

Nixon reaffirmed his objective of achieving energy "self-sufficiency" by 1980, although the term's definition remains obscure. He went on to assert that "we will break the back of the energy crisis."

But federal energy officials politely demur on that point. Dixy Lee Ray told a budget briefing that she assumed self-sufficiency meant the "capability" of being independent from fuel imports, but that she certainly couldn't speak for the President. John C. Sawhill, the deputy chief of the Federal Energy Office (FEO) said his view was that "by 1980 we want to be able to demonstrate to the rest of the world that we're on our way to self-sufficiency." This, Sawhill said, should strengthen the United States' leverage in negotiating "the prices we pay for energy."

Whatever the goal, responsibility for achieving it presently is divided among competing energy R & D agencies, the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the FEO. Much of this responsibility would come to rest in the Energy Research and Development Administration proposed by the White House last year. But the bill establishing ERDA (though it has passed the House) is stalled in the Senate, and there its prospects are mixed. Last week, William Kriegsman, a former White House staffer for energy affairs and now an AEC commissioner, said he thought ERDA's chances for Senate passage were about fifty-fifty in the next few months. If it slips much longer, Kriegsman said, passage may be a year or two away.—ROBERT GILLETTE

## Health

President Nixon will ask Congress to give him \$2 billion in fiscal 1975 for the National Institutes of Health.

It is a record NIH budget; federal budgets always set records. But it will leave many people unhappy and advocates of various health and education programs will surely be heading for Capitol Hill to ask Congress to do something about what these special interest groups will see as serious deficiencies in the President's sense of what is most important.

The biomedical community is not going to like the fact that this budget confirms its expectation that only the cancer and heart programs would get an increase in funds. And even the prosperous cancer people will not be overjoyed. On the surface, the budget figures show them getting \$100 million more than they received in fiscal 1974 but, in reality, the increase is about \$73 million. It's all a matter of which set of figures one uses in making a comparison between one year and another; there are lots from which to choose. The heart budget is up \$22 million in actual dollars. The increase for the rest of the institutes combined—there are eight of them—is less than \$1 million.

As is customary, the United States budget was released—embargoed—to the press 48 hours before the White House sent it to Congress. The budget traditionally goes to the Hill on a Monday; the preceding Saturday, top officials of each of the departments and agencies stage briefings to tell reporters what they think the budget means and, for the most part, the reporters tend to disbelieve them. It is a Washington ritual.

This year, the HEW briefing, which attracted a couple of hundred reporters, began in the department's main auditorium at noon, Secretary Caspar Weinberger presiding. The Secretary opened the briefing by reading a prepared statement which began:

The 1975 HEW budget would commit a record \$111 billion for human resources programs. Many of these programs will help all Americans reach their fullest potential. But many are continuations of uncontrollable programs carrying over from the past. We still have a conglomerate of programs which are too often ineffective, inequitable, or needlessly duplicate other programs.

The Secretary reiterated his theme from last year, namely, that there are programs that do not work or are not the federal government's business to continue and the government should stop supporting them. Several are of special interest to the health community. The government will try again to either immediately end or phase out its support of regional medical programs, community mental health centers, schools of public health, and Hill-Burton hospital construction assistance. Last year, Congress foiled HEW's attempts to kill some of these programs, granting them a year's stay of execution. In the health manpower area, its previously stated intention of ending training grants for biomedical researchers and capitation grants to medical schools for support of undergraduate students still holds.

During the main HEW briefing, at which biomedical research hardly came up at all, Weinberger noted the programs he considers most important for the coming year. The main thrust is that financial assistance of whatever kind go to individuals. "Hence, we emphasize assistance to students instead of assistance to colleges, and a Comprehensive Health Insurance plan instead of provision of health services by the Federal Government." Certainly, national health insurance will be a major item in fiscal 1975. Similarly, aid to families will be an important issue. Weinberger said he expects to propose by spring a plan for giving needy families cash, rather than food stamps, free services, and so forth. He said it is undignified for families to have to "justify their personal budgets to inquiring social workers" and that the Administration will seek a substantial change in the welfare system.

Following the main briefing, the crowd broke up into smaller groups for briefings in special fields. The health briefing, run by assistant secretary Charles C. Edwards, began with complaints from the press about the way the HEW budget information had been put together. Many things were lumped in broad categories instead of being itemized, program by program. For instance, the brief section dealing with NIH identified funds for the cancer and heart institutes and then lumped everything else together under one heading, "Other Research Institutes." It was the same with respect to other agencies and proved to be generally dissatisfying. Edwards acknowledged that he did not "have the remotest idea how this was put together," adding that he had complete budget data in hand and would provide whatever specific figures anyone wanted.

Nevertheless, the briefing was as confusing as it was enlightening. Among other problems, in stepping into the wonderland of the federal budget, it is necessary to define terms so that everyone is talking about the same thing. Budgets can be discussed in terms of authorities

or outlays, to pick only two of several options. Authorities are the maximum amount of money an agency can legally spend—a ceiling. Outlays are the numbers of dollars they will actually spend in cash during any given year. The two figures are not necessarily the same. In past years, the health budget has been discussed in terms of authorities. This year, the Administration chose to deal with outlays too. Thus, one gets the following sort of exchange:

Reporter, asking about an item in the health budget. What shall I do with this outlay figure?

