
Atomic Agency Agrees on Leadership, Israel

After months of bargaining in Vienna, the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reached a consensus on 26 September and elected a new director-general: Hans Blix of Sweden. He will replace Sigvard Eklund, also from Sweden, who will retire from office in December.

Blix was once the foreign minister of Sweden and now serves as deputy foreign minister in charge of development affairs. Although his nomination had been opposed for many weeks by a coalition of less developed nations (known as the Group of 77 or G-77), Blix won over enough of these opponents to defeat the Third-World nominee, Domingo Siazon of the Philippines.

According to a U.S. State Department official, the stalemate ended only because Mexican and African members of the G-77 defected to vote for Blix, the compromise candidate backed by the big powers. The official said that no substantive concessions were made to win the G-77 votes. However, he did say that a number of proposals were adopted which the G-77 members might consider victories. Among these were a commitment to increase IAEA technical assistance to nations wishing to develop nuclear power, a pledge to include more Third-World representatives on the board of governors and in the high-level offices of the IAEA, and a vague promise to consider electing a G-77 representative to be director-general at some time in the future. Because the United States objected, the agency did not adopt quotas for the hiring of Third-World officials.

Meanwhile, the United States won a small victory in the general conference of the IAEA, which met at the same time in Vienna. It voted to reject Iraq's request that the IAEA suspend Israel's rights of membership. Iraq maintained that Israel should be excluded from the IAEA because it had violated international law when it bombed Iraq's research reactor on 7 June (*Science*, 25 September, p. 1482). By a vote of 51 to 8, with 27 abstentions, the conference adopted

a substitute proposal that meted out a lesser punishment. For an indefinite period, Israel will be denied the technical assistance (\$150,000 annually) normally provided to IAEA members.

In addition, the conference agreed to reexamine Israel's behavior a year from now. If the Israelis have not signed the Nonproliferation Treaty and if they persist in rejecting IAEA inspections of their reactors, they will again be subject to a vote of expulsion. But the State Department official said, it is a "vain hope" to expect Israel to allow inspections.

The United States deplored the vote, but officials are clearly relieved that Israel was not expelled. The Europeans and Japanese abstained. The U.S. official said, with a touch of sarcasm, that the United States and Israel were joined by a "sterling group" in voting against the censure. The group included Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Although U.S. officials anticipated a move to expel South Africa from the IAEA, no such proposal came to a vote. The South Africans did not attend the general conference, but they were thrown out of a meeting they did attend—held by the Committee on the Assurance of [uranium fuel] Supply. The vote to throw South Africa out puzzled one American diplomat. He said that South Africa, as a major uranium exporter, is one of the few members of that committee that actually can contribute to the assurance of supply.—*Ellet Marshall*

Bills Would Enlarge Special Patent Umbrella

Changes in patent policy designed to further encourage commercialization of inventions developed with federal funds appear to have firm backing in both Congress and the White House. Administration spokesmen at a joint House-Senate hearing on 30 September voiced general approval of the changes embodied in new House and Senate bills.

Both bills would expand present law to permit large companies to retain rights to inventions that are developed

with federal research support. A law enacted last year, which established a uniform federal patent policy on federal research, granted such patent rights to universities and small businesses.

The main sponsor of the Senate bill (S. 1657) is Harrison Schmitt (R-N.M.). Representative Allen Ertel (D-Pa.) is author of the House bill (H.R. 4564). Both bills were introduced on 23 September. They are similar in their main features but differ in some details.

Sponsors of the revision argue that the changes in patent law are an important part of a package of measures—including tax reform and boosts in federal support of research—that are needed to stimulate lagging innovation and productivity.

Among Administration witnesses who expressed approval of the bills were the President's science adviser George Keyworth and officials of the Department of Commerce. Keyworth said that the main provisions of the bills are consonant with Reagan Administration policy.

Opposition to the changes in patent policy were voiced at the hearing by Senator Russell Long (D-La.) and Admiral Hyman Rickover, longtime head of the Navy's nuclear propulsion program. The main argument of opponents has been that taxpayers should not be denied the benefits of the federal investment in research. Rickover also charged that universities have done poorly in taking advantage of patent rights under the law.

Some concern has been expressed that replacement of recently enacted legislation with a new law would cause further confusion about implementing regulations. And there have been suggestions that the proposed measure might better be enacted as part of pending comprehensive patent law revision.

Staff sources say, however, that favorable action on the bills is likely fairly soon in the Senate Commerce, Transportation and Science and the House Science and Technology committees, which held the joint hearing.

Prospects for the bills appear more uncertain in the House than in the Senate. The House Science and Technology Committee shares jurisdiction on the matter with the House Judiciary Committee, and sentiment