

Commerce Secretary Wants Technical Data Restricted

The Reagan Administration's efforts to stem the flow of unclassified but potentially sensitive information to the Soviet Union may soon turn to a new area: the voluminous government literature made available to the public through the Commerce Department's National Technical Information Service (NTIS). A memorandum written last month by Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige claims that "several U.S. government agencies are tolerating a massive give-away program that permits the Soviets to acquire tens of thousands of scientific and technical studies as well as other strategic information" from NTIS.

The memo, which was sent to the secretaries of State, Defense, and Energy, the President's national security adviser, and the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, urges the National Security Council to look into the matter. Baldrige suggests that "new legislation, new Executive Orders, and coordinated government-wide regulations" may be required to stem what he calls the "hemorrhage" of information through NTIS.

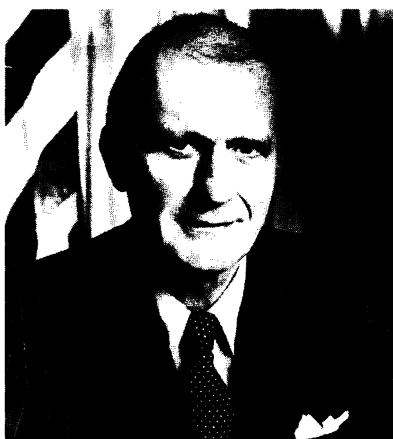
The NTIS is the chief conduit through which thousands of technical studies reach the public each year. It functions as a central clearinghouse to which government departments and agencies send unclassified studies, which are then either sold directly or made available through commercial vendors or computerized data bases. In 1983, according to Baldrige's memo, the Defense Department alone submitted 15,000 documents to NTIS.

Private corporations make extensive use of NTIS materials and they are also an important resource for scholarly research. In addition, "Moscow has unlimited access to all information in NTIS through the USSR All-Union Scientific Research Institute, which is a prominent subscriber to this source of data," Baldrige notes.

Baldrige wants much tighter screening of what goes into NTIS, in essence requiring that documents containing potentially sensitive information be withheld from NTIS even though they are declassified or un-

classified. He points out that the Commerce Department cannot perform this function and says that the Defense Department does not have adequate resources to carry out the required screening. "As a result, numerous sensitive reports are being dumped into the NTIS system without proper review."

According to Baldrige, a study of the problem was begun by an inter-agency committee in August last year and a classified draft report was produced in January. "It is my understanding that . . . its conclusions are similar to mine—that we have a massive outflow of damaging information that must be stemmed at the source," he said.



Malcolm Baldrige

Wants to stem the "hemorrhage."

"The Administration has played around with this for some time," notes one congressional observer. The interesting thing about Baldrige's memo, he says, is that it suggests that some proposals may be in the offing.

Restricting the type of information available through NTIS would be consistent with previous Reagan Administration moves to clamp down on public access to unclassified but potentially sensitive information. In an Executive Order issued in 1982, for example, President Reagan gave agencies the power to prevent many studies from being automatically declassified after 6 years, a move that ended more than two decades of liberalizing classification rules. Baldrige's memo is "part and parcel" of the Administration's efforts to make less and less information available to the public, says Allan Adler of the Center for National Security Studies.

—COLIN NORMAN

OTA Critical of AIDS Initiative

The Public Health Service's multi-front battle against acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) has been hampered by insufficient funds and inadequate planning, according to a report from the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA).

The report, produced at the behest of two congressional committees, says that despite much money—\$97.4 million in fiscal 1985—"it has not always been clear . . . that the amount of support for AIDS activities has been equivalent to the needs identified by PHS agencies." It contends that "except when prodded by Congress, the Department [of Health and Human Services] has maintained that PHS agencies should be able to conduct AIDS research without extra funds"—with the result that, despite extra appropriations, agencies have had to divert money from other activities.

The OTA maintains that planning has been thwarted by personnel cuts and financial uncertainties. It chastises the Administration for not seeking appropriations from the \$30 million fund established by the Public Health Emergency Act of 1983.

The report is also critical of the fact that despite the designation of AIDS as the "number one health priority" of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), there has been no mechanism to speed up approval and funding of grant applications which take more than a year to process.

Although in the past 4 years PHS-funded researchers have defined the syndrome, found an AIDS virus, devised a test for antibodies to the virus, and are working feverishly to develop a vaccine, the report faults HHS for concentrating almost exclusively on biology. "Psychological and social factors, . . . the service needs of AIDS patients, and public education and prevention have not been considered funding priorities." Education efforts have been directed at professionals, "leaving education of high-risk groups largely up to the leadership of the groups themselves." The education part of the AIDS budget went up to 4 percent in fiscal 1985.

According to the report, former As-

sistant Secretary for Health Edward Brandt defended the PHS's "massive effort" against AIDS, and said that impediments to planning have been posed more by "the rapidly changing problem" than by inadequate resources. Brandt also expressed the view that "a concerted effort in public education or . . . psychosocial factors cannot take place" until the biomedical puzzle is solved.

