that at least the NCI will be able to hire new people—possibly as many as 100—but it is by no means certain yet. Whether the scientists now working on contracts will be able to return to NCI depends in large part on whether there will be enough slots for the people in their laboratories. (There are persistent, and well founded, rumors that Huebner will leave NIH altogether, probably to go to southern California. He was not available to comment.)

It is an understatement, to say the least, to note that the Zinder committee has managed to shake up a lot of people at NCI, and there is evidence that many of its recommendations will be put into effect, as nearly everyone agrees they should. But it would be wrong to see the report as a condemnation of the VCP from start to finish or to surmise that the program is going out of business.—BARBARA J. CULLITON

# Science Advising: New Setup Has More Resources, Less Visibility

Ever since January 1973, when the Administration abruptly announced that the 16-year-old presidential science advisory apparatus was to be removed from the White House and transferred to the National Science Foundation (NSF), there has been speculation that presidential science advisers are becoming extinct and fit only to be exhibits in Madame Tussaud's wax museum.

Now, 10 months after the plan went into effect, the worst predictions that the White House exile would be followed by a general downgrading of science have failed to come true: the advice of scientists is indeed being sought by the government; the new advisory apparatus is preparing to fund about three times as much work as the old; finally, because it is in part a response to the energy crisis, the new arrangement has changed old definitions of science advice. It may come as a surprise to those who are fond of bemoaning the loss of the White House niche, but there is one school of thought in Washington which says that one can give creditable science advice without blowing one's horn on the presidential podium. As a veteran bureaucrat said: "It raises the question of whether you can give effective science advice without talking about it all the time. I think you can."

The new setup is headed by the science adviser to the President, H. Guyford Stever, who is director of NSF. Stever oversees two new offices: one, originally a short-term response to the energy crisis, the Office of Energy R&D Policy (OEP), headed by Paul F. Donovan; the other is a recast Office of Science and Technology (OST) called the Science and Technology Policy Office (STPO), headed by retired Navy Captain Russell C. Drew. A third element in the structure is the old Federal Council on Science and Technology (FCST), which Stever talks about revitalizing as an interagency forum for science-related studies. A fourth is NSF itself, some of whose 1190 employees have been called upon to work part-time for the science adviser. For fiscal year 1975, OEP and STPO will contract and grant $6 million for studies. In addition, NSF's administrative budget will pay for 46 full-time positions, plus consultant fees, plus travel. By contrast, the old Office of Science and Technology in the White House had 50 staff slots, and a total budget for contracts, consultants, and other items of $2 million.

In a recent interview, Stever admitted that being out of the White House means "you don't have that White House aura, and that's a distinct aura you'd like to have." But, he quipped, "If we believe some of the stories, we know that a couple of Presidents talked with their science advisers and a couple haven't. We have to have a fifth President before we know who's going to win!"

But once away from questions of aura, and whether one talks with the President, Stever and other officials can cite a long list of scattered tasks that the new arrangement has done for other parts of the executive branch. Some high-ranking members of the Administration—although not the President, as far as can be ascertained—have indeed sought Stever's aid. Last summer, Stever and STPO helped resolve a dispute involving the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Air Force, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) over future weather satellite systems. NOAA and the Air Force have similar polar orbiting weather satellite systems, known as Tyros-N and Block-5, respectively. But they both resisted OMB suggestions that it might be economical to merge. STPO made a study and recommended a partial merger. As one official said later, "STPO came out on the side of OMB. It didn't do what the agencies expected it to do. I guess that means it's capable of some independence."

Frederick B. Dent, Secretary of Commerce, asked Stever to rule on whether the nation's oceanographic land facilities and ships are as badly in need of repair and modernizing as some in the oceanography community have claimed. The study is in process, and, Stever says, the issue of new facilities will cause interagency wrangling.

Peter M. Flanigan, assistant to the President for international economic affairs, has asked Stever to participate in a committee study of technology exchange with other nations, a subject the FCST had been studying, in its characteristic, desultory manner for years. Hence, Stever requested a quick study to be done within NSF.

Finally, Henry Kissinger's National Security Council has asked Stever to set up a small group to monitor, on a long-term basis, the "flow" of science and technology to and from the United States and the Soviet Union in the new exchange agreements in all fields, from health to agriculture to space.

