

NIH: Protesters Try Going Through Channels

A petition urging President Nixon to end all American involvement in the war in Southeast Asia, signed by about 500 employees of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), went up through channels as far as the office of Elliot L. Richardson, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Richardson declined to send the petition on to the President, and this week the sponsors forwarded it directly to the White House.

There have been antiwar protests at NIH before, but the latest effort differed in two major ways. First, an attempt was made to send the petition through official channels rather than to appeal directly to the President or public. Second, the petition was sponsored by a group of employee organizations on the NIH Bethesda campus and by members or officers of such organizations acting on their own initiative. It is the first time that these groups have joined in such an action.

Whatever its effect on the war, the incident calls attention to the evolution of NIH employee organizations and of the ground rules under which they operate. It is especially worthy of note that on 15 September these same groups sponsored a bipartisan debate at NIH on the current presidential campaign, an unprecedented event.

The sponsors of the antiwar petition were the Vietnam Moratorium Committee at NIH/NIMH [National Institute of Mental Health]; All Concerned Employees Task Force (ACE); members of the Assemblies of Scientists; the executive council of the NIH Organization of Women; members of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE); Another Mother for Peace; and Scientists and Engineers for Social & Political Action (SESPA).

The petition was addressed to President Nixon in the form of a regular agency memorandum routed through NIH director Robert Q. Marston and Secretary Richardson. In stating their opposition to the Administration poli-

cies the petitioners made the following major points.

The extension of the war to Cambodia and Laos, the resumption of the bombing of North Viet Nam, the mining of the harbors and waterways can only spread and prolong suffering, destruction, and death. The continuation of the war seriously impedes the solving of urgent domestic problems, such as the existence of racial and sex discrimination, the inadequacies of health care and education, the lack of opportunities for meaningful employment, and the deterioration of the environment.

As public servants whose task is to promote the health, education and welfare of all people, we condemn your actions.

We urge you to reverse your recent decisions and to put an immediate end to all American involvement in the war.

The decision to press for the petition to be sent through channels was made, according to Elliott Schiffmann, who is active in the moratorium committee and SESPA, because the sponsors felt so strongly that the protest was a "work-related matter" and because HEW employees "feel they are deeply undermined in their dedication to the enhancement and preservation of life by federal involvement in Vietnam."

Richardson's explanation of why he would not send the petition to the President contained the following key paragraph.

My view, therefore, is that the issue you have raised involves a sincere difference of viewpoint concerning the conduct of national policy, rather than a matter to be handled administratively. This being the case, forwarding your petition through normal channels would be totally inappropriate. Doing so would not only imply official Departmental endorsement but also my own personal sanction of your views. I support rather than condemn the actions that the President has undertaken to bring the war to a close. I cannot and will not give official or personal sanction to your views. On the other hand, nothing should prevent you from forwarding your petition directly to the President.

Richardson's remarks were made in a letter addressed to three of the petitioners, after the petition itself had been

returned to NIH by the action of HEW Assistant Secretary for Health and Scientific Affairs Merlin K. DuVal.

The sequence of events went generally as follows:

In May the council of the Assembly of Scientists of the National Eye Institute-National Institute of Mental Health-National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke sent a telegram to the President condemning the Administration action in mining North Vietnamese harbors. This action elicited complaints from some members of the assembly who argued that the telegram did not represent their views. It also was clear that the NIH administration was unhappy with the way things had been done.

As a result, the moratorium committee, with the cooperation of the other groups and individuals, decided to collect signatures on a petition which would reflect the feelings of a wider segment of NIH employees. More than 500 signatures were collected in a 3- to 4-week period. The signatures represented about five percent of the employees on the NIH Bethesda campus.

After considerable discussion, Marston agreed to forward the petition to DuVal, the next link in the chain of command, accompanied by an "informational memorandum" that did not imply any sort of endorsement. On 13 July DuVal bucked the petition back to Marston with a covering memo in which he suggested that "the right of a Federal employee to express a dissenting opinion with respect to the posture of the Administration need not be encumbered by administrative channels; indeed, I could make the case that the use of the Federal machinery to express an opposing viewpoint might even be improper."

The petitioners next move was to send a letter to Richardson signed by Schiffmann, Thelma Gaither of ACE, and Robert Ryder of the moratorium committee. The letter emphasized the contradictions of the war to HEW's mission. It was to this letter that Richardson replied.

The petitioners were disappointed with Richardson's refusal to send the petition to the White House. It would be less than realistic not to recognize, however, that a Cabinet member who sent along such a petition would appear to endorse it and might as well enclose his resignation.

One point that Philip Ross, a mem-

ber of the moratorium committee, and others raise, however, centers on the question of dissent through channels. Both DuVal's and Richardson's remarks, they say, can be interpreted to mean that it is inappropriate for federal employees to express disagreement with established policies through official channels. Does this mean, they ask, that the White House is systematically cut off from critical comment from within the Executive?

