

Seven Chinese scientists touring U.S. universities and laboratories

Some 100 American scholars have visited the People's Republic of China since the dramatic thaw in relations between the United States and China last year. Now the visits are starting to flow the other direction.

The first delegation of Chinese scholars, 10 physicians (SN: 10/21/72, p. 260), completed their three-week tour of medical and health facilities in six U.S. cities on Nov. 1. Now a delegation of Chinese scientists is in the midst of a four-week stay that will end Dec. 15.

Harrison Brown, foreign secretary of the National Academy of Sciences, said last week there is no reason to believe that more groups of Chinese scholars won't be coming to the United States in the coming year. As yet, however, no definite plans for further tours are in the works.

Two of the seven scientists in the current delegation lived in the United States in the 1940's. Ch'ien Wei-ch'ang, a specialist in dynamics and jet propulsion, received his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto and was a research engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena from 1942 to 1949. Ch'ien Jen-yuan, a polymer chemist, studied at Caltech and received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1946.

During their first week in the United States, the Chinese scientists were feted at a banquet at the NAS building in Washington, toured the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, met with the President's science adviser, dined on turkey at a Thanksgiving Day dinner hosted by physicist C. N. Yang of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and toured the Brookhaven National Labora-

tory. This week they were visiting New York City and touring the Bell Telephone Laboratories, the IBM-Thomas J. Watson Research Center, and Columbia, Rockefeller and Princeton Universities.

At their first press conference, last week in Washington, the scientists spent most of the allotted time talking about the Cultural Revolution in China and recent changes in the conduct of higher education. But they did, unlike the physicians in the earlier visit, answer some spontaneous questions from reporters. Out of this came word that China was working on development of a communications satellite. As for more ambitious space research efforts, the Chinese congratulated the United States for its manned space program, but emphasized that in China most research work had to have practical applications.

Other scientists in the delegation:

Pei Shih-chang, head of the delegation and director of the Institute of Biophysics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Pai Chieh-fu, deputy head of delegation, a scientific administrator and a member of the Scientific and Technical Association Presidium.

Chang Wen-yu, deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Atomic Energy.

Hu Shih-ch'uan, who participated in research synthesizing insulin, a member of the Institute of Biochemistry in Shanghai.

Li Fu-sheng, deputy head of the External Equipment Laboratory of the Institute of Computing Technology in Shenyang.

Curbing development on New Jersey's flood plain

New Jersey is the most urban of the 50 United States. On 7,521 square miles live 7,168,164 people (census of 1970). A tremendous and continuing suburban boom has raised the state's population by 2,332,835 in 20 years. The land on which New Jersey's population lives 953.1 per square mile is relatively flat (except for the hilly northwest portion) and threaded by many rivers. Sometimes the rivers flood.

This week the state legislature, with a 33-0 vote of the state senate, completed passage of a flood-plain development bill that had been requested by the Republican Governor, William T. Cahill. The bill gives the state Department of Environmental Protection power to determine the extent of the state's flood plains and to control development within them. State officials estimate that about 5,000 of the state's 7,521 square miles will be affected.

Two forms of regulation are provided depending on whether the land considered is on a "floodway" or a "flood-hazard area." A floodway is a natural run-off area into which floodwaters dissipate. The state would have direct control over development in these areas. Flood-hazard areas are areas adjacent to floodways. Affected municipalities

would be given one year to adopt regulations for flood protection in flood-hazard areas. If the municipalities do not act within the time limit, the state can impose its own regulations.

Other states, including Wisconsin, Minnesota and Connecticut, have adopted similar laws, but New Jersey's already intense level of land development has made the measure more controversial there. Governor Cahill is expected to sign the bill shortly. □

Students custodians of lunar samples

After the Apollo 17 rocks have been processed by the Lunar Receiving Laboratory in Houston, selected samples will be divided and mounted for presentation by the American ambassadors to youth science delegates in foreign countries. Selected students of the delegation will then act as honorary custodians for the scientific and educational institutions in which the samples will be displayed. The project is part of the International Youth Science Tour sponsored by NASA for more than 70 high-school students from six continents. The students will attend the Apollo 17 launch Dec. 6 and will view the lunar surface activities from Mission Control at the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston. □

Everybody talks about computers, now NSF . . .

Concerned, curious, intrigued about the way computers affect our lives? So is the National Science Foundation. NSF announced this week it is forming a Computer Impact on Society section to support research "designed to help better understand the impact computers have on our way of life."

Peter G. Lykos, on leave of absence from the Illinois Institute of Technology, is head of the new section. Two programs are planned.

A Computer Impact on Organizations program will support studies to improve understanding of the role of computers in management and decision-making. Projects to be considered encompass investigations of legal and economic problems, including security and privacy issues, and problems in such areas as automation, robotics and traffic flow.

An Impact on the Individual program will study the ways in which computers affect work patterns and life styles. NSF says work will be supported on improving private citizens' access to automated information systems, including problems of ease of access, accuracy and confidentiality. The program will place emphasis on improving the methods available for persons to communicate with machines. □