

The issue of commercializing Landsat remains unsettled. Sometime in December the Commerce Department plans to start soliciting bids for private companies to operate and/or purchase the Landsat system. But Congress, which generally supports the commercialization of Landsat, has its own ideas about how the transfer ought to proceed. The tug-of-war is far from over.—**M. MITCHELL WALDROP**

## Anthropologist-Official Arrested in Mexico

The arrest of the director of Mexico's institute of Indian affairs, who is a well-known anthropologist, has prompted charges by his supporters that the action was politically inspired.

Salamon Nahmad, head of the National Institute of Indianistics, was arrested on 21 October under provisions of a new law designed to curb corruption by government officials. Nahmad was charged with abuse of power for his alleged involvement in an incident in which the institute purchased cloth for distribution to Mexican Indians from a company in which Nahmad's brother has an interest.

His defenders claim that his accusers, who are members of the staff of the institute, concocted the case against Nahmad because they disagree with his policies and may themselves have been involved in corrupt activities.

Nahmad has initiated changes at the institute which mark a break from its traditional paternalistic policies. He has moved to involve the Indians themselves more extensively in management of their affairs and to include more Indians in the bureaucracy that administers those affairs.

Nahmad was appointed to the director's post a year ago by Mexico's President Miguel de la Madrid shortly after he took office. Nahmad had been a member of the staff of the institute for a number of years and is the author of well-known scholarly work on the country's Indians. Social science professional organizations here and in Mexico have protested the arrest and several hundred Indians at one point occupied the institute offices to demonstrate support. Nahmad has been arraigned and is still being held in jail.—**JOHN WALSH**

## Parapsychology Update

At least one member of Congress, Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), has publicly expressed an interest in parapsychology, but apparently there are quite a few others sufficiently curious to ask the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to report on the status of such research.\* (CRS does not reveal names of requesters.)

The report, completed last summer, carries on at some length about the potential educational, military, anti-crime, and health applications if psychic phenomena are ever understood well enough to be replicable.

Currently, says the report, a paltry \$500,000 a year is going into psi research in the United States, almost all from private sources. In contrast, research is more or less thriving in the Soviet Union where speculation puts the funding at tens of millions of dollars. However, the only recognized application is dowsing, which is taught to mineralogists and geologists at the Omsk Polytechnical Institute. The People's Republic of China is said to have developed a fairly recent interest in parapsychology, including psychic healing.

In the United States, the field has been chiefly explored by psychologists, but physicists have become increasingly involved and are employing the latest technologies in an effort to detect the slightest effects of mind on matter. Most research is devoted either to extrasensory perception (ESP) or telekinesis—the ability to move objects. Currently, extensive efforts are being made to correlate psychic ability with personality variables or with particular altered states of consciousness, according to the report. The prime location for this, says the report's author Christopher Dodge, is the Maimonides Medical Center in New York.

Another major thrust has been the use of random number generators to seek statistically significant psi-induced deviations. Robert Jahn, dean of Engineering at Princeton University, has been doing this for some years, and claims weak but persistent positive results. Jahn and several other engineers are increasingly interested in possible psi interactions with

\*"Research into 'psi' Phenomena: Current Status and Trends of Congressional Concern."

computers, examining, for example, the possible disturbance of the memory functions of single microelectronic chips.

So far, the most striking results appear to be coming from remote viewing experiments. At Stanford Research Institute physicist Harold Puthoff is conducting double-blind experiments where a person is sent out to engage in an activity and the subject is asked to visualize where the person is. The investigators are claiming a 70 percent success rate.

The report notes that there is "no conclusive physical theory of psi" phenomena, but that is not for lack of trying. Theoreticians have found explanations based on electromagnetic or sound waves inadequate and are looking for more "holistic" paradigms. An extension of quantum mechanics to cover the laws of consciousness is one idea; another extends the concept of hyperspace to postulate an added dimension in human experience.

The report concludes with a glowing catalog of all the fields of human endeavor that could be enhanced by the harnessing of psi abilities. It makes no mention of the appalling social disruption such powers could also bring.

—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

## Pork Barrel Funds Decried

The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges has joined the chorus of academic organizations decrying the practice of providing funds for higher education facilities through pork barrel politics. The association adopted a statement at its annual meeting on 14 November noting that "wholly inadequate resources for facilities have led some institutions to seek direct assistance from Congress." The outcome of such a process, the statement said, "could be an irrational system of distribution based solely on political influence," and the association urged "Members of Congress and leaders of colleges and universities to refrain from this practice." The resolution also called on Congress to provide some general funding for higher education facilities.

The National Academy of Sciences and the Association of American Universities recently adopted similar resolutions.—**COLIN NORMAN**