

percent. Continuation of the trend would negate even dim hopes for food sufficiency for the region. A 1983 report on development looking to the year 2008 by the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Africa says that the picture that emerges "under the historical trend scenario is almost a nightmare." Effects on physical resources and social services would be disastrous and "socioeconomic conditions would be characterized by a degradation of the very essence of human dignity."

Population control plays little part in

current development programs or government policies in the region. African attitudes toward family planning have traditionally been conditioned by suspicion of donor country motives. French aid policy has not given family planning much place and current U.S. policy has prescribed provision of assistance for voluntary programs only when such aid is specifically requested. The issue has been recognized as a sensitive one politically for Sahelian governments, which do not lack for threats to stability. U.S. population experts, however, detect a

willingness among Sahelian officials to discuss the population problem, which is seen as a hopeful development.

In a matter of weeks, the Sahel will begin to see whether the seasonal rains that make it possible to plant and grow the crops of the region will return or whether the drought will continue. But among the stern constraints that retard development in the Sahel, population growth is seen by many as the factor that will determine whether the region in the future will go from crisis to catastrophe.—**JOHN WALSH**

DeLauer Questions DOD Censorship

Richard DeLauer, the Pentagon's top scientist, last week distanced himself from recent proposals to control the publication of unclassified but potentially sensitive papers arising from university research. Speaking at a meeting of the DOD-University Forum, a twice-yearly session involving several university presidents and Defense Department officials, DeLauer took issue with the very notion that there should be a special category of unclassified research requiring restrictions. Defense contracts with universities should be either classified or unclassified, with no publication controls, he said.

The Department of Defense recently proposed that university scientists working on defense contracts in sensitive areas of applied research and exploratory development should submit their papers to the Pentagon for clearance 90 days before sending them to a journal for publication. The department would have the right to insist on changes or withhold approval for publication (*Science*, 13 April, p. 134). Leo Young, director of the office of research and laboratory management in the Pentagon, estimates that these restrictions would apply to perhaps 1 percent of contracts between the department and the universities.

These proposals have sparked protests from the universities and prompted the presidents of Stanford, MIT, and California Institute of Technology to send a letter jointly to DeLauer and George Keyworth, President Reagan's science adviser, stating that "absent any change in research policy—which we regard as very unlikely—our institutions would be unable to accept any research contracts subject to such a restriction."

When the matter was brought up at the forum meeting, DeLauer initially said he did not understand the problem. If publication restrictions were written into contracts, universities could decide whether to accept them on those terms, he said.

Several university presidents pointed out that many major research universities would not cede authority over publication to any sponsor, and would thus stay away from these sensitive research areas. DeLauer then said he saw no reason to make a distinction between sensitive and classified research. If information should be kept secret, then classify it; if not, then it should be unclassified. "I don't think we ought to add the burden of another category," he said.

DeLauer found some support from Robert Cooper, director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, who called the idea of sending even 1 percent of university research papers to the Pentagon for prepublication clearance "a prescription for constipation."

This put both men in opposition to Edith Martin, deputy under secretary of defense for research and advanced technology, who chaired a committee that came up with the proposal for prepublication approval and had just defended it to the forum. Martin, who is DeLauer's deputy, chairs a panel within the department that will implement whatever policy is finally adopted.



Richard DeLauer

Challenged the notion that DOD should approve the publication of unclassified research papers.

Aside from the fact that publication controls are anathema in themselves, there is concern among some university officials that if the department's proposal is adopted, the area of research subject to prepublication approval may expand in the future. On the other hand, if there is nothing between classified and unclassified, more research may end up being classified; few major research universities will accept classified contracts.

A working group of the DOD-University Forum has been given the task of trying to find a way out of the current impasse. It will also tackle what could turn out to be an even more contentious issue: the possibility that defense contracts may require foreign nationals to be excluded from participating in some sensitive research projects. Discussion of that possibility is on the agenda of the panel chaired by Martin.—**COLIN NORMAN**