

AAAS Meeting: Drought Was the Topic of the Week

Denver. Participants in this year's annual meeting of the AAAS began to grapple with major societal problems even before the program started. As travelers from the snow-struck East filed off the planes at Stapleton International Airport here they found balmy weather, bright, cloudless skies, and temperatures in the 60's. It was a typical Denver day in this atypical year of drought. Groans of dismay issued from those who had mindlessly packed woolen clothes and heavy overcoats to ward off the presumed cold of the high plains. Outside, children ran through the streets in tee shirts, and sunbathers lounged on the grounds of the governor's mansion. The news from ski country, posted prominently in the airport, was bad. So little snow had fallen in the mountains that several resorts, including famed Steamboat Springs, had been forced to close for lack of snow cover.

The talk of the drought was everywhere. On Sunday, 22 February, the day the meeting officially opened, the governors of 11 Western states met here to discuss drought problems and, in the process, vented their anger at the Carter Administration's plans to cancel some 19 proposed water-resource projects, three of which would have been built in Colorado. The next day Colorado began a cloud-seeding operation in the mountain areas. Prayers and Indian dances had failed to produce much precipitation in the past, but on Tuesday and subsequent days a storm dumped a load of snow on the mountain areas, leading one cloud-seeding firm to claim instant success for its efforts (skeptics were not so sure of the cause-effect relationship). At the eastern edge of the state, however, "dust bowl" conditions prevailed at least briefly when winds exceeding 90 miles per hour kicked up so much dust that visibility fell to near zero in some locations, forcing roads and schools to be closed.

Against that background of concern, it was inevitable that some of the most attention-getting sessions of the AAAS meeting were those concerned with drought and weather modification. The interest caught AAAS officials a bit unprepared. They had scheduled a session on "American Droughts" for a relatively

small conference room at the Denver Hilton Hotel, but some 130 or more scientists and newsmen jammed into the seats, crouched on the floor, and spilled out into the hallway.

Drought expert Stephen H. Schneider, deputy head of the climate project at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, quickly became a "media darling" for much of the press. He is the author of a book on climatic changes and their impact on human well-being (*The Genesis Strategy*) as well as an articulate veteran of TV talk shows and interviews who knows how to present his views in punchy, get-directly-to-the-point sentences that make good journalistic fare. (Schneider is so good, in fact, that some journalists are a bit wary of him, sensing that he knows their game well enough to manipulate them.) Schneider's message was blunt and provocative: A long series of highly publicized scientific warnings foreshadowed this winter's severe drought in the West and severe cold in the East, he said, yet we did little to prepare ourselves for these disasters. We failed to stockpile food or launch water conservation projects in advance of the drought; nor did we increase natural gas reserves or launch a major energy conservation program to cope with a severe winter.

Schneider blamed these failures partly on the free-market philosophy of the Nixon-Ford administrations, which was ideologically opposed to such strategies as a food reserve, and partly on an unrealistic demand that climatologists produce specific predictions of a disaster when their primitive theory can only talk in rough probabilities of the likelihood of adverse climatic changes. Society must make plans to cope with climatic events even when those events cannot be precisely predicted, he concluded.

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The meeting this year—the 143rd in the association's history—was a smorgasbord of some 120 symposiums and lectures on an enormous variety of topics, all lumped together under a theme ("Science and Change: Hopes and Dilemmas") so vague as to cover almost anything. An MIT physicist donned his

karate robe to show one audience how basic karate techniques embody the laws of physics. A speaker from San Francisco State University discussed the extent to which *Frankenstein* suggests fears of Big Science. And a professor of religious history analyzed the impact of the Reverend Sung Myung Moon's Unification Church on the attitudes of its members.

Some 4000 or more individuals officially registered for the meeting, less than the number who showed up for last year's Boston meeting, but about the same as the number who attended the meeting in New York the year before. A satisfying turnout, in the opinion of AAAS officials.

Press coverage of the meeting was substantial. More than 300 individuals from the media registered with the AAAS pressroom, some from as far away as Europe and Australia.

The conglomeration of reportorial manpower proved irresistible to organizations interested in publicizing their accomplishments. The federal Energy Research and Development Administration eagerly conducted a press tour of its windmill test center at Rocky Flats, Colorado, just before the AAAS meeting started, thereby generating a spate of stories on the possibilities of small windmills as an energy source for rural areas. A few days later, high winds knocked one of the windmills out of commission.

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Many sessions dealt with the perennial question of how science might help solve various societal problems or otherwise interact with the political sphere. Colorado Governor Richard D. Lamm, a 42-year-old environmentalist and lawyer, told a standing-room-only crowd in the Hilton's grand ballroom that he wasn't optimistic about getting effective solutions from either the scientific or political communities. He said that he was "taken aback" when he considered how seldom he used the scientific resources of his own state. One reason, he explained, is that scientists approach problems with "a specialized tunnel vision," tend to ignore resource limitations and the political "agony" involved in implementing their proposed solutions, and are often bright people who lack wisdom. Lamm also expressed "great sadness" at the hubris of scientists who would schedule a program entitled "Science: The Key to Our Political Future," when science, in his view, is "only one key and not the major one." But Lamm was even harsher on his own breed. He described politicians as creatures who seek to survive

Dispute over Jensen Election as Fellow Flares in Council

Denver. A black health administrator from Harvard University angrily announced that he will resign from the AAAS because the association's election of Arthur R. Jensen, the controversial educational psychologist, as a fellow constitutes an "endorsement of racism."

