Inside AAAS

edited by CYNTHIA LOLLAR

AAAS Seminar Reaffirms Strong Bond Between German, U.S. Science Communities

Given all the bad press the United States has received lately about its international competitiveness, some American delegates to a recent AAAS bilateral seminar on U.S.-German cooperation in science and technology were understandably apprehensive: Does Germany really need us anymore?

The answer, say delegates from both countries, is a reassuring "yes."

> ***"Our relationship is increasingly one of peers."***
>
> —DONALD N. LANGENBERG
> CHAIRMAN, AAAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"The perception was that Germany has been turning toward Japan, and toward the [developing] pan-European community," says Sandra M. Burns, acting assistant director within AAAS's International Directorate, which organized the 9 to 11 September event in Berlin. "But the discussions at the seminar clearly showed no one wants to turn their backs on what has been a very productive relationship."

In fact, says Klaus Schroeter, science counselor at the German embassy in Washington, D.C., and a seminar delegate, much of the impetus behind the gathering came from the Germans themselves.

"There's no doubt that the U.S. is the leader in many areas of science and technology," says Schroeter, including science policy. He offered as an example the way American public, private, and governmental groups have come together to advance the ethically and technically complex field of biotechnology.

The September meeting grew out of a 1987 bilateral conference organized by AAAS and held in Washington, D.C. Germany's reunification, its participation in Europe's impending common market, and the desire by formerly communist bloc countries for Western aid all served to prompt another gathering, says Burns.

The need for such a conference is even more acute, say Burns and Schroeter, because Germany is one of the few industrial nations with which the United States does not have a formal "government-to-government" science, engineering, and technology link.

"The Washington science policy scene is quite dynamic—in the last 2 years alone, almost everybody [in U.S. policy-making positions] has changed," says Schroeter. "So it's always important to get people together, to transfer ideas and keep the [cooperative] spirit alive."

American delegates pointed to Germany's technical apprenticeship program as perhaps the best in the world, and a model for what the United States should be doing for its work force. Delegates noted that these and other growing German strengths have necessitated a reappraisal of what each country brings to joint projects; the United States isn't helping to dig Germany out of its post–World War II hole anymore.

Or, as Germany's Schroeter puts it, "collaboration with us is no longer a one-way street."

The funding of scholarly exchanges is just one example, says Burns. "Right after World War II, the U.S. paid for most of the exchanges," she says, which now number more than 5600 individuals from both countries every year. "Today, Germany pays about 75 percent of the bill. Overall, it balances out. But can Germany afford that anymore?"

"Our relationship is increasingly one of peers," agrees Donald N. Langenberg, chairman of the AAAS Board of Directors and head of the U.S. delegation. "A phrase that came up repeatedly was 'cooperation with competition.' It's a difficult transformation of attitude for some Americans. Nonetheless, it was clear at the seminar everyone felt strongly that cooperation was in the best interests of both nations."

There were 24 delegates from each country representing many of the two nations' most important scientific institutions. Present were Heinz Riesenhuber, Germany's minister for research and technology, and Wolf-Michael Catenhusen, chairman of the Bundestag's research and technology committee, among others. American officials from the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the State Department, and the National Academy of Sciences also attended.

Along with AAAS, the seminar's co-sponsors were the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (whose president, Reimar Lüst, headed the German delegation), the German Federal Ministry for Research and Technology, and the U.S. National Science Foundation.

A report on the seminar will be available in early 1992. For more information, contact Sandra Burns at AAAS, 1333 H St., NW, Washington, DC 20005, or 202-326-6650. ❖

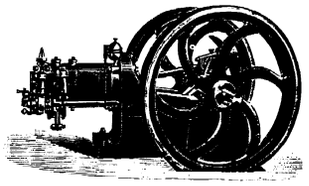
Eyes on the Future

Among the recommendations made by participants in the AAAS seminar on U.S.-German bilateral cooperation in science and technology were:

- to promote more exchanges of German and American scholars and researchers, including those working in the humanities and with special attention paid to those from Eastern Germany;
- to launch an international effort to better the public's understanding of science and technology issues;
- to step up funding for electronic networking and teleconferencing technologies that would facilitate international contact among scientists and engineers;
- to recognize that the most successful cooperative ventures come "bottom up" from individual scientists rather than "top down" from institutions;
- to settle such basic conditions as goals, financing, and responsibilities as early as possible in any joint venture;
- to undertake a comparative study of scientific and technical training in the United States, Germany, and perhaps Japan—an analysis that could serve as a guide for change in each country;
- to explore the possibility of a regular forum on U.S.-German cooperation.

