

the regulation. The rules apply to all abortions other than those to save the life of the mother. The active promotion of abortion would include abortion counseling and public education campaigns.

The PCC and the Alan Guttmacher Institute say the policy "threatens the bulk of family planning services overseas." In a lengthy letter to the Agency for International Development (AID) they point out that the regulations "threaten the credibility of NGO's as independent organizations"; pose an affront to the authority of governments that permit abortion; and promote a type of censorship that in this country would be unconstitutional.

AID has already withheld \$12 million from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which would not agree to deny funds to programs that include abortion services. More recently, a hold was placed on this year's \$47 million donation to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities because of concern over the excesses in China's population program. The UN fund does not fund family-planning programs but has provided China with money for training and demographic studies.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Keyworth Attacks the Press

Presidential science adviser George A. Keyworth, II, has some harsh things to say about the way the American press covers issues in science and technology. In an interview to be published in the forthcoming January-February issue of *SIPIScope*, the newsletter of the Scientists' Institute for Public Information, Keyworth attacks the press for its negative reporting and claims that many reporters are not interested in getting the facts. Keyworth, who generally has good relations with Washington reporters, has not previously been so outspoken on this subject.

Excerpts from *SIPIScope* follow.

SIPi: In a talk you gave at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania in October, you criticized mass media coverage of science and technology,

accusing most journalists of deliberately distorting the facts. Would you elaborate on that?

Keyworth: Let me be candid. I look back on the last few years and I see a tremendous number of positive things, more than I expected. The strong university-industry relationship that has developed is something that I would never have predicted.

But if I look at the negatives I see the American press—a press that is not responsible enough to do their job carefully or learn. The press is highly skewed in two senses: It is skewed in a manner that is not consistent with trends in the United States today, and it is skewed toward an apparent joy in attacking anything that resembles the "establishment."

This country is looking toward things like investment in the future, education, respecting people who work hard and well. We have a pragmatic view of the world's competitiveness, not some artificial, ideal world where, for example, foreign policy is dominated by human rights.

The American press as a whole is inconsistent with these trends. At a time where public attention is moving away from emphasis on divorces and moving toward the importance of the family, the American press is absolutely out of step.

And the American press as a whole, especially here in the East, has done an irresponsible job of discussing important technical issues that are not easy for the public to understand—the role of biotechnology, for example. They cover hearings on the Hill on the hazards of biotechnology, but how much effort in the press has there been to discuss the positive things biotechnology can do for America? Some, but very, very little.

SIPi: You said that many or most reporters deliberately distort the facts. Why do you think they do that?

Keyworth: We're trying to build up America, and the press is trying to tear down America.

SIPi: Why?

Keyworth: There are several reasons. Number one, for some reason that I just do not understand, much of the press seems to be drawn from a relatively narrow fringe element on the far left of our society. Number two, there's an arrogance that has to do with the power of the press. This arrogance feeds itself by achieving

the maximum amount of power. It's easier to tear down a building than it is to build one; it's easier to achieve power by being negative and tearing at foundations.

Yet for all his criticism, Keyworth told *SIPIScope* that he does not feel "personally abused" by the press. "I have relative luxury," he said. "Most of the people who actually take the time to come see me are relatively thoughtful people."

—BARBARA J. CULLITON

Hollywood Takes on Genetic Engineering

Sensitive that a new technology can be easily misunderstood, members of the biotechnology community have been talking more and more about the need to counter fears about potential hazards of the new biology with more public education about its benefits. They have yet to come up with concrete plans. Hollywood, however, may force their hand.

A new science fiction movie called *Warning Sign* will focus on a gene-splicing experiment that goes awry. Twentieth Century-Fox publicist Ted Hollis says the film is scheduled for release next fall and describes it as "a high-tech thriller." It deals with "the raw emotions of scientists and technicians, who suddenly find themselves sealed in their fortress-like lab with an experiment that has gotten out of control." The movie stars Sam Waterston (currently the lead in *The Killing Fields*) and Kathleen Quinlan. The film is directed by Hal Barwood, and produced by Jim Bloom, who has previously worked on sci-fi films including *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Asked what kind of experiment the film depicts, Hollis said, "Remember back to high school biology, and discussion about mutants!" Pressed a bit more, he said that scientists are experimenting with plants and then somehow a "mutant human being" is created. The film, he said, "is a consciousness raiser, like *China Syndrome*," a movie that depicted mayhem at a nuclear power plant.

The film was originally entitled *Bio-hazards*, a switch that the biotechnology community may consider a small blessing.—MARJORIE SUN