

## An international 'think tank' for world problems



NAS

Laxenburg Palace near Vienna will be headquarters for new East-West institute.

The twofold objectives of the Center are reaffirmed. The first objective is to find approaches to solving some of the major common problems which beset advanced societies; this will require the use of a combination of systems analysis methodology, modern management techniques, and computer technology. Secondly, the Center will, by the nature of the participants, be a device to "build bridges" between the several intellectual communities of the East and West.

—Philip Handler, at a private planning meeting at Woods Hole, Oct. 1970

After more than four years of behind-the-scenes planning and negotiations, the scientific bodies of 12 major industrialized nations signed a charter in London this week formally establishing an East-West "think tank" to study problems of modern societies. The organization will be known as the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis. It will be based in Vienna.

The institute is thought to be the first permanent entity to bring together scholars of Western and Eastern bloc countries to study social problems. As indicated in the statement in a planning document two years ago by Philip Handler, president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, statesmen of science in the Western world are hoping that the institute's work will enable closer ties with scholars in Communist countries. Handler has been in charge of negotiations on behalf of the U.S. scientific community.

In a statement this week, Handler said, "This cooperative venture will provide a unique means and opportunity for scientists of many nations to collaborate directly with one another, relatively free of national constraints, in seeking understanding of and solutions to some of the world's most troublesome problems."

The 12 founding scholarly institutions of the institute, which is avowedly nongovernmental, represent scientists of

the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Canada, Bulgaria, France, East Germany, Japan, West Germany, the United States, Italy, Poland and Great Britain.

At the meeting this week at the Royal Society in London, representatives elected a Soviet scientist, Jermen M. Gvishiani, to a three-year term as chairman of the institute's council, which will set broad policy guidelines. Appointed full-time director of the institute was Howard Raiffa, a professor of managerial economics at Harvard University. He is an applied mathematician who works on complex managerial decision problems.

In an earlier background briefing at NAS headquarters in Washington, Raiffa generally went along with a reporter's suggested analogy of the institute as "a Rand Corp. on neutral soil." But he emphasized that the institute will work "for peaceful purposes" only, that it will do no contract research, and that its entire scholarly output will be open and nonclassified. "To soften your anal-



Harvard

Raiffa: Focus on complex problems.

ogy with Rand, you might want to think of it . . . as a combination of Rand, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, and the Center for Advanced Study at Stanford, to use U.S. examples," Raiffa said.

He estimated that about 100 research scientists from the 12 member countries will be working at the institute at any one time. The institute will be housed in Laxenburg Palace, an 18th-century building 10 miles from Vienna. It is being renovated for the institute by the Austrian Government at a cost estimated to exceed \$4 million.

The operating budget of the institute is expected to be at least \$3.5 million a year. The NAS and the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. each will contribute up to \$1 million; the other national institutions, the rest. The National Science Foundation will provide the funds to be paid as dues by the U.S. Academy.

The institute intends to focus on large, complex problems that result from industrialization, many of which are common to advanced societies. Projects being considered fall into four categories: environmental systems, health care systems, municipal services systems, and large engineering design systems. Raiffa said the first task is likely to be in the area of energy: supply, demand, substitution sources, future technologies, hazards. Included on the list of other potential projects are recycling, medical diagnosis, genetic engineering, and design of new towns.

It is not yet totally clear what unique contribution studies by an international institute could make to such much-already-studied problems, and there is bound to be some future scrutiny of the institute's value on this score. But for now those responsible for its creation seem to be happy merely to have finally achieved the ticklish quasi-diplomatic task of creating a permanent East-West "think tank." □