The bitter denunciation of Jensen was made by William D. Wallace, director of health career programs at Harvard, after a confused morning of debate and voting by the AAAS Council, the body that passes final judgment on which members will be elevated to the status of fellows. Jensen is best known for his argument that a sizable genetic component underlies racial differences in IQ.

AAAS leaders were dismayed at the incident and its aftermath. Anthropologist Margaret Mead, the immediate past chairman of the AAAS board, described the situation as "a very bad muddle, an awful, awful muddle." Executive Officer William D. Carey expressed sadness that "the anger and the protest and the confusion splashed mud all over the face of the AAAS."

The dispute over Jensen arose in the closing stages of the annual election of fellows. This has always been a spotty process at best though screening procedures have been tightened considerably in recent years. There are currently some 16,000 fellows among the 114,000 members. The criteria for election are that a candidate must be "a Member who has produced a body of work on behalf of the advancement of science that is scientifically distinguished or socially highly significant, or both."

The chief sources of nominations are the various AAAS section committees, which tend to operate in mysterious, random ways. Some sections, including some of the very largest, don't even bother to make nominations, figuring they have no sound way to determine who is worthy of the designation. The nominations emerging from the sections and other valid sources (nominations may be made by the executive officer or by any three fellows) are passed on to a council committee on fellows, where nine bleary-eyed people sit all day passing candidates' folders back and forth, marking them "yes," "no," "pass," "don't know," or whatever. The vast majority of nominations are approved.

The process is haphazard in the extreme. Some of the most distinguished members of the AAAS have somehow been passed over for years. This year, for example, Luis Alvarez was finally elected a fellow, an honor which seems to have eluded him while he was capturing a Nobel Prize and other top national or international awards. The same goes for George B. Kistiakowsky, former science adviser to President Eisenhower and member of the National Academy of Sciences, and for numerous others. Meanwhile, hundreds of relatively obscure toilers in the scientific vineyards who managed to get nominated by three fellows and whose pedigree appeared acceptable have proudly displayed the designation "AAAS fellow" in their résumés.

The controversial Jensen nomination emerged from the psychology section and was endorsed by the Committee on Fellows, which forwarded 178 nominations for final approval by the council at the annual meeting here. Jensen was nominated "for his research contributions to the field of testing and individual differences, and in particular for his studies of features of intelligence testing."

The list of nominees is available in advance of the

council meeting, thus enabling members who are not on the council to learn who the nominees are. When Wallace became aware that Jensen was on the list, he sought to make a speech to the council opposing the nomination. That request triggered a heated debate and a series of controversial votes. First, there was a vote on a motion to suspend the rules to allow Wallace to speak. That failed to attract the required two-thirds support—35 voted for the motion, but 17 voted against it and 5 abstained. Later, in the most crucial ballot of the series, there was a vote on whether to remove Jensen's name from the list and refer it back to the Committee on Fellows for further consideration. That proposal was defeated by the narrowest of margins, 27 to 26. Finally, there was a vote on whether to approve the entire list of 178 names. That passed by 36 to 9, with 13 abstentions.

The final vote was the only one conducted by a roll call of council members. In the process it was revealed that at least one person who had participated in all the previous votes was not a member of the council. How many such illegal votes were cast, and whether they changed the outcome on the critical ballot, is not known.

Immediately after the confused proceedings, Wallace held a press conference and, with a handful of supporters, issued a statement criticizing Jensen's "controversial and highly questionable research drawing racist connections between race and intelligence." He called Jensen's election as a fellow "an insult to minorities and damaging to the credibility of AAAS in its work with minority scientists." Soon thereafter, he stalked out and left the field to Margaret Mead, who had spoken against Jensen's election at the morning council meeting but who said she would not withdraw from AAAS because "I never resign from anything—I stay in to fight."

Mead told *Science* she opposed Jensen's election because she considered the quality of his scientific work "unspeakable." She said that while Jensen's peers in the Psychology Section judged his work meritorious, many biologists and anthropologists thought Jensen used faulty assumptions and methodologies from their fields.

At the afternoon session of the council, Mead and six others signed a proposed resolution that listed five specific objections to Jensen's work and called upon the Psychology Section to respond to these criticisms. But that effort failed, too. The council passed a tepid resolution that made no mention of Jensen. It simply applauded efforts already under way to reexamine the fellowship process, and it urged consideration of "ways to resolve possible differences between sections with regard to the qualifications of an individual."

Carey later told *Science* he saw "no way" that the council could have "equitably" deprived Jensen of fellowship when he had been judged qualified by his peers and nominated in full compliance with AAAS procedures. Meanwhile, the AAAS issued a statement about Jensen's election which said in part:

"Nothing that occurred today implies that this association shares Jensen's positions which are controversial. We are, and will continue to be, committed without qualification to equality of opportunity in and out of science."

