in the end removed the cold fusion results from the main body of the thesis and it was formally approved by the committee.)

Soriaga told the panel members that he had felt pressured to okay Packham's defense even though he had not been allowed to question him completely on its cold fusion component, which prompted the panel to write: "Tenured faculty should be particularly concerned to protect the prerogative of untenured faculty serving on the same committee....The administration needs to review its procedures regarding the proper conduct of such oral defenses."

Are there any further lessons to be learned from Texas A&M's cold fusion capers? Yes, Fry said, but not the type that can be embodied in a new set of university regulations. The message here is that eventually incorrect experiments and theories will fall flat on their faces, and the good stuff will prevail. "Science takes care of itself," he said.

Meanwhile, the Texas A&M administration hailed the panel's report. In a prepared statement, provost Dean Gage said that after "conducting exhaustive hours of inquiries and reviewing much documentation and research data," the panel "found no evidence of scientific fraud or any other improprieties."

■ ROBERT POOL

Brown Gets Science Committee Post

In the biennial shakeup of congressional committee chairmanships, one of the most popular legislators among science policy cognoscenti has risen to the top. House Democrats picked Representative George E. Brown, Jr. (D–CA) to be chairman of the Science, Space and Technology Committee, replacing Representative Robert A. Roe (D–NJ) who has moved over to chair the Committee on Public Works and Transportation.

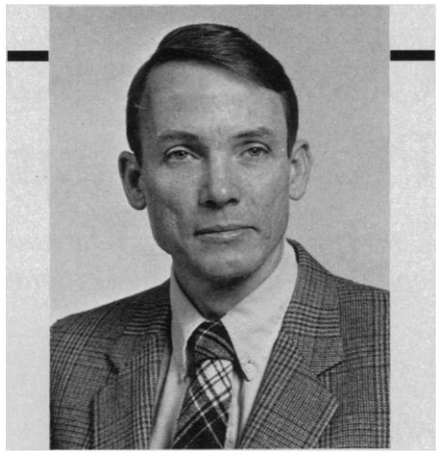
The science committee has broad authority over nearly every government science and technology program, so its chairman has considerable influence in shaping U.S. science policy. Brown has for years been an active player in several science issues, including space, the environment, and technology policy, and his elevation has been greeted warmly by scientific and academic organizations in Washington. He "is one of the few people in Congress who is truly comfortable with science," says Gerald Roschwalb of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges. Roschwalb says Brown brings a no-nonsense quality to his new post: "You don't get any romance from him about the beauty of science."

New directions. *Brown says a priority will be to get the space program on track.*

Brown has a degree in industrial physics from the University of California at Los Angeles. With a single, 2-year interruption he has been a member of the science committee since 1965. In an interview with *Science*, Brown said becoming chairman was one of his main professional goals. He says his priorities for the next Congress will be to help establish direction for the U.S. space program, to decide how to proceed with the Superconducting Super Collider, to develop alternatives to fossil fuel and nuclear power generation, and to find ways to improve U.S. science education. He also supports the Bush Administration's plans to double the National Science Foundation budget.

Brown was in line to become chairman of the space subcommittee before Roe's unexpected departure for the public works committee made the top spot available (*Science*, 30 November, p. 1202). He has not yet decided whether to take the space subcommittee chairmanship as well, or follow in Roe's footsteps by assuming the chair of the investigations and oversight subcommittee. None of the other subcommittee chair positions is likely to change.

■ JOSEPH PALCA



William Happer to Be DOE Research Chief?

Plagued first by controversy then by neglect as it went without a director for a year, the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Research may soon settle into a period of relative calm as it gets a new director. *Science* has learned that Energy Secretary James Watkins is likely to name as his new chief of research William Happer, Jr., a professor of physics at Princeton University.

Happer, 51, is an atomic physicist who has been advising the government on civilian and defense research programs for many years. He is already familiar with some of DOE's R&D programs, having served as chairman of the JASONS, a panel of academic scientists and engineers that advises the federal government on energy policy, defense matters, and other issues. He also chaired two National Research Council reviews of inertial confinement fusion.

DOE has not yet announced Happer's nomination, apparently because all the political reviews have not been completed. Happer, however, told *Science* he was looking forward to the job, despite the hard times that the Office of Energy Research is experiencing. One of Happer's first duties may be to bring a sense of stable leadership to basic energy research and the magnetic confinement fusion programs (see page 1501).

The last permanent director of the office, Robert O. Hunter, Jr., resigned in October 1989 after he had drawn fire for his attempts to overhaul the fusion program (*Science*, 20 October 1989, p. 319). Since then, deputy director James Decker has been standing in. Happer could start working at DOE as early as January, sources say, but officially he can't take control of the office until he is confirmed by the Senate. That's not likely to happen before February. ■ MARK CRAWFORD

Mark Crawford is a free-lance science writer.