

the two inoperable roll thrusters.

The satellite, meanwhile, has been placed in a slow roll in order to conserve as much hydrazine fuel as possible. Three-quarters of the fuel will be needed if the satellite is to be moved from its present low elliptical orbit into a geosynchronous orbit, where it is expected to transmit data to earth from Landsat 4, Spacelab, the Space Telescope, and future shuttle flights. If the rescue should fail, a replacement satellite can be launched, but not in time to be used during the Spacelab flight scheduled for September.

—R. JEFFREY SMITH

## Weather Satellite Sale Gets a Hearing

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige played to a packed house last week as Congress held the first of its long-awaited hearings on the Administration's plan to commercialize the land and weather satellites. Representative James H. Scheuer (D-N.Y.) chaired the hearing, which was a joint endeavor between his natural resources subcommittee and the space subcommittee of Representative Harold Volkmer (D-Missouri). The proposal to turn satellites over to private business has been stirring up controversy ever since it was made public last March (*Science*, 11 February, p. 752; 25 March, p. 1410).

The Commerce Secretary reiterated the Administration's belief that private sector involvement in remote sensing will be crucial in meeting the competition from foreign satellites, particularly those planned by the French and the Japanese. He also maintained that, after 5 years of studies on Landsat commercialization, it is time to act.

But Baldrige did offer an important concession to critics of the Administration's plan, in which the land and weather satellite systems would be offered up for bid either separately or together. It would only be an experiment, he said. It is entirely possible that none of the bids will be acceptable—in which case the Administration will abandon the idea, and he will personally push for a vigorous remote sensing program within the government.

Under questioning by Volkmer,

however, Baldrige admitted that, so far, the United States is the only nation to think about commercializing its weather satellites. Moreover, the Japanese and French Landsat's will be heavily subsidized, with the respective governments launching and operating the satellites and only then providing data to the open market.

"If we stayed with government-operated satellites, wouldn't that make us more competitive?" asked Volkmer. Baldrige said yes—it is just that the Administration does not want to keep bearing the expense of these satellites.

Scheuer challenged the Administration's view and, in particular, pointed to the President's own Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, which recently concluded that "the concept of commercializing land sensing satellites and weather satellites as a package should not be pursued."

He also quoted a scathing review of the Administration plan by the National Academy of Public Administration, which concluded that "the proposal . . . fails to meet sensible criteria of preservation of the national security, the existence of competition . . . and the appropriate relationship between the public and private interest."

On the whole, however, the committee members seem disposed to let the Administration try its experiment. If they reject it now they will have to devise—and fund—an alternative. The question is, Who will keep the U.S. remote sensing effort going if that experiment fails?

—M. MITCHELL WALDROP

## NSF Nominee Wins Committee Approval

Edward A. Knapp, President Reagan's nominee to head the National Science Foundation (NSF), got the stamp of approval of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on 13 April after assuring committee members that he would resist any attempts to politicize appointments to NSF and its advisory committees. He gave the assurances after being asked by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) at a hearing on his nomination to respond to "allegations and charges about politicization

of the agency under your leadership."

What prompted this exchange was Knapp's request for the resignations of NSF's deputy director and an assistant director last year in a move that was widely perceived as a bid by the White House Office of Presidential Personnel to get Reagan appointees in all the top NSF positions (*Science*, 24 December, p. 1286). Knapp told the committee, however, that "It was my decision to ask for the resignations . . . I wanted my own team." Asked by Kennedy whether appointees to NSF's advisory committees are screened for their political views, Knapp said "To my knowledge there have been no political tests applied to any appointees to these committees," and added that he would resist any such screening.

As for the vacancies in the top posts at NSF, Knapp said that a list of candidates for deputy director has been sent to the White House by the National Science Board, and a short list for three assistant directorships will be sent in the next few weeks. Since all are presidential appointments, the White House has the final say.—COLIN NORMAN

## Genentech Bows Out of NYU's Malaria Project

Genentech, the south San Francisco gene-splicing company, formally told New York University (NYU) last month that it will not collaborate on malaria research. This suggests that NYU's recent cloning of a malaria antibody will not lead to the rapid commercial development of a vaccine.

The proposed venture between Genentech and NYU ran afoul of ownership rights. Genentech wanted an exclusive license to market the vaccine. But one of the funders of NYU's research, the World Health Organization, also exercised a contractual claim on the patent (*Science*, 4 February 1983, p. 466). In the end, according to Genentech spokesperson Susanne McKean, "We had to draw the line, because we have too many potential products. With this one, the complications were extensive. We decided we can't do everything we would like to do."—ELIOT MARSHALL