

million or 12 percent in the NSF's education programs.

To a significant extent, the NSF's science advisory apparatus helped the OMB shape the research and development portions of the new budget. And Stever, for one, was evidently rankled a bit by widely reported complaints emanating from the AAAS meeting in New York to the effect that science policy was rudderless and drifting in the absence of an outpost in the Executive Offices. Stever said he agreed that the advisory structure needed strengthening, but he added, rather tartly, that "it's good that [science] is drifting upward."—ROBERT GILLETTE

Budget Policy

The bicentennial budget is a record federal budget (\$349 billion) with a record peacetime deficit (\$52 billion), but even holding to these levels will require cuts of \$17 billion prescribed by the President and, in effect, a new fiscal year's resolution renouncing new legislation.

The Administration's budget strategy is a product of necessity. The projected deficit—which rose some \$5 billion in the two weeks before the budget was unveiled—is attributed to a sharp decline in revenues caused by the recession and a related rise in such accounts as unemployment compensation.

The stated aim of the Administration in the budget is to fight both recession and inflation, a tricky undertaking, which can be compared to devising a plan to fight simultaneous flood and drought. The extent of the country's economic difficulties have compelled the Administration to abandon pretensions to "fine tuning" the economy in the way that was discussed a year ago. It is certainly ironical that a President and his top economic advisers, who are committed to a fundamentalist brand of economic policy, and a few months ago were espousing tight controls on federal spending to counter inflation, have been moved by events to put forward a big-spending, big-deficit budget. The President, however, has declared his determination to hold the line on the deficit where he has drawn it. But, if he is to fight recession and inflation on his own terms, he may also have to fight Congress.

The new Congress, with a big Democratic majority and a fresh passion for self-determination, seems to be deploying to push its own policies in such major sectors as the economy and en-

ergy. In an appearance at the principal budget briefing in Washington, Ford stressed his \$17 billion program of budget cuts in a way that seemed both an appeal and a challenge to Congress.

Defense

One area in which an early collision seems likely is that of the Department of Defense (DOD) budget. DOD remains the biggest spender on R & D among federal agencies and the requested increase—from \$8.8 billion in new obligations this year to \$10.6 billion next year—is larger in absolute and percentage terms than for any other sector of the R & D budget including energy.

Funds for research would go up \$232 million to over \$2 billion and, for development, up \$1.5 billion to \$8.6 billion. Defense officials say that the increases would more than offset the effects of inflation and provide for an increase in R & D funding in real terms. Funds for research and development in universities would rise from \$197 million to \$213 million, which represents a modest start toward carrying out DOD intentions to shift more basic research to the universities (*Science*, 22 Jan.).

Much of the increased funds would be earmarked for development work on new weapons systems. Some \$672.2 million is asked for the B-1 bomber compared with \$445 million this year and \$732.5 million for the Trident submarine against \$640.2 million in the current year. For the so-called Air Combat Fighter (ACF), \$273 million is being requested compared to only \$32 million this year. General Dynamics recently won the competition to

develop the ACF, a lightweight fighter intended to be less costly than other new tactical fighters. For the transition period created by the shift of the start of the fiscal year from 1 July to 1 October, \$168.3 million is budgeted for the B-1, \$171.5 million for the Trident, and \$82.5 million for the ACF.

The B-1 and Trident programs have run into controversy on Capitol Hill and, as the authorization and appropriations process proceeds this year, they are likely to come under especially close scrutiny.

Although DOD is requesting a total of \$104.7 billion in new obligational authority—up some \$15.7 billion over last year—Defense Secretary James S. Schlesinger is pressing the argument that the boost represents a bare minimum because the buying power of the DOD budget has been eroding steadily. Inflation, the costs of paying the volunteer army, and the price of more sophisticated hardware are the major factors. Defense officials assert that in terms of constant dollars the military budget is lower than at any time since 1964 and has been declining both as a percentage of the federal budget and as a share of the gross national product. Schlesinger and his aides are also sure to advance the analysis that in recent years the Soviet Union has surpassed the United States in military spending—in real terms—and that the U.S. is faced with the prospect of losing the lead, particularly in military technology, it has held over the Soviets.

To a Congress which has shown growing skepticism toward such arguments and is looking for a substantial chunk of controllable expenditures to control, the military budget may well seem to provide an opportunity for it to assert itself.—JOHN WALSH

Biomedical Research Budget Drops Again

It has been a long time since the release of the President's budget has brought good news to biomedical research. Last year, the only real increases were for the cancer and heart programs. This year, the news is uniformly bad. And it is difficult to evaluate because it may be meaningless right now to make specific comparisons with other years because of a very recent development—the "rescission budget."* In any event, it appears quite likely that in fiscal 1976, the National

Institutes of Health (NIH) will have less money for the support of biomedical research, not more.

There are always at least three sets of figures that have to be distinguished in any discussion of the federal budget. First, there is the one representing the amount of money the President is asking Congress to appropriate during

* The rescission budget message applies to all areas of federal spending. Here we are discussing only those aspects that apply to biomedical research funded by NIH.

the following fiscal year. Next, there is the appropriations figure, the one representing the amount of money Congress subsequently decides should be spent. In the case of NIH, the second figure is practically always higher than the first. Then, there is the amount of money actually spent. In budget jargon, one speaks of "outlays." The three figures are seldom the same and, by selectively using one or another of them as a base, one can manipulate the way a proposed budget looks in comparison to past budgets.