HEW official. Ignore it.

Another reporter. Last week Secretary Weinberger testified that the NIH budget would show an increase of 8 percent and he was basing that on outlay figures. Isn't that the figure you just told us to ignore?

HEW official. Yes.

So it went.

After the health briefing came to a merciful close in midafternoon, there was yet one more briefing for those who cared, an NIH briefing. By then, the overheated room which had been full to overflowing had emptied out, everyone's capacity to argue about the Administration's philosophy in supporting this or cutting that was spent and the focus was on facts.

There was one more lesson on the difference between authorities and outlays and a consensus to discuss the

To sort out the vagaries of the NIH budget for the last three fiscal years, in order to compare the President's requests for 1975 with other years, one must take impounded funds and congressional add-ons into account. In this table, there is a figure in italics above the total figure listed for each institute for 1973 and 1974. In the 1973 column, that figure represents impounded funds that have been released by the courts. (One HEW official has dubbed them "courtfalls.") In the 1974 column, the italicized figure represents the amount of money Congress appropriated to each institute above that which the President originally requested. (Nixon reluctantly accepted these congressional additions.) In each case, the totals given for each institute include the courtfall or add-on funds.

Budget authority (in thousands of dollars)				
Institute or division	FY 1973	FY 1974	FY 1975 request	Change 1974-1975
Cancer	58,900 492,250	27,300 527,306	600,000	+ 72,694
Heart and Lung	44,200 300,042	21,500 286,465	309,299	+ 22,834
Dental Research	6,100 46,998	5,100 43,949	43,959	+ 10
Arthritis, Metabolism and Digestive Diseases	24,000 167,348	19,300 152,941	152,961	+ 20
Neurological Diseases and Stroke	22,700 130,694	18,700 119,903	119,958	+ 55
Allergy and Infectious Diseases	10,400 113,434	11,700 110,369	110,404	+ 35
General Medical Sciences	29,000 183,212	29,700 168,329	168,329	
Child Health and Human Development	19,000 130,450	18,200 124,867	124,897	+ 30
Eye	4,100 38,570	7,800 39,938	39,947	+ 9
Environmental Health	4,700 30,960	3,100 28,386	28,684	+ 298
Research Resources	2,200 75,091	38,300 126,935	82,700	- 44,235
Fogarty International Center	4,666	1,200 4,762	4,784	+ 22
Total research	1,713,715	1,734,150	1,785,922	+ 51,772
Other administrative	48,823	1,300 47,184	48,862	
Total, NIH	1,762,538	1,781,334	1,834,784	+ 53,450

NIH budget in terms of authorities. Then, everyone got down to business. The briefing was run by Leon Schwartz, NIH associate director for administration, who came armed with a pocket calculator and reams of information. Deftly avoiding questions that would have required him to say whether he agreed or disagreed with policy, he presented all the facts for which he was asked and left their interpretation to his questioners. Much of the information he provided is summarized in the accompanying table.—BARBARA J. CULLITON

## Military

The Defense budget reached \$80.5 billion at the height of the Second World War, and \$75.6 billion in 1968, the peak year of the Vietnam war. This year, with the last troops withdrawn from Southeast Asia, the first SALT agreement in the bag, and a détente that has allowed defense planners to prepare only for one and a half wars at a time instead of two and a half, the Department of Defense is asking Congress to approve a budget of \$92.6 billion. Payrolling a volunteer army, inflation, and the idea of overloading the SALT negotiating table with bargaining chips seem to be the principal reasons for the largest defense budget ever.

A Pentagon briefing to explain the budget to the press was devoted mainly to proving that this is one of the smallest military budgets of the last decade. (The proof depends on excluding what is probably the fastest increasing item—military pensions—and expressing all previous budgets in terms of 1975 dollars.) "In terms of real purchasing power," states the Department of Defense press release, the DOD budgets for the present and coming fiscal years represent "the lowest Defense budget levels since FY 1951."

With this lowest ever purchasing power the DOD's investment in the developing and procurement of new weapons has suffered an increase of \$2.8 billion (\$1.5 billion of which is ascribed to inflation). The RDT & E budget (research, development, test, and evaluation) has shared in this expansion, rising from \$8.3 billion last year to \$9.3 billion, or slightly more than 10 percent of total Defense Department spending. Almost all the increase goes to development rather than research, which at \$1,862 million will be supported at essentially the same level as this year. The increased development spending is directed to "maintaining the technological lead," the President says in his budget message to Congress, in particular by continued emphasis on guidance technology for both tactical and strategic missiles, lasers, and "advanced reconnaissance technology" (satellites).

The so-called peace dividend that was to be earned from the ending of the Vietnam war was entirely consumed by increases in military pay and by inflation. The dividend from the 1972 SALT agreements to limit strategic arms and anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems is proving equally evanescent. The Administration seems to have decided that a credible American threat to build an ABM system was what encouraged the Soviets to negotiate a limit on ABMs and that similar inducements should be offered for the second round of SALT talks. Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger was saber rattling last month about "counterforce strategy," a plan