

## Chinese Bar Physicist from Bush Dinner

When Chinese authorities last week blocked the country's most well-known dissident, scientist Fang Lizhi, from attending a dinner hosted by President Bush in Beijing, the act represented the most recent and blatant form of government repression against Fang and other Chinese dissidents.

Fang, 53, an astrophysicist, has also been barred by Chinese officials from traveling abroad. He had been invited to lecture this spring semester at five American universities.

Fang's outspoken criticism of socialism and advocacy of democratic reforms and human rights have incensed Chinese officialdom. His vociferousness got him ousted 2 years ago from both his post as vice president of the Chinese University of Science and Technology in Anhui province and from the Communist Party. He was then transferred to the Chinese Academy of Science's Institute of Astrophysics in Beijing where he currently conducts research.

Until fairly recently, Chinese authorities have allowed Fang to travel overseas and even granted him permission last May to teach in the United States this spring. But in a society where overseas travel is considered a real plum, Fang said something while abroad that apparently was the last straw for Chinese officials. At a meeting last year in Australia, Fang, in response to a question, quoted wall posters at Beijing University which charged that some children of high-ranking Chinese officials were profiting from illegal business transactions. In November, the government withdrew its approval for Fang to lecture in the United States.

President of the U.S. National Academy of Science Frank Press sent a telegram in November to Chinese Academy of Sciences president Zhou Guangzhao, "expressing concern" about the prohibition and reiterated the mutual goal of collaboration between the two countries, says Robert Geyer of the U.S. Academy. Zhou has not replied.

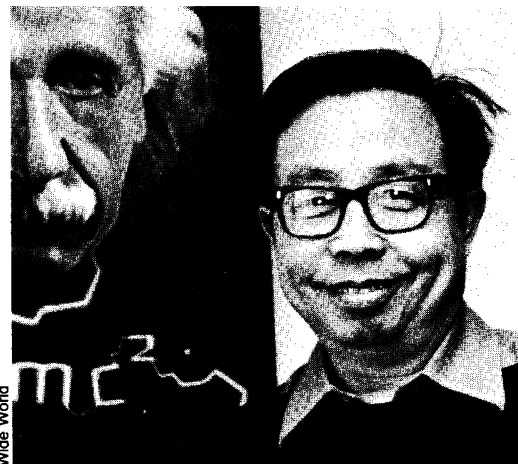
Fang is managing to get his message out overseas. He is allowed to meet with Western journalists in China. The *New York Review of Books* solicited an essay from him that ran in the 2 February issue in which Fang challenges Party arguments against democracy. He writes, "Logic allows only one conclusion: that the disappointments of the past 40 years must be attributed to the [socialist] system itself" in China.

But Fang's views are not being heard in China itself. The government has forbidden him from returning to Anhui where he has

hero status, an American expert contacted in Beijing said. The Chinese are allowing publication of his scientific work, but not his political writings.

Last week, Chinese authorities went to great lengths to prohibit Fang from attending the Bush dinner. Fang, his wife, Li Shuxian, a Party member who is also a harsh critic of the government, Perry Link, the U.S. National Academy of Science's Beijing representative, and his wife, were in an Academy car when Chinese police stopped them a couple of blocks from the hotel where the event was held. Chinese authorities issued a traffic violation to the driver, stopped a taxi that the four subsequently hailed, waved city buses past the group, and at times surrounded them with more than a dozen police as they tried to make their way to the hotel, then to the American Embassy, and to the U.S. Ambassador's residence.

