

ting forth general principles of national science policy, although the wording has now been honed and simplified.

In addition, two new federal organizations proposed in the original House bill—a Department of Research and Technology Operations and a Science and Technology Information Utilization Corporation—have been discarded. Both had been proposed as a way of centralizing and generally improving the management of federal R & D programs and the government's handling of technical information.

Instead, the committee now proposes to attack these two management problems by the politically simpler avenue of a major study. Title III of the new bill proposes a Federal Science and Technology Survey Committee, to consist of 5 to 12 persons appointed by the President to work "in association with" the science adviser. In a 15-month period, the committee would be

expected to take stock of the "total context of the federal science and technology effort" with an eye to organizational reform, simplifying government regulations that may inhibit innovation, improving planning and analysis of R & D budgets, streamlining the handling of information, and speeding the transfer of new technology into the marketplace.

Action after the Recess

The White House Domestic Council hasn't yet indicated how it feels about the new bill, but talks with House science committee staff are expected to go on during the August recess so that markup of a final version may proceed in mid-September. Quick action there, coupled with cooperation from the Rules Committee, could pave the way for a House vote in late September. The Senate committees are now thinking about hearings late that month or

early October, so that a bill could reach the Oval Office in November.

Predictions of congressional activity are among the chanciest in Washington, of course. And as time goes on the science advisory bill runs an increasing chance of being shunted aside amid the last hectic attempts to agree on major legislation, most notably an energy program.

A new science adviser, along with the nucleus of a staff, could be in place early in 1976. But with time running out before the customary upheavals of a Presidential election year, advocates of the restoration worry that it's going to be more and more difficult to find a candidate for science adviser who is willing to take a job with perhaps less than a year's tenure and yet who will do credit to the office. Leaving the post vacant until after the election is not unthinkable.—ROBERT GILLETTE

PSAC Lives!

On 17 July, 15 prominent scientists met with the Vice President for 7½ hours and with the President for 1 hour in Washington. They discussed issues that could be taken up by the new White House science advising office which the Administration has proposed reestablishing and which Congress is likely to legislate before the end of the year.

The meeting was arranged at the request of Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller, but organized by two of his long-time friends, Simon Ramo, vice-chairman of the board of TRW Inc., and Hans Mark, director of the Ames Research Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Many members of the group have been part of Rockefeller's personal "brain trust" for some time, and were associated with his Commission on Critical Choices for Americans before he became the Vice President. There were, in addition, some new faces, such as Lewis Branscomb, chief scientist of the IBM Corp., and Dixy Lee Ray, who had been an assistant secretary of state and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.

The charge to the group was to discuss problems that a series of task forces might take up in advance of the establishment of the new White House science office, which will probably take place toward the end of the year. The problems discussed were:

- Nuclear energy, materials control, and national security
- Food and famine
- International economics and technology transfer
- Productivity and information technology
- Communications, military and civilian
- Environment, health, and safety
- Biomedical and behavioral research policy

Participants indicated that the session was very informal; the task forces were not actually established, and no plans were laid for the group to meet again. The Vice President and his staff, evidently, will follow up on the advice of this group.

Critics of the Administration's proposal for a revived science office have said that there will not be enough time from the date the office is established to the November 1976 presidential elections for it to get much done. The interim task forces may attempt to get the office's work off to a head start.

But whatever else was accomplished, the meeting asserted what, in reference to the former President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC), might be called the PSAC-principle: namely, that when a President or a Vice President wants to hear some science advice, he will call in a group of trusted experts to talk.

Those present were: William O. Baker, president, Bell Laboratories*; Lewis Branscomb, vice president, chief scientist, IBM Corp.; Harold Brown, president, California Institute of Technology; Lee A. DuBridge, former president, California Institute of Technology and science adviser to the President, 1969–70; John S. Foster, Jr., vice president for energy research and development, TRW Systems, Inc.*; Philip Handler, president, National Academy of Sciences; J. George Harrar, former president, Rockefeller Foundation; Wilmot N. Hess, director, Environmental Research Laboratories, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Hans Mark, director, Ames Research Center, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; Courtland Perkins, president, National Academy of Engineering; Simon Ramo, vice-chairman of the board, TRW Inc.; Norman Rasmussen, professor of nuclear engineering, MIT; Dixy Lee Ray, former assistant secretary of state for oceans, environment, and science. H. Guyford Stever, director, National Science Foundation and science adviser to the President; Edward Teller, director-at-large, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory*. Franklin M. Murphy, chairman of the Board of the Times-Mirror Co. and chairman of the President's Biomedical Research Panel, was invited but could not attend.—D.S.

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