have provided the second probe, but NASA has now decided that it cannot afford to build its spacecraft. It will still provide the launcher if ESA wants to go it alone.

The Europeans are upset that they have lavished a good part of their meager space science budget on a project whose scientific value would be considerably reduced. ESA sent a strong protest to the State Department last week, suggesting that cancellation of NASA's share of the program would jeapordize future space cooperation between Europe and the United States.

Another action that is sure to upset scientists in other countries is the elimination from NSF's budget of about $1 million for U.S. subscriptions to the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and support for U.S. delegates to ICSU business meetings. The United States has supported ICSU since 1935.

Bilateral scientific cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would be cut by one-third from the present level, while cooperation with China would stay at the current level.

Finally in the international area, the Reagan budget has eliminated all support for the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), an interna-

Federal Job Exam to Be Retired

The Justice Department in January consented to phase out the examination used in hiring federal employees on the grounds that it has an "adverse impact" on minorities.

The exam, known as PACE (Professional and Administrative Career Examination), is the chief instrument used to screen applicants for entry-level professional jobs in the government. Similar in content to the college entrance examination, it was introduced in 1975 as a fairer measure than the old federal service entrance exam.

But in 1979 four blacks and Hispanics who flunked the 1978 PACE filed a class action suit claiming the test was biased against minorities. The evidence: in 1978, although 42 percent of whites passed the test, only 13 percent of Hispanics and 5 percent of blacks achieved passing grades.

The Justice Department chose not to contest the suit and instead worked out a consent decree, subject to approval by the U.S. District Court, which it signed in the last days of the Carter Administration. The decree called for a gradual phaseout of PACE over the next 4 years and its replacement by "alternative testing procedures"—meaning "disassembled" or nonwritten tests—to be worked out on an agency-by-agency basis for each of the 118 jobs covered by PACE. The decree said new tests had to be found which would not disproportionately disqualify minorities, and that for up to 5 years after the PACE phaseout, "all practicable means" had to be used to see that minorities were hired in proportion to their presence in the applicant population—whether or not suitable new tests had been developed. In other words, the decree would establish a quota system in which roughly 20 percent of those hired would have to be black or Hispanic.

When the office of the President-elect got wind of this arrangement, it filed a brief asking that the court postpone action on the decree. The court acceded and the Justice Department has since drawn up a modified decree. This one eliminates the 20 percent figure and shortens the time of the decree's jurisdiction to no more than 5 years during which agencies have to use "all practicable means" to eliminate the proportional discrepancy in hiring. It also allows personnel research to be centralized in the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) so each agency doesn't have to develop tests from scratch. The court gave preliminary approval to the decree on 26 February.

The case has caused considerable clamor among those who believe that the decree amounts to subversion of the merit system in federal hiring—and a mighty expensive one at that. The Internal Revenue Service has estimated that the use of less valid selection measures for agents would culminate in a yearly revenue loss of $115 million. Research by the OPM indicates that there would be an annual drop in federal worker productivity worth $456 million if PACE is replaced with "unassembled" alternatives. The Social Security Administration 18 months ago inaugurated a disassembled test called CRESS (Claims Representative Exam for Social Security), which turned out to cost them $10,000 per hire.

But money aside, the real questions relate to the validity of various tests. William C. Burns, an industrial psychologist who served as expert witness for the plaintiffs, has said it is "patently absurd" to expect a single test "to evaluate 'merit' for 118 different jobs." Other psychologists contend there is already ample evidence that PACE is valid—that is, successful in predicting job performance. The competencies, quantitative and verbal, that the test measures are common to all 118 jobs and, according to Marilyn Quaintance of the International Personnel Managers Association, hundreds of studies during the 1970's showed that the cognitive abilities measured by PACE are related to "successful performance in PACE-type jobs."

James C. Sharf, an industrial psychologist and consultant formerly employed at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), says the Carter Administration erroneously interpreted EEOC guidelines (which Sharf himself drafted) to mean that separate validation studies are required for each job. But this, he says, does not comport with professional standards for psychological testing. Furthermore, says Sharf, when a valid test shows adverse impact on minorities, it is up to the plaintiffs to demonstrate the existence of equally valid, less discriminatory tests. This, he says, is impossible, because those who want to junk PACE have no evidence for the validity of "alternative" tests. Indeed, it is just about impossible to validate oral interviews because they are "notoriously unreliable"—that is, assessments of the same applicant change over time and from rater to rater.

The Reagan Administration has chosen to get the consent decree modified rather than take the political heat for fighting it. But the elimination of PACE is likely to precipitate future showdowns. Many may share the view of Washington *Post* columnist William Raspberry that the consent decree could be "the most absurd affirmative-action proposal since the Cleveland school official ordered that the city's high school basketball teams must henceforth be at least 20 percent white."—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

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