

about cost overruns and budget problems in NASA's space science programs, and a full-scale review of the space agency's priorities can be expected when the Administration finally appoints a new chief for NASA.

● Funding for nuclear and high-energy physics by the Department of Energy (DOE) would be moderately reduced, leading to "a temporary stretch-out of new construction, a general decrease in operating level and utilization, a general reduction in the level of experimentation for medium energy nuclear physics, nuclear medicine and life sciences, and deferrals of new accelerator construction at universities."

In spite of cries of protest from some scientists, the black book proposals for the National Science Foundation (NSF) have not been changed. NSF's science education, international, women's, and minorities programs are scheduled for radical surgery. Support for the social and behavioral sciences would be sharply reduced, while support for the physical sciences and engineering would be left untouched. A \$75 million program to upgrade scientific instruments at colleges and universities would be deferred, as would plans to build a 25-m telescope in Hawaii.

Proposals to slash DOE's solar energy and energy conservation programs also remain unchanged. The Reagan budget calls for reductions of 60 percent and 75 percent, respectively, from the Carter Administration's proposals for these programs in FY 1982. Direct federal support for demonstration projects to produce synthetic fuels from coal, shale, and biomass, would also be cut back severely.

Conspicuously absent from the budget proposals submitted last week were DOE's nuclear energy programs. These were still under negotiation when the economic message was sent to Congress, but there are indications that some programs will be favored with large increases.

Also missing were detailed proposals for the Department of Defense, although Reagan promised to add \$7.2 billion to the defense budget in FY 1982 and to increase the military's share of the budget from 24 percent this year to 32 percent in 1984.

Reagan's tax proposals, which face a tough trial on Capitol Hill, would permit corporations to write off expenditures on R&D equipment in 3 years, and these expenditures would be eligible for an investment tax credit of 6 percent instead of the 3.33 percent allowed under current laws.

Other machinery and equipment could be written off in 5 years under Reagan's proposals, with half the value deductible in the first 2 years. This would greatly accelerate the existing schedules under which corporations can claim tax deductions for new investments. Business executives have long argued for such tax changes to spur new investment, but they are unlikely to be satisfied with

Reagan's proposals. Some business groups are already beginning to lobby for substantial tax credits for the conduct of R&D, in addition to the proposals for R&D equipment.

Reagan's economic proposals are clearly just the opening volley in what will be a long and bloody budget battle that will continue for many months.

—COLIN NORMAN

Women in Science Cut

National Science Foundation programs intended to help open careers in science to women are included in the list of major spending cuts put forward by President Reagan.

Consigned to the ax are two newly mandated programs regarded as the most significant so far in assisting women to establish independent careers in research. These provide visiting professorships for women in science and technology and research opportunity grants designed to get women started or restarted in research.

The cuts Reagan proposed follow recommendations made by budget director David A. Stockman. For this year, \$6 million in "cross-directorate" funds had been allocated to the new programs. Other women-in-science and minorities programs are administered by the NSF science education directorate which is also scheduled for deep cuts.

The two new women-in-science initiatives won the blessings of Congress in 1980 after an effort of several years led by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.). Since the Democrats lost control of the Senate, a key role in women-in-science matters has passed to Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), new chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over NSF policy matters. Hatch supported the women-in-science initiatives in the House-Senate conference after negotiating a substantial paring down of provisions with Kennedy. Hatch is said to be favorably disposed to the new NSF programs, and his attitude could bolster their fortunes as Congress deals with Reagan's budget.

A good deal of confusion surrounds questions of how the Administration will proceed in seeking reductions (rescission) in funds already authorized and appropriated for this year. Technicalities abound. In the case of the new women-in-science programs, for example, funds were, in effect, voted as a proportion of the total research fund package for NSF, not as a separate item that would be easier to cut.

Within the NSF, preparations to put the new programs into effect did not go smoothly. A main problem was translating the language of the law into eligibility rules that would not restrict participation unduly.

Women's groups, which strongly support the programs, charge a lingering reluctance on the part of NSF officials to see "targeted" programs, such as the women-in-science initiatives, operate in NSF research directorates. They are said to oppose targeted programs on grounds of a clash with traditional NSF criteria of scientific excellence determined by peer review.

There is also concern, shared by some women on NSF's policy-making National Science Board, that these programs would be perceived as conferring inferior status on participants. At the NSB meeting on 16 January, Marian E. Koshland, professor of bacteriology and immunology at the University of California, Berkeley, while endorsing the purposes of the program said, "many women would prefer not to have this award, because it could be viewed as a second-class citizenship award."

Other reactions are less ambivalent. Commenting on the threat to the new NSF women-in-science programs posed by the Stockman hit list, an officer of a professional women's organization that had campaigned hard for the programs, observed, "This overdue remedy has become an easy target because it was implemented long after it should have been."—JOHN WALSH