flawed and we commented on it." Then he adds: "For all I know, Healy will throw [our comments] in the garbage." But he won't say publicly what the comments were.

Barbara Mishkin, Popovic's attorney, also says no one in Healy's office promised that Healy would read Mishkin's critique. But she also felt the report should be revised before going to HHS. "There are still errors in it and there are clear omissions," says Mishkin, although, she added, this draft is much more "readable" and less "inflammatory" than the last one.

As if the back-and-forth between HHS, NIH, and Congress weren't enough, the seas have been made even stormier by NIH's critique of one journalist's story. In an NIH "statement" obtained by *Science*, Crewdson's 9 February article is criticized for making "errors and misstatements." Even though Crewdson cites only "sources familiar with a summary of the investigation's findings" and never states that he has seen the report, NIH is clearly upset that someone broke the strict silence surrounding the document, leaking enough information for a page one *Tribune* story titled "Inquiry concludes data in AIDS article falsified."

The "statement," which the NIH press office was unaware of when first contacted—but later said was official—says, "NIH stresses that speculation based on hearsay about ongoing...scientific misconduct investigations is fundamentally at odds with standards of fairness that the scientific community and the public expect and deserve." The statement focuses on the fact that Crewdson referred to the OSI report as "final," which, the statement says, is an inaccurate term—although federal regulations describing the process use the same language.

Crewdson, who knew nothing of the statement when contacted by *Science*, but was shown a copy, says, "I don't see anything in here that suggests that anything in my story was inaccurate. The story stands."

So, as has been true from the beginning of this salty tale, the navigational chart looks different to everyone involved. Crewdson's "final" report is the NIH's "proposed" report. Some say Healy has promised to pass the report to the HHS Office of Scientific Integrity Review by the end of February. Attorneys for Gallo and Popovic, on the other hand, insist that if she reads their critiques, she'll be forced to send it back down the chain for further rewrites. Taking those contradictory chart readings into account, the best advice for OSI-watchers would seem to be: Batten down the hatches, rough seas ahead. ■ JON COHEN

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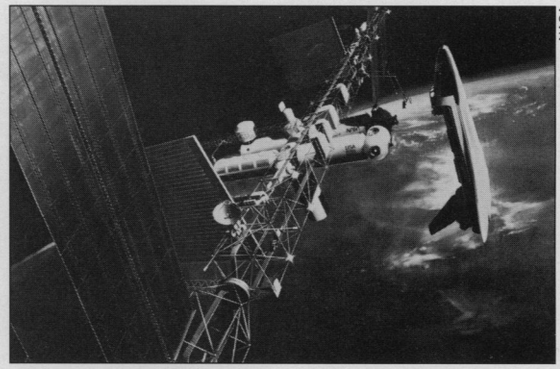
Truly's Dismissal Puts NASA on Autopilot

The White House scrambles to find a new space chief as Congress begins its debate on the 1993 budget

PRESIDENT BUSH IS MOVING RAPidly to find a replacement for Admiral Richard Truly, head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), whose resignation he demanded and received on 10 February. The White House has no choice but to step smartly, because Truly will be leaving NASA on 1 April, and the agency has had no deputy since last September, when the former number two official, J.R. Thompson, resigned. So who will pilot the agency through the big budget battles ahead? This "tends to create a sense of insecurity in NASA and in Congress as to whether NASA really will get its act together," says House science committee Chairman George Brown (D–CA), putting it gently. Uncertainty about the future could make it hard to obtain the big money NASA is counting on this year.



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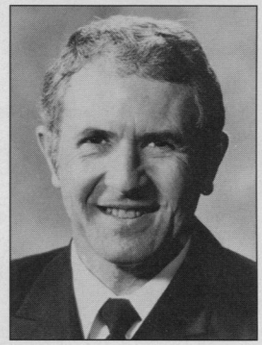

Obsolescent? *Admiral Richard Truly clashed with the White House over his dogged support for a space agenda—including the shuttle and the space station—drawn up in the 1980s.*

The agency needs $15 billion to honor a multitude of commitments, including $2.25 billion for Space Station Freedom (up 11% since last year) and $3 billion for science programs (up 9%). According to Brown, the station will soon be at the center of another "heavy debate" on the Hill as budget hearings begin this week. So, with a lame duck at the helm, who will guide the agency through Washington's version of space junk?

