
Military-Industry Plan Boosts Science Education

The Pentagon is providing the initiative for a program designed to promote interest in science and engineering among high school and college students. A cooperative effort between the military and industry, the program will work mainly through ROTC's in high schools and colleges. Also envisioned as part of the program is establishment of a National Science Center for Communications and Electronics at Fort Gordon, Georgia, home of the Army Signal Corps.

The plan is to involve educators and members of professional organizations as well as people from the military services and industry in a Partnership for the Development of National Engineering Resources. The program's mission, as described in a briefing paper, is to "increase the number of college trained engineers available to industry, government, the military services and the scientific community."

Major impetus for the program has come from Defense Communications Agency commander, Lieut. Gen. W. J. Hilsman. The program has gained the blessing of top Department of Defense officials. President's science adviser George A. Keyworth concurs with the idea, but is taking no direct role in the program. Other civilian agencies in the government or major educational organizations are not currently involved.

A pivotal role in the program is to be played by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA), which combines aspects of professional and trade associations. AFCEA's members are drawn from the military and industry, in the latter case working mostly for defense contractors.

In a pilot program now operating in the Los Angeles area, technically trained AFCEA members and junior officers will visit schools and colleges to discuss careers in engineering with students. Experience gained in this first phase will be evaluated with the idea of refining the program before it is applied on a national scale. Now in the planning stage are efforts to create links between industry and students through plant visits, student at-

tendance at professional meetings, and a variety of educational and work opportunities to be offered by industry. Junior chapters of AFCEA may be established for interested students. Options for changing military career patterns to make military service more attractive for technically trained personnel are also under discussion.

The National Science Center for Communications and Electronics would be built with private funds by a nonprofit organization. Final details have not been settled, but the center is expected to be part science museum open to the public and part "campus without walls," using modern communications technology to make educational material and information available to schools and colleges across the United States.

The project has the enthusiastic support in Congress of Georgia Senator Sam Nunn who in July submitted a concurrent resolution "encouraging" establishment of the center. The government would provide land for the center at Fort Gordon, but funds for construction—estimated at \$17 million—would come from private sources. Support from industry, private foundations, and individuals is now being sought and an announcement of financial commitments is promised by the end of the year. The government would be asked to pay operating expenses for the center after completion.—*John Walsh*

ACLU to File Second Anti-Creationist Suit

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is making final preparations for filing suit against the State of Louisiana concerning the Creationist-inspired "Balanced Treatment" act, which was signed into law on 21 July. The act, which is almost identical with the one approved by the Arkansas legislature earlier in the year, mandates the teaching of creation science when evolution science is presented in public schools.

The Arkansas law is already the subject of an ACLU suit, and this is due to go to court on 7 December. The complaint in the Arkansas case is that the law violates the constitutional separation of church and state. "Our

action against Louisiana will be very much along the same lines as the Arkansas complaint," says ACLU attorney Jack Novick.

In addition to the ACLU, a number of religious bodies and individuals are listed as complainants in the Arkansas suit. Although the list of complainants has yet to be finalized for the Louisiana suit, it is likely to follow the same pattern. Also to be settled is the date for filing the complaint in the federal district court there, and this is likely to be before the start of the Arkansas trial.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Academy of Sciences are to offer supporting evidence to the court.—*Roger Lewin*

French Nuclear Policy Only Slightly Revised

France's socialist government came out of the parliamentary debate on nuclear power policy in mid-October with its plan for a modestly reduced national nuclear program intact. Parliament endorsed a proposal that six new plants be ordered in 1982 and 1983 instead of the nine sought by the previous government.

The plan given parliamentary assent also calls for expansion of the reprocessing plant at La Hague near Cherbourg where reactor fuel from both France and foreign countries is reprocessed. The plant is to be doubled in size and a new plant of equal size built so that La Hague will have a capacity of 1600 metric tons a year.

The La Hague expansion was a volatile issue before the parliamentary debate. The Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT), the noncommunist labor organization that has close ties with the ruling Socialist Party, has been at odds with the party on its nuclear program. The CFDT sought deferral of expansion of La Hague, where some radioactive leakage has occurred, and opposed reprocessing of foreign fuel, on the grounds that it made France a depository for other countries' nuclear waste.

Before the debate, Premier Pierre Mauroy had ordered foreign shipments into La Hague stopped. This was apparently to avoid exacerbating