Bush's bland reaction to the incident has drawn criticism that the U.S. government has a double standard in dealing with repression of dissidents in China and the Soviet Union. A White House spokesman reportedly said that Bush expressed "regret" to Chinese officials shortly after the incident. Harvard graduate student Pei Minxin, a



**Fang Lizhi** has also been prevented from lecturing in the United States this year.

Chinese citizen, wrote in the *New York Times* on 28 February, "For the past 14 years, the United States has been an acquiescent spectator to human rights violations in China—an attitude markedly different from the one it displays toward the Soviet Union." The Reagan Administration publicly denounced the Soviet Union for barring Andrei Sakharov from traveling overseas, Pei noted, but there was "no condemnation" by Bush officials of Fang's treatment. "This unprecedented event—preventing a guest of a United States President to meet with him at his invitation—is only the most dramatic example of the persistent abuse of human rights in China."

■ MARJORIE SUN

## NAS Weighs in with 7-Lb Diet Guide

Three years ago, the National Academy of Sciences convened a panel of 19 researchers to review the world's scientific literature on diet and health in order to come up with the definitive word on what we should and should not eat. More than 5000 papers—some of them better than others—were subjected to scrutiny and last week the results were released.

In "Diet and Health"\*, a 1000-plus-page report that resembles the Manhattan telephone book, the Academy's National Research Council told people to:

Reduce total fat consumption to 30% or less of total calories every day.

Reduce cholesterol to less than 300 milligrams a day. (One egg has 274 milligram; one pat of butter has 11 milligrams.)

Eat five or more servings a day of vegetables and fruit, especially green and yellow vegetables and citrus fruit.

Eat six or more servings of starches and other complex carbohydrates.

Don't eat more than 6 ounces of protein a day. (One hamburger and you're done.)

Don't drink if you can help it. If you must, stick to two beers, two glasses of wine, or two cocktails a day.

Don't eat more than 6 grams of salt a day—that's one teaspoon total, including salt in prepared foods.

Stick with fluoridated water.

And forget about that daily vitamin pill. Just one a day won't do you any good. An excess might make you sick.

Anyone who figures out how to follow this good—if familiar—advice might hope to prevent the following chronic diseases: heart disease; cancer of the colon, prostate, and breast; stroke and diseases of the peripheral arteries; hypertension; obesity; osteoporosis; diabetes; gallbladder and liver disease; and rotten teeth. However, the Academy does not promise eternal life.

And it does state quite clearly that although diet counts, genes do too. In fact, "most chronic diseases in which nutritional

\*Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council, "Diet and Health: Implications for Reducing Chronic Disease Risk." Copies at \$45 each are available from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20418.

factors play a role also have genetic and other environmental determinants," according to the report of the committee that was chaired by geneticist Arno Motulsky of the Center for Inherited Diseases at the University of Washington.

Admittedly, "Diet and Health" for all its magnitude says very little that is new or surprising. The one exception is fiber. As anyone who watches television or reads popular magazines knows, fiber is in—especially the fiber in oat bran, which is said not only to prevent cancer but also to lower cholesterol. The Motulsky committee has its doubts. Careful review of what is known about fiber revealed that its benefits are "not nearly as much as we've been led to believe." Fiber is difficult to analyze chemically. The idea that fiber is fiber is wrong. And interactions among fiber and other foods are often unclear. If fiber-rich foods are good for you, it may not be the fiber at all that confers a dietary blessing on the system. It's just not clear, the panel says.

The special value of "Diet and Health," Motulsky believes, is not that it is news but that it is comprehensive and scholarly. Unlike most previous reports (the recent report of the Surgeon General being an exception), the Motulsky report evaluated data for a number of chronic diseases, considered dietary interactions, and tried to balance risk factors for the whole spectrum of diseases. Although the "Diet and Health" guidelines are generally consistent with previous advice, there are more "specific, quantitative recommendations," Motulsky says.

What is the downside of all this? Even the committee recognizes that adopting the ideal diet will require time and attention. A certain mathematical ability would also be handy for counting calories and figuring out whether one's carbohydrates come to 55% of the total, for instance. It would also be useful for figuring out how to keep daily protein to "1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight or 0.026 ounces per pound."

