

the North Atlantic Assembly propose the setting up of such an agency. However, given its ambitious scope, the assembly adopted a more modest amendment under which member governments will be invited to "consider" such a proposal, leaving it for the time being up to them to take any further action.

However, according to committee member Peter Emery, a Conservative member of the British Parliament, the resolution is still significant in that it gives individual members of the assembly a mandate to go back to their own governments with formal requests for reports on the actions that have been taken to coordinate activities on technology controls, both in terms of defining the limits to East-West technology transfer and strengthening West-West technological cooperation.

At the minimum, he said, this would promote an initial dialogue between governments and their parliaments over the broader impact of technology transfer regulations "in a way that has never happened before."

Emery points to the European Space Agency as an example of the progress that can be achieved in international cooperation on technological projects provided ground rules are decided in advance.

"In the more general field of technology transfer, we have never come together in the same way to write such ground rules," he said. The advanced technology subcommittee, he added, might make suggestions on "the type of ground rules which could be developed leading to greater collaboration with the United States."

He admits that the proposal to establish a new agency is ambitious; several other members of the scientific and technical committee said that such responsibilities might be given to an existing body such as the Paris-based Coordinating Committee on Export Controls (COCOM) which is already responsible for coordinating the efforts of Western nations to regulate exports to the Eastern bloc.

There is a wide feeling in Europe, however, that COCOM is excessively dominated by the United States. Ibrügger and others see the proposed new agency as a way of complementing COCOM's work by helping to sketch out strategies for closer cooperation in a more positive sense. And Emery adds that "the fact that this suggestion comes from NATO parliamentarians rather than from government economists could itself give it a greater chance for success."—**DAVID DICKSON**

NIH Bows to Part of Rifkin Suit

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has bowed to one of Jeremy Rifkin's legal challenges and decided to conduct environmental assessments of certain field tests involving genetically altered organisms. The recent decision narrows the legal issues to be argued in federal court next month in the ongoing battle between Rifkin and NIH over these types of experiments.

Rifkin contends that NIH did not properly evaluate the ecological consequences of testing genetically modified organisms in the environment before approving the experiments and, in 1983, took the agency to court. He asserted that NIH violated the National Environmental Policy Act by allegedly failing to conduct two kinds of ecological analyses defined by the act: an environmental assessment and a much more involved analysis called an environmental impact statement. In May, U.S. District Judge John Sirica ruled in Rifkin's favor when he stopped University of California researchers from conducting an NIH-approved field trial pending a decision on Rifkin's suit.

Now NIH has decided it will carry out the simpler of the two evaluations. NIH official Bernard Talbot says that the agency will basically repackage data it has already collected, adding some additional information to write the formal assessments. NIH has already drafted an analysis of the University of California experiment, which would involve bacteria genetically engineered to prevent frost formation in potato crops. NIH also plans to assess two field trials proposed by private companies, which have been approved by the recombinant DNA advisory committee and are awaiting a green light from NIH director James B. Wyngaarden.

Rifkin argues that in 1978 NIH should have analyzed the ecological consequences when it revised its recombinant DNA guidelines and set forth a policy concerning the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms. Now that NIH has agreed to perform environmental assessments of deliberate release experiments, the main legal issue boils down to wheth-

er environmental impact statements are also required. In addition, Rifkin argues that NIH has failed to develop an administrative program to analyze in depth the ecological consequences of these experiments. NIH will challenge Rifkin's assertions in the U.S. Court of Appeals here in Washington on 5 December.—**MARJORIE SUN**

Soviet Psychiatrist Near Death from Hunger Strike

Anatoliy Koryagin, a Soviet psychiatrist who was jailed in 1981 on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" after publicly criticizing the political use of psychiatry in the Soviet Union, is reported to be near death as a result of a hunger strike. His condition has prompted several human rights organizations and scientific bodies to appeal to Soviet authorities for him to receive proper medical care.

Koryagin's apparent crime was that he diagnosed as sane several political



Anatoliy I. Koryagin

dissidents that Soviet authorities had confined to psychiatric hospitals. He examined the patients at their own request when he was a consultant to the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, an unofficial human rights group that was later broken up by the authorities and whose members were all arrested.

Koryagin was sentenced in 1981 to 7 years' imprisonment and an additional 5 years of internal exile. He was transferred in July 1982 to the notori-