

than he is if protected by no restraint system at all. Moreover, to judge from sled impact tests conducted by highway safety laboratories, he is at least somewhat safer than he would be if he were wearing the lap and shoulder belt combination. An air bag absorbs impact forces more gently than do belts and

from a larger area of the body—and, the greater the impact speed, the more important this is believed to be.

It is true, however, that no statistically significant comparison between the effectiveness of air bags and that of belts can be drawn from the experience with the limited number of cars equipped with air

bags to date. About all one can say is that, in the 89 crash situations in which air bags are known to have deployed, most of the drivers and front seat passengers escaped with either no injuries or only minor ones.

Four persons were killed in these crashes, but none of the fatalities was at-

CEQ Chairman to Head Citizens Lobby on World Problems

Russell Peterson, chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) plans to leave his position at the end of this month and become director of a new citizens lobbying group called New Directions.

"I'm quitting because of a great opportunity," Peterson told *Science*. Up until some weeks ago he had never even heard of the nascent organization. He found out during a lunch with World Bank president Robert McNamara, one of the original minds behind the operation. A whirlwind courtship with the founders ensued, which culminated with plans for Peterson to take over presidency of the organization on 1 October.

New Directions is to be closely modeled on Common Cause, the citizens lobby set up by John W. Gardner in 1970. The new group, however, will concern itself with global problems. "We plan to fly under four banners," said Peterson. The goals are "to help the poorest of the poor to help themselves; to protect and enhance the environment; to reduce the risk of war and violence; and to safeguard basic human rights." The organization plans to zero in on a few major "targets" at a time—arms sales, for example, or problems of plutonium recycling—and mobilize members to put pressure on legislators and do whatever else they can think of. Peterson says the goal is to get 100,000 members in the first year of operation. The organization plans to support itself on annual dues of \$20 apiece. Peterson says New Directions wants to form links with citizens organizations around the world and hopes to stimulate the development of New Directions-type groups in other lands.

An Elite Cast

A fairly impressive selection of people, many of them veterans of past Democratic administrations, are behind the grandiose new plans. Convenors of the planning commission were Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, and publisher Norman Cousins. It was chaired by William Roth, a California businessman and environmentalist who ran against Governor Jerry Brown in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. Other participants, in addition to McNamara, are anthropologist Margaret Mead; former Treasury Secretary Douglas Dillon; John Gardner; former deputy defense secretary Cyrus R. Vance; Jack T. Conway, former president of Common Cause; and Joseph Slater, president of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies.

Roth says the planners were looking for a leader who was "really devoted" to the issues in question and who also had experience in government and in dealing with legislatures. Peterson apparently filled the bill perfectly.

Peterson is all bright-eyed about his new job and says, "If I sat down to write what I wanted to do for the rest of

my career I couldn't have done better." Peterson has been concerned about global problems, long-range planning, and the need for a "holistic" approach to decision-making since his days as a chemist at the Du Pont Company.

A former Republican governor of Delaware, Peterson has presided over CEQ during a time of its having relatively low visibility, in contrast to the period when the council was rushing to take new initiatives in the years immediately following the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969. Peterson said he thought the most important thing the CEQ has done during his 3-year tenure has been "to teach the country something about environmental economics." He said there has been "much misunderstanding" about the effects of environmental cleanup on the economy, but he now believes "the tide has turned," and Americans now realize that when the quality of life is put into the equation, implementation of environmental legislation has had a positive impact on the economy.

On the other hand there have been disappointments. The two major ones perhaps involve the failure of the Administration to support the kind of land use policy and toxic substances control laws Peterson has been pushing for. The Office of Management and Budget recently restated the Administration's opposition to a compromise toxic substances bill that has passed the House and has even been endorsed by the Manufacturing Chemists' Association.

New Directions does not as yet have any specific plans. Peterson says it will not have any research capability but wants to "tap the knowledge and proposals of existing research and educational organizations in the international field."

Roth said the new organization will "tie together a range of diverse issues" some of which are now the focus of special groups, and others which do not now have a coherent constituency in this country, such as poverty and the transfer of resources in underdeveloped countries. It would be in a position, he says, to develop stands on matters that go beyond the concerns of U.S. foreign policy. It would exert pressure on the Executive Branch of government as well as Congress. It would provide a recourse, for example, for someone interested in seeing a change in this country's food aid policies. It would also offer a channel for translating domestic environmental concerns into the international arena.

New Directions, to be headquartered in the same building as Common Cause, will have a small staff of no more than seven or eight and much of the work will be contracted out. Official announcement of its formation, including the membership of its board of directors, is scheduled for mid-October.—C.H.