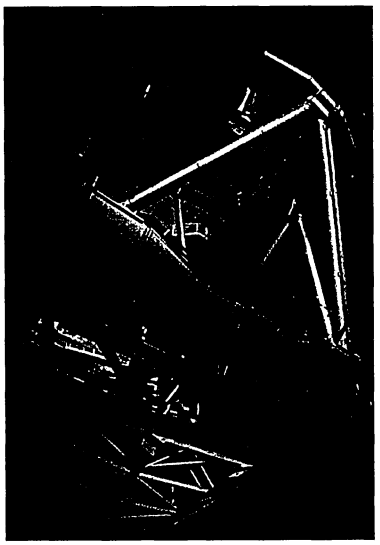
But Britain isn't getting a free ride. In addition to its regular ESO subscription, which is linked to national income, Britain is paying what ESO director-general Catherine Cesarsky calls an "entrance fee" of $110 million, "equivalent to what they would have paid if they had been building the VLT with us," she says. Britain had little choice. According to Ian Halliday, chief executive of the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC), studies showed that without more access to 8-meter telescopes, Britain would rapidly slide down the astronomy league table, from around second place to perhaps 15th.

In the 1950s, the U.K. was involved in early discussions with its European neighbors about building a Southern Hemisphere observatory. But Britain pulled out and joined Australia in building the highly successful Anglo-Australian Observatory. Five other nations went on to found ESO in 1962. Membership now stands at nine, and the organization has headquarters outside Munich and two observing sites in Chile.



Join the club. Britain wants access to ESO's Very Large Telescope in Chile.

Although British astronomers already have access to the twin 8-meter Gemini Observatory telescopes in Hawaii and Chile, built with the United States and several other countries, they argued for more. The government has pitched in $14 million a year for 10 years toward Britain's ESO membership. But to make up the rest of the entrance fee and subscription, PPARC has to trim existing facilities to find another $7 million annually from the middle of the decade. "That, of course, is the difficult bit," says Halliday.

The aging Jodrell Bank radio observatory near Manchester, U.K., had been an expected casualty, but it was reprieved when three universities and a local development agency offered to upgrade the telescope network based around it. Perhaps the biggest upset will be a two-thirds reduction in funds for the Anglo-Australian Observatory. Cuts will also be made at the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope and the U.K. Infrared Telescope, both in Hawaii, and the Isaac Newton group of telescopes in the Canary Islands. "It's all heartrending for the astronomers ... these are instruments they've been using for 10, 20 years," says Halliday.

In addition to the money these cuts will raise, Britain will pay part of the package in kind by donating a new telescope at Paranal. VISTA, a 4-meter infrared survey telescope, is currently under construction by a consortium of British universities. It will work in tandem with an optical scope now being installed by ESO. "It was something we knew we were interested in having," says Cesarsky.

The injection of British cash comes at just the right time to finance ESO's role in the Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA), says Cesarsky. ALMA is a 64-strong array of 12-meter radio telescopes that will produce millimeter-wavelength images of young galaxies 10 times as crisp as images from the Hubble Space Telescope. Negotiations are under way with the United States and Japan, so ESO will have to come up with some money soon. With Britain conveniently solving that problem, existing members are not likely to complain about Britain's late entry to the VLT show. "This is really done in a spirit of European collaboration," says Cesarsky. **–ANDREW WATSON**

Andrew Watson is a writer in Norwich, U.K.

CREDITS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) ESO; SUSAN WALSH/AP

NIH APPOINTMENT

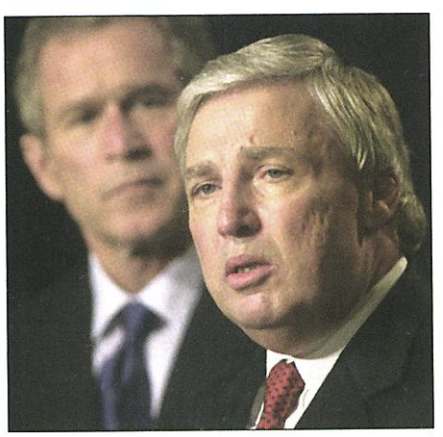
Texas Oncologist Gets Cancer Institute Post

President George W. Bush last week named a prostate cancer researcher from his home state of Texas to head the $4 billion National Cancer Institute (NCI), the largest institute of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The appointment of Andrew C. von Eschenbach, a urologic surgeon at the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, helps fill a leadership void at NIH, which currently lacks a permanent director and chiefs for six of its institutes.

Von Eschenbach, 60, directs M. D. Anderson's genitourinary cancer center and its prostate cancer research. He has also been heavily involved with cancer advocacy groups such as the American Cancer Society, from which he just stepped down as president-elect. And he has twice battled cancer himself: melanoma in 1989 and prostate cancer 2 years ago. "My passion has been to further the basic science agenda" at M. D. Anderson, von Eschenbach told *Science*. He also wants to speed the transfer of new findings into clinical practice: "I believe strongly that it's a continuum." Von Eschenbach says he thinks his wide-ranging background, from researcher to survivor, made him attractive. "They were looking for people who could communicate and put their shoulder to the wheel, and I was one of those people," he says.

Von Eschenbach's appointment had been rumored for several weeks (*Science*, 2 November, p. 973). One of his strongest backers is M. D. Anderson president John Mendelsohn, who was at one point approached about the NIH directorship but declined. The Bush family knows both researchers through their devoted support for the cancer center.

