

end of the fiscal year with solar and conservation research money they were unable or basically unwilling to handle."

In recent years, Edwards said, some of the laboratories have lost their identity. "They have become embroiled in highly political battles that pitted solar programs against the traditional priorities. Labs spent more money but the quality of their work did not always increase in tandem."

Although the labs should concentrate on basic research, Edwards said, they could do more applied work on military projects. "Our weapons development program involves extensive activity in 'practical' fields, including electronics." In short, nuclear energy and nuclear weapons are in, and alternative energy is out.

The contradictions and confusion of Edwards' tenure are wrapped up in his comments about the future of the national laboratories. "I want to propose today that we make better use of many of these skills by encouraging private industry to make more use of the labs," Edwards said. "We have to be careful, of course, that the labs don't wind up devoting too much of their time to applied work, and we have to be sure that the government doesn't wind up back in the business of subsidizing business. But consistent with the missions of the labs, we'd like to make optimum use of this nation's skills." Maybe his successor can figure that one out.

—R. Jeffrey Smith

Peace Academy Gaining Momentum

A proposal to establish a national peace academy, which has been floating around Capitol Hill for years, is now gaining increased attention. The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources is considering a bill reported out of a subcommittee on 28 April, and the House plans hearings on a similar bill this month.

Proponents of the academy have long contended that the time is ripe for the establishment of a federally chartered entity to provide a national focus for conflict resolution. Prominent among the advocates are economist Kenneth Boulding of the University of

Colorado, and Harvard law professor Roger Fisher. Fisher heads Harvard's negotiation project, which offers training to groups around the world, including the Naval War College and the NATO Defense University.

Only a handful of universities currently offer degrees on conflict management, but peace academy supporters point out that individuals with such training have helped resolve many domestic conflicts, including the Indian take-over at Wounded Knee and the occupation of two buildings in Washington, D.C., by Hanafi Muslims in 1977.

James Laue, director of the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the University of Missouri testified last month before the Senate subcommittee on education, arts and humanities that the hostage crisis in Iran probably could have been resolved sooner if mediators had been available who could have operated outside of rigid official channels. He said the failure of United Nations Secretary Kurt Waldheim's mission to Iran was in part due to the fact that no one had developed liaison with the students who were holding the hostages.

Former hostage Moorhead Kennedy, who heads a new peace institute at New York's Cathedral of St. John the Divine, added that the State Department "tended to lump foreign happenings in traditional categories—political, economic, and military," and "had obviously not paid sufficient attention to the influence of religion and related psychological factors. . . ."

Fisher later explained to *Science* that trained negotiators can complement and supplement official communications. The government has a natural resistance to allowing participation by outsiders. But, said Fisher, they can play an invaluable role in developing informal channels of communication as well as in doing basic work in developing options. They have much more flexibility, he says, because they are not bound by official positions, they do not have to worry about face-saving, and they are expendable.

Fisher himself was consulted during the course of the Iranian hostage negotiations and he personally intervened—as an individual trusted by both sides—to cut through a last-minute snag involving funds transfer hours before the hostages' release.

The proposed academy would be a federally chartered nonprofit corporation engaged in research, training for people both within and outside the government, and information. It would also act as a clearinghouse for programs around the country and offer resident fellowships to foreign leaders. Bills call for a 2-year authorization of \$31 million. President Reagan has declined to support the legislation "because of current budgetary restraints."—**Constance Holden**

GAO Points Up Military Use of Shuttle

A recent report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) has confirmed what planetary scientists have long feared: that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), an ostensibly civilian research agency, will soon be spending a large portion of its time serving the needs of the Department of Defense. The GAO examined NASA's budget request for research and development in fiscal year 1983 and discovered that more than 20 percent benefited the Pentagon exclusively.

The bulk of this subsidy is accounted for by military use of the space shuttle. Although the shuttle was initially developed to serve a large proportion of commercial and scientific customers, 49 percent of its flights over the next 3 years are now allocated to Defense Department missions. "This is bad news for those who are concerned over cutbacks in NASA's space science activities," says Senator William Proxmire (D-Wis.), who requested the study.

The value of NASA's work for the Pentagon has not been pinpointed before because the space agency avoids connecting overall shuttle costs with individual flights. It also claims that the shuttle benefits the entire nation, no matter who uses it.

According to Proxmire, one consequence of the bureaucratic book-juggling is that the Pentagon is not forced to weigh the value of the shuttle against competing military ventures. It is probably a lot easier to support a major federal project when somebody else is paying for it.

—R. Jeffrey Smith