

## A Great Society blueprint, heavier in science than most, goes before the Congress

The \$186 billion budget President Johnson plans to present to the Congress this week and the State of the Union message he delivered at the opening of this Congressional session, represent for science the sharpest diversion yet from the policies that began with World War II and carried through the administration of the late President John F. Kennedy.

In earlier years of the Johnson Administration, major presentations of Presidential policy were marked by a leveling off of research and development expenditures and an apparent indifference to the growth of science itself.

This year, while the leveling off will continue, and support of some efforts not linked to Vietnam and the social programs of the Great Society is being cut, it is apparent that President Johnson feels he has finally found a way to mobilize science and technology for the nonmilitary wars important to his administration: poverty, disease, unbridled population growth, crime and urban problems.

While the President's nonmilitary programs would undoubtedly move more quickly were it not for the war in Vietnam, it would be in error to blame the shifts and cutbacks in many areas of Federally supported science and technology solely on competition for funds.

Up to now, major research and development efforts in the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration have paid for more than half of the research carried on in industrial laboratories and about three-fifths of the work pursued in universities and similar institutions. Because new systems are invariably more costly than those they replace, and present systems are being construed as adequate, decisions have already been reached to:

- Cut back the space program once the moon has been reached.
- Settle for less in defense than the most advanced technology could provide, through such compromises as reliance on a non-nuclear navy, good enough for defense purposes if less than the best money could buy.
- Slow down the search for bigger

and better weapons for the nation's nuclear arsenal; enough overkill is enough.

Political pressures will continue to move Defense and the AEC in the direction of a missile defense system, despite outcries that this is only another lap in the arms race spiral. And Defense in the next few years will bend considerable effort toward perfecting the launch vehicles and radars, while the Atomic Energy Commission continues the detonation of massive thermonuclear devices in an effort to perfect the anti-ballistic missile warheads.

Any cutback in armaments, paced by the modicum of agreement on a treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, is still more hope than promise, despite President Johnson's dramatic promise to lay the treaty before the Senate for ratification this year.

Evidence that the Soviet Union really wants to halt the spread of nuclear weapons was her acceptance verbatim of language in the draft treaty on inspections suggested by West Germany last fall. The issue had been a major reason for opposition to the treaty by the Germans (SN: 10/2/67, p. 228), who now find their objections defused by the Soviet acceptance of their own suggestion.

If the inspection question has been eased, the doubts of non-nuclear nations about general disarmament have not. The treaty would more-or-less permanently relegate all non-nuclear nations to second-class status.

In U.S. national policy this year there will be a reliance on science and technology—if no major increases in support—in many of the non-military programs the President has already cited. These are expected to be covered more thoroughly in subsequent messages to the Congress.

International cooperation for the development of ocean resources, for example, was selected out of the thousands of ideas submitted for inclusion in the State of Union message. This is the first time the President has singled out oceans for a special comment on such an occasion. The sharing of fish protein concentrate technology will be a major effort.

Domestically, new legislation to promote child health and prenatal care will build on the Child Health Act of 1967

and the 1967 Social Security Amendments. Maternal health care is planned for women who cannot afford it, as is care for children up to one year of age, with states contributing part of the money. Another part of the legislation will support family planning so that some of estimated 450,000 annual unwanted pregnancies will not occur.

The President's promise to stiffen drug abuse control aims at suppliers, not users. He specifically mentions stricter penalties for those who traffic in LSD and other dangerous drugs (hallucinogens, except marijuana, and barbiturates, amphetamines and some tranquilizers).

The President's strong comments seem to reduce any chance that marijuana will be removed from its legal slot as a narcotic.

Last year President Johnson submitted to Congress a Safe Streets and Crime Act that reflected the findings of his Crime Commission. It was a moderate, even liberal, bill aimed principally at upgrading the criminal justice system with grants to localities.

First in the House, then in a Senate subcommittee, the bill was not merely amended; it was shorn of many reform aspects and changed into what has been called a conservative, if not regressive measure.

To help fight crime the President is asking for \$100 million—less than he requested last year. His own comments seem to reflect a somewhat more conservative feeling than last year, and his program has been called repressive by civil rights leaders.

Elsewhere, the President proposes to:

- Ease the pressure on the cities through long-term housing, job training and model cities programs.

- Press for enactment of flammable fabrics and pipeline safety legislation, expand air and water pollution control allocations and increase controls over fish, poultry, water supplies and public exposure to radiation.

- Expand aid to undergraduate education, even as expenditures for the expansion of graduate training are being trimmed.

(Science News will examine the implications for science and technology of the President's fiscal 1969 budget proposals next week. Ed.)