Von Eschenbach succeeds Richard Klausner, who left to head the new private Case Institute of Health, Science, and Technology in October. Klausner is credited with revamping NCI's administration and promoting a molecular approach to cancer during an aggressive and high-profile 6-year stint. "I'm sure [von Eschenbach] swallowed once or twice" when he was offered the post, says cancer re-



President's pick. Fellow Texan Andrew von Eschenbach heads to NCI.

searcher John Niederhuber of the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Colleagues say von Eschenbach's range of experience makes him ideal for the position. Robert Young, president of Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, says that von Eschenbach "is deeply committed to investigator-initiated research" and brings "as much involvement with advocacy and surveillance groups as anybody who has led NCI in the past." Cancer biologist Bert Vogelstein of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, who has collaborated on two studies with von Eschenbach, says the new NCI director has "a keen appreciation of the value and potential of basic research" in understanding the origins of cancer.

This range of experience feeds into his interest in fostering collaborations to battle cancer. At the national level, he has worked to help increase patient access to cancer data and treatments; at M. D. Anderson, he oversaw a venture with drug companies to develop protease inhibitors for treating prostate cancer. Von Eschenbach is expected to be on the job in early January; his appointment does not require approval by the Senate.

–JOCELYN KAISER

HARVARD DISAPPEARANCE

Lab's Fate Uncertain As Search Continues

Tom Cech says he has been thinking about Don Wiley "hourly" ever since the Harvard biochemist vanished last month. As president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), Cech has posted a $15,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the baffling disappearance of his longtime scientific colleague, whose rental car was found at 4 a.m. on 16 November on a 2.9-kilometer-long bridge across the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee. But Cech is also burdened with the knowledge that soon he may have to terminate funding of the HHMI investigator, a step that will disrupt the lives of some two dozen young scientists in Wiley's lab.

Police are still investigating the disappearance of the 57-year-old Wiley, a structural biologist who won the Lasker Prize for exploring how the body fights infections. The car was found several hours after he left a dinner with the advisory board of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. There are no indications of foul play, and Wiley's colleagues can't believe that he would have committed suicide. Harvard Police Chief Francis "Bud" Riley, who is in close contact with the Memphis police and the FBI, concedes that he has no idea what happened to Wiley. But he visits the Wiley lab periodically to keep the team apprised of the latest developments.

In addition to posting the $15,000 reward, HHMI has provided financial support to Wiley's family and dispatched its chief scientific officer, James Gavin, to meet with Wiley's lab. It even offered to hire a private investigator, which Harvard authorities declined. Individual pledges from Wiley's friends and colleagues have enabled Harvard and St. Jude's to post a separate $10,000 reward.

Friends and former students around the world praise Wiley as a brilliant and energetic researcher. "Don has had an incredible impact," says Lawrence Shapiro, a structural biologist at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. "He was the guy [who] everybody wanted to be." His vibrant personality created a collegial and productive lab, says biophysicist Brian Baker, who left Wiley's lab in August to take a job at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. "His childlike enthusiasm toward science infected the whole lab."

Harvard biochemist Steven Harrison, who shares laboratory space and some students with Wiley but works on different projects, has taken on the overwhelming task of keeping his colleague's lab afloat. Harrison admits that work on the structure of viruses and human immune system proteins has been proceeding more "fitfully than usual." But day-to-day operations have resumed, he says, and regular lab meetings were scheduled to restart this week.

CREDIT: JON CHASE/HARVARD UNIVERSITY NEWS OFFICE

Missing. Don Wiley's research focuses on the structures of viruses and immune system proteins.

HHMI, which has continued funding the Wiley lab, has a policy of speedy terminations when an investigator dies. "It is irresponsible to keep labs open without mentors on an ongoing basis," says Cech. HHMI will discuss the situation next month if Wiley does not reappear. Harrison says he has already met with lab members individually to review their "research and career goals." Cech says that HHMI will help them find new scientific homes should that be necessary.

HHMI does not dis-

ScienceScope

Budget Strings *Science* has learned that the National Science Foundation (NSF) is slated to get an increase of 4% to 5% in the president's upcoming budget request for 2003. That's pretty good during a war, observers say. But the money comes with some strings attached.

The biggest flap surrounds the White House's plan to transfer $121 million from four other agencies (*Science*, 7 December, p. 2066). Supporters of three Smithsonian Institution centers are howling the loudest about a shift of $35 million. But three other programs also take a hit: $19 million from the Environmental Protection Agency's Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program of environmental grants and graduate fellowships; $10 million from hydrology programs at the U.S. Geological Survey, and $57 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant program. The White House also wants to add $60 million to a math and science education partnerships program that will debut in 2002 with $160 million. But NSF may be forced to trim other programs.

International Ire European, Japanese, and Canadian officials blasted NASA last week for unilaterally scaling back plans for the international space station. At a 6 December NASA advisory group meeting in Washington, D.C., the partners rejected a U.S. money-saving move to trim the station's crew from six to three. "Totally unacceptable," said J. Feustel-Büechl of the European Space Agency. The Europeans plan to write a protest letter to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Meanwhile, NASA-Administrator-to-Be Sean O'Keefe said at his 7 December Senate confirmation hearing that it is his "fondest hope" to expand the station's crew. But soaring costs in the station and other programs are forcing NASA to "ride the crest of a wave we don't fully control."

Looking Up The European Union's (E.U.'s) Council of Research Ministers, meeting in Brussels on 10 December, has approved a $15.6 billion science budget for 2002–06—a 17% overall increase over the previous 4-year period. The Sixth Framework Program will include support for three new research areas: health-related research in genomics and biotech ($1.9 billion), nanotechnology ($1.2 billion), and food safety ($609 million). Andrea Dahman, spokesperson for E.U. research commissioner Philippe Busquin, expects the plan to win final approval soon from the European Parliament and the E.U.'s finance ministers. "We don't expect any major hiccups," she says.