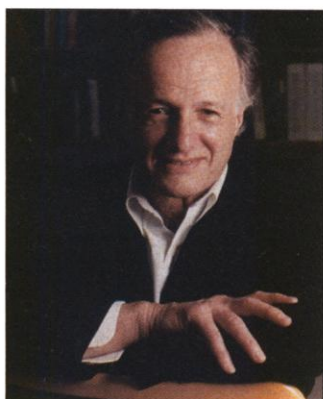


NOBEL STATEMENT

Laureates Plead for Laws, Not War

OTTAWA—A majority of the world's living Nobel laureates issued a statement last week urging industrial nations to work cooperatively to address conditions that they believe contribute to global terrorism and unrest in the developing world. The statement, signed by 108 laureates and released at the 100th anniversary of the prizes, identifies poverty, global warming, and the spread of arms as a combustible mix, and it points to several international agreements as examples of the kinds of measures that should be encouraged. Ironically, a few days after the statement was released, the Bush Administration announced that the United States is withdrawing from one of those agreements, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

The message "is a call, not to arms, but to disarm the source of major tensions in the world," says the University of Toronto's John Polanyi, a 1986 chemistry laureate and the driv-



the world's dispossessed. ... If, then, we permit the devastating power of modern weaponry to spread through this combustible human landscape, we invite a conflagration that can engulf both rich and poor."

"Science alone, technology alone, is not sufficient to deal with these issues," says Massachusetts Institute of Technology chemist and 1995 Nobel recipient Mario Molina. "We need strong commitments and values from society that technology and science are put to good use." The statement mentions the Kyoto Convention on Climate Change, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the ABM Treaty as agreements fostering a similar spirit of community. U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty is a "serious mistake," Polanyi says, adding that nations are "fooling themselves" if they think safety can be found behind the protective walls of new missile screens. Crawling into an armed hole offers only the pretence of safety, Polanyi argues.

Polanyi began talking to his Nobel colleagues last July about drafting the statement. About 30 laureates declined, he says, for reasons that vary from its omission of population control to a general distaste for political commentary. Many laureates who initially thought that the statement might be presumptuous or an oracle of the future changed their minds, he notes, after deciding that "the alternative, having a high level of education and some public prominence and not saying what you believe, is even worse."

The message shouldn't be labeled liberal or conservative, Molina says. "To me, it's rational. It's the only means to provide stability in the long run. It's also what we think is fair and justifiable from an ethical point of view."

Molina says there is no formal plan to achieve official recognition of the document among governments or international bodies. "But there might well be next steps that each of us take as individuals," he says. Adds Polanyi: "I don't think one can afford to discount the thinking of scientists in an age of science."

—WAYNE KONDRO

Wayne Kondro writes from Ottawa.

ScienceScope

Healthy Investment Spending more on health care in the developing world would save lives, reduce conflicts, and boost the economy, a panel of 18 economists, health experts, and scientists argues in a report presented this week to World Health Organization (WHO) director-general Gro Harlem Brundtland. Echoing views long espoused by its chair, Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs, the panel says that middle-income countries should spend an additional 2% of their gross national product on health and rich nations should chip in an extra 0.1%. Most of the money—some \$66 billion by 2015—should go to getting drugs and vaccines to needy people, with \$3 billion set aside for basic research and a "global NIH" that would target common but poorly understood diseases. The panel estimates that the investment would be repaid sixfold in economic expansion.

Sachs hopes such numbers will start swaying national health spending decisions as early as 2002. In the meantime, he says, big pharma should make its drugs cheaper for poor countries.

PCAST Named The Bush Administration has unveiled its President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. The president introduced his 22 picks and said that they would begin work by producing reports on information technology infrastructure, increasing federal science spending in fields likely to produce economic benefits, improving energy efficiency, and combating terrorism. The panel (see sciencenow.sciencemag.org/feature/data/pcast.shtml) will be led by White House science adviser John Marburger and investor E. Floyd Kvamme.

The council's makeup—just one member is a working scientist, more than half come from industry, and many served Bush's father—suggests that "the Bush Administration is moving even further than Clinton" toward addressing industrial issues, says Harvard University science policy analyst David Hart. Marburger says that the dearth of scientific expertise is deliberate: "The goal is to get advice from leadership in higher education and industry and not necessarily at the scientific level."

One more high-profile executive may still join the panel. The White House initially said that America Online founder Steve Case was on the team, but a paperwork glitch prevented his formal appointment.

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Bully pulpit. Some 108 living Nobel Prize-winners have signed on to John Polanyi's 100th anniversary statement.

ing force behind the letter. "It's also a call for replacement of war by law." If Alfred Nobel could give away an immense fortune to reward achievements in science, literature, and peace, Polanyi decided, the least his colleagues could do is think idealistically about how to improve the world.

The statement, signed by luminaries in science, medicine, literature, and world affairs (see www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/nobel.shl for full text and list of signatories), says: "The most profound danger to world peace in the coming years will stem not from the irrational acts of states or individuals but from the legitimate demands of

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