

cation directorate (*Science*, 6 June 1975).

Ford faces a serious challenge from Ronald Reagan for the Republican presidential nomination, and Ford's political advisers are said to be urging him to avoid antagonizing conservative Republicans during the pre-convention period. Some of the issues raised in examination of the NSF education program have heavy symbolic meaning to some conservatives.

Stever's major antagonist in Congress has been Representative John B. Conlan (R-Ariz.), who is now campaigning for his party's senatorial nomination in his home state. In his letter to the four Republican senators, Mosher alluded to a former staff member of Conlan's, George Archibald, who had been active in developing material on which Conlan based many of his charges against NSF and Stever. Archibald continues to work part-time for Conlan on issues involving NSF.

Mosher noted that the senators' letter, which was written on Senator McClure's office stationery, "was publicly released and distributed to the press" by Archibald, "a man whom we know here in the House as being a very skillful, zealous manipulator of propaganda. His actions give the impression that he prepared the letter."

The account of the origins of the letter given by a McClure aide are that it originated at the time of a meeting of the Senate Steering Committee in early June. The committee is a discussion group made up mainly of conservative Republican senators which meets weekly and of which McClure is currently chairman.

Stever's prospective appointment was brought up before the meeting by McClure. Archibald's involvement in the matter is described as a coincidence. Archibald says that he was invited to the meeting to help brief the senators on education legis-

lation then before Congress. When the Stever nomination was mentioned, Archibald says he volunteered both information and opinion on the matter and offered to provide the senators with further documentation on NSF issues. According to Archibald, Senator McClure dictated the substance of the letter to Ford on the spot, and it was polished and later signed by the three other senators. He says that his own role in its distribution was to make copies available to a few reporters he knew were following NSF matters closely.

A member of the staff of one of the signatories expressed surprise that the letter had attracted special attention. It reflected a concern among the senators in the group about some appointments by the Administration. Members of the group had communicated their apprehensions to the White House about other appointments—up to Cabinet level—in the past without causing a furor, he said.

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration:

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), set up in 1968 to help local governments fight crime, has been subjected to periodic onslaughts of criticism for being preoccupied with promoting new hardware and, mainly, for not being able to show that it has contributed to any reduction in crime. Two new reports that have emanated from the private sector this year continue the attack, chastising the agency for inefficiency, wrongheadedness, red tape, and general wasting of money, of which it has so far been given \$4.4 billion.

The reports come at a time when the agency is up for reauthorization by Congress. Discomfort with the agency's failure to deliver as expected is reflected in the \$600 million appropriation voted by the House Appropriations Committee for fiscal 1977, a \$207 million cut from the 1976 budget. And the House Judiciary Committee has voted this time to give the agency only a 1-year authorization (it usually gets 3 years). The purpose of these actions is to put the agency on notice that all is not well, although it is unlikely that a radical restructuring like that recommended in the reports will be called for.

Bulk of Money in Block Grants

The LEAA was added to the Justice Department in the wake of the riots of the 1960's, to help improve local criminal justice systems and help reduce crime. The bulk of its money goes to states in the form of block grants administered by state planning agencies set up for the purpose. The agency has a "discretionary" fund for grants to support innovative anticrime projects, and a program to pay for college training of law enforcement personnel. The legislation also set up a National Institute for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (NILECJ), which is LEAA's research and evaluation arm.

Being a large, pioneering agency dealing in a volatile and highly politicized area, the LEAA has been very vulnerable to criticism. The block grant system—designed to steer a course between excessive federal direction and excessive lack of accountability on the part of recipients—has, predictably, been criticized for both failings. The research program has been torn between pressures to get at the roots of the causes of crime and to produce results that can immediately be used in the field. And the agency's "success" or lack of it is difficult to assess when no one knows what kind of yardstick to use. One thing only is certain: The crime rate, after a hopeful looking dip in the early 1970's, is still on the increase.

The two reports indicate, at any rate, that the program is pretty much a failure. One, *Law Enforcement: the Federal Role*, produced by a Twentieth Century Fund task force, recommends that the block grant system be dumped, along with LEAA's ten regional offices, and that money be given to the states through special revenue-sharing. The report also proposes that 50 percent of the LEAA budget go to a new Law Enforcement Assistance Institute that would concentrate on research, evaluation, and experimentation.

The other report, written by Washington lawyer Sarah Carey for the Center for National Security Studies, is even rougher on LEAA—in fact, it calls for its abolishment. *Law and Disorder IV* (part of a series of reports critical of LEAA) also suggests that if "fiscal relief" is needed for state law enforcement efforts it should be delivered by means of revenue-sharing, and proposes establishment of a research center separate from the Justice Department.

Both reports come down heavy on the layers of bureaucracy and red tape in the LEAA program—"at present most of LEAA's staff in Washington is involved in keeping track of the bureaucracy it has created," says the task force.