—PHILIP M. BOFFEY

by staying as far away from criticism as possible; they therefore exert "very little leadership." If dynamic leadership is needed, he said, it will have to come from outside the political system because the system does not reward boldness. Lamm said he himself sometimes needs a crisis to spur him to act.

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Some of the Western governors seem very taken with the ideas propounded by the British economist E. F. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful* and chief theoretician of the "appropriate technology" movement. That movement seeks to focus attention on technologies that are small-scale, decentralized, ecologically sound, labor-intensive, and "appropriate" to the local setting. Schumacher, who is currently on a 6-week barnstorming tour that will take him through 13 states as part of a drive to attract support to appropriate technology groups in this country, stopped off at the AAAS meeting. Montana's Governor Thomas L. Judge complimented Schumacher on a "good job" in presenting his case when he visited his state a few days earlier. Judge said that science, technology, and the university system too often serve the needs of big

corporations and big systems; he viewed appropriate technology as a means to protect sparsely populated states such as his own against the depredations of powerful forces that seek to strip away resources to fuel far-off centralized systems. Colorado's Governor Lamm called Schumacher's book "impressive" and urged the media to plug Schumacher's speech that evening at a college in Denver.

The appropriate technology movement conducted a number of events at the AAAS meeting and other points nearby. For the most part, participants were either true believers or interested onlookers. The most jarring negative view was presented by Joseph F. Coates, assistant director of the federal Office of Technology Assessment, who described the movement as an "intellectually empty" haven for disenchanted middle-class youth who are seeking a "playground" for their hobbies and a new "radical chic" cause now that the Vietnam War is over. Small may be beautiful, Coates said, but the various solar houses and compost toilets built by the appropriate technologists and shown so proudly in a slide show here are actually "ugly" and "unattractive." To expect that the American public would prefer them to the

products of our large-scale, centralized, technical system "flies in the face of everything we know about people," he said.

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While the scientific sessions held center stage, an array of committees, councils, and boards were conducting the housekeeping business of the association. It soon became apparent that the AAAS has adopted somewhat more modest and realistic goals for itself. In 1969, the AAAS board resolved to expand the association's membership by an order of magnitude within a decade, and just last year the incoming AAAS president was still talking of a threefold increase or more. But membership actually peaked at 133,000 in 1970 and has since declined to 113,000. This time around AAAS officials expressed relief that the decline was a bit less steep in 1976 than in the preceding 2 years. William D. Carey, the executive officer, said that the drop in membership while expenses continue to rise poses "big trouble" for the AAAS. He noted that a major membership recruitment effort has been launched, with the result that the membership is projected to reach 115,000 by the end of 1977.

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Brzezinski: Role of Science in Society and Foreign Policy

"If, after the inauguration, you find a Cy Vance as secretary of state and Zbigniew Brzezinski as head of national security, then I would say we failed. And I'd quit. But that's not going to happen. You're going to see new faces, new ideas."

The now notorious remark made in an interview given to *Playboy* before last year's election has come back frequently to haunt its perpetrator, Carter's all-but chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan. Both Vance and Brzezinski have attained the offices in question. Jordan's remark, made during the populist phase of Carter's campaign, was probably aimed not at Vance and Brzezinski in person so much as at what is known as the foreign policy establishment, the coterie of East Coast lawyers and bankers whose base of operations is the Council on Foreign

Relations. Jordan was right in epitomizing Vance as a member of this establishment but not quite so accurate with Brzezinski who, if not a new face, may still prove a source of new ideas.

Brzezinski has in fact been a sharp critic of the foreign policy establishment, even to the point of writing its obituary. The "WASP-eastern seaboard-Ivy League-Wall Street foreign affairs elite," wrote the white-Polish-born-Catholic-Canadian raised, Columbia University professor in his characteristically hyphenated style, "... enjoyed the institutional backing of the internationally-oriented eastern business-banking community, with which it was in a rather symbiotic relationship, and it was also tied—often by close personal links—to the Protestant tradition and church. . . . The Vietnam war was the Waterloo of the

WASP elite. But like Waterloo, a period of decay preceded the final battle."

The period of decay, as Brzezinski tells it was brought on "by the unprecedented plunge of American society beyond the industrial age into a new postindustrial technetronic era, for which there was no prior philosophical or cultural preparation." The reign of the WASP's gave way to the Kissinger interregnum, but "the secretive style and manipulative character of Kissinger's stewardship had the effect of accelerating congressional entry into direct foreign policy making." In these words, written in an article that appeared in *Foreign Affairs* last November, Brzezinski summed up the history of the world of foreign policy-making prior to his fast impending advent.

From Brzezinski's writings and academic career it is hard to divine the future course of his influence on foreign policy, which will doubtless be far less dominant than that exerted by Kissinger. Born in Warsaw, Brzezinski spent most of his early life in Montreal, where his father was the Polish consul general. Graduating from McGill, Brzezinski specialized in Russian studies at Harvard,