

laboratories for handling radioactive samples and possibly plutonium separation, a radiochemistry laboratory, a pilot reprocessing facility, and a fuel fabrication laboratory. For this, the Italian company providing the equipment has reportedly been paid a little over \$50 million, and Italy has won a contract to build military ships for Iraq.

In addition, several countries—Portugal, Italy, Niger, and possibly Brazil—have sent or are planning to send large quantities of semi-processed uranium known as yellowcake (U_3O_8) to Iraq. Estimates of the volume range from 100 to 300 tons. Iraq apparently has no plans to build facilities to convert the ore to fuel, but the ore could be irradiated in the French reactor to produce plutonium.

Even before the Italian deal, Israel announced that the situation was becoming intolerable. Israeli officials made threats in public and private, suggesting that if the big powers did not intervene, Israel would act to crush the growing nuclear program in Iraq. Some examples are worth citing. The chief aide to Menachem Begin was quoted last July as saying, "Israel cannot allow itself to sit back and wait for an Iraqi bomb to fall on our heads." Former chief defense scientist and Begin adviser Yuval Ne'eman warned at the same time that Iraq would be able to build a bomb within 2 years. Deputy defense minister Mordecai Zippori was quoted as saying of the campaign against Iraq, "We will explore all legal and humane avenues. If pressure doesn't work, we'll have to consider other means." At that time Israel had already been accused of directing murder and sabotage plots against Iraqis (*Science*, 29 August 1980, p. 1001 and 31 October 1980, p. 507).

Although Israel did apply diplomatic pressure in the United States and Europe, it never made public its full case against Iraq. Perhaps Israel found it awkward, having never signed the NPT, to demand that restrictions be imposed on Iraq, a seemingly obedient follower of NPT rules. Perhaps Israel's military did not wish to draw attention to the bombing plan.

In any case, the failure to make a formal case against the Iraqis before the attack is now seen as a breach of international law. Undersecretary of State Walter Stoessel, Jr., told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 18 June: "The United States was not consulted in any way about any phase of the Israeli action, nor were we informed of it in ad-

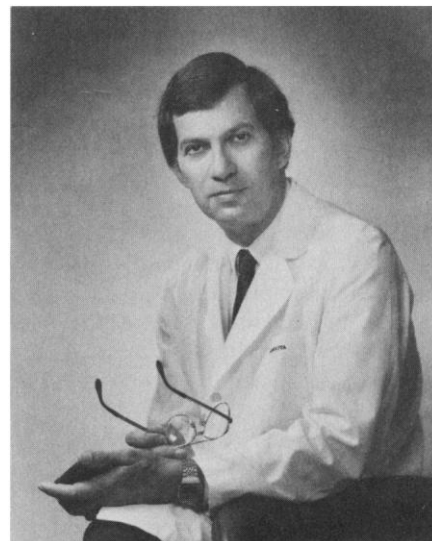
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Cancer Researchers Defend NCI Against Congressional Attacks

Unusually aggressive though largely unspecific criticism by members of Congress of the National Cancer Institute and its director, Vincent T. DeVita, Jr., have brought forth a strong reaction from the cancer research community. At recent Senate hearings, Senators Paula Hawkins (R-Florida), Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), and Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) were particularly vehement in attacking NCI's failure to produce a cure for cancer and in challenging DeVita's ability to manage the vast cancer enterprise (*Science*, 13 February, p. 684, and 19 June, p. 1366).

Metzenbaum, who in the past has been supportive of NCI, publicly accused DeVita of being "blasé" about his leadership of NCI. Hatch, for reasons that are not clear, has indicated in private that he wants DeVita ousted from the NCI directorship which is a presidentially appointed post.

The National Cancer Panel, which reports directly to the President, the National Cancer Advisory Board, and an overwhelming majority of NCI's senior scientific staff are among those who have rushed to DeVita's de-



Vincent T. DeVita, Jr.

Flattered by researchers' support

fense. The panel, headed by Rockefeller University president Joshua Lederberg, sent a wire to the President on DeVita's behalf; the advisory board sent a letter saying that if DeVita is not reappointed, the national cancer program will suffer "irreparable damage."

In a letter to Richard H. Schweiker, Secretary of Health and Human Services, more than 90 directors and heads of NCI's laboratories and clinics said they were "dismayed by the impressions reflected in the press following the recent hearings of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources." They called DeVita an "excellent manager of scientists and scientific resources and . . . a dynamic leader." Copies of their letter, which is reprinted in full on page 9, went to more than 20 members of Congress and to White House science adviser George A. Keyworth, among others. Keyworth is known to be an admirer of DeVita's.

The effect of public and private politicking apparently is working in DeVita's favor. Several of Hatch's Senate colleagues have urged him to back off and Metzenbaum actually phoned DeVita to apologize for the tone of his criticism. DeVita, who has been trying to keep a low profile throughout, says that he is "very flattered" by the support he is getting and that he believes that he and Hatch can get along.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON