

against threats which are not absolutely sure to materialize but which *may* materialize. The FAS committee wants no defense measure adopted unless the threat which such a measure is to counter can be shown with certainty to be in the offing.

Foster wishes to expand our defense research in order to "minimize the possibility of a technical surprise" (2). He is particularly afraid of such a surprise because of "the remarkable secrecy maintained by the Soviet Union over their R & D efforts" which "often leads to uncertainty about some areas of the longer term threat." In other words, he wants to be *sure* of our capability to defend ourselves—a difficult task but part of the responsibility of the officials of the Department of Defense. Foster cautions that his data are not precise, but he wishes to act in spite of the lack of absolute certainty. The FAS committee, on the other hand, demands that the motivation for defense expenditures be free from assumptions (assumptions, by their very nature, are questionable) and be based on precise numbers.

The four-man FAS committee does not oppose defense research under all conditions. The first page of their statement of 6 May (1) contains the passage "The Federation of American Scientists supports a vigorous program of research, and of development (R & D), on those weapons that are necessary to maintain a deterrent of unquestioned power." In view of this, we are unable to interpret the rest of the FAS statement, and its general tone, unless we assume that the committee insists on an *absolute* proof that the research to be undertaken be truly "necessary." Other parts of the FAS statement support this assumption. Naturally, in view of the tightness of the Soviet and Chinese security, immensely more effective than our own, such proof is very difficult to furnish—a point not brought out in the FAS statement. Nor does it bring out two other facts which support our need to stay, at least in research, well ahead of the Soviet Union. These are, first, the Soviet Union's shorter lead time, due in part to their more extensive building of prototypes—a practice resolutely opposed by the FAS committee. Second, the report does not mention that the Soviet government has the power to assign its scientists at will to military research. It is small wonder then that some Soviet scientists are terrified by the thought of a future in which some leader will say "The stra-

tegic balance has changed. We must exploit it."

We believe that the controversy between Foster and the FAS committee is the result of a difference in desires. If there is a chance that we are safe, the FAS committee does not want to strengthen our defense research. If there is a chance that we are in danger, Foster wants to strengthen our defenses.

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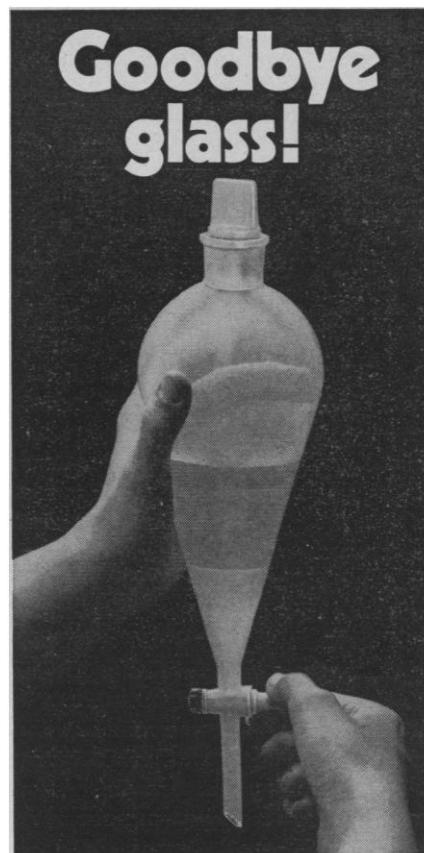
References

1. *Is There an R & D Gap?* (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Military Research and Development of the Federation of American Scientists, Washington, D.C., 1971).
2. U.S. Senate, Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Research and Development, *Hearings on Authorization for Military Procurement* (92nd Congress, 1st session, 1971).

Stimulating Blood Donation

In his editorial "On stimulating the gift of blood" (13 August, p. 583), William Bevan supports H.R. 853, a bill to award a \$25 federal income-tax deduction for "voluntary" blood donation. Not only could this bill cost the American taxpayers \$30 to \$40 million annually, but there is no certainty that it would accomplish its goal of increasing the quality and quantity of blood that is used in transfusion. A more basic question may also be raised, Is it right and necessary to convert most of our blood-donor population into one of de facto paid donors by legislative means?

The answer depends, as Bevan notes, on one's "faith in the altruistic principle." The principle appears not to work in the Soviet Union, where blood donation is rewarded by lavish government subsidies (1), but it is operative in England, Australia, and New Zealand, where voluntary donors supply 100 percent of the blood needs. That it can also work in the United States is shown by the successful operation of all voluntary, blood-donation systems in Seattle, Milwaukee, and other communities. Especially noteworthy is the success recently achieved in the recruitment of voluntary donors in New York City through the efforts of the Community Blood Council of Greater New York, which now



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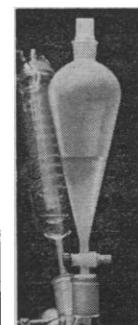
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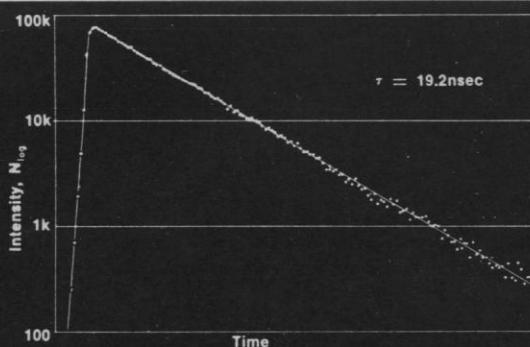
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supplies 50 percent of the blood needs of that area.

Possibly H.R. 853 is needed to prod the American public into making the gift of blood that is so essential to the well-being of their less fortunate fellows and costs them only a few minutes of their time with slight physical discomfort. Even larger subsidies may be necessary to obtain kidneys, skin, and other tissues for the rapidly increasing demands of organ transplantation. On the other hand, cynicism and materialism may be less rampant than we are sometimes led to believe. Spared from legislation such as H.R. 853, perhaps we can yet follow the English example.

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Reference

1. J. Vaughn, *Transfusion* 7, 212 (1967).

National Register

Concerning the demise of the National Science Foundation's register of scientific and technical personnel (News and Comment, 1 Oct., p. 42), it should be mentioned that in the spring of 1970 the council of the American Sociological Association (ASA) voted to discontinue sending out questionnaires for the national register. This regrettable action was taken on the grounds that the ASA could not control the uses made of the data by government agencies and other persons and thus might subject the membership and other sociologists to inquiries to which they had not given their specific consent. The issue is related to a more general concern with the use and abuse of data banks (1).

Whatever the merits of this decision, the discontinuation of the national register is a blow to those who, like myself, have been engaged in research on the career lines of scientists and related problems. The register, with all its deficiencies, has been the most valuable instrument for tracing, on a large scale, the professional histories of individuals. It is to be hoped that a new, improved phoenix will rise from the ashes.

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Reference

1. P. H. Rossi, *Amer. Sociol.* 5, 389 (1970).