But most of all, reasonable adherence to an ideal diet means rejecting fast food, canned soups laden with sodium, most frozen concoctions, and rich restaurant food—in short, it means changing the American diet by substantially changing the way the food industry produces the products that fill the supermarket shelves, because the average American does not limit the diet to fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meat, and skim milk.

Many people see special problems in eating out. But there is hope. One committee member reported with approval that New York's four-star Four Seasons restaurant now offers a gourmet "spa cuisine." Another noted that in any "decent" restaurant, one

can get a healthful meal by telling the waiter what you want and how you want it prepared—the menu be damned.

The real challenge in all of this is what committee calls "implementation"—an important policy issue that is the domain of yet another committee that hopes to report

within the year. Its advice will be aimed not at the average eater but, rather, at the food and restaurant industries, airlines, school cafeterias, and federal policy-makers. The goal: make low-salt, low-fat food de rigueur throughout the land.

■ BARBARA J. CULLITON

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## GM, Hughes Settle Stock Fight

General Motors has agreed to pay the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) nearly \$1 billion in real money this year as part of the settlement of a dispute over the purchase price of Hughes Aircraft, which GM bought from the medical institute in 1985. The institute will get another \$1 billion or so by 1995.

When the late Howard Hughes created HHMI in 1953, he gave it Hughes Aircraft as its sole (and ultimately very valuable) asset. When the institute sold the aircraft company to General Motors, the \$5.2-billion sale price included a complicated arrangement in which GM paid in part with \$2.7 billion in cash and in part by giving HHMI 99.5 million shares of a newly created class of GM stock—H (for Hughes) shares. Those shares turned out to be less valuable and less liquid than anticipated, which left HHMI feeling strapped for cash despite its status as the largest medical philanthropy in existence. In addition, Hughes felt it improvident to have its investment portfolio tied so exclusively to a single company. After all, a good portfolio is a diversified portfolio.

While HHMI was worrying about getting its money, GM was having second thoughts about its purchase arrangement when problems arose over the value of contracts that Hughes Aircraft had with the

federal government at the time it was sold (*Science*, 23 December, p. 1630). GM was unhappy at having to pay a \$200-million penalty to the government over a disputed Navy contract with Hughes Aircraft and wanted to get its money back from the Hughes institute. HHMI trustee Irving Shapiro, former chairman of DuPont, accused GM of "unseemly" behavior in the case and said that the \$200 million was just petty cash to GM.

The frosty and public argument that erupted between GM and HHMI has now been settled. George W. Thorn of Harvard, who is president of the HHMI trustees, calls the new agreement "very satisfactory" because it provides the institute with "the liquidity we desired." Six hundred and seventy-five million dollars in cash and \$300 million in promissory notes for 35 million shares of stock can do that.

The rest of the money from GM will arrive in stages over the next 5 years as the institute executes various agreed-upon options for selling 55 million additional shares of GM H stock, either to the motor company or on the open market.

As for General Motors, its chairman is quoted as saying that with \$6.8 billion in cash on hand, it can afford the \$975-million buy-back of stock from the medical institute. Good thing. ■ BARBARA J. CULLITON

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## An Arbitrator for Space Policy

The President filled a critical post among his advisers on space policy when he returned from Asia on 2 March. He chose Mark Albrecht, a legislative assistant to Senator Pete Wilson (R-CA), to be executive director of the National Space Council, a new coordinating body created by law in 1988. The council will be chaired officially by Vice President Dan Quayle. It will include nine other members representing the secretaries of State, Defense, Commerce, and Transportation, also the Office of Management and Budget, the President's chief of staff, the national security director, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the admin-

istrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Albrecht is not well known to Washington's civilian space community. His boss sits on the Armed Services Committee and has been more interested in military programs. Albrecht has developed his expertise accordingly.

The biggest challenge facing Albrecht, congressional aides say, will be to negotiate peace and find common ground among the competing interests on the space panel. One former congressional aide says: "Albrecht is very bright, very competent, but nothing can prepare you for that kind of work. It's like war." ■ ELIOT MARSHALL