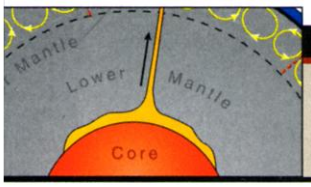


erations vice president for Bode Technology Group in Springfield, Virginia. As evidence, he cites the successful identification of remains found in Vietnam 30 years after the war.

Each match from the World Trade Center disaster made by the private labs will be verified by the medical examiner's lab. Police then will inform families in person. Shaler says he expects the entire effort to take a year. At this stage, cost is hard to estimate, says Shaler, who notes that the city and state can draw on relief funds appropriated by Congress.

The huge task will put DNA identification in the public spotlight. Forensic scientists say they have been hampered in the past several years by lack of staff, advanced equipment, and funding. New York City alone, for example, has 10,000 samples from alleged rapes yet to be processed. The Justice Department this summer proposed spending $30 million over the next 18 months to begin resolving the national backlog. Researchers are quietly hoping that their success in identifying the disaster victims will prove their worth and bring needed resources to their field. –ANDREW LAWLER

THE SOVIET LEGACY

Hoping Software Will Help Keep the Peace

Hundreds of Russian nuclear scientists may soon find themselves writing commercial software in a novel bid to keep their weapons expertise from falling into the wrong hands. The deal, in the works for months, may herald other initiatives aimed at blocking weapons proliferation in the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks.

The arrangement—announced in Washington, D.C., last week by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy in Moscow, and their Russian corporate partner—is salve for a bruised U.S. nonproliferation effort. In April, the Bush Administration proposed cutting $100 million from a raft of DOE programs to improve nuclear security in Russia, from securing plutonium stockpiles against potential smugglers to helping nuclear physicists find peaceful work (*Science*, 1 June, p. 1632). Last month's events, however, appear to have built stronger support for U.S. nonproliferation efforts. The attacks "crystallized the need to intensify cooperation" to keep weapons expertise out of terrorists' hands, says U.S. Representative Curt Weldon (R–PA), an expert on Russia.

A Russian company, LUXOFT, along with its U.S. partner CTG Inc., will take the lead in retraining the scientists, whose salaries will be paid by a $500,000 grant from the DOE's Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention (IPP) program. Previous projects in the $25-million-a-year IPP have typically paired U.S. companies directly with Russian defense scientists. Nevertheless, says DOE's Steven K. Black, turning weapons scientists into computer programmers "epitomizes the goal of the IPP."

The details of the Kurchatov project, which were being finalized in Moscow on 11 September as the World Trade Center and the Pentagon burned, may also help stem a decade-long decline at the institute. Its 5000 scientists, half the peak number from the 1980s, are seriously underpaid, says Boris Stavisski, a nuclear physicist who heads the Kurchatov Technopark, which seeks to commercialize the institute's research. Although fewer than two dozen scientists will be involved in the project's first phase, LUXOFT managing director Dmitry Loschinin says his firm expects to retrain 150 scientists over the next 2 years and perhaps 500 by 2006. Stavisski concedes that it will be difficult to steer some older scientists onto a new path, while others worry that such programs may fail to reach the crème of the weaponeers because the Russian government isn't ready to have its finest weapons designers shifted to civilian work.

CREDIT: IVAN SEKRETAREV/AP

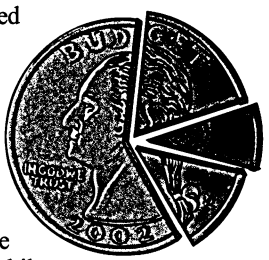
Containment. New project will retrain 150 scientists from the Kurchatov Institute (above) over the next 2 years.

Even so, a new day may soon dawn for many other former Soviet defense experts. The Bush Administration is expected to propose several initiatives to expand R&D collaboration and nonproliferation programs at a summit meeting next month in Moscow between President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin. "It's a new era in our relationship," says Weldon, one that requires "a concerted effort to show Russian scientists that there are opportunities outside of weapons development."

–ROBERT KOENIG

BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

First House Vote Good For NIH Budget



U.S. biomedical research spending appears headed for another big boost. Congress last week took the first step toward finalizing a 2002 budget for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) when a House subcommittee approved a 12%, $2.5 billion increase, to $22.5 billion, for core research programs. The panel also urged NIH to forge ahead with controversial human stem cell research, rebuffed a White House proposal to trim spending at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and boosted antibioterrorism budgets.

Biomedical groups are welcoming the NIH increase, although it falls almost $1 billion short of the amount needed to keep the agency on track to double its budget by 2003. The 2002 fiscal year began on 1 October, but Congress has given itself until the middle of the month to complete work on the 13 spending bills that direct U.S. government spending, with further extensions likely if needed.

NIH's raise was part of a larger $123.1 billion spending bill approved on 3 October by a House Appropriations Committee subpanel. Details were not available as *Science* went to press, but lobbyists and congressional aides say the bill, which also funds labor, education, and social welfare programs, provides roughly the amount for NIH basic research requested by President George W.