As for political activity within federal agencies, there is little doubt that latitude for action by employees on social and political issues has broad-

ened. At NIH, special circumstances have affected the trend of events. During the later years of the Johnson Administration and early years of the Nixon Administration there is no doubt that NIH administrators feared that antiwar activities among agency employees might have an adverse effect on an already difficult budget situation. The atmosphere altered somewhat after the departure of Robert H. Finch as HEW secretary and the department's general counsel of that period, Robert C. Mardian, who followed a hard line on employee activism. Richardson, a former Massachusetts attorney general,

is regarded as being more relaxed about social activism by employees so long as it follows the lines set out by court decisions.

Throughout HEW as a whole, the pitch of political activism has lowered decidedly. In the late 1960's, the war and Administration handling of civil rights and social programs caused a ferment in the agency and "politicized" many workers, particularly younger recruits. Finch's departure was hastened by confrontations with angry groups of employees. Currently, quieter methods are being employed, and effort is directed mainly at union organization

Review of Cancer Plan Under Way

"The National Cancer Plan will be a landmark document," Leonard Laster of the President's Office of Science and Technology said recently. It will represent a precedent-setting attempt to "formalize and nationalize the planning that goes into a major research effort," he added, saying that the final version of the plan must be the "best document our national thinking can evolve."

The plan, not yet complete, has already been elevated to a special status in the minds of many scientists and administrators. They see it not only as a description of how the battle against cancer will be waged in the next few years, but also as a model for other all-out attacks against disease, such as the campaign against heart disease which is next on the national agenda. In this view, the plan is more than just another report.

To give the plan the benefit of what Laster calls a "contemplative look" before it is cast in concrete, it will be reviewed by a special committee of the Institute of Medicine, part of the National Academy of Sciences (*Science*, 1 September). In his letter to the persons he asked to serve on the committee, Institute President John R. Hogness said, "... the need for and advisability of an independent, outside review has become increasingly apparent to many." He has named Lewis Thomas, newly appointed dean of the Yale University School of Medicine, chairman of the panel, which will hold the first of an anticipated half-dozen meetings this weekend. (Thomas, who is highly regarded as a doctor and researcher, is also widely admired in the medical community for what colleagues describe as a special talent for approaching complex situations without prejudice or bias.) Members of the review committee* were drawn from a variety of disciplines, including administration, and only a couple of the members are active in cancer research. As Hogness remarked, "This committee

is not made up of a group of cancerniks." It will report by mid-November.

According to Laurence Tancredi, an M.D.-L.L.B. who recently joined the staff of the institute and who will be staff officer for the review, the committee will focus on the ways the plan was put together and the priorities it sets. At present, only two-thirds of the plan, which has been months in preparation by the staff of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), is available in final draft form, but the committee will have access to all of the background material the NCI is using for the final portions.

Two completed sections, which have received at least the tacit approval of the NCI's national cancer advisory committee, are volume I, the "executive summary," and volume II, part I, the "strategic plan." The former is, indeed, a summary that, according to NCI leaders, is intended for congressmen and other public officials. The strategic plan sets forth goals—"The *ultimate goal* of cancer research is to develop means to eradicate or prevent all human cancers"—tells how the plan was put together, and discusses the whole matter from what has been described as the approach of a systems analyst. One section describes a "research strategy hierarchy," for example, and says, "To facilitate planning and implementation of the program research strategy, it has been organized in a hierarchial format with the following levels:

- ▶ National Program Goal
- ▶ National Program Objective
- ▶ Approaches
- ▶ Approach Elements
- ▶ Project Areas."

Volume II, part 2, called a "digest of scientific research recommendations," is a compilation and synthesis of the 3000-plus pages of ideas that came out of the work of 40 panels of 250 cancer authorities who advised the NCI as consultants. The third and final section, volume III, is the "operational plan." "That is the part," one NCI official said, "that will tell you how to coordinate all this and make it work. It's the guts of the thing as far as many of us are concerned." It is slated for completion next spring.—B.J.C.

* David Baltimore, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harry Eagle, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Herman Eisen, Washington University; Judah Folkman, Children's Hospital, Boston; Paul Marks, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Rufus Miles, a retired government administrator and university official now engaged in writing; George Palade, Rockefeller University; Helen Ranney, State University of New York at Buffalo; Alvin Weinberg, Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Population Committee Launched

The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, which released its findings last March after 2 years of study, has gone on the road. That is to say, a citizens' committee containing many former commission members has launched a year-long program to educate the public on the findings and recommendations of the report and to put pressure on government agencies to move ahead in particular areas.

