

Advisory Group Says DOE Slights Education for PR

A citizen's task force appointed by the Department of Energy to study its energy education program has taken DOE sharply to task for not drawing the line between education and propaganda. The task force urged the agency to overhaul the whole operation.

Surprisingly, DOE's top brass, rather than ignoring the report or huffing and puffing in offended innocence, which would be standard bureaucratic procedure, have said that the critics have a point and indicated that DOE intends to make some changes.

The Public Energy Education Task Force is one of six panels formed to look critically at various aspects of DOE activities. The education panel has 13 members drawn from industry, labor, academe, and public interest groups. It was chaired by Shirley Sutton of Americans for Energy Independence and its sole government member was George Tressell, director of the National Science Foundation's Public Understanding of Science program.

The report's most cutting criticisms were of "A tendency on the part of DOE to 'sell' government actions and policies through the techniques of rhetoric, persuasion, and advertising," and of "Too biased a participation by some DOE program offices in public debates of energy issues."

To mend its ways, the task force urged that DOE reform itself along two lines. (i) The agency should form a broadly based public advisory panel to scrutinize the information activities of DOE. (ii) A program of grants for education activities awarded under a peer review system should be established with funds at least equal to those allotted to DOE public information activities.

Noting that DOE spends an estimated \$25 million a year on its information program, the report says that only about 10 percent of that is allocated for public education. The group asked that the education program be supported at a level of \$10 million to \$20 million a year to start with.

In making its recommendations, the

group's major premise was that "great confusion and a lack of basic information exist in virtually all segments of the American public regarding energy issues and options. Although vast corporate, governmental and special interest resources are currently devoted to advocacy of particular points of view, little emphasis is being placed on nonpartisan energy education so that the public can better arrive at its own value judgments on energy questions. The Federal Government is the most appropriate sector of society to take a leadership role in support of such nonpartisan education."

A public education program, says the report, "must recognize and carefully respect the differences between education, and propaganda or marketing." Education, observes the group, "does not attempt to indoctrinate, rather it seeks to better enable individuals to develop their own perspectives and opinions."

Reacting to the report, DOE upper-echelon officials, including Energy Secretary James R. Schlesinger, have expressed agreement with the report's thesis that the public is overwhelmed and thoroughly confused by the outpouring of often conflicting information on energy matters. They are also apparently willing to concede that federal agencies can be influenced by institutional self-interest. In the same way that industry public-relations programs are influenced by hopes of profit, government agencies may conduct information programs in ways calculated to promote the agency's policies and programs. Among some DOE officials there is a feeling that it is difficult to develop education programs which are both impartial and effective, but they say they are willing to try.

Schlesinger, in fact, late last year appointed a Communications Action Group headed by Omi Walden, assistant secretary for conservation and solar applications, to make recommendations on the agency's information and education program. The group will be meeting with task-force members on the issues raised in the report, but there is no agency commitment to adopt its recommendations.

The model the task force has in mind for education is programs operated by the National Endowments in the Arts and Humanities and NSF's Public Understanding of Science pro-

gram, which awards competitive grants under a peer review system. A wide range of institutions and citizens' groups would be eligible under the task-force proposal.

While unsparing in its criticism, the task force's report does not name names or cite cases. DOE's information program came under attack, for example, during the campaign preceding a nuclear moratorium in California in 1976 when the agency circulated a brochure that was regarded as patently pronuclear. According to members of the task force, an earlier draft of the report carried some specifics, but these were edited out to be "gentlemanly."

DOE, of course, is not the only government agency whose information program is less than perfectly impartial. Agency information offices accentuate what they see as the positive, and there is no effective oversight mechanism to correct the tilt. The task-force report, therefore, is a clear statement of a generic problem in the federal establishment. As for DOE, it has set an example of bureaucratic sweet reasonableness by turning the other cheek. It will be interesting to see whether the agency will, so to speak, go the second mile in dealing with the problem.

AAAS Counterpart for the Other Culture

The American Association for the Advancement of the Humanities, which a year ago was little more than a gleam in its advocates' eyes, is now showing strong organizational vital signs. It has a Washington office, is beginning publication of a monthly *Humanities Report*, and has just sent out its first mass mailing to enlist members.

The AAAH chairman is James M. Banner, Jr., a Princeton historian and one of the association's founders. In the letter to prospective members, Banner writes that humanistic scholarship and the institutions which support it face grave difficulties and that the AAAH was established to help find solutions to these difficulties. Humanists up to now have been notably lax

in making the case for the humanities. "The blunt truth is that everyone is organized but the humanities," says the letter.

The AAAH is intended to give humanists, traditionally fragmented among specialized disciplines, a means of making common cause; the Washington office will give the humanists a "presence" in the place where important decisions are made. AAAH was deliberately given a name that suggests it aspires to be a counterpart of AAAS and its founders hope that, like AAAS, it will deal with both scholarly and policy matters.

