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## DeLauer Named Chief of Defense Research

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One of the most important technical posts in the new Administration, under secretary of defense for research and engineering, has been filled. The long-expected nomination of Richard DeLauer, an executive vice president of TRW, Inc., was announced on 3 March. As the fourth-ranked civilian in the Department of Defense, DeLauer will divvy out the department's \$22 billion budget for R & D and will control weapons procurement policy.

Since 1958 DeLauer has been at TRW, where he directed defense, space, and energy programs, with particular responsibility for TRW's ballistic missile work. He is a graduate of Stanford University in mechanical engineering and has earned degrees in aeronautics and mathematics from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and the California Institute of Technology. DeLauer spent 15 years as a U.S. naval aeronautical engineer before joining TRW.

As DeLauer ships east from Los Angeles, his predecessor, William Perry, will ship west to San Francisco, where he will join the investment banking firm of Hambrecht and Quist.—**Eliot Marshall**

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## Republicans Ax NIOSH Head

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Anthony Robbins was fired last week from his post as director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, but he still doesn't know why he is out of a job that is generally considered apolitical.

Robbins' commission as an assistant surgeon general of the Public Health Service Corps was also terminated. The action is highly unusual except in cases of gross misconduct. Robbins may try to appeal the firing from the commission.

A Carter appointee, Robbins was given no detailed reasons for the ouster by his boss, Secretary of Health and Human Services Richard Schweiker. The HHS press office said only that the firing "was in the public interest."

The dismissal of Robbins, who had served 2 years of a 6-year term, came a few days after the Chamber of Commerce of the United States published a stinging criticism of him in a four-page article. It accused Robbins and his deputy, John Froines, of "a variety of offenses ranging from mismanagement to malfeasance." It stated that Robbins has suppressed the agency's findings on health hazards when the information "could not be converted into regulations to use against business." Says Robbins, "That's nonsense."

The department has given him 30 days to find a new job. Robbins, former state health director in both Colorado and Vermont, says, "I'm still trying to figure out what happened and what I want to do next."

Richard Coene, an executive officer at NIOSH, was named acting director.—**Marjorie Sun**

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## Export Law Affects Scientific Meetings

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Wishing not to be cast in the role of censor of its own members, the American Vacuum Society (AVS) has asked the State Department to grant scientific meetings a broad exemption from some new rules on weapons secrecy. The AVS is one of many technical and academic societies that find the new rules restrictive.

These rules, the 1972 International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), were revised and published in a preliminary form in the *Federal Register* on 19 December 1980. They are designed to tighten controls on the export of military equipment and data. To this end, they require that an export license be obtained by anyone who gives a foreigner technical data that may have a defense application. There is a general exemption for unclassified data, if they have been published, for publication is thought to put them in the public domain.

The Vacuum Society's president, Theodore Madey, worries that members giving presentations at its meetings may be considered exporters of contraband if foreigners are present. Madey wrote to the State Department in March: "Since virtually all unclassified technical data could be construed

as bearing to some remote extent on something on the munitions control list, we believe a general exemption should be given to such meetings. . . ."

The society has been stung once already by secrecy enforcers and wants to avoid a second embarrassment. Last year the AVS was shaken when the Commerce Department made it disinvite Soviet, East European, and Chinese guests who had been asked to a meeting on computer bubble memories (*Science*, 7 March 1980). To avoid trouble in the future, the AVS is asking the government to consider all presentations at open meetings as material in the public domain and thus exempt from control.

The State Department, according to one who helped draft the new ITAR document, is considering the AVS' request along with about 40 similar petitions. For example, the National Science Foundation sent a couple of lawyers over to the State Department in early March to argue, among other things, that the ITAR definition of public domain is too vague. Attorneys at State say they will try to accommodate the scientists, but they will not be able to say how far the accommodation will go. The final version of the ITAR will not be ready before the end of April.—**Eliot Marshall**

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## GSA Seeks Competitors for AT&T Lines

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Since the late 1960's, the federal government and large corporations such as General Motors, IBM, General Electric, and Xerox have leased trunk lines for long-distance telephone calls from AT&T. This service, called Telpak, enables the government to purchase long-distance service at a discount rate. But Telpak may soon be terminated, and the General Services Administration (GSA), which, along with the Department of Defense, is the largest federal user of Telpak, is making plans to switch from AT&T to other providers of telecommunications services. If the GSA's plans go through there will be a major change in the way many government telephone calls are transmitted and many of these communications will have to be encrypted.