The Citizens Committee on Population and the American Future, as it is called, has as its honorary chairman John D. Rockefeller III, who also chaired the commission. Cochairmen are Hugh Downs, former host of NBC's "Today" show, Eleanor Holmes Norton, activist attorney and chairman of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, and Stephen Salyer, who at 22 was the commission's youngest member. With a \$210,000 budget supplied by foundations and other private sources, the committee is trying to generate public support for recommendations that have generally been plowed under in the debate over the report's more controversial proposals, chief of which is the suggestion that women should have "liberalized access" to abortion.

Efforts to Increase Visibility

The commission, no doubt eyeing the fate of reports on such matters as marijuana and pornography, has avoided relying on the Administration for support. The report was released in three separate, highly publicized sessions, and a movie described as a cinematic version of the report will be aired over the Public Broadcasting System on 29 November. (The three major networks refused to show the film because they won't sponsor controversial shows over which they have no editorial control.)

Meanwhile, the committee is speaking to all the professional and volunteer organizations it can get its hands on—"from the AMA to ZPG," says executive director Carol Foreman—about the little-publicized aspects of the report. These aspects include sex education, adoption, fertility-related health services, women's rights, land use planning, jobs, and a multitude of other subjects related to the quality as well as the quantity of life.

The committee is acting as a speakers' bureau and will send witnesses to testify in behalf of its goals on Capitol Hill. This month it began sending people around to various government agencies to explain relevant areas of the commission's research. (The seven volumes of research, comprising 100 papers, will be available sometime in October.)

Everyone is bending over backward to make this a strictly non-partisan venture. At the press conference called to announce the program, Rockefeller and his colleagues had kind words for Congress (whose efforts in the areas of population and national growth have been marked by apathy), and Rockefeller even praised President Nixon for acting "pleased" when told about the committee's plans.

Nixon, it may be recalled, issued a short press release in May saying he did not plan to comment extensively on the report, but making known his strong personal objections to abortion ("an unacceptable form of population control") and to proposals that minors be given access to contraceptives and birth control information ("such measures would do nothing to preserve and strengthen close family relationships").

The committee can probably be expected to downplay such matters as abortion in the interest of gaining a fair hearing for its other proposals. Its basic purpose, as Downs put it, is "to integrate population considerations into the national agenda." The message has not yet come through very strongly to the federal government, but its ears may start to prick up if some clear vibrations start coming in from the public.—C.H.

and at achieving gains for minorities.

At NIH, the character of the work force creates special conditions. Researchers and administrators in NIH's intramural program are university trained and oriented, and there is considerable mobility between NIH and the universities and medical schools. And particularly among younger professionals, there is an assumption that university-style political and social activism will not be discouraged. To recruit and retain competent researchers, NIH officials have to keep this in mind.

The era of activism at NIH is traced by many observers from the rise of the Vietnam Moratorium Committee as an offshoot of the moratorium movement in 1969. A crucial incident occurred when Marston turned down a request from the moratorium group for permission for Benjamin Spock to speak on the NIH campus. The moratorium people went to court and obtained a temporary injunction which allowed Spock to appear. The injunction, which is still in force, proved to be the wedge that really opened NIH facilities to use for meetings on social and political issues.

Employee organizations at NIH have gained confidence in recent years. Of the organizations named among the petition's sponsors, the moratorium committee and Another Mother for Peace are specifically antiwar groups. The others deal with worker rights and working conditions in varying ways. (SESPA, which is relatively small at NIH, has a foot in both camps.)

The longest established of the groups is probably the Assemblies of Scientists of the institutes. These are made up of research scientists and are concerned mainly with general policies which affect research and with improving the professional atmosphere. For instance, they promote the arrangement under which graduate study is carried out in cooperation with Johns Hopkins University. The assemblies are open to all researchers and have generally been apolitical.

The All Concerned Employees Task Force (ACE) is concerned with reducing discrimination against minority employees and is really a local branch of the Government Employees United Against Racial Discrimination (GUARD). ACE concentrates on obtaining recruitment of more blacks to professional jobs at NIH and the improvement of pay, promotion, and working conditions for black employees

who are clustered in service and maintenance jobs at NIH. ACE has been generally mistrustful of both the NIH administration and other employee groups but has had tentative ties with white liberals and radicals active on social issues. ACE co-sponsorship of the petition could be significant.

The membership of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the NIH local of one of the government-workers unions, is made up largely of blue-collar workers. While some of the AFGE leadership is regarded as activist in social and political issues, the local is generally regarded as concerned mainly with economic matters.

The NIH Organization of Women is made up primarily of professional women and so far has not made major inroads in recruiting among secretaries and other nonprofessional women employees.

