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policy news from around the world.*

## **U.S. House Science Committee Holds Hearing on Sensitive Research**

In October, the U.S. House Science Committee held a hearing on "Conducting Research during the War on Terrorism: Balancing Openness and Security." At the hearing, Dr. John Marburger, director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, addressed a concern that the Bush administration was considering a policy of "pre-publication review" of sensitive federally funded research.

"This is incorrect," Marburger said. "This is not the thrust of the considerations, and it's important to note that this process is in the formative stage."

House Science Committee Chair Sherwood Boehlert (R-N.Y.) opened the hearing by saying, "The war on terrorism will be won in the laboratory just as much as on the battlefield." He noted that this highlights some "critical tensions" that the war on terrorism has brought to a head: "If the laboratory is a theater of war," he said, "then what are its rules of engagement? War demands secrecy; science thrives on openness. How can a free society balance those competing demands?"

In response to questions from Rep. Boehlert, witnesses from across the research community said that there should not be a category for "sensitive, but unclassified" research, a concept that dates back to the Cold War which was recently alluded to by White House officials in a proposal unveiled last May. Such a category, said the witnesses, would hamper the openness necessary for the scientific enterprise to thrive.

M.R.C. Greenwood, Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Cruz, said, "The best way to sort out these issues is to work directly with experts in the various scientific fields and scientific societies. The experts are well equipped to help determine if something is sensitive or dangerous and may need to be withheld from the public domain for any amount of time by classifying the work."

About a week after the hearing, the presidents of the U.S. National Academies (NAS)—Bruce Alberts (National Academy of Sciences), William A. Wulf (National Academy of Engineering), and Harvey Fineberg (Institute of Medicine)—issued a statement that called for the scientific community to work closely with federal agencies responding to new national security threats. But they also asked the federal government to refrain from creating poorly defined categories of information that do not provide precise guidance on what data should be restricted from public access.

"Experience shows that vague criteria of this kind generate deep uncertainties among both scientists and officials responsible for enforcing regulations," they said in the statement. "The inevitable effect is to stifle scientific creativity and to weaken national security."

The NAS background paper on "Science and Security in an Age of Terrorism" refers to the self-regulating activities of the science community involved in uranium research prior to the Manhattan Project. In 1940, NAS collaborated with its National Research Council to establish an advisory committee on scientific publications, to which over 200 scientific journals agreed to channel articles in this field to help determine whether the work could be published without causing a threat to national security.

The NAS presidents' statement recommends the same type of ongoing responsibility from the scientific research community today as it works closely with government agencies. Furthermore, their statement provides recommendations for the federal government in determining what research should be restricted from public access. A recent NAS report identifies critical research and development areas as well as immediate actions the government can take using available technology. The NAS background paper, report, and presidents' statement, can be accessed at Web site <http://nationalacademies.org/>.

## **NRC Recommends Continued Direct Government Funding of Smithsonian Science Centers**

In a report issued by the U.S. National Academies' National Research Council (NRC) in October, the NRC recommends that the Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE), among other research centers of the Smithsonian Institution, remain exempt from having to compete for federal research dollars. The committee that wrote the report said the SCMRE fills a highly specialized research niche that is of unique value not only to the Smithsonian but also to museums worldwide.

The chair of the NRC committee, Cornelius J. Pings, president emeritus of the Association of American Universities, said, "There would be little or no scientific benefit to transferring funds away from Smithsonian research to a competitive mechanism. In fact, withdrawing federal support would likely lead to the demise of much of the institution's research and compromise its mission to 'increase and diffuse knowledge.'"

The study was sponsored by the

Smithsonian Institution at the request of the White House Office of Management and Budget. The report can be accessed at Web site [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu).

## **Tony Filmer Appointed Director of CSIRO's Light Metals Program**

Geoff Garrett, chief executive of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), announced last October the appointment of Tony Filmer as director of CSIRO's emerging flagship program on light metals. Filmer is currently managing director of the Smelting Division in Tasmania, Australia of Comalco, a supplier of bauxite, alumina, and primary aluminium to Australia and New Zealand. He has a PhD degree in electrochemistry from Murdoch University, Western Australia. Following a research career in process metallurgy, Filmer has held a series of senior management positions with industry.

## **Canadian Photonics Fabrication Centre Given Green Light**

The Canadian and Ontario governments and Carleton University announced in November an innovative collaboration that will see Canada's National Research Council (NRC) and the university implement plans to build NRC's Canadian Photonics Fabrication Centre (CPFC) in Ottawa.

