large-scale military involvement. This idea, like legalization, urine testing of workers, mandatory treatment of drug users, and several other new frontiers in the war on drugs, might benefit from a more complete public review.

"There has been a remarkable lack of interest" in improving our understanding of the drug problem, says Peter Reuter, author of the RAND Corporation study. "We have no retail price data on drugs," he says, which would be useful for monitoring the effectiveness of policies. If the cocaine epidemic ever recedes, "You'd like to be able to say, 'It's getting better here faster than there because you're doing something different here.' " The chaos in official records and estimates, he says, makes this kind of analysis impossible, and the lack of information is "an absolute non topic" in Washington. "Nobody gives a damn."

Mark Moore, a federal adviser on drugs of long standing at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, says the current policy amounts to "flying blind in the short run and failing to accumulate the experience that allows us to know what works in the long run."

One reason for indifference, Moore thinks, is that police executives are not trained in scientific methods. They put a "premium on being confident about answers" rather than on raising doubts. As a result, they do not produce useful information about their own operations. Nor do the "clinicians" (the police) mix often with the theorists.

Some blame the researchers, too. The "scientific community has not been enthusiastic" about crime research, according to Stewart of the Institute of Justice. Moore agrees that researchers seem bored by operational problems, the kind that often yield valuable insights. They have imposed very high standards, rejecting data that do not come from random trials. But it is difficult to maintain clinical standards in police stations, courtrooms, and jails. Imperfect data, Moore says, may still have a value.

A bit of solid research would go a long way toward clarifying the nation's goals and alternatives, Moore thinks. He sees an analogy with economics. The President's economic advisers often disagree on theory, and they do not expect to create a perfectly balanced market. But they are skilled at managing the direction of economic change and controlling key variables such as interest and unemployment. That may be good enough.

In the same way, drug abuse could be managed intelligently as a long-term problem. There would be no "winning" the war. But it might be possible to steer events in a favorable direction. "You could have a policy by adaptation and improvisation," Moore says. "And, if you've got a good measurement system, you might not need a theory."

For such a system to work, however, leaders would have to experiment with new ideas, invest in data collection and analysis, and demand objective reviews of experience. Little of this is being done today, and some say this explains the confusion in policy.

As Bowsher of the GAO says: "The dilemma is that no one knows which drug control policies are the most effective. Opinions vary about what the federal government should do. . . Experts disagree about which antidrug programs work the best."

Congress hopes to invigorate the troops this year with new legislation, and there is much on its agenda. However, in the final sprint to the election, the antidrug bill may not get the careful scrutiny it deserves. Many think the result may be a "Christmas tree" loaded with a variety of glittering ornaments, similar to the end-of-term finance bill that passed last December. If that happens, a chance to develop a well-focused drug strategy may be lost.

■ ELIOT MARSHALL

SSC Takes Another Step Forward

The Superconducting Super Collider will receive $100 million in funding in fiscal year 1989—$263 million less than the Administration requested, but enough to keep the research program moving forward. The decisions of the House and Senate Appropriations committees, which each approved $100 million in separate actions, do not assure that the proton-proton particle accelerator will actually be constructed, however.

In fact, both committees express doubts in their appropriations reports about the ultimate fate of the proposed $5.3-billion project, which would have a circumference of 53 miles. Citing budgetary limits across the research sector, the House Appropriations Committee noted that "the new administration may also be similarly constrained on this project in future years."

Besides declining to fund construction of the SSC, the committee scolded DOE for its poor record of bringing large projects online within their advertised budgets, and it urged the department to refine its cost estimates for the collider.

The Senate Appropriations Committee, while supportive of the SSC, expressed concern in its appropriations report about the project's future. "The Committee simply doesn't know where the money is going to come from to undertake this $5-billion to $8-billion project." The Senate committee has agonized over the SSC because of the budgetary impact it may have on other physics programs. It will be non-SSC research, according to the report, that will drive progress in high-energy physics in the next decade.

As a consequence, the committee suggests that "the new administration must either find new sources of revenues to finance new initiatives like the SSC or be more successful . . . in convincing Congress to terminate many current ongoing programs. . . ."

The $100 million provided to the SSC will go to continue research on superconducting magnets, including acquisition of tooling. This budget is $75 million more than the current year's budget and will allow for industry contractors to join in the planning for building the accelerator's 9600 magnets.

Funding for high-energy physics, excluding the SSC, will be at most $568 million—the level recommended by the House. The Senate is recommending $556.8 million. The current year's budget is $539 million, excluding the SSC. The difference will have to be worked out in a House-Senate conference. If the Senate number prevails, it may be difficult to fully operate DOE high-energy physics facilities as called for by the House committee.

On another front, the House-Senate conference must also decide whether to continue forward with engineering studies for Compact Ignition Tokamak (CIT), a magnetic confinement fusion energy experiment designed to ignite a deuterium-tritium plasma for a short period of time. The Senate has appropriated $22 million for the project, while the House has allocated just $15 million. DOE officials say they will have to lay off the CIT design team if the House figure prevails. Research on the new Tokamak would continue. But officials say losing the design team after a year of work would be a major setback.

The House also wants to reduce spending at DOE's Office of Health and Environmental Research to $239 million, down $31 million from this year's level. The Senate favors a budget of $264 million. Despite these differences, both committees urge DOE to take a strong role in the effort to map the human genome.

In its report, the House committee said, "The committee believes that federal research associated with this project should be centrally coordinated by the department." The Senate committee endorsed the House language.

■ MARK CRAWFORD