

Resolutions and reformation at the AAAS

Bombs fell on North Vietnam in record numbers for two weeks just before the American Association for the Advancement of Science met in Washington for its 139th annual meeting (SN: 1/6/73, p. 4). The bombs left their mark in Indochina and at the AAAS meeting. Antiwar rallies were formed and petitions were signed. When the legislative council of the 130,000-member AAAS met on the last day of the meeting, two strongly worded resolutions related to the war were passed.

One, directly related to the post-election bombing escalation, called for an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. armed forces in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. States the resolution: "As scientists we cannot remain silent while the richest and most powerful nation of the 20th century uses the resources of modern science to intervene destructively in the problems of poor and distant lands."

In another statement, the council resolved that the AAAS endorse the purposes of the Vietnam War Ecological Damages Assessment Act of 1972. This act, proposed by Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.) and Rep. Gilbert Gude (R-Md.), calls on President Nixon and the National Academy of Sciences to assess and report to the public on the ecological effects (constructive as well as destructive) of the application of American science in Indochina.

The AAAS council also endorsed the findings of the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future (SN: 3/18/72, p. 181) and called for increased funding for population sciences research. In other resolutions, the AAAS urged "that reference to the theory of creation, which is neither scientifically grounded nor capable of performing the roles of scientific theories, not be required in textbooks and other classroom materials intended for use in science curricula," and that "scientists be selective in the usage of nonhuman primates and that governments contribute to the conservation needs of nonhuman primates by all feasible means."

"Certainly the timeliness and political implications of some of these resolutions give the impression that the AAAS council is becoming more socially conscious and politically aware of the uses of science and technology," says Richard Scribner, AAAS meeting director. But even without the background and stimulation of increased bombing in North Vietnam, it is evident that the AAAS is on its way to becoming a more responsive organization. The major portion of the council meeting was taken up with the discussion and ratification of a new set of bylaws that implement and amplify the constitution approved at last year's AAAS meeting. The major thrust of these two documents is aimed at making the AAAS a more democratic organization with increased membership participation.

The legislative council, for instance, will be reduced in size from an unwieldy 550 persons to a more manageable 100. So streamlined, this representative body should find it possible to meet more than once a year and thus be more responsive to the needs of the association membership. In another change, the board of directors and the president-elect of the association will no longer be elected by the council but by popular vote. In effect, the AAAS will become more oriented toward its membership and less toward affiliated societies. Members will have direct links to the council.

Discussing these changes in governance, Leonard Rieser of Dartmouth, the new president-elect of the AAAS, emphasized the strengthening of the association's various disciplinary and interdisciplinary sections. In addition to stimulating communication among scientists, Rieser says the changes will encourage the members of these groups to be more concerned about the advancement, public understanding and use of science, and to get more involved in the AAAS. After all, he says, "one presumes that people who join the AAAS are more than just subscribers to SCIENCE magazine."

29/72, p. 71). In August NASA slipped HEAO to 1976 to save money (SN: 12/2/72, p. 358).

HEAO was classified as a high priority recommendation of various scientific advisory groups. NASA chose to cut into it rather than Viking (the 1976 Mars landers) or the Jupiter-Saturn fly-bys. "We are going back to the study-phase with HEAO to see if we can develop an alternate plan," said one NASA scientist. But other scientists weren't as optimistic. "HEAO is dead," says Herbert Friedman of the Naval Research Laboratory, "at least in the form we have been pursuing."

Other cuts included phasing out work on communications satellites and cancellation of work on the quiet short take-off and landing research aircraft. Work on nuclear propulsion will be discontinued. The Plum Brook Station near Sandusky, Ohio, where nuclear power testing is conducted, will be closed. There was no mention at all of the recommended Pioneer Venus mission.

Said one scientist of the state of affairs, "There is just not much of an audience to plead for science." □

Medical programs due for major cutbacks

The Government's budget proposal for fiscal 1974 will not be released until late this month, but the advance word in the medical area is that a number of Federal health services will be eliminated or reduced.

The 26-year-old Hill-Burton hospital construction program, which built \$13 billion worth of hospitals in 4,000 communities, will be phased out. So will the Regional Medical Program, designed by the Johnson Administration to bring health care to more Americans. Community health planning is cut 10 percent. There are no funds for maternal and child health, family planning programs or comprehensive health services. Research training for medical students will be eliminated. These cuts are somewhat offset by the President's Health Services Formula Grants, whereby states will apply Federal funds for health care.

Some medical research will receive increased funding. The streamlined Na-

tional Cancer Institute (SN: 5/13/72, p. 309) will get the lion's share. Heart research is next in line for an increase. Research in birth control, environmental health and venereal diseases will also receive more funds. Emergency medical services, one of the President's pet projects, will be funded at the present \$15 million. Further details regarding National Institutes of Health programs will not be known until the budget is released; a decrease of \$42 million in other research money is anticipated. Which type research will be hit will be a matter of great interest.

Some medical spokesmen—John A. D. Cooper, president of the Association of American Medical Colleges, Louis G. Welt, president of the Association of Professors of Medicine, others—have protested the cuts. Congress will probably pressure the President to reinstate some of the funds. But the chances of his doing so are slim since the new Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is Caspar W. Weinberger, who helped design the cuts for the Administration's Office of Management and Budget. □