Of the four Republican signers, Helms is the only one who previously has involved himself publicly in the controversy over the NSF education program. In comments on the floor and legislative initiatives, however, Helms has generally followed the lead of Conlan in the House.

Kennedy, in a "Dear Colleagues" letter addressed to the four signers on 15 June, twitted them about their initiative in the following terms. "Your decision not to express interest in these matters to me during this period or during the seven years I have served as Chairman of the Subcommittee, as well as the bi-partisan cooperation which has characterized all of the Subcommittee's activities, is totally contrary to your allegations that I have not been fully responsive to the concerns of members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle."

What really set the steering committee letter apart was the tone of the criticism of Kennedy and Symington, which was

harsher than is customarily used by senators in referring to their colleagues—even members of the other party in an election year. It was this departure from sometimes stagey senatorial decorum which seems to have attracted attention. Senator Jacob K. Javits (R.-N.Y.), for example, felt constrained to write to the four signers, making public part of the letter which included the comment that "As ranking Republican member of the Labor and Public Welfare Committee, I can state that, in my judgment, Senator Kennedy has discharged his responsibilities as Chairman of the Subcommittee in an open and exemplary manner."

There have been reports that two signers of the letter may be reconsidering—at least to the extent of seeking more information about NSF and Stever. Helms, however, seems to be standing pat, having sent the following short and rather abrupt response to Mosher on 14 June.

"I acknowledge receipt of a letter

bearing date of June 11 bearing what purports to be your signature.

"I am confident that this letter must have been written by a high school summer intern in your office, and without your knowledge."

At almost any other time, the anti-Stever letter would probably have caused no more than a ripple. Circumstances, however, have lent significance to the matter. Leisurely congressional handling of the legislation creating the new science office delayed the appointment process until awkwardly late in the life of the current Administration. And the politically supercharged atmosphere generated by the Ford-Reagan contest has certainly heightened the difficulty of a decision such as that involving Stever. Most observers feel that unless the President moves to appoint Stever before the nominating conventions, the new science office will, effectively, go into a holding pattern until January.—JOHN WALSH

Anticrime Agency Faces Criticism, Lowered Budget

Both also decry the fact that the state planning agencies are required to submit plans only for the use of LEAA money—which comprises only about 5 percent of their law enforcement budgets—and that even then planning and paperwork can be a waste of time and money because states make plans to satisfy lengthy LEAA guidelines and then go ahead and spend the money as they please. Oft-made charges are repeated—to the effect that states spend undue amounts of money on expanding their police forces and purchasing new gadgetry instead of developing innovative programs such as alternative ways of dealing with juvenile offenders and drug addicts. The NILECJ comes under fire for failing to develop a comprehensive research program, and for being ineffectual in disseminating whatever results it does produce. For example, the Carey report says that although improved street lighting and helicopter surveillance were found to have a very limited impact on crime prevention, the agency was moving ahead on subsidization of street lighting projects and helicopter purchases.

Evaluations Seen as Justifications

Both Carey and the task force complain that even though elaborate evaluation requirements are built in at every level of the LEAA program, evaluations have been geared more to justifying past projects than to illuminating problems.

Victor Navasky, in a paper in the Twentieth Century Fund report, says LEAA has an identity problem and blames much of the confusion on the agency's mandate. He writes that the goals of crime reduction and improvement of the criminal justice system, while supposedly complementary, imply a "profound difference" in approach—"the difference between the traditional, hard line, punitive law enforcement agenda and a more adventurous criminal justice strategy." Similarly, he characterizes the block grant system as

being "caught halfway between the Great Society and the New Federalism."

Many people, including LEAA administrator Richard Velde, believe the "crime reduction" goal has helped confuse LEAA's mission and has compounded its public relations problems by creating unrealistic expectations.

Faulty as the law may be, Congress is showing no disposition to make any fundamental alterations—and, so long as the government abides by its commitment to keep its paws out of local decision-making, there is not much it can do directly to overcome the resistance to innovation that is strong in law enforcement establishments. There is possibly more opportunity for improvement in LEAA-sponsored research where, it has been alleged, pressure to produce usable results has led to too much emphasis on development of such things as a wristwatch that measures a policeman's pulse. The National Academy of Sciences has been given a \$267,000 contract to assess the research program, and results will be out next December.

There is much room for improvement at LEAA, but fears that the agency is the forerunner of a national police force are not as much in evidence as they were a few years ago. Supporters of the agency point to some positive developments: improved professionalism of personnel, better data collection, record-keeping and communications, and first-time efforts at comprehensive planning. The LEAA has entered a field where knowledge (on causes and prevention of crime) is scanty, and research grants from NILECJ have helped raise criminology from a second-rate discipline to a major area of academic study. All this might have been done with a fraction of the funds that have been expended, but some charity may be expected if one accepts Velde's view that "LEAA is a pioneer working in what is largely an uncharted area."—C.H.