
Stanford Says Yes to Modified Weapons Proposal

After months of agonizing, officials at Stanford University have given a green light to a proposal to conduct weapons-related research at the university's synchrotron radiation laboratory. The proposal, which had prompted protests from Stanford faculty and staff, has been approved only on condition that the part of the work most closely tied to military applications be carried out off campus, however. That condition seems to have quelled most, but not all, of the opposition.

The proposal was put together by researchers from three weapons labs (Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos, and Sandia) and the University of California. In essence, they proposed putting up some \$6.4 million to build facilities at the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory (SSRL) to do basic research with x-rays and ultraviolet radiation. Although the bulk of the funds would come from the Department of Energy's (DOE's) military program, only a small fraction of the research would be directly applicable to weapons.

The part of the proposal that drew opposition at Stanford involves the development of advanced x-ray detectors. Scientists from Livermore were interested in developing and calibrating such devices for use in nuclear testing and in laboratory simulation of nuclear explosions. The proposal has now been modified, however, to permit development of advanced detectors at SSRL, but their calibration for weapons testing would be carried out at Livermore.

SSRL director Arthur Bienenstock argues that because many experiments are now limited by the state of the art of detectors, the work done at Stanford will have broad uses in basic research, while the overtly weapons-related work will be done at Livermore. Largely on that basis, Bienenstock gave the go-ahead on 27 September for construction of the facilities. The first is scheduled for installment in mid-1984.

The weapons labs have applied to DOE for \$5.4 million for the facilities, and the University of California has approved another \$1 million for its share. In addition, Livermore has re-

quested \$1 million to upgrade its own hardware to calibrate the x-ray detectors. Scientists from the weapons labs and the University of California will use two-thirds of the experimental time at the new facilities and the remainder will be available to SSRL researchers.

Most of the opposition to the proposed weapons work came initially from faculty and staff at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC). Because SLAC provides the basic energy for SSRL, they argued that they would be direct participants in military research if the proposal were approved (*Science*, 25 February, p. 936). Acting SLAC director Sidney Drell has welcomed the changes in the proposal, but there is still said to be some unease at SLAC.

—COLIN NORMAN

USDA Relents on Landsat

The Department of Agriculture has decided to continue its purchase of Landsat data after all. Instead of cutting back to \$400,000 in fiscal year 1984, as proposed last August (*Science*, 30 September, p. 1357), the department agreed on 25 September to maintain its acquisitions at the full \$7.5 million planned originally. Officials at the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which operates Landsat, are not sure what caused the change of heart. The guessing is that Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, or perhaps the White House Office of Management and Budget, pointedly told Agriculture Secretary John R. Block that with the administration embroiled in a controversial effort to sell its land and weather satellites, now was not the time for the largest single Landsat user to pull out.—M. MITCHELL WALDROP

Hinckley Starting Mental Illness Fund

John Hinckley, Sr., the father of the young man who shot President Reagan 2 years ago, is currently setting up a new organization for research and public education on mental ill-

ness—particularly schizophrenia, the affliction of John Hinckley, Jr. The American Mental Fund will be located in Washington, D.C. Hinckley hopes it will follow the lead of the American Cancer Society in reducing the ignorance and attendant stigma on a disease that can be as devastating to families as to its victims.

Hinckley says the area he is stepping into is, "a vacuum . . . a void. It was hard for me to believe it when we first started looking around." He notes that almost all other major diseases have active lobbies and annual fund-raising drives. Hinckley is currently making the round of foundations looking for money. A research grant program is planned eventually. Meanwhile, the fund's first project is the preparation of a pamphlet describing the warning signs of mental illness.

The Hinckley case has brought to light many of the problems and incongruities surrounding research and treatment of mental illness and schizophrenia in particular. About 1 percent of the population suffers from the disease; for about one-third of the sufferers it is chronic and disabling. The research budget is about \$26 million.

Yet schizophrenics occupy half of all mental hospital beds, and the disease probably causes more social disruption than any other in proportion to the number of sufferers. For example, in 1976 it was estimated by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) that total costs, direct and indirect, of schizophrenia to the nation equaled those incurred by cancer: \$20 billion. For every \$1000 in treatment costs for cancer, \$66 is spent on research. But the parallel figure for research on alcoholism, drug abuse and mental health combined is \$7. "Schizophrenia is the most important example of the effect of stigma on research budgets," says Frederick Goodwin of the NIMH.

Research on schizophrenia is showing new promise with the development of technology permitting examination of brain structures in live patients. But the most heartening advance, says Samuel Keith, director of schizophrenia research at NIMH, has been the mobilization of families of the mentally ill. Although self-help groups have been multiplying since the 1950's, it is only in the last few years that groups of families of the mentally