ble to rule out all risk; and describes a "general framework" to assess risk and to control microorganisms used in large-scale production and for agricultural and environmental purposes.

An EPA representative, who had a major role in shaping the original OECD draft, acknowledges that some changes are needed, but says that overall the document is a reasonable one and mendable. But the State Department, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture all have significant objections to the tone and substance of the revised draft. Some participants complain that the document projects a pro-regulatory stance. What was intended to be a guide to regulation, they say, has turned out to be too prescriptive. They fear it will become an inflexible standard if adopted. Furthermore, the document appears to be inconsistent with the Administration's approach to the domestic industry, which was fleshed out in a lengthy *Federal Register* notice earlier this year. In this notice, the federal agencies, except for EPA, propose to take a business-as-usual approach to gene-spliced products; that is, products will be evaluated on their own merit and not according to the method by which they were produced.

Henry Miller, an FDA official, assailed the OECD revised draft in an internal memo as "seriously flawed" and "muddled," and said that it contained "an overall, inappropriate negative bias [against biotechnology]." The revised draft in some sections focuses on biotechnology in general and in other parts refers only to organisms made by recombinant DNA techniques, not other methods of genetic engineering. Miller criticizes the revised draft for singling out recombinant DNA techniques from other genetic engineering methods. This approach, he says in the memo, does not square with a statement in the document that says "potential hazards of industrial use of R-DNA organisms are expected to be of the same nature as for other biological agents."

The biggest bone of contention among the federal agencies appears to be the section that discusses controls on the commercial production of microbes. The revised draft includes a detailed chart that sets up three levels of containment and specifies, for example, the level in which staff should wear protective clothing, the laboratory air should be filtered, or laboratory waste treated. These details are "too specific," said the State Department participant. "This section is seriously flawed."

An EPA participant said that the containment categories were "never intended to be international standards, but are meant to illustrate the concept of containment." He concedes that the revised draft "is not a clear document. It needs help. [But] the issue is how to achieve consensus."

The State Department has agreed to let FDA commissioner Frank Young try to patch up the differences among the agencies. U.S. officials have postponed an August OECD meeting and hope to get the American act together so they can present a unified position when the next OECD meeting is held, perhaps in October.—**MARJORIE SUN**

Memo Sets Policy for "Star Wars" Publications

The head of the basic research end of the "Star Wars" program has sent a memo to other top Defense Department officials stating that no restrictions will be placed on the publication of research supported by his office on university campuses, unless agreed in advance by contract.

The memo, signed by James Ionson, head of the Innovative Science and Technology (IST) Office, comes at a time when scientists on several university campuses are refusing to participate in "Star Wars" research for political and technical reasons. Ionson's memo is an attempt to remove one area of potential conflict between his office and the universities.

The idea was to assure university scientists that if they accept funding from the "Star Wars" program, they would be able to publish the results freely. Unfortunately, however, the memo was "massaged" as it went through the Pentagon's review process, and it appears somewhat contradictory in its final form.

The second paragraph states unequivocally that "The conduct and reporting of research performed on university campuses when sponsored by the IST Office of the SDIO [Strategic Defense Initiative Office], although funded out of budget category 6.3, will be treated as 'fundamental research.' " In previous top-level memoranda, and in a draft national policy statement now under consideration by the White House National Security Council, Pentagon officials have said that no restrictions will be placed on the conduct and reporting of "fundamental research."

The next paragraph, however, states that "Decisions regarding publication of the results of unclassified IST research performed on university campuses will normally be the responsibility of the university author. However, when there is a likelihood of disclosing operational capabilities and performance characteristics of planned or developing military systems, or technologies unique and critical to defense programs, the contract will stipulate that the responsibility for the release of information resulting from IST research belongs to the sponsoring office."

According to Ionson, the intent of that paragraph is to enable universities to undertake restricted work if they wish to do so. "If there are no restrictions in the contract, none will be imposed—ever," says Ionson.

—**COLIN NORMAN**

Plan to Bar Funding to Pennsylvania Laboratory

Two House legislators want to block federal research funds to the University of Pennsylvania head trauma laboratory. Last month, the National Institutes of Health faulted the laboratory for its treatment of primates during head injury experiments and Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Margaret Heckler then suspended funding, pending a response from the school.

Representatives Charles Rose (D–N.C.) and Rod Chandler (R–Wash.) are seeking a tougher measure. They plan next month to introduce an amendment to the NIH appropriations bill that would suspend for 1 year agency funds used for animal research by the head injury lab. The measure already has bipartisan support from 30 other legislators.

—**MARJORIE SUN**