Ethical, social, legal, and medical problems relating to AIDS are likely to become increasingly complex as the disease spreads beyond high-risk groups. Over 7000 cases have been reported so far, and the government predicts 40,000 more in the next 2 years.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

White House Awards Science, Technology Medals

February appears to be the month for bestowing high honors on some leading practitioners of science and technology. On 19 February, President Reagan awarded the National Medal of Technology to 12 individuals and one U.S. company, and 8 days later he presented the National Medal of Science to 19 prominent scientists.

The recipients of the National Medal of Science were: **Howard Bachrach** (U.S. Department of Agriculture's Plum Island Animal Disease Center); **Paul Berg** (Stanford University); **Margaret Burbidge** (University of California [UC] San Diego); **Maurice Goldharber** (Brookhaven National Laboratory); **Herman Goldstine** (American Philosophical Society); **William Hewlett** (Hewlett-Packard Company); **Roald Hoffmann** (Cornell University); **Helmut Landsberg** (Resources for the Future); **Walter Munk** (UC San Diego); **George Pimentel** (UC Berkeley); **Frederick Reines** (UC Irvine); **Wendell Roelofs** (Cornell University); **Bruno Rossi** (MIT); **Berta Scharrer** (Albert Einstein College of Medicine); **Robert Schrieffer** (UC Santa Barbara); **Isadore Singer** (UC Berkeley); and **Richard Zare** (Stanford University). In addition, the medal was awarded posthumously to **George Low** (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) and **John Trump** (MIT).

Recipients of the National Medal of

Technology were: **Frederick Brooks, Jr.**, **Erich Bloch**, and **Bob Evans** (IBM); **Steven Jobs** and **Stephen Wozniak** (Apple Computer Inc.); **Marvin Johnson** (Phillips Petroleum Company); **Ralph Landau** (Halcon-Scientific Design Group); **John T. Parsons** and **Frank L. Stulen** (John T. Parsons Company); **Harold A. Rosen** and **Allen E. Puckett** (Hughes Aircraft Company); **John F. Sutter** (Boeing Commercial Airplane Company); and **AT&T Bell Telephone Laboratories**.—**COLIN NORMAN**

Science Board Takes on Pork-Barreling

The National Science Board has issued a report sharply critical of the growing trend whereby scientific facilities have been directly funded by Congress without being subjected to merit-based review.

The ad hoc Committee on Excellence in Science and Engineering, headed by Charles E. Hess, found that in the past 2 years, 15 universities have obtained over \$100 million by this process (*Science*, 2 November 1984, p. 519). In some cases, "funds were diverted from other scientific activities that had been selected on the basis of their merit," says the report.

The following universities have been successful in appealing directly to Congress for funds, according to the committee: Catholic University, Columbia University, Florida State University, Northwestern University, Boston University, West Virginia University, Indiana University, and the universities of Utah, North Carolina, Connecticut, Hawaii, Oregon, Kansas, and New Hampshire. In addition, the University of New Mexico narrowly missed getting funds for a new engineering building, but a congressional report said the project should be given "high priority" for a possible construction grant in the future.

The committee says the actions set "a dangerous precedent," which "could seriously undermine" the system of merit competition for research funding, and "could well threaten the integrity of the U.S. scientific enterprise. . . ."

Clearly, says the report, the resort to "opportunistic solutions" reflects

the fact that the research infrastructure needs more money. The committee proposes that the National Science Foundation put more effort into emphasizing the importance of merit review, reevaluate its own procedures and review those of other agencies, and stage a Conference on Academic Research Facilities with the National Academy of Sciences and the Office of Science and Technology Policy.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

Getting Health Promotion into Medicare

Senator David Durenberger (R-Minn.), chairman of the Senate health subcommittee, has introduced three legislative proposals designed to give Medicare more of a role in disease prevention through "incentives to promote self-responsibility."

In view of evidence that "better late than never" applies to the development of healthy habits, the first proposal, S. 357, would give nonsmokers and ex-smokers who have been off cigarettes for 6 months a \$1 monthly reduction in their premiums for non-hospital services. Most life insurance companies already give nonsmokers a break, but the practice is still not widespread among health insurers. However, some Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans have adopted nonsmoker discount plans.

The second proposal, S. 358, would raise the deductible for nonhospital services from \$75 to \$100. But expenditures on nonreimbursed preventive care—namely, immunization, health screening, and antihypertension medication—would be counted toward satisfying the deductible.

Finally, in S. 359, Durenberger has proposed that the Department of Health and Human Services fund five demonstration projects that would provide a variety of preventive services including dietary advice, stress reduction, and "targeted mental health intervention."

Durenberger, who says he recently gave up smoking a pipe, argues that "Staying well and providing suitable incentives for maintaining good health not only makes good health sense, it also makes sound economic sense."—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**