Congress regarded Truly, the former astronaut, as a leader who could be trusted. He is credited on Capitol Hill for getting NASA on track after the 1986 shuttle disaster and for speaking plainly. He's viewed as "a good man who did a good job under difficult circumstances"—the characterization that was given by Senator Al Gore (D–TN) last week.

But within the White House, space strategists saw Truly in a different light. He seemed a conservator of tradition rather than a spokesman for new ideas, and this played a part in his removal. The other key factor was his inability to recruit a new deputy director. Officially, Truly submitted a letter of resignation on 10 February, but when he spoke with the Associated Press 2 days later, he conceded, "Frankly, it wasn't what I had planned. It's a situation where the president decided to make a change." Yet no one has identified a single incident that might have precipitated Truly's dismissal. Even old hands in the space community say they were taken aback by the decision. Representative Brown was "more than surprised; I was shocked." And John Logsdon, director of George Washington University's Space Policy Center, thinks that only a handful of top officials knew the ax was about to fall. "The specific timing was a surprise," says Logsdon.

Truly's abrupt removal as the appropriations process gets under way has prompted speculation that the Administration already has someone lined up to take his place. But this is not so, says David Beckwith, spokesman for Vice President Dan Quayle. "No notification was given to anybody prior to [Truly's] resignation," Beckwith says. As for the criticism that the Administration chose a bad time for acting, Beckwith responds: "There's never a great time for a change like this; if it had happened last fall, people would still say it was bad timing."

Nominees for the number one and number

two positions at NASA could be named as early as this week, Beckwith believes, although "early March" is more likely. While the president and his aides are not giving out names, everyone else in the space community is speculating about who has made it to the president's short list. The "four As" are among those most often mentioned: James Abrahamson, the onetime Air Force general who ran the Strategic Defense Initiative Office and is now an executive at the Hughes Aircraft Corp.; Norman Augustine, chief executive of Martin Marietta and chairman of the special advisory panel that last year urged NASA to make science its first priority; Edward "Pete" Aldridge, chief executive at the Aerospace Corp. and a former Air Force general who warned of the shuttle's flaws before the Challenger accident; and Joseph Allen, a former astronaut who became president of a boat-rocking young company in Houston, Texas, called Space Industries, Inc. Most of these candidates were unreachable last week, although Allen, after a tentative "no comment," disclosed that he has not been contacted about the top NASA position.

A more specific rumor that fluttered through NASA headquarters last week, says a contractor who spends a lot of time there, is that the new team will include Abrahamson in the top position and Michael Griffin, currently director of NASA's Office of Exploration, as number two. Griffin and Abrahamson both belong to the school that advocates developing "cheaper, quicker" methods of reaching space, and both have worked closely with Quayle's staff. Griffin moved to his current position at NASA last August, at the White House's insistence; he was not Truly's candidate for the job.

It may be hard to persuade industry candidates to take the assignment, says Jerry Grey, science adviser to the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. "They really need somebody," Grey says, "but it's a thankless job" that brings "vituperative criticism" and would require a major pay cut for most executives. But whoever the president's final choice turns out to be, the nominee is likely to be someone who will have more sympathy for the shakeup effort led by Vice President Quayle and his National Space Council.

It is no secret that Quayle and his space group have clashed with Truly in the past year over where NASA should be headed. Quayle and the council staff have been pressing NASA to innovate and develop smaller, cheaper space vehicles. But Truly dug in his heels on a number of issues and insisted that NASA should take care of old business first—which for Truly meant getting the shuttle running smoothly and building solid support for the space station.

