

not, even though India believes otherwise. "It is widely recognized that in taking its present position, the Indian government is attempting to blackmail the United States with its threat to extract plutonium from supplies of . . . spent fuel if we do not capitulate and send them still more. . . . We should assert our rights." Richard Betts, a policy analyst at the Brookings Institution, suggests that the question be put before the World Court. "If adjudication by the Court is infeasible, unrealistic, or undesirable, then I believe the United States should make the best of a bad situation and allow the shipment to proceed." Betts adds that refusal "will inflame Indian nationalism and enhance the appeal of arguments that India needs nuclear weapons to show it is not a pawn of arrogant superpowers."

Others are inclined to feel the time is ripe for a firm stand. Henry Rowen, a Stanford economist and non-proliferation expert, describes the State Department position as "a kind of nuclear appeasement." He dismisses its concern that the Soviet Union might fill U.S. shoes. "This might be a better alternative from our standpoint. The Soviet Union record, although spotty, has been better than ours in controlling its nuclear exports. For instance, it requires the return of spent fuel from its customers." Rowen suggests that the United States consider shipping the fuel only if the Indians agree to return the spent material they already have—what he calls "a return of the hostage."

Thus far, a resolution of disapproval has attracted 65 cosponsors in the House, including most members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Soviet Anthrax Explanation Is Debunked

A House intelligence subcommittee says it has seen hard evidence that an outbreak of anthrax in Sverdlovsk, in the Soviet Union, last year was primarily due to inhalation of anthrax spores. The evidence supports U.S. suspicions that the Soviets were cultivating anthrax bacteria in violation of a treaty barring germ warfare production (*Science*, 4 April). The Soviets have claimed the epidemic was due to ingestion of anthrax-tainted meat, an explanation the subcommittee now

terms "incomplete at best, and at worst a fabrication."

The evidence, disclosed to the congressmen in private by U.S. intelligence agencies, is tied to the symptoms of the hundreds of Soviet citizens who fell ill in the Sverdlovsk region, or based on autopsy data from those who died. The subcommittee says the symptoms were those caused by inhalation of anthrax spores: general fatigue and a low-grade fever within a few days of exposure, followed by respiratory infection which improves slightly and then worsens to include swelling of the chest and neck, discoloration, and a rasping of the throat. Death occurs within a day after the symptoms become acute. Gastrointestinal anthrax, such as might be caused by infected meat, is characterized in contrast by nausea, vomiting, pain, and diarrhea.

U.S. intelligence agencies uncovered what the subcommittee calls "one last bit of decisive evidence" about the symptoms after more than 6 months of investigation. Previously there had been some dissension among the analysts over the seriousness of the incident or the sufficiency of the proof.

Subcommittee chairman Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) noted in releasing the report that inhalation anthrax can occur naturally only if spores are dislodged from sheep wool during shearing: "So when you have information that confirms numerous deaths in an urban area from inhalation anthrax, you know that . . . there was a man-made concentration of spores that got into the air—or else the Soviets have a well-camouflaged sheep-shearing operation." According to Mark Popovsky, a Soviet emigrant with friends in the immediate region, the anthrax spores were actually released after an explosion at Military Compound 19 in Sverdlovsk, long suspected by U.S. spies of being a germ warfare factory.

The subcommittee says the Soviets may be in violation of the treaty's provision on consultation and cooperation, simply because they are not being more frank. Congress has already passed a resolution saying that if the Soviets persist in their story about tainted meat the United States should protest at the United Nations.

The subcommittee suggests it is time to do this now, but the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) holds out hope for a better U.S.S.R. re-

sponse. "It was decidedly unhelpful to put out this report while we are still involved in negotiations," says an ACDA spokesman. The agency has expressed regret that the matter ever became public in the first place, claiming that the Soviets might be more contrite now if it had all been handled through private diplomatic channels. Aspin speculates it was the Carter Administration itself that organized the leaks in order "to make political capital out of the incident" in the wake of the Soviets' Afghanistan invasion.

ACDA holds out the possibility of further Soviet explanation, but in Congress it is the season to jump to conclusions. Representatives John Ashbrook (R-Ohio) and Bill Young (R-Fla.) say the episode "has revealed once again that the Soviet Union cannot be trusted to honor agreements or treaties." Even Aspin, who is usually a liberal on matters involving Soviet relations but who faces a tough reelection campaign, says that the evidence of cheating is "fairly good" and that "the future of arms control hangs in the balance until we get a full, accurate account." The SALT and underground nuclear test ban treaties both rely in part on Soviet goodwill, he notes, as did the germ warfare treaty. None can be independently verified in full. "It may be that the Soviets have a higher tolerance for risk than we thought," Aspin says. "It may be that our political system is unable to respond to incidents like Sverdlovsk in a way the Soviets take seriously."

New NSF Directors

President Carter has nominated two experts in electrical engineering to serve as director and deputy director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). John B. Slaughter, 46, currently academic vice president and provost of Washington State University, has been nominated as director to succeed Richard C. Atkinson. Slaughter, who received his doctorate in engineering physics, will be the first black to head NSF. Previously he served as an NSF assistant director of astronomical, atmospheric, earth and ocean sciences.

Donald N. Langenberg, 48, formerly vice provost for graduate studies and research at the University of Pennsylvania, has been confirmed as deputy director.

—R. Jeffrey Smith—