Stever also says he has taken steps to revive the FCST. In theory, the group is a meeting ground for the research heads of all the agencies. But for the last several years, agencies have preferred to fight their battles with each other elsewhere, leaving FCST little meaningful work or authority. Now FCST meets only with preassigned subjects—such as technol-

# "Astronauts' Doctor" Leaves NASA

Charles A. Berry, director of life sciences at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and known as the "astronauts' doctor" for more than a decade, is leaving NASA to become president of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

As an Air Force flight surgeon, Berry participated in the medical evaluations leading to the selection of the original seven Mercury astronauts in 1958. He came to NASA in 1963 as chief of the medical operations office at what is now the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

At NASA, Berry, 50, monitored and later supervised the monitoring of the conditions and responses of astronauts to space flight in the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and Skylab programs. He was responsible for developing experimental programs to determine the effects of long-term space flight on man, particularly of a weightless environment.

Appointed director of life sciences in 1971, Berry had overall responsibility for coordinating and managing all biomedical research, bioenvironmental systems, aeronautical life sciences, bioengineering, planetary biology and quarantine programs, ecological applications, medical engineering applications, and applications for medical and health care delivery.

In his new position, Berry will supervise the administration of seven of the university's health-oriented schools and services on the Houston campus.—SCHERRAINE MACK

ogy transfer from the government to the private sector—and Stever claims he has been successful in getting the principals, from Malcolm Currie, of the Pentagon, to James C. Fletcher, the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, to attend. However, his aim of making FCST have "faster turnaround time" on specific assignments has been less successful, he says.

None of this activity has been particularly visible. The best-publicized activities so far have involved the energy crisis. When last fall's Arab oil embargo caused White House planners to rush to the R&D community in a manner reminiscent of the panic which followed Sputnik, the chairwoman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), Dixy Lee Ray, won the choice assignment of drawing up a $10 billion research plan for national self-sufficiency in energy by 1980. Stever remained in the background; he was chairman of a blue-ribbon committee that reviewed Ray's plan, known as the White House Energy Research and Development Panel. The panel and the energy policy office also worked on the fiscal 1975 budget, which was in preparation when the fuel shortage occurred. Evidently, OEP's performance during those crisis-ridden months was promising enough for OMB to reward it with a budget raise from $2.5 million in fiscal 1974 to $4.5 million in fiscal 1975.

The other office in NSF is the non-energy-related STPO, which will consist of a group of 29 if all of its staff slots are filled, will support FCST and work on short-range projects such as dealing with the weather satellite conflict. There is also housecleaning: one report by the now-defunct President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC), *Chemicals & Health*, which nearly died with PSAC, has been issued; one on youth was also issued. STPO will do in-house and contract research on such things as technological forecasting, social science studies, and science policy. STPO will work on materials; a subcommittee of the President's Domestic Council is also studying materials; the FCST is reviving a panel on the subject; and there are plans for a committee of experts to work with STPO on future materials problems. Finally, STPO, with OEP, worked with OMB in preparing the fiscal 1975 budget, which turned out to be something of a boom year for R & D.

Finally, it is fair to ask whether any successor is planned to PSAC, which, in its early years under Eisenhower, is said to have met frequently with the President himself. PSAC was just allowed to flicker out when the other White House science offices were dismantled; Stever now says it will be revived on an ad hoc basis. The White House energy panel of which he was chairman was the first example; the next will be the committee on materials now being planned; a third will be a committee on world food.

What do all these activities add up to? One former OST staffer reflected the views of some observers when he described the energy and science policy offices as "a sideshow in a whole circus of activities which doesn't have any impact anywhere." And he questioned whether these new offices in NSF would not be hamstrung by warring groups in the foundation. "How can NSF coordinate the science policy . . . of the government when it can't coordinate science policy in the National Science Foundation?" Indeed, the relations between these new offices and the existing work of NSF seems to be consuming a fair amount of staff time and official concern.

But by far the strongest critics of the new setup are some leaders in the scientific community who, in testimony, speeches, and articles, lament that science advice is in this holding pattern, and, with clocklike regularity, call for a White House Restoration. How strongly they feel they have lost power may be indicated when a National Academy of Sciences' committee, headed by Eisenhower's science assistant James R. Killian, reports this summer on alternative science advisory mechanisms.

But a number of officials close to the new advisory mechanism argue that the holding pattern isn't so bad. They noted that the idea that the White House science advisers were persons of power and authority was largely a myth in the first place. Noting the autonomy and rich resources of the new offices in NSF, they are optimistic that these offices could do some useful steering of science at the middle levels of government, where a lot of important technical decisions have always been made.

One official elaborated on this theme: "I don't think science policy statements are where it's at. It's the practice that counts; it is the decisions on science that are tied to the area the science is serving.

"Four Presidents have said they should shift priorities from military research to civilian research. But with all the policy pronouncements, they have done very little. What a defense contract officer does from day to day affects science more than all these policy pronouncements put together."

—DEBORAH SHAPLEY