

firmed that it will be headed by Steven Briggs, a former biotech researcher at Pioneer Hi-Bred International in Johnston, Iowa, and will focus on plant genomics.

Observers are expecting a big payoff from both ventures. Somerville, who has seen the St. Louis group's business plan, notes that each of the 15 principal investigators will get 370 square meters of lab space: "That's pretty big." Indeed, he suggests the center could one day rival the John Innes Center in the United Kingdom, at 100 research groups the heavyweight among plant science institutes worldwide. Says Somerville, "I would call this stage one."

—JOCELYN KAISER

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

### Epidemiologist Named CDC Director

Jeffrey Koplan, an epidemiologist now working with a private company, has been chosen to head the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Donna Shalala, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, announced the choice 10 July at CDC's headquarters in Atlanta. The event was "something of a homecoming celebration," says attendee James Curran, public health school dean at Emory University, because Koplan has spent most of his career at CDC.



**Full circle.** Koplan spent 2 decades at CDC.

The CDC directorship has been vacant since February when the previous chief, David Satcher, left to become the U.S. Surgeon General under Shalala. Koplan will take charge of both CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry on 5 October and is declining comment until then. No Senate confirmation is required.

Koplan, 53, is currently president of Prudential Insurance Co.'s center for health care research in Atlanta, which studies the costs and outcomes of health services. Before taking this private-sector job, he spent 2 decades rising through the ranks at CDC—from field researcher in the Epidemic Intelligence Service to assistant surgeon general, becoming in 1989 the first director of CDC's national center for chronic disease prevention and health promotion. According to health researchers, Koplan played a key role in devising an AIDS monitoring network in 1982 to 1984 and led an initiative to prevent breast and cervical cancer in the 1980s.

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"He's a terrific choice," says Curran, who admires Koplan's professionalism and "scientific depth." Mohammad Akhter, director of the American Public Health Association in Washington, D.C., also says he's "delighted" with the selection, calling Koplan a practical leader who knows how to advance ideas through the bureaucracy.

Others are more cautious. Public health leader D. A. Henderson of Johns Hopkins University notes that, although Koplan has a great record and is "very capable," he will also need great leadership skills to reinvigorate CDC. Henderson believes CDC has become "parochial" and needs nudging to "open up" to outside ideas. Infectious diseases researcher Barry Bloom, recently named dean of Harvard University's School of Public Health, also notes that CDC has been slighted in recent federal budgets and needs a strong political champion. Koplan's ability in this area is untested, Bloom says.

—ELIOT MARSHALL

#### PHYSICS PUBLISHING

### Russian Academy to End AIP Journals Deal?

**MOSCOW**—The socialist principles of the Soviet era long forgotten, the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) is rapidly learning to play hardball in its dealings with the West. Over the past few months, the RAS has threatened to end an agreement with the American Institute of Physics (AIP), which currently translates and distributes English-language versions of several RAS physics journals, and instead produce the two most profitable journals in its own publishing company. During negotiations in Moscow at the end of last month, the academy told the AIP it could continue publishing the journals for just one more year if it increases the royalties it pays to RAS by 50%. Russian journal staff claim that an agreement was reached on those terms; AIP officials, when contacted by *Science*, declined to comment.

The move has dismayed some Russian researchers, who fear that without the international profile and publishing and distribution expertise of the AIP, these prestigious journals will soon wither. "As soon as AIP disappears from the Russian publishing market, competitiveness will disappear as well and the situation might grow much worse,"

says Alexei Starobinsky, an expert on gravitational theory and a corresponding member of the RAS. "Physicists will be extremely upset by this move," says Roald Sagdeev, a former head of Moscow's Institute of Space Research who is now a physics professor at the University of Maryland, College Park.

RAS officials say they are simply carrying out a resolution passed by the academy's presidium in 1992. The resolution created a new publishing company, dubbed MAIK Nauka, jointly owned by RAS and U.S.-based Pleades Publishing, and it stipulated that the translation and publication of all RAS scientific periodicals in English should be concentrated at MAIK Nauka. By this year, MAIK Nauka was publishing all but six of more than 80 RAS journals that are translated into English. Those six—the *Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics* (JETP), *JETP Letters*, *Physics of the Solid State*, *Semiconductors*, *Technical Physics*, and *Technical Physics Letters*—are all being published by AIP. An umbrella organization for a number of learned societies in the physical sciences and astronomy in the United States, AIP has been publishing English-language versions of Russian physics journals since 1955.

RAS officials apparently saw a chance to bring these remaining journals into the MAIK Nauka fold because the contracts for *JETP* and *JETP Letters* come up for renewal later this year, and the other four are due next year. As the renewal deadlines approached, RAS declared in a letter to AIP that they would not be renewed. "This is the fulfillment of the decision of the RAS presidium," RAS vice president and deputy head of the RAS Scientific Publishing Council, Rem Petrov, told *Science* in an interview prior to last month's negotiations.

RAS officials have also accused AIP of making excessive profits from the current arrangements. Petrov claims that the income from the sales of just one of the six journals—*JETP*—was \$1.69 million in 1996, of which \$303,000 was paid as royalties to authors and \$70,000, or 4% of sales, was transferred to RAS. If AIP insists on the contracts being renewed on the same terms, Petrov argues, AIP would continue to profit "at the expense of Russian intellectual property." AIP declined to comment on the negotiations, but AIP chief Marc Brodsky said before the Moscow talks that "we at AIP are proud of our productive and mutually beneficial relations with all our [Russian] colleagues, in-



**Coming home?** English versions may soon be published in Moscow.