In brief:

■ **The annual AAAS Forum for School Science** was held in Washington, D.C. on 11 and 12 October. Experts on technology and education spoke with nearly 200 participants on such topics as business school partnerships, technology-based curricula, restructuring schools using technology, and technology and students with disabilities. For more information, contact Betty Calinger, AAAS Directorate for Education & Human Resources, 202-326-6629.



■ ***Science*'s third annual Human Genome Conference** took place on 21 to 23 October in San Diego. Much of this year's discussions turned on advances in faster and cheaper ways to map genes, and the use of model organisms such as fruit flies, mice, and even plants. For more information, contact Monte Basgall in the AAAS communications office, 202-326-6715.

■ **AAAS Fellows on the move:** Walter Massey, director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and former AAAS president, has named AAAS Fellow and University of Pennsylvania engineering dean Joseph Bordogna as NSF assistant director for engineering, effective 1 September. Another AAAS Fellow, nutritionist Nevin Scrimshaw, was awarded the 1991 World Food Prize on 14 October. Scrimshaw is director of the United Nations University's Food, Nutrition and Human Development program and helped launch the University's World Hunger Program 16 years ago.

■ **Remember: Ballots for the election of AAAS** president-elect, members of the Board of Directors and Committee on Nominations, and section officers are due into headquarters **postmarked no later than 15 November**.

Another reminder: Organizations or individuals wishing to present **proposals or resolutions for possible consideration by the AAAS Council** should send them in written form to the executive officer, Richard Nicholson, **no later than 8 November**. Proposal details can be found on page 1562 of the 27 September issue of *Science*. ❖

AAAS Adopts New Resolution

Resolution Concerning Proposed Federal Ethics Rules on Participation by Federal Employees in Professional Societies

The AAAS Board of Directors has added its voice to the protest against proposed rules that would severely restrict how much federal employees may participate in professional societies.

At its 4 October meeting in Washington, D.C., the AAAS Board voted to adopt the following resolution, which calls for the elimination of section 2635.806 from the Office of Government Ethics' proposed set of regulations concerning employees of the executive branch. This section would prohibit a federal employee from conducting society business on government time, unless specifically authorized to do so.

Professional societies such as the American Geophysical Union have argued that such restrictions would make federal scientists "second-class citizens" among their peers in industry and academia.

Whereas, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is the world's largest general scientific organization, founded in 1848, with over 132,000 individual members from all fields of science and engineering, as well as the world's largest federation of scientific and engineering societies, with 291 affiliated organizations;

Whereas, AAAS supports the need for uniform ethical rules for federal employees as well as the need for avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety;

Whereas, the proposed rules already prohibit any preferential treatment of private organizations, Section 2635.101(b)(8); the proposed rules already prohibit use of an employee's public office for the private gain of "nonprofit organizations of which the employee is an officer or member," Section 2635.702; the proposed rules prohibit outside activities that conflict with an employee's official duties; and the proposed rules already prohibit an employee who is also an officer, director, or trustee of a professional association "from participating in his official capacity in any particular manner that has a direct and predictable effect on a financial interest of the organization," Section 2635.806(c);

Whereas, participation by federal employees in the internal and business affairs of professional associations is of significant value to federal employees in terms of personal and professional development and to the federal government in terms of education and training of staff;

Whereas, the rules as currently drafted in Section 2635.806 are unclear and open to unnecessarily restrictive interpretation which could lead to denial of participation in activities which are legitimate;

Whereas, the proposed rules would be counter to the spirit of volunteerism espoused in the President's "Points of Light" Program and would discourage federal employees from volunteering their time and talent in the service of their professions and the public interest, and run counter to the American democratic tradition and spirit by serving to erect walls between the Government and the people, and are also detrimental to the advancement of the Administration's pro-education goals;

Therefore let it be resolved, that the American Association for the Advancement of Science encourages the Office of Government Ethics to eliminate Section 2635.806 from the final regulations. ❖