

question: Do these findings apply to humans? Because women's sex drives are known to fluctuate throughout their menstrual cycles, it is quite likely that women are more attuned to intercourse at ovulation than at other times, and that their heightened drive at this period puts their sex partners more in the mood for intercourse. Sex attractants secreted at the time of ovulation may likewise serve as a come-on for men. In 1975, Michael and his colleagues identified acids in the vagi-

nal secretions of women that were identical to monkey sex attractants, and more of these acids are present at the time of ovulation than at any other time (SN: 1/4/75, p. 5). Then last year, Richard L. Doty and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania found that male subjects consider women's vaginal odors more intense and agreeable during the preovulatory and ovulatory phase of the menstrual cycle than at any other phase (SN: 1/3/76, p. 6). □

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## Geophysicist next science adviser?

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Geophysicist Frank Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has emerged as the top contender for the presidential science adviser post, SCIENCE NEWS has learned. Contrary to other press reports, however, he had not yet been offered the job by early this week.

On Thursday, Feb. 10, Press met with President Jimmy Carter to exchange views on science policy. Finally, Carter reportedly asked Press to write a description of how he would proceed if appointed the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)—in effect, the President's chief science adviser.

At midweek, Carter apparently was still considering the written reply, and Press told SCIENCE NEWS he did not know when a decision might actually be made. He would not comment further on the job or on his discussions with the President.

Press is currently the chairman of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at MIT and serves on several government advisory panels. For a decade he has been a leader in efforts to increase funding for earthquake research and is credited with helping bring about this year's major budget increase in this area. He was a member of the old President's Science Advisory Committee in the Kennedy administration, now serves on the National Science Board and has consulted for several other agencies, including the Department of Defense and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

As a scientist, Press has pursued a wide range of related interests. He was a member of the team of geophysicists that first identified the long-period oscillations that travel around the world following an earthquake—waves now measured by a seismometer named after Press and a colleague. During the International Geophysical Year, he helped do seismic analysis that showed Antarctica to be a true continent, in honor of which there is now a Mt. Press in Antarctica.

In the early 1960s he helped develop seismic techniques to police the atomic test ban treaties then being negotiated. When Apollo astronauts landed on the moon, they left behind a seismometer designed and built by Press and his co-workers. More recently, he has chaired the National Academy of Sciences Com-

mittee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China and traveled to China to study earthquake prediction. He reported personally to President Ford about the Chinese successes.

Among his colleagues, Press has a reputation for quiet scholarship, accompanied by an active concern for applying what has been learned. In pressing for a larger commitment to earthquake prediction, for instance, he has followed a low-key, rational approach but supported it with a tenacity capable of sustaining the effort over four administrations.

Carter's apparent choice has raised speculation in Washington about what sort of science policy to expect for the next four years. Some observers have pointed to Press's obvious strengths in matters dealing with natural resources and the environment but question his willingness to "rock the boat" on sensitive military matters, like the B-1 bomber. Appointment of an academic scientist, rather than a science administrator, would also raise questions over the role the next science adviser will play in Carter's much discussed plans for administrative reorganization.

Even if Press were to be appointed immediately, it would be too late for him to affect this year's revised science budget, which will be submitted to Congress on Feb. 22. The changes for R&D are expected to be small, however, except for possible cuts in defense R&D and priority changes rumored for ERDA. □

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## NIH director stays, CDC director goes

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"Politics is out at NIH," Joseph E. Califano Jr. has told the staff of the National Institutes of Health. To prove his point, the new Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare announced that the Carter administration would retain Donald S. Frederickson as the director of NIH.

Frederickson is a Republican appointed by Ford a year and a half ago and will be one of the few Ford men expected to remain in the new administration. It was a sign that Carter would not subject NIH to partisan politics where many say it has

floundered since the Nixon years.

Past NIH directors have been the object of much political maneuvering. Both Robert Q. Marston and Robert S. Stone were asked to leave their posts by Richard Nixon, the first President empowered to appoint the NIH director. Since then, critics have charged that basic research at NIH has suffered from the increased emphasis on goal-oriented research. Much of the criticism surfaced in the form of a statement drafted by the Federation of American Scientists two years ago (SN: 12/21/74, p. 389). Although no move is expected to return the directorship to a nonpolitical position, the NIH staff greeted the announcement with much enthusiasm.

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While NIH was withdrawing from the political arena, another agency of the HEW, the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, was again drawn inside. On Feb. 7, David J. Sencer, director of the CDC since 1966 and an employee since 1960, announced that he had been asked to resign his post by Califano. Immediate reaction blamed the resignation on the criticism the CDC has received for its handling of the swine flu immunization program and its investigation of the Legionnaires' disease. At least one group of scientists at a virology meeting on the day of the announcement considered Sencer a competent administrator and found his resignation unfortunate.

But at a press conference following the resignation, Califano disagreed with the notion that the politics cast out of NIH had somehow found its way to the CDC. He said that while interviewing candidates for the position of assistant secretary of health, he found that all thought CDC "could do with some fresh air, some fresh faces." Califano also insisted that CDC had not been singled out for political reasons since other health administrators from past years had also been asked to resign. "If you had been through what I have been through in the last week trying to think through this swine flu program," Califano said, "you would be damned sure that there were no politics in the health area and that you had the best minds available in this country to help you with those issues." □

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During all the shuffling of positions in the new Carter administration, the House of Representatives was dismembering the controversial Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Opponents felt the Committee had too long promoted the adoption of nuclear energy without properly regulating its use. All the former functions of the JCAE have now been distributed to five committees in the House, with the oversight of ERDA going to the Science and Technology Committee and domestic regulation of nuclear energy to the Interior Committee. Oversight of military uses of atomic energy goes to the Armed Services Committee. □