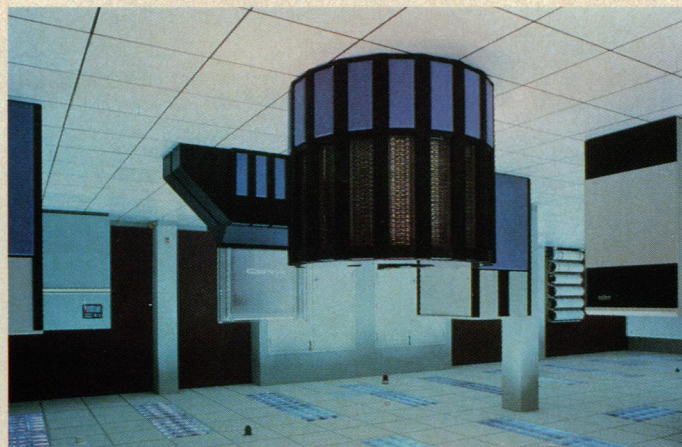


Supercomputer Spat

■ Administration science officials are publicly confident that the new High Performance Computing Initiative will be a model of interagency camaraderie similar to last year's much-applauded global change initiative, but their hopes may already be doomed. On Capitol Hill, legislators are engaged in a stubborn turf fight over which federal agency will control a portion of the initiative known as the National Research and Education Network (NREN), a state-of-the-art "data highway" that will pipe data from computer to computer at billions of bits per second.

Under a bill introduced in late January by Senate science subcommittee chairman Albert Gore, Jr. (D-TN), responsibility for implementing NREN would go to the National Science Foundation "in cooperation" with the Department of Energy, NASA, the Department of Defense, and other interested agencies. NSF, Gore argues, has already taken the lead in bring-



A Cray-2S/4-128 supercomputer at an NSF supercomputing center.

ing high-performance computing to the masses with its supercomputing centers and the NSFnet, and is the logical agency to continue the work.

But Senator Bennett Johnston (D-LA), the powerful chair of both the energy committee and its associated appropriations subcommittee, wants DOE to have sole authority for the network. Not only were the department's weapons laboratories the pioneers in modern supercomputing, goes his argument, but they are experienced

in running big, multi-agency projects. (Critics say the labs also desperately need a new mandate with the ebbing of the Cold War.)

Reconciling the two bills promises to be a time-consuming process. The two sides spent months last year thrashing out a compromise on the same issue, as Gore tried to push a computing initiative through Congress in advance of the Bush Administration. Now that compromise has fallen apart, and the thrashing begins anew.

National Center for Supercomputing Applications

Fraud Office Besieged

■ The legal fallout from a federal court decision in the Western District of Wisconsin that invalidated the way NIH investigates allegations of misconduct (*Science*, 11 January, p. 152) is spreading across the country. Two more researchers—neurologist L. Cass Terry of the Medical College of Wisconsin and John Hiserodt, a cancer researcher formerly at the University of Pittsburgh—have recently filed suit against NIH's Office of Scientific Integrity, claiming that its investigative procedures were set forth in violation of federal law and fail to afford the accused their constitutional rights. Both scientists have cited the original



James Abbs

case—brought by University of Wisconsin neurologist James Abbs—as a "persuasive" reason for judges in their districts to throw out the OSI procedures.

Meanwhile, the Abbs case is far from over. Abbs has asked the court to reconsider its related finding that OSI has not violated his due process rights. That ruling, Abbs claims, was superfluous once the court declared the procedures invalid.

NIH is also trying to decide how to respond to the court's adverse ruling. One source in the Public Health Service suggested that NIH might comply by publishing its procedures in the *Federal Register* while contesting the ruling in court.

University of Wisconsin

Numerical Predictions: Who Has the Best Crystal Ball?

■ Later this year, for the first time, researchers from more than a dozen disciplines who regularly peer into the future using a mathematical technique known as time series prediction will have the opportunity to strut their stuff. From 1 August to 31 December, physicists, biostatisticians, and econometricians (to name just a few) will unleash algorithms which their inventors claim can yield hard numerical predictions about any situation—such as, say, stock market prices or variable star fluctuations—in which a computer might extrapolate a system's future behavior from its past.

Is this gathering, sponsored by the Santa Fe Institute and known officially as the Time Series Prediction and Analysis Competition, merely the mathematical equivalent of a tractor



pull? Not exactly. Competing programs will tackle any of five standard problems not just to vie for superiority but to provide an objective evaluation of their capability. Such evaluations, the conference organizers hope, could cross-fertilize successful prediction methods across disciplinary boundaries, eliminating the need for researchers to keep reinventing the wheel in their own fields.

■ For weeks, insiders at NIH have hinted that Robert Gallo's lab in Bethesda had some dynamite new data about the two most famous AIDS virus isolates that would cause some "red faces" at the Pasteur Institute in Paris (*Science*, 8 February, p. 619).

Conventional wisdom has been that a virus isolated by Luc Montagnier at Pasteur and sent to Gallo in 1983 had somehow contaminated Gallo's cultures, thus explaining the amazing similarity between Gallo's HTLV-IIIB and

Montagnier's LAV-1. But this week Gallo and colleagues report in *Nature* (p. 745) that DNA sequence comparisons show the 1983 Pasteur samples not only differ from HTLV-IIIB, indicating that Gallo derived his isolate independently of the French, but that they also differ from published sequences of LAV-1. Gallo's lawyer Joseph Onck says ordinarily this finding would merely be a scientific footnote, but the controversy kicked up around Gallo makes the latest news more significant.