

Congressmen challenge Keyworth on his commitment to science budget cuts

by Marsha Freeman, Science & Technology Editor

"We cannot expect to be preeminent in all scientific fields, nor is it necessarily desirable," stated Dr. George A. Keyworth, the President's Science Adviser, before the House Committee on U.S. Science and Technology Dec. 10. Keyworth called upon the scientific community itself to help make "difficult choices" in this new policy of "discrimination" among scientific programs, since not all can continue to receive support. He threatened that if his scientific "colleagues" do not make such choices, "others will."

Keyworth was making the administration's public response to unusual pre-Christmas-recess congressional hearings motivated by recent statements by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) on science, space, and education policies, and by disturbing rumors from the Office of Management and Budget on drastic cut-backs under consideration for the fiscal year 1983 budget.

Although the deliberations on this year's fiscal 1982 budget were not even concluded yet because of the Congress's refusal to institute draconian cuts in the nation's science and technology programs, the legislators held this series of pre-emptive public hearings to get on the record their opposition to the even more drastic cuts being considered for next year while the administration finalizes its FY83 budget requests. The administration's federal 1983 budget is scheduled to be released to Congress in mid-January.

Reversing forty years

Keyworth told the committee that "science policy, made without considering economic policy, is irrelevant," a perverse response to the long-term American commitment to scientific advances as *the basis for* economic advances. The President's economic and fiscal policy, Keyworth stated, will mean "there are priorities and limits, and R&D—for all its recognized worth—must contend and compete" for the federal dollar. In a

response, Rep. Ronnie Flippo (D-Ala.), Chairman of the Sub-committee on Space Science and Applications, quipped, "economic policy without regard to *science* policy, is also irrelevant." In addition, past investment in science and technology has "produced economic payoffs beyond our wildest dreams," stated committee chairman Don Fuqua (D-Fla.).

But Keyworth maintained his anti-science stance in the face of opposition. "We cannot realistically expect to accelerate spending for R&D in a period of fiscal austerity," he continued. "I believe that today's federal role in science and technology must be different from that which has prevailed since World War II. . . . Certainly, a science policy for the 1980s cannot be and should not be one based simply on growth for growth's sake. Even in a period of affluence and sustained economic growth, throwing money at problems has not proven to be an effective strategy. In fact, it has often been responsible for furthering mediocrity rather than stimulating excellence."

This weak attempt to justify the fallacy that slashing science and technology programs will help restore the nation's economic health contradicted statements in Keyworth's own testimony. Earlier, the Science Adviser had pointed to the number of American Nobel laureates as evidence of the health of American science. These were due, in part, to federal support for research over the past 40 years.

The majority of the Science and Technology committee was not in sympathy with this attempt to throw away the U.S. lead and excellence in science, which includes the programs they have funded through their stewardship of the majority of the nation's R&D projects in the legislative process.

In his opening statement, Rep. Fuqua stated that it was "crucial to make long-term considerations, going beyond shifting budgets." He characterized the administration's budgetary science policy as one of "short-

term expediency which could interrupt science and technology training and careers.”

The question, according to Fuqua, is, “is our long-term investment holding against the budget cuts. . . . We need to inject long-range thinking on short-term budget juggling,” he stated, “and this will be a bipartisan effort.”

The President’s goal of increasing productivity “clashes with his economic goals of a balanced budget” Fuqua summarized.

Space, education and nuclear R&D

In his prepared testimony, Keyworth tried to steer clear of policy stands on a specific science policy issues. During the questioning by committee members, however, congressional leaders who have just spent the past year trying to save their programs from the first bout with the Reagan administration on budget cuts tried to pin down the Science Adviser.

One of the first issues raised was that of the federal responsibility in science education. In his testimony, Keyworth himself described a “situation with serious national implications” in the shortage of qualified science and engineering personnel. He admitted that “underlying current problems with the quantity and quality of trained scientific and engineering manpower is the weakness in our country’s elementary and secondary school preparation in mathematics and science. Since 1970 there has been a nationwide trend toward reduction of high school graduation requirements” in these fields.

His solution? “Despite the administration’s real concerns in this area, improvement in this unfortunate situation is the responsibility of the schools themselves and of the communities that run them.”

Representative Doug Walgren (D-Pa.) the subcommittee Chairman with responsibility for the National Science Foundation, responded sharply to this attack on the entire post-war legislative history of the federal government’s role in fostering excellence in science education. There is “strong evidence that there must be a federal role in this area. Our secondary schools are woefully lacking in training in the sciences: college administrators keep saying this before my subcommittee,” he stated.

Federal support for fellowships on the college and graduate level is required, the congressman agreed, “but we need strong goals and programs to upgrade secondary science education. The administration is saying that the NSF’s work in science curriculum development has been ineffective, so we’re eliminating it. What are we going to replace it with?”

Walgren continued, “These programs *have* made some contribution. We will lose these students because they have had no exposure to science on the secondary

level.” The administration attempted to eliminate all NSF science education programs in the FY82 budget. Walgren’s subcommittee and the full Science and Technology Committee restored some of the funding for this year, and they are not likely to agree to an abandonment of federal support for science education in the upcoming budget battle.

