

reservations about deployment. One of the ABM opponents who made the greatest impression on the committee members was Panofsky who argued that "it is almost unimaginable that our deterrence can be endangered by 1975 through a Soviet first strike capability; therefore a case for urgency for deploying ABM to protect our retaliatory forces cannot be made."

In the past, senators have obediently accepted the evaluations of Defense Department officials and scientists. Now, outside scientists are providing the information and ideas that Congress needs in order to evaluate and criticize the ABM deployment. The support of these scientists and weapons experts has emboldened senators to tackle the Defense Department in a way that

they have previously hesitated to do. Whether or not the opponents are actually able to stop the Safeguard ABM, scientists and senators are likely to be pleased enough by the success of their newfound working relationship to extend their examination to other Administration requests for the development and deployment of new weapons systems.—BRYCE NELSON

House Panel Kind to NSF Budget but Trims Some Programs

The National Science Foundation has emerged relatively unharmed from the first authorization hearings ever held on the agency's annual budget. Last week the House Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Development, chaired by Representative Emilio Q. Daddario (D-Conn.), announced that it had cut NSF's budget request for fiscal year 1970 by some \$9 million, or less than 2 percent of the amount requested. In the opinion of Leland J. Haworth, NSF director, "the overall reduction in funds is not severe." In fact, Haworth told *Science*: "We are pleased with the success of the authorization hearings and feel that Mr. Daddario and his subcommittee have considered our proposals with sympathy and understanding." But NSF officials could not become euphoric over this initial success, for their budget faces still tougher hurdles ahead.

The Daddario subcommittee's biggest single cut—totaling \$4 million—was imposed on virtually the only significant new program in what NSF officials have otherwise described as "pretty much a standstill budget." NSF had sought \$10 million to support interdisciplinary academic groups in the performance of research, both basic and applied, on problems relevant to society, but the subcommittee chopped this down to \$6 million, a cut of 40 percent. Ironically, the interdisciplinary program was devised, in part, to carry out the congressional mandate in last year's NSF reorganization act, which specifically authorized NSF to support both the social sciences and applied research. The interdisciplinary program also marks an important departure from past NSF timidity over supporting research in touchy areas. As Philip Handler, chairman of NSF's National Science Board, told the subcommittee:

"When the Science Foundation first began to think in terms of the possible mode of support of the social sciences, it erected for itself a set of taboos. The Science Foundation wasn't sure of itself, it didn't feel strong, it wasn't sure it could defend [itself against] the wrath that might fall upon it for breaking such taboos. Subjects like sex, religion, ethnic voting behavior, anything that had an air of controversy about it, if the results were uncomfortable, were just simply excluded from consideration. . . . But I think we have crossed that bridge now. . . . We like to support the social sciences as vigorously as the people in the field have the talent to permit."

Despite NSF's newfound courage and seeming desire to comply with congressional wishes, the subcommittee

concluded that NSF's interdisciplinary program was too ambitious. The subcommittee's action does not seem to reflect any bias against the social sciences, though at least one key member, Representative James G. Fulton (R-Pa.), has stated that NSF should stick to supporting the natural sciences and keep out of such touchy problems as "integration of the schools." Rather, the subcommittee seems to have concluded that neither NSF nor the universities could effectively use \$10 million on such research in the coming fiscal year. As Daddario told NSF officials: "They [the universities] are groping; you are groping; and you are kind of groping together."

NSF officials profess to be happy that the subcommittee approved the concept of the program and do not seem overly concerned about the size of the cut. As Haworth expressed it: "We are pleased that the proposed new program for interdisciplinary research has been endorsed for significant funding."

The Daddario subcommittee imposed two other major cuts on NSF by requiring that two "big science" construction projects be deferred. The subcommittee declined to authorize \$3.3 million to resurface the radio-telescope at Arecibo, Puerto Rico, which is in the process of being transferred from Pentagon funding to the NSF. Some subcommittee members were concerned that the Pentagon, as a result of its own budget problem, is "palming off" too many research projects on NSF, but the subcommittee's action seems to have been motivated primarily by a desire to have the next NSF director establish priorities for large-scale astronomy projects. The subcommittee also declined to authorize \$2 million to build a new oceanographic research vessel. In both cases, Haworth said he was "disappointed" at the subcommittee's action.

The NSF budget still has several more hurdles to clear. Authorization hearings were scheduled to start in the Senate this week, and the appropriations committees in both the House and the Senate must still be heard from. Last year Congress cut an amazing \$100 million from NSF's budget request of \$500 million. This year NSF has again requested \$500 million in new appropriations, and Foundation officials are keeping their fingers crossed that Congress will treat the request more kindly. However, it seems likely that Congress, no matter how kindly it handles NSF appropriations, will again impose a spending ceiling on the Administration, an action which caused considerable grief among NSF grantees last year.—PHILIP M. BOFFEY