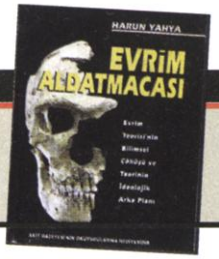

of his former professors, says Okamoto may not have been "socially mature enough" to seek advice on handling materials in his lab. Okamoto has told RIKEN officials that he did not bring any samples from the United States to Japan, let alone into the RIKEN labs. RIKEN is trying to trace the origin of all materials in Okamoto's lab; Ito says that, so far, it has not found any evidence of U.S. materials.

Ito and other RIKEN officials are particularly chagrined at the accusation that RIKEN acted as an agent of the Japanese government for economic espionage. "We have operated with extraordinary openness," he says. RIKEN conducts collaborative research projects with institutions throughout the world, Ito says, and nearly a quarter of its 245 researchers are non-Japanese. "I am seriously worried about this incident having an impact on RIKEN's image," he says.

–ELIOT MARSHALL AND DENNIS NORMILE

THE POSTGENOMIC ERA

Windfall for European Data Bank

PARIS—The European Union has come to the rescue of the continent's premier repository of DNA and protein sequence information. As *Science* went to press, the E.U. was preparing to announce that it would help provide a roughly 50% boost in the $11 million annual budget of the European Bioinformatics Institute (EBI). The cash injection, to come over the next 3 years, will fund four new projects, including repositories of data from "gene chips" and protein-protein interactions. These projects, in turn, will help provide much-needed operating funds for EBI.

This is the second major piece of good news that the financially troubled EBI, located near Cambridge, U.K., has received in the past 6 months. Last December, the governing council of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, Germany—EBI's parent organization—agreed to bail out the institute after E.U. officials had decided to stop funding routine operating costs for a number of European research centers (*Science*, 5 November 1999, p. 1058, and 8 December 2000, p. 1869). "This is a day for celebration," says EBI co-director Graham Cameron. "It is the biggest dollop of money ever put into [European] bioinformatics infrastructure."

The groundwork for the E.U.'s generosity was laid last November, when Philippe Busquin, research commissioner at the European Commission—the E.U.'s executive wing—earmarked $22 million for genome projects involving databases and animal disease models. This week's announcement that a significant chunk of these funds will go to the EBI represents a partial relaxation of spending rules that some scientists feel are too stringent. "The struggle has been to fund research proposals that are not directly linked to the simple maintenance of databases," explains Carlos Martinez-Riera of the research directorate. Indeed, both E.U. and EBI officials stress that the money was awarded only after the EBI and other partners submitted proposals for new programs rather than for ongoing costs. Although the philosophy behind the funding rules has not changed, Martinez-Riera says, the new EBI funding in practice will help sustain the institute. "We have met each other in the middle," he says.

The E.U. money will fund four new projects: a database for information derived from "DNA arrays," which monitor the expression of thousands of genes at once; a data bank of three-dimensional protein structures; a database of biochemical interactions between proteins; and a project to integrate several existing EBI databases so that researchers can conduct more sweeping searches. The EBI, slated to receive $11.3 million for these projects over the next 3 years, will carry them out in collaboration with 30 other labs in 11 European countries. EBI's partners will share an additional $5.7 million in E.U. funding.

"This kind of science creates its record in electronic form," says Cameron. The E.U. funds, he says, should better position EBI to "carry on its crucial role as a custodian of this record."

–MICHAEL BALTER

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) CHRISTINE NESBITT/AP; DOUG YOUNG/EMBL

Halcyon days. After months of uncertainty, the European Bioinformatics Institute is at last on firm financial footing.

CLIMATE CHANGE

17 National Academies Endorse Kyoto

As the Bush Administration dithers over what it might do to address global warming, 17 national academies of science decided to cut to the chase in an editorial in this week's *Science*. Affirming the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) conclusion that human activities are warming the planet, the statement urges those with "doubts"—by implication, the United States—to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which would impose binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions by industrialized countries (see p. 1261). Robert May, president of the Royal Society of the United Kingdom, which organized the statement, says it was partly provoked by Bush's recent rejection of the Kyoto treaty, along with resistance to the Kyoto terms from countries such as Australia.

Advocate. Robert May helped organize the collective statement.

Notably absent from the list of signers is the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS). It was invited to sign, but the NAS board felt it could not endorse a document it did not help draft on a few days' notice, says F. Sherwood Rowland, NAS foreign secretary. According to several sources, the statement's explicit backing for the Kyoto Protocol was a problem. The protocol is "regulatory, not science," Rowland says. The academy, moreover, is conducting its own expedited review of the IPCC report and did not want to be seen to prejudge the outcome.