NASA and the White House clashed in 1990 on whether or not to prolong the life of the shuttle program by building a sixth orbiter. Truly "went to the mat" in favor of the purchase, and lost a "bitter fight," says Logsdon. Truly also seemed to "lack enthusiasm" for the President's Space Exploration Initiative, a plan to send humans to the moon and Mars. And he gave indifferent support to other projects favored by Quayle, such as the national aerospace plane and the proposed development of a new rocket system to carry cargo cheaply into space, called "the national launch system." In the end, says Logsdon, the president "became convinced that he was not going to be able to get the kind of [space] program he wanted as long as Truly was there."

And then there was the matter of style. According to John Pike, policy analyst at the Federation of American Scientists, Truly was "doing the inside job himself...running the agency on a day-to-day basis," rather than representing its broader interests to Congress and the public. Representative Brown agrees. Truly seemed to "get himself too much involved in the details of NASA management when his strength was really meant to be in NASA's external relations," says Brown. "He may have spread himself too thin." The fact that Truly himself did the work of a deputy administrator may have made it harder to recruit a true deputy, some observers say.

In the end, says Logsdon, Truly is "a guy of very high integrity who has a particular view of NASA, and when he found that his bosses didn't share that view, he fought his bosses." The "right thing to do when you find yourself in that position," Logsdon says, "is to leave." Had Truly done that earlier, Logsdon thinks, he might have spared himself last week's ordeal. But now NASA as well as Truly may be in for an ordeal. At least, that's what Truly himself seemed to indicate last week as he announced his departure to agency employees. Over NASA's in-house TV network he gave a gloomy forecast: "In the Navy, when you're entering very tough situations and rough seas, there's a saying called 'steady as she goes.' That's what I'd like to impart to you today." ■ ELIOT MARSHALL

Stanford Faculty Tackles Overhead

The last time Stanford faculty spoke out in large numbers on the issue of indirect research costs, they lambasted their administrators for driving Stanford's overhead rate through the roof (*Science*, 20 April 1990, p. 292). Now they are up in arms again—but this time over rates so low they say they may threaten the entire research enterprise. "The government seems determined to seriously damage a large fraction of research universities," warns Arthur Bienenstock, director of the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory. Bienenstock and his colleagues are banding together, trying to head off the rate decreases before it's too late.

The faculty were shocked last year when, hard on the heels of several rough hearings held by Congressman John Dingell (D–MI)—hearings that ultimately forced Stanford president Donald Kennedy to resign—the Office of Naval Research (ONR) cancelled agreements that had set reimbursal rates for such things as buildings, equipment, and library operations. That brought Stanford's indirect cost rate from 74% to 55%. Many who had spoken out thought 74% was too high and worried that it would continue to rise under big-spending administrators, but few thought the university could sustain itself with a rate much below, say, 65%. But worse news was to follow, jolting faculty members into action. At hearings held last month by Dingell, Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) director Fred Newton suggested that the agreements be revoked retroactively back to 1981 (*Science*, 7 February, p. 679). That would drop the rate for that decade to an anorexic 37% or less and require Stanford to pay back hundreds of millions of dollars to the government.

"This swinging of the pendulum will destroy research," says Haresh Shah, chairman of civil engineering at Stanford. Bienenstock, Shah, and a handful of other senior science faculty and department chairmen have held a series of impassioned meetings over the past few weeks to determine how to ward off these dire actions. The problem, says biology chairman Robert Simoni, is that "whatever we do, we will be accused of acting in self-interest." Which is why plans for sending a delegation to Washington were scrapped—the group didn't want to worsen the situation inadvertently by appearing to go over the heads of the government negotiators. Instead, they settled on a letter campaign to the press. Shah, Bienenstock, and materials science chairman William Nix tried to rally colleagues in a letter that appeared this week in the *Campus Report*: "Just as we protested indirect cost rate increases," they wrote, "we should speak out against attempts to impose arbitrary, low rates, and the refusal to enter into fair negotiations."