

Academy Cancels Visit to Soviet Union

The National Academy of Sciences has postponed a visit to the Soviet Union to seek an expansion of scientific links with its Soviet counterpart. In a telegram sent to the Soviet Academy of Sciences on 7 June—5 days before the Academy delegation was scheduled to arrive in Moscow—Academy President Frank Press said that discussions would be impossible "given the deep concern the members of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences have about the circumstances of Foreign Associate Andrei Sakharov." Sakharov is reported to have begun a hunger strike on 5 May in an effort to secure permission for his wife, Elena Bonner, to leave the Soviet Union for treatment of a severe heart ailment.

Press says that Academy officials brought up concerns about Sakharov to a delegation of visiting Soviet scientists on 8 May, and the Academy has also raised the matter with Anatoly Dobrinin, the Soviet Union's ambassador to the United States. Press's telegram states that "I believe it is to our mutual advantage to postpone the visit of our delegation until a climate more favorable for positive discussions exists."—COLIN NORMAN

Environment 1984 Gets Mixed Marks by Report

The Reagan Administration got a somewhat better report card this year for its environmental policies in a new study by the Conservation Foundation—thanks largely to the appointment of William D. Ruckelshaus as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Nonetheless, the report goes on to describe a host of environmental problems that need to be tackled.

In a report issued 2 years ago, the foundation, regarded as a nonpartisan research organization, assailed the Administration for its emphasis on "deregulation, defederalization, and defunding" of environmental protection. Now, however, Ruckelshaus "presides over a reinvigorated agency

whose morale and integrity have been restored by one of the most impressive rescues on record," writes foundation president William Reilly.

But the 471-page report, entitled "State of the Environment 1984," points out that "the progress made should not obscure the many points of controversy and vulnerability in ongoing environmental programs." It notes that the Administration is still holding EPA's budget and staff at insufficient levels. Environmental monitoring and research are inadequate.

What is the state of the environment? The report says that disturbingly little is known about the potential hazards of thousands of chemicals and that little is being done to study the problem. Progress in the regulation and cleanup of hazardous waste sites "appears painfully slow." While air quality in urban areas has improved, the problems of acid rain, carbon dioxide, and indoor air pollution have not been adequately addressed. Water has not fared as well as air. Groundwater, in particular, is suffering from serious pollution and lack of government regulation. Industry is better at controlling discharges, but runoff from farmland and discharge from municipal treatment plants pose significant problems.

The report recommends major reforms in environmental law to manage pollutants more efficiently. A whole chapter is devoted to explaining a new approach that might be used to control pollutants. Under the patchwork of environmental laws passed by Congress, EPA has traditionally regulated contaminants as they affect a single resource, such as water, air, or land. The report says the pollution problem could be handled more efficiently and economically if contamination to water, air, and land were assessed as a whole.

It also calls for improvements in risk assessment, which has also been a pet project of Ruckelshaus's. Foundation president Reilly also remarks in the report that new ways are needed "to break the gridlock" between industry and environmentalists. To that end, the foundation last month announced the formation of a new corporation called Clean Sites that will assist industry in planning the cleanup of hazardous waste sites. The corporation's board chairman is Russell Train, president of the World Wildlife

Fund, and it has the backing of Douglas Costle, EPA administrator under Carter, and leading industry executives.—MARJORIE SUN

Melmon Resigns Stanford Chairmanship

Kenneth Melmon has resigned as chairman of the department of medicine at Stanford Medical School after an ethics committee said he was guilty of "grossly negligent scholarship." The finding stems from the fact that he incorporated some 15 pages from a book he helped edit into a chapter he wrote for another textbook (*Science*, 6 April, p. 35).

Melmon has maintained all along that he was told by the textbook's editor that permission to reproduce the material had been obtained and that his manuscript contained proper attribution. But permission apparently was never given and the attributions were not included in the published version.

The ethics committee investigated the matter when it came to light early this year. Although it found no evidence of deliberate plagiarism, the committee said Melmon was negligent for failing to ensure that permission had been given to use the material and for failing to confirm that the attributions were included.

The committee's findings were sent to Stanford president Donald Kennedy, who met with Melmon in May. Kennedy sent a letter of censure to Melmon on 6 June, stating that although he agrees that Melmon "had no conscious intent to deceive," his actions represent "a degree of carelessness in dealing with the intellectual property of others that violates the fundamental norms of the academic profession." Kennedy said that in light of Melmon's resignation, no further action is appropriate.

Melmon, who will retain his university professorship, said in a statement that "I realized that I had to resign as department chairman rather than allow the affair to blow up into a giant confrontation among my friends and colleagues that would inevitably weaken or destroy the work that I had done over the past 5 years."

—COLIN NORMAN