

Unesco, from which the United States withdrew at the beginning of 1985.

M'Bow, who comes from Senegal, has said that he has not yet decided whether to stand for reelection, but some governments have already given him their support. In particular, a meeting at the end of July of the heads of states of African nations belonging to the Organization for African Unity endorsed a statement urging its member states to take "all the necessary steps" for the renewal of his mandate. ■

DAVID DICKSON

Senate Votes to Expand Anti-AIDS Drug Trials

The Senate has approved a sharp increase in funding for experimental drug trials for AIDS patients. An amendment to the fiscal year 1987 appropriations bill for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), offered by Senator Lowell Weicker (R-CT), would shift \$47 million from an energy assistance program to the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

If the amendment is approved by a conference committee and the appropriations bill is signed by President Reagan, the money will be used to fund additional treatment evaluation units and establish satellite centers so that the number of AIDS patients receiving experimental drug therapy can be increased.

The Senate's action came just as researchers and health officials were engaged in an intense debate over clinical trials of AZT (3'-azido-2'-deoxythymidine), a drug manufactured by the Burroughs Wellcome Company that appears to inhibit the ability of the AIDS virus to reproduce itself. At issue is whether the drug is sufficiently promising to end the clinical trial prematurely in order to make it more widely available. Such a move would, however, compromise the full value of the trial. A decision is expected soon.

AZT is one of several drugs that are being clinically tested by NIAID. In July, the institute awarded \$100 million, to be paid out over a 5-year period, to 14 U.S. universities and hospitals that had been approved as treatment evaluation units for testing anti-AIDS drugs. At that time, five more treatment evaluation units were approved but not funded. If Weicker's amendment survives, about \$7 million of the additional \$47 million would be provided to these five treatment evaluation units. The rest of the money could be used to establish satellite

centers where additional AIDS patients could be included in clinical trials and to expand experimental treatment programs in existing centers.

Because the Weicker amendment was proposed and passed so quickly, "the logistical details and the regulatory details of giving experimental drugs to an additional number of people still need to be worked out," according to James Hill of NIAID. Ultimately, NIAID would decide how the additional money should be spent.

Anthony Fauci, director of NIAID, foresees that the additional money would allow clinical trials to be expanded to include patients who do not fit into the currently available protocols for experimental drug therapy. "And, depending on the language of the bill, we may also be able to use some of the money for drug development," says Fauci. "That is, we could do some very basic science at the molecular biology level aimed at developing new drugs that interfere with various functions of the AIDS virus."

The source for the \$47 million in Weicker's amendment is a proposed reduction in the funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Weicker, who chairs the Senate appropriations subcommittee on labor, health and human services, and education, noted when he proposed the amendment that \$2 billion was recently allocated to the states for energy assistance programs from a fine levied on Exxon for overcharging customers. Thus, the \$47 million in the Weicker amendment is more than compensated for in fines paid by Exxon.

As of 8 September, there were 11,002 AIDS patients alive in the United States. About 1000 patients are currently participating in clinical trials to test the safety and efficacy of drugs that may either inhibit replication of the virus that causes AIDS or enhance immune responses to the virus. In addition to AZT, several other drugs, including HPA-23, foscarnet, ribavirin, didoxycytidine, and interferon alpha will also be tested by the treatment evaluation units recently funded by NIAID.

Samuel Broder of the National Cancer Institute says that additional money "may allow us to expand the current drug trials and determine drug efficacy more quickly."

But the additional funding for drug intervention studies for AIDS is far from guaranteed. The HHS appropriations bill (HR 5233) is likely to contain provisions opposed by the Administration, and a presidential veto is a distinct possibility. And even if large increases in AIDS funding are approved, they could later be whittled away by cuts required to meet the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction targets. ■

DEBORAH M. BARNES

Graham Nomination Moves at Last

After sitting becalmed in the executive approval process for 3 months, the nomination of William R. Graham to be President Reagan's science adviser and director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is finally showing signs of movement. On 11 September, the Senate Commerce Committee held a routine hearing on the nomination, at which Graham was gently quizzed about his views on various science policy issues. The committee's approval is expected to be given in the last week of September, and the full Senate is likely to follow suit shortly thereafter.

Thus, Graham will take office almost 4 months after Reagan announced his intention to appoint him to the top science advisory post. Most of the delay resulted from the glacial pace with which Graham's papers moved through the White House bureaucracy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a process that took more than 2 months. Graham had already gone through this process less than a year ago when he was appointed to his current position as deputy administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The Commerce Committee hearing, which was attended only by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), with Senator Albert Gore, Jr. (D-TN), putting in a brief appearance, produced no surprises and few strong indications of the directions Graham is likely to take. In his verbal responses and written answers to questions posed by Senators Ernest Hollings (D-SC) and Donald Riegle (D-MI), Graham confined himself mostly to generalities.

The post of science adviser has been vacant since 1 January, when the previous incumbent, George A. (Jay) Keyworth left to launch a consulting firm. It was filled on an acting basis by Keyworth's former deputy, John P. McTague, who departed on 23 May for a top executive post at Ford Motor Company. Since early June, Richard Johnson, an assistant OSTP director, has filled in.

Meanwhile, OSTP's budget has been cut from \$2.2 million in fiscal year 1986 to \$1.3 million in 1987. Asked at the hearings whether that would crimp OSTP's operations, Graham said he has not yet turned his attention to the structure of the office, but suggested that it is appropriate for the White House bureaucracy to share in the effort to cut federal spending. Graham also said he would seek advice from outside OSTP and the federal government. ■

COLIN NORMAN