

ons program. However, this was not the reason for leaving, according to Edward Van Den Ameele, a company spokesman. "It was purely a business decision. . . . We decided it would be better to concentrate our resources in our main lines of business—plastics, polyethylene, batteries, industrial gases," Van Den Ameele said. The annual fee Union Carbide received for managing Oak Ridge was \$8 million. "We were never really making money on it," according to Van Den Ameele, "and if that had been the reason for leaving, we'd have gone a long time ago."—**Eliot Marshall**

Samios Named Director of Brookhaven

Nicholas P. Samios, a widely respected high energy physicist who has worked feverishly for the past year and a half to pull the ailing Isabelle accelerator project out of a tailspin, has been named director of its parent organization, the Brookhaven



Nicholas P. Samios

National Laboratory on Long Island. Samios, who since 1 January has been Brookhaven's acting director, replaces George H. Vineyard, who resigned last August when the accelerator was beset by a variety of problems. Isabelle, meant to be the Cadillac of the next generation of U.S. atom smashers, has fallen behind schedule and nearly doubled in price because of problems with the design of its superconducting magnets.

Samios, who has been at Brookhaven since 1959, was recently elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Said Robert E. Hughes, president of Associated Universities, which operates Brookhaven: "Dr. Samios' warm human qualities, his intellectual strength, and his energetic life-style will serve him well in the demanding role of director."—**William J. Broad**

U.S. Votes Against Law of the Sea Treaty

Under relentless pressure from its president, Tommy Koh of Singapore, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea concluded its work on schedule on 30 April. After more than 8 years of debate, the delegates from 150 countries agreed to a new law to apply to international waters. However, the accomplishment was undermined by the refusal of several major powers to give their endorsement.

The final vote on the treaty was 130 in favor and 4 opposed, with 17 abstaining. Voting against the treaty were the United States, Israel, Turkey, and Venezuela. Among the abstainers were the Soviet Union, West Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

In explaining his stand, the U.S. ambassador to the talks, James Malone, said that he had decided to vote against the treaty "for reasons of deep conviction and principle." The terms of the agreement "fell far short of our objectives," he added, referring to the points laid out earlier this year by President Reagan (*Science*, 19 March, p. 1480). Malone did not specify the issues that rankled the U.S. delegation, but it was clear that one of the more important was the provision that signers of the treaty would be bound to abide by future amendments, even if they opposed them. American officials also balked at the requirement that proceeds from deep-sea mining be shared with movements of national liberation.

Several observers said that they anticipate the United States' refusal to support the treaty will not cause immediate problems for commercial, scientific, or military ventures in international waters. Mining companies, for example, are sheltered temporarily by a Resolution on Preparatory Investment Protection (PIP). It guarantees the claims of consortia which have already invested in deep-sea technology, provided that at least one member of each consortium comes from a nation that has signed the treaty. The treaty also sets a deadline by which all mining companies must be based in a country that has signed. The purpose, it appears, is to spur the companies to lobby in favor of the treaty.

If territorial claims linked with the new treaty clash with U.S. interests, the United States will assert that customary law takes precedence over the treaty. This position is likely to prevail in most cases, for the treaty at present lacks the support of a number of leading sea powers.

Despite the treaty's rather uncertain status, Koh has scheduled to carry on with a formal review of the draft on 22 September, followed by signing ceremonies in Caracas in early December. According to the State Department, it is conceivable but not likely that President Reagan could change the Administration's position on the treaty between now and December.

—**Eliot Marshall**

Medical Data Bank: A Security Risk?

The government's concern about the leakage of high technology secrets to the East has touched the seemingly innocuous MEDLINE service of the National Library of Medicine (NLM). MEDLINE, with over 2000 subscribers in America and overseas, is a computerized index of articles taken from 3000 medical and biomedical journals. Last December, NLM informed foreign purveyors of MEDLINE that they should not allow any person from a Communist country to have direct "on-line" computer access to the system, unless prior approval had been obtained from the Export Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The Commerce Department, according to officials there, is not worried that foreigners will be able to extract the secrets of bomb building from back issues of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Rather, officials have recently become aware of ways that a skillful computer operator might enter a MEDLINE data bank in a government computer center in, say, West Germany, then jump from MEDLINE into sensitive files on national finance. There is no fail-safe way to prevent file jumping, and less than adequate control of sensitive data in foreign computer banks. Therefore, Communist users of MEDLINE will be required to make their inquiries by mail.—**Eliot Marshall**