Backtracking on fission and fusion

Nuclear energy is the only field in energy R&D where the President himself has made a public commitment to push the nation forward. Now, under threats from the OMB of budget deficits and economic calamity, the administration is promoting policies which will undermine the President’s intent. Energy Secretary Edwards, who has until now put up no significant fight against slashing the Department of Energy budget, stated in the *Washington Post* Dec. 8 that the proposed \$1.5 billion OMB cut in the DOE’s FY83 budget will prevent him from carrying out the nuclear mandate.

Keyworth, who made no mention of energy R&D in his testimony, was questioned on this closely by Rep. Marilyn Bouquard (D-Tenn.), Chairman of the subcommittee on Energy Research and Production of the Science and Technology Committee. In the rumored FY83 administration budget request, she stated, “fission R&D is dropping despite the administration rhetoric about saving the nuclear option.” Nuclear energy is necessary for the nation, and is a “vital element in our international balance of trade,” she said.

Keyworth repeated what has become the pat answer to this observation: that the nuclear R&D budget proposal contradicts the President’s own stated policies. “We have one principal objective in our nuclear policies—to restore health to the nuclear option and allow nuclear energy to compete with other energy sources” in the marketplace. He had stated the evening before the hearings in a talk before the Washington, D.C. section of the American Nuclear Society, that the administration’s commitment to nuclear energy “is profound, but highly pragmatic.” “We are going to remove the [federal regulatory] impediments for nuclear energy rather than give out subsidies, which are a crutch,” he stated.

What he meant by “subsidies” became clearer. “We are going to focus on the initiatives on which a healthy industry depends—other facilities might be interesting down the road. The focus will be on the near term, like nuclear waste.” In other words, advanced nuclear R&D and development of more advanced second-generation high-temperature reactors, fission-fusion hybrids, etc. have gone by the boards. This was reflected in the administration’s FY82 budget earlier in the year where advanced nuclear technology, including fuel reprocessing, was cut out of the budget.

Government has been a "dead hand" on the nuclear industry, Keyworth told the committee, and its role now is simply to get itself off the industry's back. This, of course, overturns the policy established by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. It is unlikely that Congress, which for four years voted funds for programs including the Clinch River Breeder Reactor over the objection of President Carter, will toss these R&D programs into the garbage bin.

Over the past year a fight has raged between the administration and the Congress over national policy in thermonuclear fusion. Less than six months after President Carter put his signature on the 1980 Magnetic Fusion Energy Engineering Act, mandating an aggressive fusion effort, Carter holdovers and anti-technology factions in the Reagan camp were trying to overturn the intent and goals of the law.

Bouquard asked Keyworth, "Are you going to appeal the OMB cuts in the DOE fusion program [more than \$50 million in real dollars]?" Keyworth would only say that he cannot comment on specific programs still under budgetary review. Bouquard was visibly angered by this posture.

On the space program, Flippo received an equally negative response. When he asked if Keyworth will support the Galileo Jupiter mission before the OMB, Keyworth replied: "It is a good mission. The question is whether we can afford to support it."

"In an article in the *Washington Post*," Flippo said, "you recommended against continuation of NASA's planetary programs." "Planetary exploration has dominated space science programs for the last decade," Keyworth replied, trying to deflect the question. "I strongly support all areas of space science. . . ." Flippo cut Keyworth off in obvious disgust.

Research & Development

Cold welcome for a Heritage proposal

by Marsha Freeman

The Heritage Foundation's attempt to eliminate NASA aeronautics research and development in the name of "free enterprise" has touched off a major battle in Congress. Because it would gut American advanced military programs (and hamstringing the country's second largest export industry), the David Stockman-backed plan has

also prompted a second look at the special report issued by *EIR* earlier this year entitled "The KGB Moles and the Heritage Foundation."

The battle pits the socialist-founded but nominally conservative Heritage Foundation, along with the Office of Management and Budget, against Congress, the military, and the aerospace industry. Since the British Fabian Society operatives who set up Heritage as a control point over the administration, using the "right-wing" version of British liberalism, are interlinked with KGB personnel, the questions arises as to whether certain elements of Soviet intelligence are using Heritage to undermine vital U.S. capabilities.

Research in advanced aircraft has been federally supported since the birth of the industry in the second decade of this century. It is supposed to be turned over to private industry, according to Heritage's 1980 report to the Reagan administration. The author of this proposal, Richard Speier, asserted in October that the government should not pay for aeronautical research and development since it ends up as a "commercial" product for industry. Congress, industry, and the military took a distinctly opposite viewpoint during hearings held Dec. 8 by the subcommittee on Transportation, Aviation, and Materials of the House Committee on Science and Technology.

Dan Glickman (D-Kans.), the subcommittee chairman, said in his opening statement that "suggestions have ranged from turning aeronautics over to the military, to ending all propulsion work and closing the NASA Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, to zeroing out entire program." Glickman then presented for the hearing record three letters from high-level Defense Department administrators, to dispel the notion that the military would pick up aeronautics research if it were dropped by NASA.

The Pentagon's position

In a recent letter to OMB director David Stockman, Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger stated that the "major reductions proposed in the NASA aeronautics technology programs and the closing of the Lewis Research Center are not consistent with DOD needs. . . . Therefore, I request that, before any budget reductions and subsequent management actions are taken which impact the NASA aeronautics program, this department be given the opportunity to review these actions to ensure that they will not adversely affect important defense needs."

A letter to NASA Administrator James Beggs from the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, Dr. Richard DeLauer, states: "The continued superiority of U.S. aeronautical technology, and the historic dependence of the Military Services on NASA facilities and technical specialists have been, and will