

in the National Intelligence Daily, a classified report circulated to about 200 high-ranking U.S. officials.

China denies that it is engaged in nuclear commerce with Iran, but says it is working with Brazil, Pakistan, and other countries in peaceful development of nuclear power. And for the moment, the Administration and key Senate members such as Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) and Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) continue to support the trade pact. Even if China does engage in peaceful nuclear trade with Iran, government officials say that is not a basis for rejecting the treaty. West German and British companies also are talking with the Iranians, officials note, about completion of several nuclear power plants.

But whether Helms and Lugar can avoid consideration of Glenn's bill is uncertain. Says one committee aide, "It may be very difficult for other senators to consider this trade pact in a rational way." Unless Congress acts to block the pact, it will go into effect by January. Glenn's proposal still could be enacted afterward, but the chances for passage would be reduced.—MARK CRAWFORD

Surveillance Laws Need Overhaul

In long-ago 1968, when new federal privacy legislation was passed, electronic surveillance was primarily limited to telephone taps and concealed microphones. But now the explosion of communications technology "is rapidly outpacing law," according to a report from the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). Legislated policy is ambiguous, incomplete or nonexistent with regard to a number of technological innovations, among them: digitally transmitted telephone conversations, calls on cellular or cordless phones, data communication between computers, electronic mail, database surveillance, pen registers, closed circuit television, and electronic beepers.

In a survey of 142 federal agencies (not counting intelligence agencies), the OTA found that 25 percent use or plan to use electronic surveillance. The same proportion uses computer-

ized record systems for law enforcement, investigative or intelligence purposes. As for the private sector, "the extent of use of electronic surveillance . . . is unknown," says the report.

Surveillance technology is getting ever more flexible, reliable, fast, and difficult to detect, and new capabilities, such as computer speech recognition, are imminent. Yet technological protection against electronic surveillance is lagging, with encryption being the only generally effective countermeasure at this point.

The new developments pose a wealth of challenges to the Bill of Rights. Title III of the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act only protects oral communications transmitted by wire. The other major statute regulating government surveillance, the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, has broader coverage of technology, but the terms of protection are limited. Other recent laws are restricted to protection of the transfer of certain kinds of information.

The OTA report spells out various policy options with regard to telephone calls, electronic mail transmission, and other technologies including electronic physical, visual, and database surveillance. Basically, it says new measures could either be designed to give blanket coverage in each area, or policies could be fashioned according to specific technologies or specific stages of transmission (for example, there are at least five discrete stages where electronic mail can be intercepted). Congress could also set up new mechanisms for control and oversight of federal database surveillance.

Congress is, in fact, making moves to bring federal privacy laws up to date. Representative Bob Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) of the House Judiciary Committee has introduced an "electronic communications privacy act of 1985" (H.R. 3378), cosponsored in the Senate by Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.), that would bring new technologies under the purview of the 1968 law. And Senator William V. Roth, Jr. (R-Del.), who with Kastenmeier requested the OTA report, has initiated an assessment by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, which he chairs, of computer use in the federal government.

—CONSTANCE HOLDEN

A Plan to Save Tropical Forests

A 56-country, \$8 billion plan for salvaging what remains of the world's tropical forests has been proposed by the Washington-based World Resources Institute. WRI president Gus Speth claimed at a 22 October press conference that the 5-year strategy, developed by an international task force, is "the first concrete action plan" for "arresting and ultimately reversing" rainforest destruction, which is proceeding at a rate of more than 27 million acres—an area larger than Austria—every year.

The plan, which has the endorsement of the World Bank, the Agency for International Development, and the United Nations Development Program and its Food and Agricultural Organization, represents an unprecedented attempt to coordinate government, private and grassroots organizations on behalf of what many regard as the world's most urgent environmental problem. WRI hopes to garner financial support for the plan at various forthcoming international meetings, and international assistance agencies will be convening to discuss it at The Hague in November. Next year, the aim is to bring together top political leaders for a "summit meeting" on the subject.

The goal of the planners is to double global expenditures on tropical forests. This means raising investments by international aid agencies and lending institutions to \$800 million a year, and contributions from national governments and private organizations by a like amount. The World Bank, whose forestry expert John Spears had a leading role in the development of the plan, and AID are already putting increasing emphasis on forest conservation, primarily through projects to develop alternative sources of fuelwood.

The action program is organized around five issues: fuelwood and agroforestry; watershed protection; forest management for industrial uses; ecosystem conservation; and strengthening of institutions for research, training, and extension. There is special emphasis on local participation, particularly by women.

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