To this already confusing picture we must add, this year, the President's rescission budget. Everyone will remember that the fiscal 1973 and 1974 budgets were complicated to sort out because of the situation regarding impounded funds (*Science*, 15 February 1974). The Executive branch withheld money appropriated by Congress; the courts released it and, suddenly, relatively substantial sums, dubbed "court-falls," became available. Well, Congress did not like the business of impoundment and passed a law saying that the President no longer may refuse to spend congressionally appropriated funds without asking for permission. And so we have a rescission budget request that was sent to Capitol Hill on 30 January.

In his rescission message, President Gerald Ford asked Congress to let him withhold \$351 million from NIH's funds for fiscal 1975, with the biggest chunk coming out of the institute that has previously received the most generous budgetary increases—the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Ford is asking to have \$123 million in NCI money back, out of a total congressional appropriation of \$691 million. The next hardest hit of the regular institutes would be the National Heart and Lung Institute which is being asked to reduce its expectations for fiscal 1975 by almost \$38 million. (Appropriations, rescission requests, and other data for each of the institutes are shown in the accompanying table.)

The Administration presented the health budget request for fiscal 1976 in comparative terms of the rescission budget rather than the President's original requests for 1975 or the congressional appropriations, in order to give itself the benefit of the doubt when it comes to measuring generosity. Thus, if you compare the rescission or "new" fiscal 1975 budget for all of NIH—\$1.733 billion—with the President's request for 1976—\$1.805 billion—you

get an increase of \$71 million. If, however, you compare the \$1.805-billion figure with what the President originally asked for last year—\$1.834 billion—things do not look as good. Then, if you compare the \$1.805-billion request for fiscal 1976 with the sum Congress appropriated for fiscal 1975—\$2.090 billion—things look horrible. In short, the research budget could drop as much as \$285 million in 1 year, without taking account of inflation.

The catch in all of this is the widely held belief that Congress will not buy the rescission budget and will, instead, require the President to spend all, or a good portion, of the NIH funds as originally appropriated. Congress has until mid-March to decide whether to accept rescission. Meanwhile, NIH officials are following what one called the "prudent" policy that was instituted early

in December. They are behaving as though the rescission budget were in effect and are sitting on a lot of money, waiting to see whether it will be theirs to spend or not.

Whatever happens to the rescission budget, it remains clear that the Administration is going to try to get Congress to go along with its reduced \$1.805-billion request for NIH for fiscal 1976, though it will have a tough fight with Congress. Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary Caspar Weinberger spoke for the Administration when he told reporters that biomedical research is going to have to bear the burden of the current economic crisis along with the rest of the country. "I think \$1.8 billion for NIH is quite substantial even by today's standards," he said, adding, "I hope it will be spent wisely."—BARBARA J. CULLITON

Budget (in thousands of dollars); FY, fiscal year.

Institute or division	President's original FY 1975 budget	Congressional increase	Total FY 1975 appropriation	Net rescission proposed	Adjusted FY 1975 rescission budget	President's request for FY 1976
Cancer	\$600,000	\$91,666	\$691,666	— \$123,006	\$568,660	\$605,000 — 86,666*
Heart and Lung	309,299	14,831	324,130	— 37,730	286,400	292,794 — 31,336
Dental Research	43,959	5,905	49,864	— 7,489	42,375	43,536 — 6,328
Arthritis, Metabolism and Digestive Diseases	152,961	20,160	173,121	— 28,473	144,648	148,409 — 24,712
Neurological Diseases and Stroke	119,958	22,540	142,498	— 30,283	112,215	114,955 — 27,543
Allergy and Infectious Diseases	110,404	9,048	119,452	— 13,975	105,477	108,711 — 10,741
General Medical Sciences	168,329	19,071	187,400	— 30,794	156,606	161,630 — 25,770
Child Health and Human Development	124,897	17,069	141,966	— 23,978	117,988	106,062 — 35,904
Aging†						
Eye research	39,947	4,186	44,133	— 6,512	37,621	39,201 — 4,932
Environmental health	28,684	6,265	34,949	— 6,922	28,027	31,113 — 3,836
Research Resources	82,700	44,500	127,200	— 40,560	86,640	81,058 — 46,142
Fogarty International Center	4,784	805	5,589	— 1,020	4,569	4,540 — 1,049
Total research	1,785,922	256,046	2,041,968	— 350,742	1,691,226	1,753,199 — 288,769
Other administrative	48,862	— 412	48,450	— 385	48,065	51,801 + 3,351
Total NIH	1,834,784	255,634	2,090,418	— 351,127	1,739,291	1,805,000 — 285,418

* The figure in italics in the right-hand column shows differences between what the President is asking in FY 1976 and what the Congress appropriated in FY 1975. † In 1974, research in aging was taken out of Child Health and Human Development and a separate Institute of Aging was created. NICHD had been spending about \$13 million for studies of aging.