

baby food be used "as a substitute for breast milk . . . right from the first week.") An advertisement showing an upper class mother, a healthy baby, and the product name probably makes any explicit claim of superiority unnecessary. What seems more than likely to make some mothers give up breast-feeding far earlier than desirable is the companies' practice of having saleswomen approach mothers right after birth to push their product. According to P. S. Venkatachalam, of the Protein Advisory Group, some companies hire nurses, dress them in uniforms similar to those worn in hospitals, and send them to visit mothers in the maternity ward and, later, in their homes. "They convert them because these mothers will accept anything from someone dressed in a white coat."

The largest baby food company active in developing countries is the Swiss firm Nestlé. In the second rank are three American companies (Ross Laboratories of Columbus, Ohio; Mead Johnson of Evansville, Indiana; and Wyeth Laboratories of Philadelphia) and two English firms (Cow and Gate, and Glaxo). Bob A. Benton, director of nutritional research at Ross Laboratories, does not deny that the companies send nurses into maternity wards. "It's a highly competitive market, and hospital is an obvious place to reach the new mother. We don't tell them to bottle-feed instead of breast-feed—in fact, our nurses are trained to teach all aspects of mothercraft, including breast-feeding—but the problem is you want to get the women started off on your product before someone else's."

According to Benton, the baby food companies are simply "fulfilling a need." The strong desire of women to bottle-feed—a "mystical feeling that the formulas have something"—has nothing to do with the industry's advertising, he says. Benton concedes that some women may change over too soon from breast to bottle. "Maybe we as an industry can try to change our advertising in this respect. That would need an agreement between the various companies, and we are working with the U.N.'s Protein Advisory Group toward such an end."

Lactation is an ancient process even by evolutionary standards, and on teleological grounds it is reasonable to suppose that the milk of each species is specially adapted to its needs. Whale milk, for example, is laden with high-calorie fat, which is suitable for animals that live in cold waters; rabbit

milk is particularly rich in protein, which is probably related to the very rapid early growth of their offspring. Within the last few years, it has become increasingly clear that human

milk, too, is uniquely suited to the human child. The biochemistry of the milk is exactly matched to that of the infant. Human milk possesses unidentified factors which protect against

DOD Said to Admit to Weather War

A growing number of unofficial reports and public statements indicate that, at a top secret briefing on Capitol Hill last week, the Department of Defense (DOD) at last acknowledged to civilians that it engaged in cloud-seeding operations for military purposes over Southeast Asia in the Vietnam war. Some of the reports indicate that the activities continued into 1972—or throughout the first term of the Nixon Administration. Allegations of cloud-seeding, known as weather modification, were made in the *Pentagon Papers* (*Science*, 16 June 1972) and by the *New York Times*. However, the Pentagon has never confirmed or denied the charges in their entirety.

At the briefing on 20 March, however, two high-ranking military officials described cloud-seeding efforts aimed at muddy infiltration routes in Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, and North Vietnam from 1967 until 1972, according to reliable sources close to the briefing. The briefing is said to have described a series of over 1000 sorties and to have given estimates of how successful the military thought they were in artificially inducing rain, according to these sources. The program was, and still is, "at the highest level of classification," according to yet another source. The briefing was given by Dennis J. Doolin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, and Raymond B. Furlong, a brigadier general who is principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. The persons briefed were Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) who has led Senate inquiries into weather modification and proposed a treaty banning environmental warfare, Senator Clifford Case (R-N.J.), congressional staffers, and executive agency officials.

These background reports appear to tally with public statements by Senator Pell, who has a reputation for being tight-lipped on national security matters. In an awkward exchange with reporters after the classified session, Pell was reported by the *Providence Journal* as having said, "There's no question that they produced the activities," and he is quoted as having referred to the Pentagon as having "added to the rains." When queried by *Science*, Pell flatly declined to discuss these remarks or the substance of the briefing on national security grounds. But he added, "Nothing in the briefing dissuaded me from my view that we may have engaged in these activities in Southeast Asia."

Pell said that he thinks the material discussed in the briefing should be declassified in its entirety and that he believes the DOD is moving to do so. "I could not see a single word" that would jeopardize national security by its release, he said. "The whole program and the sensitivities about it are all inflated." In a new move the National Security Council has requested DOD to review its policies on weather modification and other forms of environmental warfare, and Congress intends to press DOD for the results.

In addition, the *Providence Sunday Journal* in mid-March reported the existence of a classified letter—from Melvin R. Laird, Nixon's first Secretary of Defense, to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—in which he altered his 1972 testimony that the DOD "is not and has not" engaged in cloud-seeding "over North Vietnam." Laird reportedly wrote that the testimony was "correct as far as it applies to the period of time that I was Secretary of Defense." The fact that Laird is trying to set the record straight and DOD has finally briefed Congress indicates that fuller DOD revelations could be on the way.—D.S.