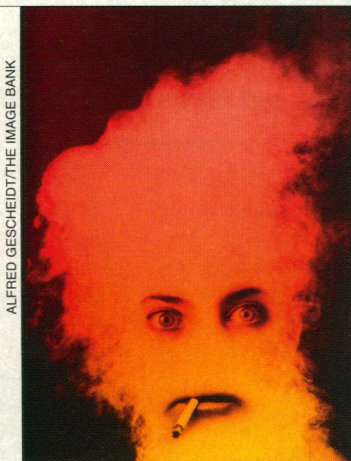


Governor to Extinguish Tobacco Research?

A pall hangs over the University of California's Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRP). Not from cigarette smoke, but from fear that the 3-year-old program might succumb to what its backers view as a plot to kill it by Governor Pete Wilson.

One of several health projects funded by a cigarette tax approved by a state referendum in 1988, TRP pays for biomedical research and related studies, including psychological analyses of cigarette ads. Since TRP's inception, however, Wilson has fruitlessly urged California lawmakers to divert up to 80% of TRP's funds to other state health programs—such as one to aid indigent, pregnant women—arguing that the money should be spent on direct medical care. But Wilson's critics, who have sought



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Up in smoke? California's tobacco research outfit is in trouble.

to modify TRP to focus it more tightly on tobacco issues, charge that Wilson is bowing to pressure from the tobacco industry, which opposes the program (*Science*, 13 March 1992, p. 1348).

Wilson's latest attack came on 25 September, 2 weeks after

the state legislature adjourned for the fall. He vetoed a bill that would have authorized TRP for another 4 years, stating he supports a proposal to extend it only through June 1994, when a larger package of cigarette tax-funded programs are up for reauthorization. A Wilson spokesman says the governor will consider extending TRP only in the context of the other programs.

In the meantime, TRP's authorization is running out—the existing law expires on 31 December. Wilson's veto is evidence he “wants to gut the whole program,” alleges TRP scientist Stanton Glantz, a University of California, San Francisco cardiology researcher. Glantz says he's hoping the public health community will lobby hard to ensure TRP's existence and, if necessary, persuade legislators to prevent future interference from Wilson.

U.K. Research Councils Get an Everyman Chief

British academic scientists are pleased with the fact that an industrial scientist chosen as new director-general of the country's research councils also knows basic research. But they realize his power is limited to an advisory role in the government's allocation of \$1.7 billion a year across six councils, and they are waiting anxiously to see who is named to lead three of those councils.

John Cadogan assumes the new advisory post to science minister William Waldegrave in the wake of a U.K. science shake-up orchestrated last May (*Science*, 4 June, p. 1419). Rumors were that Waldegrave wanted an industrialist in the post; he got one in Cadogan, who was research director at British Petroleum until he retired last year. But academics are pleased nonetheless: Cadogan has run a small chemistry lab at the University of Edinburgh since he left there in 1979.

Cadogan has several months to establish a strategy before the new council system is up and running. Council officials say that one of Cadogan's key challenges will be to gather enough clout to forge a consensus on funding priorities across the six councils; one impediment he faces is that as an adviser, Cadogan won't control the purse strings. His first chance to impress the U.K. science community will come next month, when he helps fill chief executive posts at three research agencies.

Georgetown Does a Neuroscience Shuffle

Just when financial troubles afflicting a backer have halted payments for a \$41 million neuroscience building at Georgetown University, Congress and the Pentagon are coming to the rescue. Help is on the way in the form of a \$20 million award for a new program on brain sciences at Georgetown. Officially, the old and new projects are unrelated, but the new one will be housed in the old one's building.

Georgetown's plans for a grandiose neuroscience center, the Fidia-Georgetown Institute for the Neurosciences, ran into trouble when the backer, Fidia Pharmaceutical Corp., an Italian company, faced bankruptcy proceedings and political troubles in Italy. A lawsuit from Georgetown (first reported in *Science & Government Report*) alleges the company has reneged on financial commitments.

Fidia has not revealed whether it will make payments on loans that financed construction of the building that was to have been its home on campus. (Fidia's vice

president in Washington, D.C., Letizia Amadini, failed to return phone messages left at her office.) For now, the company is continuing to pay the salary of the institute's director, Erminio Costa.

As for the new congressional project, that's an “entirely separate” initiative funded by the Department of Defense, says university spokesperson Clare Fiore. The money has, however, enabled the university to begin recruiting staff for an outfit that will focus on cognitive and computational sciences.

This will make up for some of the support that may be lost from Fidia. But it won't solve Georgetown's problem entirely. Pentagon lawyers have said the “earmarked” funds in the 1993 defense appropriations bills that will pay for the new project are not usable for construction. Instead, the dollars must pay for research, which leaves Georgetown with a big, unpaid construction bill. “We're looking for a donor who would like to have a building named after him,” says Fiore.

White House to Take Crack at Reinventing Science

President Bill Clinton, who last year asked voters “to embrace change,” is ready to do just that with the current system of coordinating the government's \$76 billion R&D budget. Science policy officials are awaiting an executive order that is expected to create both a powerful White House entity to oversee R&D spending and a set of interagency committees to coordinate budgets in nine broad areas of national concern.

The new body, the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), was proposed in the Administration's plan to reinvent government (*Science*, 17 September, p. 1513). The council would oversee panels addressing nine major R&D categories—from manufacturing and communications to education and the environment—identified by White House science

adviser John Gibbons and the Office of Management and Budget (*Science*, 24 September, p. 1668), as well as a tenth committee on basic research to tackle overarching issues such as indirect-cost charges and the missions of federal agencies. This last panel would also develop what a White House official calls “a more rational, long-term R&D policy.”

Policy analysts view the changes as a positive sign for science, and Congress appears ready to do its part. Representative Rick Boucher (D-VA), who chairs the House subcommittee on science, has introduced a bill to establish the NSTC as well as a presidentially appointed panel of outside science advisers similar to one that served President Bush. Boucher plans to hold hearings on the bill early next year.