

## Senate Committee Quizzes Bromley

D. Allan Bromley, President Bush's nominee to become director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, has been in and out of Washington for many years. But last week's surprisingly long 4-hour confirmation hearing may have seemed more than a refresher course in Washington politics to the 63-year-old Yale University physicist.

While receiving Bromley warmly, Republican and Democratic members pressed him for details about how he will provide science and technology policy leadership. They also want to know what advice he will give about current environmental concerns, where he stands on the continuing tussle between the advocates of big and little science, and how he'll recommend trimming science budgets in deference to the omnipresent deficit.

In particular, the senators wanted to know how he plans to revitalize the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and whether he will have the ear of President Bush. Senator Albert Gore (D-TN), who ran the hearing in place of Chairman Ernest Hollings (D-SC), seemed especially interested to learn how much Bromley will be constrained by past White House policies.

Senators Gore, John C. Danforth (R-MO), Larry Pressler (R-SD), and John F. Kerry (D-MA) all urged Bromley to play a far more forceful role in setting science policy than did his predecessor, William Graham. They suggested that to be effective in his new post, Bromley should emulate the outspoken style of outgoing Surgeon General C. Everett Koop. "I do not know if you will be allowed to do that," said Pressler, "but I hope you will. . . . We really need to have the science and technology policy area upgraded."

Although Bromley told Kerry that he intends to make OSTP a major player in Administration decisions involving science and technology, he insisted it would be a mistake to view him as "a lobbyist for the science and technology community" just because he has access to the president.

Based on his testimony, Bromley certainly won't be viewed as a lobbyist for the environmental community. Asked for his assessment of the global warming problem and whether the United States should curtail its use of fossil fuels, Bromley said that action must be taken now to preserve the world's rain forests, to use energy more efficiently, and to step up reforestation efforts. But he is not yet convinced that research findings require the U.S. to act at this time to slash carbon emissions. That response irritated Gore, who noted that it will be hard to

persuade the Third World to preserve their forests unless industrial countries such as the United States take some meaningful action.

Just how Bromley will cope with the demands of small and big science in a time of tight budgets is not clear. Bromley says he is strongly behind such big projects as the Superconducting Super Collider, the manned space station, President Bush's plan announced 20 July to colonize the moon and go to Mars, and the sophisticated Earth-observing spacecraft planned as part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Mission to Planet Earth.

At the same time Bromley said he is committed to "maintaining a balance between small science activities that are the backbone of our science research base and major science initiatives." To allow basic research funding by the National Science Foundation and other agencies to be cut back, he says, would be "suicidal."

## New Round in *Dingell v. NIH?*

Despite what he calls a "thorough and objective" investigation by a National Institutes of Health panel, Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI) may be firing up his investigative engines for a closer look at the latest scientific misconduct case to come to light. In a letter dated 14 July to NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden, Dingell indicates that the "serious misconduct" uncovered by the panel's investigation of vision researcher C. David Bridges should more properly be called fraud and might be worth a criminal investigation.

The NIH panel concluded that Bridges, while at Baylor University, plagiarized work done by Harvard University researcher Robert R. Rando in preparing a paper on the regeneration of visual pigments. The paper appeared in the 26 June 1987 issue of *Science*. Although Bridges has denied the charge, the NIH panel recommended stiff penalties.

Dingell questions whether NIH has gone far enough. He wants to know why NIH stopped short of accusing Bridges of fraud. "As I understand it," Dingell writes, "your panel found that Dr. Bridges abused the process of peer review, stole the ideas and data from Dr. Rando, stole the protocols and techniques, may not have done some research at all, falsely dated critical laboratory records, claimed the original data was stolen, then apparently produced some questionable data. Now if this does not

But Gore warned the nominee that small science could indeed suffer if the Administration did not whittle down its list of mega projects. Asked whether some relief might be found by trimming defense R&D spending in the wake of warmer U.S. relations with the Soviet Union, Bromley countered that more R&D spending might be needed to keep military technology up to date.

One program that Bromley hinted might be deferred is the Human Genome Project. The cost of sequencing genes and analyzing data might be reduced, he said, if the genome project were stretched out to await the development of new technology.

Bromley's Senate confirmation is a virtual certainty, but Gore indicated that the confirmation of four other forthcoming nominees to fill OSTP associate director posts are not assured. These as yet unnamed individuals will face tougher grilling than the well-respected Bromley received when the committee holds additional hearings after Congress returns from its August recess, Gore said.

■ MARK CRAWFORD

amount to fraud, what would?"

Wyngaarden, in a response dated 21 July, writes that "the term 'misconduct' has been defined in such a way to include fraud and, indeed, it is difficult to conceive of an act of scientific fraud which would not be encompassed by the more generic term 'scientific misconduct.'"

As for criminal charges, Wyngaarden writes that the panel's report on the Bridges paper is being sent to the Department of Health and Human Services inspector general, who will decide whether to pursue the matter further.

Dingell's letter also contained a question about *Science* Editor Daniel Koshland's role in the affair. Why, he asked Wyngaarden, if journal editors are "one of the bulwarks against scientific misconduct," did Koshland not investigate Bridges when he learned from Rando that there were problems with Bridges' paper? Wyngaarden does not answer this question in his letter to Dingell.

Koshland says Rando's letter to *Science* did not raise the question of plagiarism, but only raised issues about appropriate reference to his work, and a reference was included in Bridges' article. (see *Science*, 14 July, p. 120).

Will Dingell accept these responses or is NIH in for another grilling before his committee? As *Science* goes to press there are no hearings scheduled.

■ JOSEPH PALCA