the regular budgets of the agencies. The agencies usually manage to eke out funds for administrative costs and travel expenses, but the U.S. share of joint research must be funded in the free-for-all competition for federal research funds.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has therefore played a special role in science bilaterals. NSF's annual spending on international science cooperative activities has been running at about $10 million, of which $1.5 million—the largest dollar share for any single country—currently goes to China.

While Sino-American cooperation is booming, the relationship is not without difficulties. There are U.S. qualms that the Chinese government underfunds its exchange students, for example, but most of the frictions seem to arise in other areas. Reciprocity has been an issue, for example, in negotiations over an agreement on the exchange of technical information. The U.S. agency involved is the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), which disseminates technical reports on research funded by the federal government. The Chinese have taken full advantage of access to NTIS services, becoming the second biggest user nation after Canada with a standing order for two microfiche copies of virtually everything NTIS publishes.

When the agreement came up for renewal, U.S. officials complained that the United States did not have access to comparable Chinese material, but, in effect, was simply permitted to subscribe to Chinese journals and similar publications. The discussion is still in progress.

Similar complaints have been raised by other U.S. agencies about the inability or unwillingness of the Chinese to provide access to particular people or information. Some Americans think that the Chinese persist in equating requests for information with spying.

There have, however, been improvements in Chinese flexibility in dealing with U.S. requests, particularly since the Chinese government decentralized authority to make arrangements under the protocols. American observers also say that the Chinese have been most freewheeling in seeking cooperation with U.S. professional organizations, industry groups, and individual companies.

At this point, at least, there is agreement on both sides that the relationship is thriving. As a U.S. industry observer put it, borrowing one of those lyrical Chinese nature similes that Americans seem to find irresistible, cooperation is growing "like bamboo shoots after the spring rain."—**JOHN WALSH**

Mistrial Is Declared in Mechanization Case

A legal challenge to farm mechanization research at the University of California has ended in a mistrial because the presiding judge became seriously ill. A new judge was assigned to the case on 16 May and trial proceedings at Alameda Superior Court in Oakland, California, are expected to start all over again in the fall.

The court ruling was a major setback for the group that filed suit against the university in 1979. After 5 years of legal skirmishing with the university, California Rural Legal Assistance, an advocacy group representing the California Agrarian Project, finally got its day in court this spring. The lawsuit charges that the university improperly spent public funds for mechanization research that allegedly benefit only agribusiness and violated federal land-grant acts as well. The implications of the case, however, are broader, raising questions about the social costs of innovation (*Science*, 30 March, p. 1368).

The trial, which began on 12 March, was suspended in mid-April when Judge Spurgeon Avakian was stricken with a respiratory ailment. At that point, the advocacy group had presented nearly half its case and laid out its legal strategy in the non jury trial. William Hoerger, an attorney for the legal group, expressed disappointment with the decision, saying that he had been pleased with the progress of the trial. Although university lawyers now have the advantage of knowing the group's approach to the case, Hoerger said, "I can't see changing our strategy."

Gary Morrison, lead attorney for the university, said that he hopes to persuade the new judge, Raymond Marsh, to throw out the case entirely, but added that the chances of success were slim. Morrison said the university, at the very least, will ask Marsh to narrow the scope of the lawsuit before the trial begins. The university filed similar motions under Avakian but was largely unsuccessful. Marsh is expected to meet with the two parties within the next few weeks.

Shortly before the trial was suspended, the university revealed a list of 16 expert witnesses who were to testify on its behalf. Assuming that the case goes to trial, the advocacy group will be taking their depositions during the summer.—**MARJORIE SUN**

Formaldehyde Issue: Back to Square One

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced last week that it will consider whether formaldehyde should be further regulated and classified its review of the chemical as a top priority. The decision represents a reversal of a 1982 ruling by EPA under Anne Burford.

The formaldehyde issue has run full circle under the Reagan Administration. Just before Burford took office, agency officials recommended that formaldehyde—a ubiquitous chemical found in products such as particle board, plywood, and permanent press clothing—should be designated a priority for regulatory review. Animal studies had shown that the chemical causes cancer at relatively low doses. But former head of EPA's toxic substances office John Todhunter ruled in 1982 that formaldehyde did not merit this classification. Critics of his decision charged that Todhunter had been unduly influenced by industry and last year, the Natural Resources Defense Council challenged Todhunter's decision in a lawsuit against the agency.

EPA's new decision brings the agency back to the same point in the regulatory process as when the Reagan Administration took office. The agency said it is giving priority to formaldehyde since a large number of people are exposed to the chemical, particularly workers who handle formaldehyde-treated fabric and people who live in homes constructed largely from plywood and particle board—such as mobile homes.

The agency must now decide whether formaldehyde poses to humans a significant risk of cancer, gene mutations, or birth defects. At the same time, the agency has announced that it will consider ways to regulate the chemical. None of these actions, however, guarantees that the agency will actually follow through with regulations, but the priority designation sets in motion the review process.