

NAS Calls for Arms Talks

The National Academy of Sciences has added its voice to a growing sentiment in favor of prompt negotiations with the Soviet Union on nuclear weapons. In a resolution approved at its recent annual meeting in Washington, the Academy called on President Reagan and Congress to intensify "without preconditions and with a sense of urgency" efforts to reach an agreement limiting the number of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

The resolution, which was drafted in the Academy's Committee on International Security and Arms Control, was approved after a discussion of weapons trends and arms control problems. Marvin Goldberger, president of the California Institute of Technology and chairman of the committee, noted that "members of the Academy have had a long involvement in weapons design and production, as well as arms control issues. Consequently, the Academy has a special obligation to heighten awareness of the implications of these weapons."

Interest in arms control within the Academy has been increasing for some time, Goldberger said. The topic came up repeatedly during a series of regional meetings convened by Academy president Frank Press last year. Members of the Academy's committee have met twice with their counterparts on a Soviet Committee on Peace and Disarmament Research, and plan a third meeting in Moscow later this year.

In its preamble, the resolution states that any use of nuclear weapons is likely to escalate into a general nuclear war, and that "science offers no prospect of effective defense against nuclear war and mutual destruction." It calls for continued adherence to existing arms control treaties, including the unratified SALT II agreement.

The vote preceded by several days the opening of a series of hearings on nuclear arms control by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The chairman, Senator Charles Percy (R-Ill.), noted as he opened the hearings that the general public is becoming increasingly anxious "that we may well witness the horror of a nuclear war in our own lifetime" and that "some leaders in both govern-

ments may believe that nuclear war might somehow be winnable or survivable."

The hearings, which resume this week, are intended to air the merits and drawbacks of various arms control resolutions pending in the Senate, including a proposal for a nuclear weapons freeze.—**R. Jeffrey Smith**

USDA Retreats on Gypsy Moth Front

The gypsy moth got the good news on 27 April, when Assistant Secretary of Agriculture John Crowell told a House subcommittee that the government can no longer afford to wage chemical attacks on insects in the



fashion that has prevailed for the last two decades. In this year's budget, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposes to slash its share of the joint federal-state effort in the war on insects from 50 to 12.5 percent.

Earlier this year, Representative Joseph McDade, a Republican from Pennsylvania, asked the USDA to reconsider its austere new budget. Pennsylvania is one of the most heavily infested breeding grounds of the gypsy moth. Would it be possible, McDade asked, to declare the northeastern United States a gypsy moth emergency zone just for this year? If it were, the \$5 million which has been withheld from the pesticidal war chest could be released.

The USDA and the Office of Management and Budget refused to go along. At hearings on 27 April before the House interior appropriations subcommittee, of which McDade is the ranking Republican member, the decision was reaffirmed. Crowell said that if an exception were made for the gypsy moth, then the USDA would have to declare an emergency for the

spruce budworm and perhaps other insects. Despite a "vigorous exchange" on the issue, according to McDade's press secretary, the USDA stood firm.

The importance of all this, ethologically speaking, is that the most powerful human enterprise—the U.S. government—has surrendered to the insect battalions. Each year since its appearance in the *New World* in 1869, the gypsy moth has grown more populous. By 1981 it was capable of defoliating 10 million acres of forest in one summer. Observers of its habits predict (*Science*, 28 August 1981, p. 991) that the moth will expand its territory again this year and probably each year for the remainder of the century, unless humans discover an inexpensive new method of stopping it.

—**Elliot Marshall**

Edwards Defends Budget Cuts at DOE

Secretary of Energy James Edwards, who is leaving soon to serve as dean of the School of Medicine at the University of South Carolina, appeared before the American Physical Society recently to explain his controversial legacy in the field of energy research. "I've wanted this opportunity because I realize that morale at some of the laboratories could be higher," Edwards told the assembled scientists on 27 April in Washington. "I realize that there is some uncertainty about this Administration's commitment to science."

The budget cuts experienced by energy researchers are primarily in demonstration projects that the government had no business subsidizing, Edwards said. "And many of them made no economic sense. There were poorly managed programs that we've either restructured or terminated."

This Administration, he said, is getting back to basics. By basics, Edwards means research that assists the nuclear power industry. "We are putting behind an era of stop-and-go policymaking; an era where, in a few short years, we went from exalting nuclear power to calling it a 'last resort'; an era where some of the national laboratories were flooded at the