

ple. Strengthening research and higher education is thus a major goal of the economic reforms launched by the Chinese government in the mid-1970's.

The People's Republic of China became a member of the World Bank in May 1980. Its emergence as a potential major borrower will increase pressure on the World Bank's resources at a time when increased support from the bank's major contributor, the United States, is in doubt. The Reagan Administration is now conducting a review of its policies for the World Bank, and Congress shows signs of balking at a proposal to increase U.S. contributions to the institution.

—**Colin Norman**

Chilean Doctors and AAAS Mission

In the wake of a fact-finding mission to Chile sponsored by the AAAS and four other organizations, a Chilean military judge has dismissed the main charge against three imprisoned Chilean physicians and ordered their case transferred to a civilian court. This could be the first step toward their release.

The three physicians, Manuel Almeyda, Pedro Castillo, and Patricio Arroyo, were accused of illegal political activities, but the real reason for their arrest is thought to have been their treatment of torture victims and supplying of medical help to students on hunger strike. Arrested in mid-May, the three physicians were held incommunicado, most of the time with their eyes taped, for 3 weeks until June 7. On this day two North American doctors, Jonathan Fine and James Koopman, arrived in Chile on a fact-finding mission at the request of the Chilean Commission on Human Rights.

Secretary of State Alexander Haig asserted recently that there had been "dramatic, dramatic reductions" in human rights violations in Chile and three other Latin American countries. The Fine-Koopman commission, however, reported that, far from a reduction, "Serious human rights abuses are once again on the increase in Chile." The imprisoned physician Manuel Almeyda, they noted, was direc-

tor of the medical program of the Catholic Church in Santiago. In this role he gave medical care to victims of torture and was also the principal physician in Chile to provide evidence of torture in Church efforts to bring torturers to justice through the courts.



Manuel Almeyda

Imprisoned physician ran program for Catholic Church.

These and other findings prompted House Foreign Affairs committee chairman Clement Zablocki and Michael Barnes, chairman of the subcommittee on inter-American affairs, to take up the case of the three physicians with Chilean foreign minister Rene Rojas Galdames. Rojas, in a recent meeting in Washington, had told the House Foreign Affairs committee that he abhorred torture. In a letter of 24 June the two congressmen told Rojas that "we consider the release of these physicians and an end to this kind of activity to be crucial for the improvement of relations between our two countries. . . ."

The military prosecutor having dismissed the major charge against the three physicians, there are hopes that they will soon be released on bail while a civilian court considers the remaining charge, one of "illicit association."

The mission of the two doctors was coordinated by the AAAS clearinghouse on science and human rights.

—**Nicholas Wade**

Congress to Reexamine Antiabortion Amendment

In a vote split along party lines, a Senate subcommittee has approved, three to two, the so-called human life bill, which implicitly outlaws abortion by stating that human life begins at conception. However, a vote by the full Judiciary Committee will be delayed until after the subcommittee on the Constitution has taken another look at a proposed amendment banning abortion.

Although right-to-lifers have hailed the vote as a sign the tide is turning in their direction, people favoring abortion believe a deadlock is at hand. Since the human life measure is of dubious constitutionality, congressional foes of abortion are now turning their hopes back to the amendment route—despite the fact that the human life bill was originally devised to get around the problems posed by the amendment.

Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah) said the Constitution subcommittee which he heads will not take up the amendment until the fall, and final action on either proposal is not expected before next year.

Meanwhile, as attempts to broaden the definition of human life are going on at one end of the mortal span, there are attempts to narrow the definition at the other end. Because life-support technology can keep peoples' hearts beating indefinitely after their brains are dead, a presidential commission is urging Congress and the states to adopt a uniform definition of death, based on cessation of all brain function. The President's Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine and Biomedical and Behavioral Research examined 2 months' worth of records from seven hospitals and found that about 17 percent of the comatose people being sustained on respirators were already dead in terms of brain function.

Currently, 23 states still hang on to an old definition of death that only recognizes heart stoppage. But several groups, including the American Medical Association, have approved a new definition involving cessation of function in both the higher brain and brainstem.—**Constance Holden**