific communication prevails. As shown by England's recent commitment to metric, it has finally won out in the area of economic interdependence. India, contrary to what Mayer implies, has almost completed her conversion and will benefit greatly as an infant industrial nation by going to the recognized international system; the change will enable India to eliminate her many regional weights and measures and with them the English system.

Does this presage a metric world? This is one of the questions that Senate bill S. 774 is intended to answer. Senator Pell's committee has stated the case simply and well: "The committee is convinced that it is timely and desirable to undertake a comprehensive study of the advantages and disadvantages of increased use of the metric system in the U.S., so that any future decision in this area can be based on a full knowledge of the facts." George Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Science and Astronautics, first suggested this rational approach to the problem three Congresses ago. Recent hearings on both House and Senate bills brought forth overwhelming support for a study and very little opposition. Even opponents of metric conversion could be well served by a fact-finding study.

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. . . Now before Congress is a series of bills to study "the practicability of the adoption by the U.S. of the metric system of weights and measures." Although such can hardly be construed as "compulsion," the move toward consideration was almost certain to elicit a response such as Mayer's. In 1926, Mayer was a prominent member of a group which persuaded Congress to defeat the Britten-Ladd bill, a bill to adopt the metric system for certain uses. It has taken Congress 40 years to take another close look at the issue, this time on a much more conservative basis.

It is, of course, too much to expect that people will welcome any change from their customary thought patterns. The need for Americans to convert to metric measures must first be recognized and fully appreciated. This all takes time and must be debated over and over again. . . . Much would be accomplished by a thoroughly objective study and public airing of the issue. A national committee selected by the Department of Commerce should work with counterpart committees from other English-speaking countries. Obviously we can benefit from the prior experience of other countries of the world, 80 of which have adopted the metric system in the last 160 years. . . .

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