## Ethics Rules Inquiry

■ Proposed ethics rules that would bar federal scientists from performing any business for scientific societies on government time (*Science*, 20 September, p. 1348) will soon get a congressional review. On 22 October, the human resources

*Rep. Paul Kanjorski*

subcommittee of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, chaired by Representative Paul Kanjorski (D–PA), will meet to hear complaints from a broad array of professional societies that fear the new rules would unduly crimp their operations and deprive government employees of valuable experience.

The agency responsible for the rules, the Office of Government Ethics, received more than 1400 comments, "nearly 85%" of them protesting the restriction on society activities, says a subcommittee aide.

Despite the vociferous objections lodged against the rules by scientific associations, no scientists will be called to testify before the subcommittee, even though the aide agrees that the "shared technology and science information" resulting from government-society contacts is one of the "very important" subjects the subcommittee will consider. Instead, organizations such as the Federal Bar Association and the American Society of Association Executives will lead the charge. "We wanted an academic perspective, and we chose the bar association," says the aide.

## DOE Clings to Cold War

■ The fact that the cold war is over doesn't seem to have registered with Department of Energy (DOE) officials, who have pressured scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to pass up a workshop on nuclear disarmament.

Workshop organizers had invited three Livermore weapons researchers to participate in the 18-19 October workshop on "Verified Warhead Storage and Dismantlement" sponsored by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and the Natural Resources Defense Council. But DOE's Office of Arms Control told them that the agency would not pay their expenses to attend, although it frequently does so for other conferences, says invitee Ray Kidder, a retired Livermore researcher who still works at the lab part-time.

DOE officials defend the policy by claiming that the nongovernmental workshop is an "inappropriate" forum for DOE scientists to discuss nuclear weapons policy. Office of Arms Control director Anthony Czajowski said that lab personnel wanting to "do their own thing" has been a continuing problem for DOE. But Czajowski virtually admitted that politics might have played a role in the decision when he added: "The workshop might be counterproductive to the president's arms control initiatives."

Workshop organizers are outraged. "I don't think the current DOE administration understands that these guys aren't junior Navy officers who are supposed to do only what they're told," says Frank Von Hippel, head of research at FAS.

### Competition Ahead for Nanofabrication Lab

■ Cornell may want to start looking over its shoulder soon. The National Science Foundation (NSF) will soon announce its intention to "recompete" its $2-million annual grant to Cornell's National Nanofabrication Facility (NNF). The award is actually worth even more than $2 million because NSF also supports researchers who use the facility.

Begun 14 years ago at Cornell University as a center for advanced research on microelectronics, the NNF has become preeminent in many fields of micro-engineering. Cornell is now in the final year of a 5-year bloc award, due to expire on 30 September 1992. After that, NSF plans to put the center up for grabs.

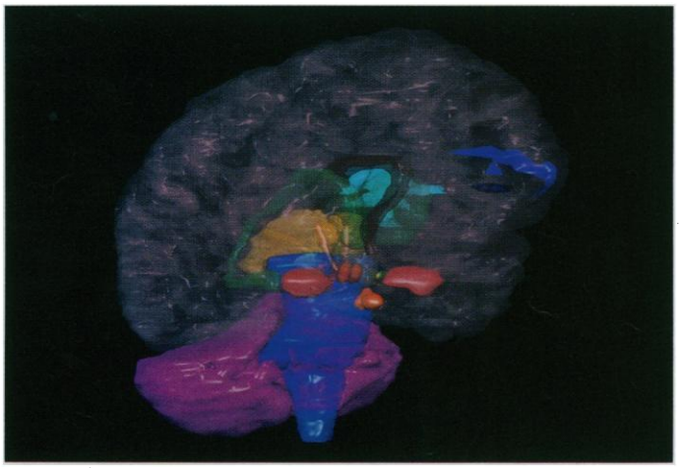
No university should come to think it has an "entitlement" to an NSF-funded research center, says George Hazelrigg, NSF's division chief for electrical and communications systems. "Do we intend to yank [the NNF] away from Cornell? Not at all," he says. But because NSF has been stung by critics from have-not states who argue that the same large, well-heeled research universities always land the big facilities, the National Science Board last February directed NSF to review thoroughly, if not recompete, all major projects after 10 years. The message from the board, says Hazelrigg, was that "there should be a finite life to these things."

## Academy Panel to Urge More Funding for Computational Mechanics

■ Unless a branch of mathematics known as "computational mechanics"—used in activities ranging from designing computer chips to simulating the spread of global pollution—gets a desperately needed infusion of federal funding, already ebbing U.S. preeminence in the global market for computer technology will erode even further. So warns an upcoming report, due in late October, from a National Research Council panel.

Computational mechanics—the mathematical modeling of physical phenomena—permeates many scientific fields, including the development of supercomputer software, says panel chair J. Tinsley Oden, an aerospace engineer at the University of Texas at Austin. As a result, computational mechanics and the high-performance computing initiative touted by the Bush Administration are closely interwoven, and the success of the initiative depends on engineering advances stimulated by computational mechanics research, he says.

More than scientific research is at stake, Oden warns. Because the computing initiative could help reverse a decade-long, 33% decline in the U.S. share of the computer equipment market, he says, a federal focus on computational mechanics is vital to U.S. competitiveness.



*Computational mechanics underlies the modeling of most physical phenomena, such as Alzheimer's disease.*

EDITED BY DAVID P. HAMILTON