AAAH is now a nonprofit in good standing, having 501-C-3 status with the Internal Revenue Service and start-up grants from the Exxon education foundation, Ford and Rockefeller foundations, and the Dyson-Kissner Corporation in New York. The question now is how many humanists, who really aren't used to this sort of thing, will ante up the \$25 annual dues.

Administration Backs Plan for Technology Foundation

Creation of a Foundation for International Technological Cooperation (FITC) to foster development in less developed countries is on the list of the Administration's New Year's resolutions, but the details will have to wait until President Carter decides on proposals for reorganization of the total federal structure for foreign aid.

The FITC has been in the pipeline for almost a year (*Science*, 16 June 1978) and Administration sources are now predicting the foundation will be in business by 1 October. Funding in the initial stages would amount to \$80 million or \$90 million transferred from the Agency for International Development (AID) budget, and an additional \$25 million requested in the President's budget.

Since last summer, a small FITC planning office has been working to clarify the foundation's purpose and organization. Genuine cooperation is to be emphasized, with a major share of funds being spent overseas, mainly to strengthen indigenous institutions abroad and to support education and

training programs in less developed countries (LDC's). Foundation backers argue that experts from LDC's should be more involved in planning and program implementation.

The President's science adviser, Frank Press, is chief patron of the idea in the Administration, and his Office of Science and Technology Policy is working closely with the FITC planning office. OSTP, in fact, has set up an advisory committee on science, technology, and development under Ford Foundation vice president David E. Bell, who was an AID director during the Kennedy Administration. The foundation idea has the support and apparently the personal interest of President Carter. It also has the backing of AID administrator John Gilligan and the State Department.

The FITC idea, however, is in a holding pattern until Carter acts on plans for a major reorganization of the government's foreign assistance programs, which include not only those administered by AID and State, but also loan programs under Treasury authority. The most ambitious reorganization proposal calls for establishment of an all-inclusive International Development Cooperation Administration (IDCA), of which FITC would be a semiautonomous part.

Whether Carter opts for IDCA or a less ambitious alternative, the issue of the degree of independence for FITC is potentially the stickiest question facing the foundation. Opposition could come from the AID bureaucracy who came late to the view that science and technology will be important in the future of U.S. aid programs and may now resist giving up part of the action to the foundation. On Capitol Hill, Senator Adlai E. Stevenson (D-Ill.), chairman of the Commerce Committee's science subcommittee, will introduce his own bill establishing the foundation. Stevenson's bill will reflect his conviction that the foundation will have to have maximum independence to be effective. The views of other major players in Congress, however, are not yet clear. When final plans for FITC are fixed, friction could also occur on questions such as how the staff is to be constituted and how much of FITC's funds will be spent abroad. To sum it up, FITC appears to be an idea whose fiscal year has come, but in Washington there are always those qualifying butts.

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university trustees, in response, approved a memorandum of understanding assuring that the center would be completely controlled by the university, which the faculty said was not enough. "The credibility of USC as an academic institution is now in jeopardy before the world," read a faculty senate resolution. "To restore our academic integrity, we believe that measures far more sweeping . . . are now imperative."

Finally, the trustees appointed a special committee to investigate the matter, and to oversee the start-up of the center. Ironically, their efforts may be needless, because few believe the center will be able to attract any donations now. "This is the equivalent of a Watergate for us," says LeBlanc. "I've received letters from faculty at other schools who were offered positions here, who now say they won't come." Indeed, faculty at other Middle Eastern centers said they were dumbfounded at what USC had done. "They goofed," said one. "They set it up in a stupid way."

In the midst of all this, some discomfiting details about Beling's choice in 1976 as the holder of the Saudi chair also came to light, compounding the university's embarrassment and confusing the issue somewhat. Beling, it seems, was named as the recipient of the chair in the agreement Hubbard signed with the Saudis when it was set up; Beling, a former official of the Arabian American Oil Company, was also the person who got the Saudis to endow the chair. Hubbard insists that Beling was his choice, and that all he did was indicate who would be picked if the Saudis gave the funds. The contract, in fact, says that future incumbents in the chair are to be chosen by USC in consultation with the Saudis, "within the acceptable academic traditions of the university."

The incident is roughly parallel to the manner in which the Iranian chair in multinational management at George Washington University was filled, also in 1976. Philip D. Grub, a professor in the school of business, helped negotiate the endowment, was mentioned by university officials as a likely recipient, and ultimately was appointed to fill the chair. No strings were attached, Grub explained. "I was simply the only person in the department who had had major previous contacts with Iran and the Middle East." Both the USC and GWU arrangements were defended by the director of one Middle East center, who said, "As long as both instructors were already on the faculty, I see nothing wrong with letting a donor know in advance who is going to get the