The government of Canada announced that it will contribute \$30 million over five years. The federal funding is part of a 2001 budget allocation that NRC received for leading-edge technologies and expanding NRC's regional innovation and technology cluster initiatives. The government of Ontario, through its Ontario Innovation Trust (OIT) and Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund (ORDCF), announced that it will provide up to \$13.125 million to Carleton to assist with outfitting the center and enabling university researchers to access fabrication facilities for photonics and optoelectronics devices. The photonics center will cost \$43 million over the first five years.

Don Boudria, Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the Canadian House of Commons, speaking on behalf of Allan Rock, Minister of Industry, said, "This...facility will be the first of its kind in Canada, helping Canadian firms tap into the established world-class expertise and innovative capabilities of the region. It will also help maintain the solid R&D base required to support and serve the Canadian photonics and optoelectronics sectors."

**South Africa's CSIR Strengthens International Network**

In October, Pawel Dluzewski of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute for Fundamental Technological Research visited the National Product Development Centre (NPDC) of South Africa's CSIR (formerly called the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) as part of a project under a South Africa and Poland Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. The project, titled "Nanoscale Mechanics," is jointly led by Dluzewski and NPDC's Nawaz Mahomed and involves research into the mechanical behavior of nanostructures using computational techniques based on molecular dynamics and finite element analysis. Initially funded for three years, it allows for the exchange of South African and Polish researchers and aims to provide a link between physicists and materials researchers working on atomic positioning and residual-stress fields in nanostructures as applied to processes such as the epitaxial growth of nanofilms.



*Pawel Dluzewski, right, of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute for Fundamental Technological Research and a visiting researcher at South Africa's CSIR (formerly called the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), at one of the two seminars he presented at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa. With him are, from left, Nawaz Mahomed of CSIR's National Product Development Centre, and, from the Department of Physics at Witwatersrand, CSIR Fellow Professor Frank Nabarro and Professor J. Comins.*

**Info Day in Portugal to Emphasize Bio- and Nanotechnology**

An information day on "Portugal, Candidate Countries, and ERA" will be held in Lisbon January 17-18 to bridge the

gap between researchers in the European Research Area (ERA). According to Portugal's Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the event is designed to foster partnerships of different institutions in these countries, supported by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Bio- and nanotechnology will be the principal scientific themes covered at the event. Portugal has a strong biotechnology research program, according to the ministry, and several candidate countries, particularly the Czech Republic and Poland, are strong in the field of nanotechnology. Seminars at the event will cover FP6, rules for participation, proposal preparation, evaluation criteria, and intellectual-property rights. Portugal's Secretary of State for Science and Technology, Fernandes Thomaz, will give the opening address.

**South African Workshop Recommends International Collaborations in Platinum Research**

A workshop on platinum-based industries of the future, organized by South Africa's CSIR (formerly called the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) and held in Pretoria September 26-27, released a report providing recommendations for industrial applications and international collaborative research in the field. Co-sponsored by South Africa's Department of Science and Technology with input from the Council for Mineral Technology (Mintek) and the National Research Foundation, the workshop was attended by a cross section of platinum interest groups as well as by German and Swedish specialists in platinum metals.

Working groups on industrial and medical applications identified issues and areas for further investigation, including high-temperature platinum-based superalloys, electronics, the glass industry, catalysis, jewelry, and medical applications. A number of specific projects were identified during the workshop, notably in the development of anti-cancer platinum compounds and oxidation-resistant Pt-modified aluminide coatings.

A steering group was named that will develop a vision and associated strategic plans as well as engage with key stake-

holders such as relevant cabinet ministers in South Africa and representatives from industry. The vision and strategic plan will be presented to South Africa's National Advisory Council on Innovation and the Department of Science and Technology and to bi-national commissions set up with Germany and Sweden, respectively.

A second workshop on the topic is under consideration, to be held this year in Europe. The report is available on the CSIR Web site at [www.csir.co.za](http://www.csir.co.za).

**South Korea, Chile Sign Cooperation Agreement for Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy**

South Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Choi Sung-hong, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile, Maria Soledad Alvear, signed an agreement between the two countries in November for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The spokesperson for the South Korean ministry said that the agreement stipulates cooperative measures between the two countries in such areas as research and development as well as planning and construction of nuclear energy plants and a commitment to peaceful uses of nuclear substances and equipment.

**Academy of Finland Launches Multidisciplinary Research Programs**

The Board of the Academy of Finland announced in November the decision to launch seven research programs in 2003. A total of €41.3 million has been earmarked for the programs. Among the projects involving materials research are ones on future electronics and industrial design, each scheduled to run for three years. The program on electronics will focus on future technologies for logic systems and future materials as well as new algorithms and calculation methods aimed at more effective implementation than is currently possible. The multidisciplinary program on industrial design will cover design practices, technological product development, materials research, marketing, consumption, and the cultural impact of products. □

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