While employee organizations are more active, it is difficult to say how much more effective they have become. The number of activists remains relatively small, although in the case of ACE, at least, it appears that the organization has real support from a majority of black employees at NIH. ACE for example, carried the day when they protested the launching of a sickle cell anemia screening project on the campus. The NIH administration conceded ACE claims that the project was not well designed or done with proper consultation.

White activists tend to feel that the NIH administration is more "permissive" these days but say NIH and HEW officials are successful in "diffusing" issues and "talking things to death."

Obviously, the new activism will produce problems which the present modest guidelines cannot fully anticipate or control. What happens, for example, if a federal employee throws himself into social or political activism to the detriment of his regular work? Will his superior's response be construed as harassment or the reasonable imposition of discipline?

It appears equally obvious that the trend toward "in-house" activism by federal employees will continue. Employee unions are pushing for the right to strike and for other prerogatives of collective bargaining. And the campaign for minority rights and women's rights hardly has peaked.

In the federal service the Hatch Act, which restricts federal employees' engagement in partisan politics, is being interpreted in a freer way. At NIH,

perhaps the most important departure from past practice was the recent debate on campaign issues. The protagonists—Pierre Salinger for the Democrats, Howard Denis, an attorney active in GOP affairs, for the Republicans—were enlisted by the League of Federal Voters, an organization which helps arrange such bipartisan sessions. To be sure, attention was devoted to public health issues by both speakers, which was appropriate at NIH, but a lot of the questions centered on the war. Other such meetings are planned although not yet scheduled.

All in all, it seems possible that in retrospect, antiwar action within the federal bureaucracy will seem to have had little direct impact on the war, but will have released forces which significantly affect other social and political issues.—JOHN WALSH

APPOINTMENTS

Robert A. Good, head, pathology department, University of Minnesota, to president, Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research. . . . **Charles G. Overberger**, chairman, chemistry department, University of Michigan, to vice president for research at the university. . . . **Robert C. Euler**, professor of anthropology, Prescott College, to president of the college. . . . **Edmund T. Cranch**, associate dean, College of Engineering, Cornell University, to dean of the college. . . . **Donald E. Osterbrock**, chairman, astronomy department, University of Wisconsin, to director, Lick Observatory, University of California, Santa Cruz. . . . **Howard H. Hiatt**, professor of medicine, Harvard University, to dean, Harvard School of Public Health. . . . **Sheldon Judson**, chairman, geological and geophysical sciences department, Princeton University, named chairman, Princeton University Research Board. . . . **W. Keith Kennedy**, vice provost, Cornell University, to dean, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. . . . **Art Gallagher, Jr.**, chairman, anthropology department, University of Kentucky, to dean, College of Arts and Sciences at the university. . . . At Marquette University: **Raymond J. Kipp**, professor of civil engineering, to dean, College of Engineering; and **Albert W. Jache**, chairman, chemistry department, to dean, Graduate School. . . . **O. Carroll Karkalits, Jr.**, assistant director for en-

gineering, Petro-Tex Chemical Corporation, to dean of engineering, McNeese State University. . . . **Alvin H. Scaff**, dean of advanced studies, University of Iowa, to chairman, sociology and anthropology department, University of North Carolina, Greensboro. . . . **Herbert C. Corben**, vice president for academic affairs, Cleveland State University, to chairman, physical sciences department, Scarborough College, University of Toronto. . . . At Lafayette College: **Warren J. Guy, Jr.**, associate professor of electrical engineering, to head of the department; and **B. Vincent Viscomi**, associate professor of mechanical engineering, to head, civil engineering department. . . . **Walter B. Hall**, chairman, periodontics department, University of Washington School of Dentistry, to chairman, periodontics department, University of the Pacific School of Dentistry. . . . **George G. Reader**, chief, ambulatory care and community medicine division, New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, to chairman, public health department, Cornell University Medical College. . . . **Richard A. Carpenter**, former chief, environmental policy division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, to executive director, Environmental Studies Board, National Academy of Sciences-National Academy of Engineering. . . . **Edwin P. Hollander**, professor of Psychology, State University of New York, Buffalo, to provost of the university. . . . **George T. Harrell, Jr.**, provost, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Pennsylvania State University, to vice president for medical sciences at the university. . . . **L. Leon Campbell**, director, School of Life Sciences, University of Illinois, to vice president for academic affairs, University of Delaware. . . . **Richard B. Setlow**, scientific director of biophysics and cell physiology, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, to director, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Tennessee. . . . At the Medical College of Georgia: **Curtis H. Carter**, acting dean, School of Medicine, elevated to dean; and **Raymond C. Bard**, vice president of the college, to dean, School of Allied Health Sciences at the college. . . . **Arthur C. Gentile**, associate dean, Graduate School, University of Massachusetts, to dean, Graduate College, University of Oklahoma. . . . **Clarence G. Stuckwisch**, chairman, chemistry department, University of Miami, to dean, Graduate School at the university.

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