Pollack To Head State Science Office

Science photo

Herman Pollack

The latest chapter in the relationship between the State Department and the scientific community ended 14 July with the elevation of Herman Pollack to the directorship of the Department's Office of International Scientific and Technological Affairs.

Pollack, a career administrator with the Department, had been heading the office in an acting capacity since January 1965 while repeated efforts were unsuccessfully made to engage a scientific luminary for the post. There is general agreement that, during that period, the office gained greatly in stability and in effectiveness as a means for bringing scientific and technological expertise into foreign policy affairs. But there is also little doubt that many elder statesmen of science, though disdaining the post themselves, are not altogether pleased to find it in the hands of a nonscientist.

Since the Department set up the office, in 1951, on the recommendation of a high-level committee of scientists, the scientific community has tended to think of it as its own, and it still does, though the office at times has declined to near-extinction. Nevertheless, though the Department elevated the directorship to the protocol equivalent of assistant secretary (third highest in the State hierarchy) as an inducement for a senior scientist to take the job, none was forthcoming. The reasons are complex, but common to many rejections was the feeling that Secretary of State Dean Rusk does not take science or scientists as seriously a many scientists do. (A physical scientist who once occupied the post has lamented that the Secretary did not accord his views on the political wisdom of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam much weight.)

Among scientists concerned with international affairs, it is admitted, though sometimes grudgingly, that Pollack has done an outstanding job, and that the office is likely to improve still further now that he is free of the uncertainties of an acting appointment.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of City College, Pollack holds a master's degree in international relations from George Washington University. He joined the State Department in 1946 and served as director of the Management Staff and deputy assistant secretary of personnel before joining the science office as deputy director in 1964.

Newly appointed to serve as deputy director was J. Wallace Joyce, who served under Pollack as acting deputy director. Joyce holds an engineering degree and doctorate from Johns Hopkins University and formerly worked on international scientific programs at the National Science Foundation. In 1964 he was honored by the American Geophysical Union for his leadership in international geophysics cooperation.

The role and potential of the office in the fuzzily defined relationship between science, technology, and foreign policy are a matter of some debate (see E. B. Skolnikoff, *Science*, 25 Nov. 1966). But in the words of the State Department, the job of the office includes providing assistance "to the Secretary in his considerations of scientific and technological factors affecting foreign policy." One of the major activities is the scientific attaché program, under which some 20 attachés have been posted at major U.S. embassies.

—D.S.G.

the demonstration given the American people certainly that the Department of Justice and most assuredly the Congress is determined to eliminate this rat-infested area in this country."

The bill that emerged from Rivers' committee bore the marks of this anger. It required that the cases of draft evaders be given priority by the Justice Department. It struck the Supreme Being clause from the section on Conscientious Objection in an attempt to narrow the definition of C.O. status. It eliminated Justice Department hearings for C.O. applicants who receive adverse decisions from local boards. Apparently in the same mood, the committee curbed exemptions for doctors in the Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration, or the Office of Economic Opportunity (see box).

Yet, Rivers' bill did not necessarily block most of the Administration's major reforms. The crucial setback came in the conference called to reconcile the House and Senate bills. The House Committee had opposed a lottery until it saw a concrete plan from the Administration, which had simply asked for authority to establish the new system. Consequently, the committee had required that the President give Congress 60 days to disapprove of the lottery before putting it to use. The restriction, though unwanted by the Administration, was not necessarily crippling: a disapproving resolution would have to pass both branches, and the Senate, which was more friendly to the lottery, would probably not go along. But the conference replaced the 60-day veto with an absolute ban against a lottery until new legislation had passed both houses. The change, surprisingly, was made at the urging of Sen. Richard Russell (D–Ga.), the bill's Senate manager, who disliked Congressional vetos. As he told the Senate: "I am well aware that there are some circumstances in which the so-called Congressional veto is applicable, but I do not like to extend this practice generally."

Of such idiosyncrasies is history made. The conference bill—which cleared both Houses, but not without a lengthy floor debate in the Senate —apparently destroyed the Administration's plans to announce a shift to the 19- and 20-year-old pool. Without a lottery, the Defense Department thought there were too many problems. The Administration will introduce a lottery next session.

What happened to the reformers