George Bundy, president of Ford Foundation, concluded that under his proposal "everyone is better off than he was before." "This is not magic or sleight-of-hand," Bundy wrote. "It is a people's dividend, earned by the American nation from its enormous investment in space."

Despite the attractive rationality of the Ford Foundation proposal, it is hardly surprising that not all participants in the debate view the picture in the same way. The differences grow in part from the differing chief interests of the protagonists. The Ford Foundation's concern is focused principally on finding a way to obtain funds for a massive expansion of educational television. The Foundation in the past has been ETV's principal benefactor, having contributed more than $100 million to its development during the last 15 years. The $6 million the Foundation gives annually to the National Educational Television and Radio Center (NET) is its largest perennial grant. But major resources from elsewhere have not been forthcoming. With what Bundy termed the "shining exception" of the Educational Television Facilities Act of 1962, the federal government has stood aside—and the 1962 act carried an appropriation totaling less than the money (about $10 million annually) spent by Ford alone during the years since the act was passed. The result of what amounts to a starvation diet for ETV is that it is generally agreed to be what Bundy called it: "a depressing failure." But the Foundation believes that, with proper financing, the desert would bloom, attract great talent, and develop into a service that would greatly enhance the quality of American life and culture.

A.T.&T. and the Communications Satellite Corporation—another aggressive contender in the field—are less interested in our cultural climate than in our business climate: what is most important to them is the overall efficiency and economy of the whole communications system. Comsat's presence among the competitors for the operation of a domestic satellite system is perhaps one of the most hotly contended of all the current issues. Comsat argues that legally it is the only U.S. entity authorized to own and operate satellites for either international or domestic communications; competing claims it dismisses as possibly meritorious but essentially academic. Comsat's position is held in apparent isolation. Most of the parties involved believe

Mohole: Aground on Capitol Hill

If Project Mohole ever reached the seaborne stage, how would it maintain its record for misfortune? By ramming a cruise ship loaded with orphans, or perhaps by inadvertently sailing into a Red Chinese port? We shall not know for a long time, if ever, for last week the luckless project was firmly aground on Capitol Hill, with the House reaffirming its earlier decision to cut off funds for the ever-costlier program to drill a hole deep into the ocean floor (*Science*, 13 May).

This action came after a revelation that is politically titillating but, like so much of the controversy in Mohole's long and unhappy career, irrelevant to the question of whether the U.S. Government should pay for drilling a hole in the ocean floor. The revelation was that, shortly after the House voted to withhold Mohole's funds last May, relatives of George Brown, chairman of the board of Brown & Root of Houston, the Mohole design firm, contributed $23,000 to the President's Club. This is a Democratic fund-raising organization that milks fat cats by promising them entrée to the White House in return for contributions of at least $1000. (Brown himself gave the Club $2000 in April, and Brown & Root's president, Herbert J. Frensley, also gave $1000.) A few days after donation of the $23,000, Lyndon Johnson asked the Senate to reverse the House action. This the Senate did by voting to restore the $19.7 million of Mohole funds that the House had cut from the National Science Foundation budget. The funds were needed to continue construction of the huge Mohole drilling platform, begun earlier this year in San Diego. Following the split between the two houses, Senate and House conferees met a few weeks ago to attempt to reconcile their Mohole differences. However, the House conferees refused to go along with the Senate, and last week, by a vote of 108 to 59, the House backed them up. Now it is the Senate's turn to decide whether it will accept the House action or stand by its conferees, but, all around, it is agreed that if Mohole is not dead it is barely breathing.

If an autopsy report is ever required for Project Mohole, it will have to ascribe the demise to multiple and needless injuries. Conspiratorial minds will see a direct connection between the $23,000 donations to the President's Club and Johnson's plea to save Mohole, and so it was played by Representative Donald Rumsfeld, an Illinois Republican, on the floor of the House. But the White House, under Kennedy and Johnson, regularly backed the project all the way, and it is doubtful that a political contribution spelled the difference between a presidential plea and presidential acceptance of a decision to kill off a long-standing project in which a good deal had already been invested. Furthermore, Brown has long been involved in Democratic politics, and though the timing looks suspicious he has long been a big contributor to the Party.

Apart from the wildly rising cost estimates—from $5 million at one point to more than $125 million at present—Mohole's greatest wound was the recent death of its congressional guardian, Representative Albert Thomas of Houston, who long served as chairman of NSF's appropriations subcommittee. Thomas, an old associate of Brown's, may or may not have had something to do with Brown & Root's getting the design contract. But in any case it looked as though he did, and, at the time of his death, vast resentments toward the project had accumulated. When Thomas's successor, Joe L. Evins (D-Tenn.), took over, one of the first actions of the subcommittee was to deny funds to Mohole, ostensibly on the grounds that the costs had got out of hand and that economy was necessary because of the war in Vietnam.

What must be observed is that Mohole, whatever its scientific merits, is now the albatross of the scientific community, with every misadventure and miscalculation feeding the widespread impression that the scientific community has grown rich and rotten on government subsidy. Scientifically its demise might be a great loss, but politically Mohole is a running sore.

—D. S. GREENBERG