

# SCIENCE

# LETTERS

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## NAS Management of RERF

*Science* reported (M. Balter, News, 3 Feb., p. 611) that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has decided to remove the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) as the co-administrator of the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF) in Hiroshima-Nagasaki, Japan. As stated in that article, we are disappointed at DOE's decision and remain convinced of the Academy's qualifications to manage this activity, but we will help with an orderly transition to a new co-administrator.

*Science* reported that one of two main DOE concerns with the Academy management of the RERF was "NAS's high overhead costs in running RERF." We have analyzed our indirect charges for the RERF grant and take exception to the DOE view. In the current fiscal year, the rate approved by our cognizant agency is three-tenths of 1% (0.3%) of the total direct cost for RERF where we are essentially administering the "flow-through" of a large amount of funds for direct expenditures. More specifically, the Academy charges DOE a total of \$60,000 of indirect costs to pass through more than \$18 million of funds which provide the bulk of the U.S. share of the support of RERF.

In addition, our approved indirect cost rates for overhead and general and administrative (G&A) expenses are assessed against direct costs related to Academy employees, such as staff salaries, cost-of-living adjustments for American staff at RERF, and moving costs for American staff. These assessments amount to \$602,000 on direct expenditures of \$1,570,000 (primarily salaries and fringe benefits), or 38%.

Therefore total indirect costs charged to the project of \$662,000 on \$19,570,000 of direct expenditures amounts to an effective rate of 3.4%. In a period of years when essentially all of the increase in U.S. costs for the operation of RERF is due to the steadily increasing cost of buying yen, the Academy feels that it has been very cost-effective as the U.S. manager of this binational enterprise.

The second major concern of DOE, that the Academy is not equipped to closely align the work of RERF with U.S. universities, is also misplaced, in our opinion. We have substantively involved 77 universities, national laboratories, and teaching hospitals in RERF during our management. Moreover, the Academy manages the post-

doctoral and predoctoral fellowship programs for federal agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Institute for Standards and Technology, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and DOE.

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Recent reports (News, 3 Feb., p. 611; *ScienceScope*, 17 Feb., p. 951) and a letter to the editor (24 Feb., p. 1077) have questioned the motivation and process behind DOE's effort to seek an academic institutional grantee to replace NAS as the U.S. management support contractor for RERF. In light of DOE's past and current commitment to the success of RERF, we wish to correct the errors and misstatements in these articles.

For over a year, we have discussed with the nation's leading radiation scientists and former RERF directors the best ways to preserve the RERF mission despite increasing financial constraints and to leverage its unique capabilities and expertise to train a future generation of scientists. The paucity of researchers equipped to pursue questions about health and ionizing radiation is of great concern to the experts who were consulted and to DOE, whose responsibilities demand a commitment to further the understanding of the health impacts of radiation. The decision to open the RERF management contract to competition among universities was based solely on our desire to strengthen graduate training. DOE has no intention of influencing the RERF research agenda.

The contention that NAS is "uniquely qualified to oversee RERF" is overstated. Under the RERF charter, a binational group of scientific counselors, not NAS or DOE, develops the RERF scientific agenda. This arrangement will not change with a new grantee. The duties of NAS are to identify American staff scientists and candidates for Director and Scientific Counselor and to transfer DOE funds to RERF. For a new grantee, these duties will remain the same,

with the exception of transferring funds, a task that will be assumed by the U.S. Department of State in order to reduce overhead costs. Control of the research agenda and the allocation of funds will remain with the RERF Board of Directors.

In our negotiations and decisions, we have kept our process open and transparent. In December 1994, we informed NAS of our intent to seek a university grantee. We have done our best to keep all parties abreast of our intentions. Through our communication with the scientists, RERF officials, and the Japanese government, we have endeavored to ensure a smooth, constructive transition. We recognize that transition is painful. Many parties feel a responsibility to ensure the continued excellence, viability, and independence of RERF, including its staff and directors, the Japanese government, former and current NAS employees, the international scientific community, DOE, and, most important, the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We are committed to ensure that the personal lives of the researchers are not disrupted and that the work continues in an independent, productive manner.

We are confident that transfer of the administrative support grant to an independent American university will maintain the

appropriate intellectual and managerial distance between the work of RERF and DOE, and will continue to foster research of the highest quality and to encourage the development of a new generation of radiation scientists.

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### African Dinosaur Discoveries

The report by Paul C. Sereno *et al.* (14 Oct., p. 267) on African dinosaurs was valuable and informative, but contained a minor taxonomic error. The family-level name "Torvosauroida" is improper for the taxon that includes the two theropod families "Torvosauridae" and "Spinosauridae." Both names are validly formed and available, but "Spinosauridae" was proposed by Ernst Stromer in 1915, whereas "Torvosauridae" was coined by James A. Jensen in 1985. According to the 1985 International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (Article 36a), "a name established for a taxon at any rank

in the family group is deemed to be simultaneously established with the same author and date for taxa based upon the same name-bearing type (type genus) at other ranks in the family group, with appropriate mandatory change of suffix." Thus, even though the name "Spinosauroidea" (using the superfamilial suffix -oidea) has not yet (to my knowledge) explicitly been used in the literature, it has priority by 70 years over the name "Torvosauroida" whenever a name is required for a superfamily containing both families "Spinosauridae" and "Torvosauridae." The name "Torvosauroida" as used by Sereno *et al.* is thus a junior subjective synonym of "Spinosauroidea," the name that should have been used for that taxon.

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Sereno *et al.* describe interesting dinosaur material from the Lower Cretaceous of Niger, but do not adequately acknowledge the importance of what was previously known about the Cretaceous dinosaurs of Africa. Although the paper by Taquet (1) on the

There's only one way  
to purify peptides—  
with your eyes open.

