Briefing:

Science 86 Sold to Time Inc.

On 27 June the AAAS Board of Directors sold *Science 86*, the association's popular science magazine, to Time Inc., publisher of *Discover*. "Deciding to cease publication of *Science 86* was an extremely painful decision for the AAAS Board to make," president Lawrence Bogorad said in an announcement prepared for the press. "It was necessitated by the severe 2-year decline in advertising revenues which has put a tremendous strain on the budget of our nonprofit Association."

Time Inc., which gains *Science 86*'s valuable subscription list through the sale, will fold *Science 86* and fulfill its outstanding subscriptions with copies of *Discover*. Both magazines have been honored by the National Magazine Award for General Excellence, with *Science 86* receiving that prize twice since it was first published by AAAS in the fall of 1979.

Like *Science 86*, *Discover* has been beset by losses in ad revenues recently. In a public statement, AAAS Executive Officer William D. Carey said, "Time Inc. is resolved to continue *Discover* and to be the premier science magazine in the field. To help insure this, Time Inc. has announced its intention to appoint a science advisory board for *Discover*, similar to the one that has existed for *Science 86*. We applaud this initiative and will give them every encouragement for continued success."

Bogorad, in his statement, noted that with the launch of *Science 86* the AAAS "set the pace for a new crop of popular science magazines. . . . We regret that the financial situation made it impossible for the Association to continue publishing the magazine," he said, "but we believe that the mission of *Science 86* will endure." ■

BARBARA J. CULLITON

Dugway Lab Plans Defended by Defense Department

The Department of Defense (DOD) recently released a lengthy report that justifies its controversial plans to build a new, sophisticated laboratory for biowarfare tests, but has changed its tune slightly to appease critics of the proposal.

Almost 2 years ago, the Defense Department proposed rapid construction of a laboratory at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah, arguing that the Soviets have been hard at work conducting offensive research in biological warfare. DOD argues that the facility must be built to develop equipment to protect troops against pathogens that, it says, the Soviets use now and will create in the future with the help of biotechnology.

The proposal won funding by Congress but construction was stopped by a federal judge, who said that DOD had not conducted a proper analysis of the potential effects of the research on the environment. The court action was a result of a lawsuit filed by activist Jeremy Rifkin. The proposal also has been challenged by members of Congress and several prominent scientists (*Science*, 17 May 1985, p. 827), who are worried that the laboratory would raise the risk of biowarfare. They are also concerned that other countries, particularly the Soviet Union, would perceive laboratory studies as offensive research.

In the new report, which was written in response to an order by the House Appropriations Committee, the Defense Department raises for the first time the possibility that it would allow experts outside the military to review the overall activities at the lab. It suggested that reviewers might include scientists who are both members of the National Academy of Sciences and of the Army Board on Science and Technology. The oversight group would review the biotechnology activities of the lab, including studies that would involve the testing of pathogenic organisms created through recombinant DNA techniques. An aide to Senator Jim Sasser (D–TN), who has opposed the new lab, says that the proposal for peer review was "a positive step."

For most of the report, however, the department reiterates its original arguments to justify the laboratory, but in greater detail. It says that the most recent example of biological warfare is the Soviet's use of "yellow rain" toxin in Southeast Asia, a claim that, according to several independent studies, is based on shaky evidence that's getting even shakier (*Science*, 4 July, p. 18). The report also says that developing countries are using genetic engineering for biological warfare, but does not cite any specific examples. It simply asserts that "third world proliferation [of biological warfare] is getting worse. . . . "

The report gives the impression that biotechnology makes it a snap to create new pathogenic organisms that could be used in biological warfare and mass produce microbes. The sophisticated Dugway lab is needed, it argues, because there are not enough nonpathogenic microbes to simulate several toxic organisms, such as rickettsia, viruses, or fungi.

The department does not address a key issue raised by critics, who question how the U.S. can keep up with the development of methods to protect troops if novel microbes can be designed and produced easily.

According to the report, the department plans to complete the court-ordered environmental analysis by March 1987. The analysis will be publicly available, it says. ■

MARJORIE SUN

Cold Neutron Works Nixed by House

The scientific community may have to wait a little longer to conduct experiments on the National Bureau of Standards cold neutron source. Unless the Senate Appropriations Committee produces a funding bill for the Commerce Department that is radically different from House legislation, major construction on the beam line and experiment stations will be delayed at least a year. Despite the House Science and Technology Committee's endorsement of a $10-million capital program in 1987, the Appropriations Committee declined to fund the undertaking.

In total, the committee approved a $120-million budget for NBS, $3.95 million less than President Reagan's request. Although the cold neutron source is the agency's top priority, it was not approved because of a lack of funds. The Reagan Administration had proposed to free up revenue for the project in part by closing down NBS's Center for Building Safety and Center for Fire Research. The Appropriations Committee, however, rejected this proposal. Instead, it provided $3.11 million and $5.14 million, respectively, for the two programs. The committee also funded the agency's Institute for Computer Science and Technology at $8.13 million, $3.13 million more than the Administration proposed.

The attraction of the proposed facility is that it would provide low velocity neutrons for materials research. The $27-million project chiefly consists of installing a cold source to cool neutrons to −415 degrees Fahrenheit, a beam line off an existing reactor, and an experiment hall.

The House Appropriations Committee accepted the agency's proposal for a new initiative in fiber optics, providing $800,000—$150,000 less than the Administration sought. Similarly, it endorsed the proposed Consolidated Scientific Computer