

the issue would hang like a lead weight around future arms control issues. Of immediate concern, Nunn and Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, have said that unless the Administration withdraws its interpretation, they will insist that the Senate be given the entire negotiating record of future treaties—including the anticipated treaty to eliminate intermediate-range missiles—before it ratifies them. This could tie up the ratification process in endless delay.

Perhaps more important, continued disagreement over the interpretation of the ABM treaty could seriously impede efforts to negotiate an agreement to reduce strategic weapons. The Soviets have consistently tried to link negotiations on strategic weapons with limits on SDI, and it is considered unlikely that they will agree to reduce strategic arms while the Reagan Administration continues to insist that it can develop and test SDI unfettered by the ABM treaty. "The reinterpretation of the ABM treaty is the central issue in whether we will see a strategic arms agreement in this Administration," says Garthoff, who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Some, however, see a possible way out of this impasse in a Soviet proposal, advanced by foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze during his visit to Washington last month. Shevardnadze proposed negotiations on exactly what testing and development is limited by the ABM treaty, with the aim of setting limits on the performance levels of devices such as lasers and rockets to be tested in space. Anything exceeding those limits would have to be tested on earth.

The suggestion has been interpreted as a move away from the Soviets' previous insistence—advanced by Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev at the Reykjavik summit meeting—that the treaty limits all SDI tests to the laboratory. It has also been welcomed by Nitze as a basis for discussion. At a AAAS arms control symposium on 29 September, Nitze noted that the treaty, under any interpretation, is not crystal clear on exactly what development and testing means, and on what constitutes an ABM component. "The whole theory of the treaty was that when something like this arises, we would talk to the other side about it," he said. To even enter into such discussions would, however, be tantamount to admitting that the broad interpretation of the treaty does not apply.

John Rhinelander, the legal adviser to the U.S. delegation that negotiated the ABM treaty, sums up the choice this way: The debate over the treaty has been "theological," he says. "Now it is time to deal with it on a practical level." ■ COLIN NORMAN

Briefing:

AIDS Panel Goes to Congress

The Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic went to Capitol Hill on 30 September to seek advice from Congress on how to fulfill its extremely broad mandate, which requires the 13-member group to examine virtually all aspects of AIDS. It was the commission's second meeting since being formed in July.

The Congressmen's advice:

■ Senator John Danforth (R-MO) told the members that they should convince President Reagan to go on prime-time television and be briefed by a handful of leading AIDS researchers. Reagan has always been "a kind of stand-in for the public," said Danforth. Why not, mused the senator, have the President play the role of an uninformed John Q. Public and ask the experts, for example, if he could get AIDS by standing in an elevator with someone harboring the virus.

■ Senator Lowell Weicker (R-CT) tore into the panel: "To date your commission has yet to prove that it is not merely an extension of the far right moralizing this Administration has employed at its first line of offense in the AIDS battle."

■ Representative Ted Weiss (D-NY) warned of letting the federal response to AIDS get bogged down by budget cutters and Administration officials with conservative social agendas. What is needed is a commitment by the President to listen to his own public health officials and scientists, said Weiss.

■ In other business, the commission announced it has hired a public relations expert, though it has failed to appoint a new executive director to fill the shoes of the first executive director who was ousted last month. The commission is supposed to issue its preliminary report at the beginning of December. "We're not going anywhere until we get somebody in that position," said commission member Burton James Lee III, a physician at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. ■ W.B.

Census Compromise Reached

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has modified some of its inflammatory last-minute suggestions for shortening the 1990 census form (*Science*, 21 August, p. 839). Instead of recommending the deletion of almost one-third of all the questions, it

wants to eliminate only three on home fuel and heating. It still wants to transfer seven of the ten housing questions contained on the short (or "100 percent") form to the longer, sampling form, including information on rent and property values.

The sample is also currently being redesigned to respond to OMB's proposal that the sampling rate be reduced from 1 in 6 to 1 in 20 in dense, hard-to-count inner city populations.

Wendy Gramm, OMB administrator for information and regulatory affairs, told the Department of Commerce in a 17 September letter that plans formulated by the census bureau did not meet "the criteria of practical utility and minimization of burden" established by the Paperwork Reduction Act. Citing high rates of nonresponse in the past, Gramm wrote that "the public is more concerned about privacy, less sanguine about surveys, and more suspicious of government than it was in 1970."

The final census forms were supposed to have been approved by 28 September in order to meet next year's 20 March date for the census "dress rehearsal." ■ C.H.

Kondratiev Rehabilitated

The Soviet Union has rehabilitated the economist Nikolai Kondratiev. He is best known for his theory of economic cycles, which has recently seen a resurgence of interest among Western economists as an explanation of the link between technological innovation and economic growth (*Science*, 25 February 1983, p. 933). Kondratiev was one of a number of academic economists who were arrested during the purges of the early 1930s because of their opposition to the economic policies of Josef Stalin. He subsequently disappeared after a show trial. Another of those whose works can now be openly studied in the U.S.S.R. is Alexander Chayanov, a staunch opponent of the mass collectivization of agriculture who supported the gradual transformation and modernization of peasant smallholdings through cooperative farming. Chayanov was shot in 1939. ■ D.D.

Crafoord Prize

The 1987 Crafoord Prize has been awarded to ecologists Eugene P. Odum and Howard T. Odum. The prize, awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and worth \$250,000, rotates on a 4-year cycle between mathematics, astronomy, geosciences, and biosciences—areas not covered by the Nobel. ■ C.N.