

edited by RICHARD STONE

## The 7% Non-Solution

On Monday, the president's science adviser, John Gibbons, announced that academic R&D would grow by 7% in the president's budget (see p. 780)—proof the Administration cares deeply about university scientists. The next day, officials confessed the rate is only 1.1%, well below inflation. What happened? The new figure corrects a \$730 million mistake made by a clerk at NIH when compiling 1995 numbers, which produced an apparent rise of \$1 billion in academic spending in the proposed 1996 budget. "We goofed," admits a budget official for the Public Health Service.

## A Cooler Look at The IQ Controversy

As controversy simmers over the best seller *The Bell Curve*—and its thesis that the United States is becoming increasingly stratified by IQ—the American Psychological Association (APA) plans to enter the fray with a formal stand on the contentious subject of intelligence research and testing.

*The Bell Curve*, by the late Harvard psychologist Richard Herrnstein and political theorist Charles Murray, argues that the gap between the intellectual haves and have-nots is widening, and that blacks tend to be have-nots. Some 52 scholars signed a statement, published in the *Wall Street Journal* last December, which defended as "mainstream" the research cited in the book. But the book has been raked over the coals by many reviewers, who say IQ research is a hokey field

and that the authors' political agenda biased their conclusions.

When APA's science board met last November, says Emory psychologist Ulric Neisser, "we regretted that the APA doesn't have a statement on record on the scientific status of these issues." So the board asked Neisser to chair a 10-person panel to report on the subject. Nathan Brody of Wesleyan University says the panel intends to "address issues of intelligence much more broadly" than does the book and will "indicate areas of agreement and disagreement" among scientists. "Too many reviews have been written by people not terribly informed about the field of intelligence," he says. The panel plans to produce a report by May.

## States Offered Bigger R&D Role

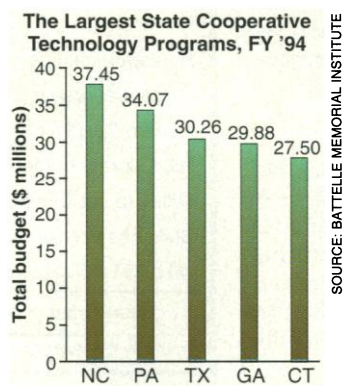
The Clinton Administration is hoping that a new task force on the participation of states in federal R&D programs will shore up support for technology spending, a key plank in its R&D platform.

"The time is right to re-examine our national science and technology system to create a stronger role for state and local efforts," says John Gibbons, the president's science adviser.

With federal technology programs out of favor in the new Congress, the Administration is hoping state initiatives will be more popular among Republi-

cans. This idea has surfaced periodically over the past 25 years: For instance, Gibbons' predecessor, Allan Bromley, created a short-lived council of local and state officials to advise federal agencies on science programs. Gibbons has asked the task force, which has yet to be appointed, to offer recommendations within 90 days on increased state involvement in federal R&D programs.

States are already active in



supporting advanced technologies, although their focus is usually on jobs rather than basic research. Last year states spent \$384 million on technology programs (see graph), according to statistics released by the Battelle Memorial Institute. That's up 22% from 1993, fueled by growing federal efforts such as the Technology Reinvestment Program. This and similar programs are under the gun, however, by Republicans looking to trim the deficit.

## Russian Parliament to Hear Soros Spy Charges

In Russia, giving away money seems to attract not just attention but suspicion—so much so that a foundation which has funneled more than \$100 million to Russian scientists is now fending off espionage allegations and bracing for a public inquiry. The Russian parliament is gearing up for a hearing on 20 February into the activities of the International Science Foundation (ISF), a fund set up by financier George Soros.

The inquiry is inspired in part by an article in the 10 January issue of Moscow's *Independent*. The paper published excerpts of what it claims is a report—produced by the Federal Counterintelligence Service (FCS)—that accuses ISF of engaging in "subversive" operations by using its grants program as a cover to buy rights to 3000 Russian technologies that are now "well under way into patenting in the United States."

Soros has denied the allegations, and Russian

Science Minister Boris Saltykov last month defended ISF's activities. But their rebuttal failed to satisfy Mikhail Burlakov, a member of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party, who demanded that the Duma—Russia's lower house of parliament—investigate ISF. In response, the Duma committees on Science, International Affairs, and Security scheduled a hearing.

But the inquiry may backfire on the security agency. According to Mikhail Glubokovsky, deputy chair of the science committee, the FCS "should bear ... financial responsibility" for attacking ISF. Glubokovsky says he wants to see the Duma punish FCS by transferring \$100 million—the amount of ISF aid to Russian science—from FCS's budget to the Ministry of Science's budget. FCS officials, who have refused to comment on the report, are expected to respond to this proposition and questions about their report at the hearing.

## AIDS Scientist Accused Of Double Dipping

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is investigating allegations aired by the *Miami Herald* that high-profile AIDS researcher Lionel Resnick improperly used a lab supported by federal research funds to do outside contract work, netting him at least \$250,000.

As the *Herald* reported on 3 February, Resnick resigned from posts at Mount Sinai Medical Center and the University of Miami after his billing practices came under scrutiny last year. The institutions began investigating Resnick, a virologist who has collaborated with leading AIDS researchers, after they noticed that he had requested that payments for work done at his Mount Sinai lab go to Vironc Inc., a business sharing his home address.

Resnick's attorney, Alan Kruger, acknowledged to *Science* that Resnick used his Mount Sinai lab—which received federal grants—to moonlight, for instance, by doing virology assays for drug companies. But Kruger asserts the story has been blown out of proportion over "an accounting issue": Resnick's misunderstanding of the government's direct cost reimbursement rules. "This isn't a guy who had a scheme to defraud anybody," Kruger says.

According to Kruger, Resnick has agreed to reimburse Mount Sinai for using lab staff there to do his outside work and has put \$500,000 into escrow to cover those costs, which are now being tallied by auditors. Joel Stocker, an attorney for Mount Sinai, confirms the center has reached an agreement with Resnick. "Our dispute with Dr. Resnick has been resolved," Stocker says.

However, *Science* has learned that the HHS inspector general is investigating Resnick, who received more than \$500,000 from the National Institutes of Health over the last 3 years. The U.S. Attorney's Office in Miami met with HHS investigators on 7 February; it has not launched an investigation or filed charges.