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Summary Minutes

of

The Research Advisory Committee

April 9-10, 1992

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Summary Minutes
of the
RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 9-10, 1992

Chairman Bryant Rossiter called the 100th meeting of the Research Advisory Committee to order at 9:00 a.m., with members John Gordon, Robert Herting, Carl Liedholm, Elinor Ostrom, Bobby Phillips, Calvin Qualset, and Gerald Thomas present; members Thomas DeGregori and Charles Muscoplat absent.

ITEM I. Research Update

Richard Bissell, AID/Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Research and Development, reviewed the following items:

* The AID reorganization took effect formally in October 1991, consolidating various functions under three directorates: Policy, Operations, and Finance/Administration. The Office of Research was also created within the Bureau for Research and Development. There have been delays in filling positions, low personnel ceilings, and stringent resource allocations.

* Vacancies on the RAC, a concern voiced at previous committee meetings, will be addressed. With new areas of emphasis in the Agency, the membership might expand to 13 or 14.

* Research challenges facing the Agency include designing a program for the former Soviet Union. Approximately \$230 million in technical assistance is programmed for FY 92, with a request to the Congress for \$300 million in FY 93. Under the Agency's continuing resolution passed by the Congress, the monies for this program will come out of the Economic Support Fund account. It is hoped that for FY 93, the Congress will provide development allocations for the program.

* A small CGIAR group met in London in February to examine the future role of CGIAR and lay out areas of inquiry and mandates for the 1990s.

* The Administrator's Fellowships are a mechanism for bringing experienced scientists into the Agency for two weeks to provide an assessment of a given area and to bring new ideas to A.I.D. Recent Fellows were: Donald Plucknett, World Bank, who provided an assessment on agricultural research; and, Glen Johnston, who suggested how the Agency might form a support network.

Chairman Rossiter noted that much of the Committee's last meeting (September '91) was devoted to concerns that research and development are being down-graded in the Agency; perhaps not as a matter of philosophy but as a matter of budgets. He referred to a report from the Carnegie Foundation that stresses the need for a more important role in international affairs of research and development. The report even included a proposal for an expansion of the State Department to accommodate such a re-alignment of priorities. He asked for Bissell's views.

Bissell said he did not think there had been a downgrading of research yet, but stressed that research is facing important and increasing competition, without any foreseeable increases in A.I.D. resources.

ITEM II. The AID Strategic Research Agenda

Developing a Research Agenda

Hiram Larew, AID/Director, Policy, described efforts by the new Office of Strategic Planning within the Agency's Policy Directorate to develop a research agenda for the Agency.

Underlying assumptions in developing the agenda include:

- * Either constant or diminishing resources, in the face of increasing assistance needs;
- * Increasing concern over accountability for the programs, and for the research conducted;
- * Increasing interest in maintaining and improving the quality of the research.
- * Defining the type of research currently being supported and that might be supported in the future;
- * Profiling the current research portfolio;
- * Providing guidance on the future of the research portfolio. The office of Strategic Planning has drafted a document, "The Agenda for the Nineties", that discusses various options, directions the Agency might take. The document is only in the initial stages of discussion and how it will come out cannot be predicted.

Larew said that if the Agency is going to continue to be involved in research, the strategic plan also ought to include a section on how to do a better job of explaining successes so that it can more clearly justify what it is doing. It is hoped the

Agenda will explain what AID's research plans are for the next five to ten years, both to those within the Agency and to those outside as well.

Rossiter said it is important for Larew's group not become simply an advocate for AID, but, on the other hand, the Agency could almost lose by default if it does not develop some form of advocacy. Rossiter asked if others were being engaged in discussion of the research agenda.

Larew said that as the agenda is developed, other agencies will be asked for comment. For the short term, they are looking at such things as the reasons for AID's past involvement, its comparative advantages, where its strengths are in research.

Responding to a question from Ostrom, Rossiter said industry's success rate in research is only about 10 percent overall. The government's role is extremely difficult with politics always focusing on the boondoggle, waste, graft and so on. He could see no reason in principle why the failure rate of R & D in government should be required to be any lower than it is in industry, medicine or universities.

A Concept for Research Triage

Howard Minners distributed a paper illustrating a concept of "Research Triage," with four categories reflecting the amount of AID involvement:

In the first category, where AID's effort is substantial, the relatively small number of areas would include, for example, the CRSPs, The Children's Vaccine Initiative, and the environment.

In a second category, AID would still have a fairly strong and recognized role, but would not provide the leadership. Examples include the malaria vaccine and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

A third area, where many of AID's programs would fall, involves substantial coordination with other research within AID and in other parts of the scientific universe, in government or outside.

The largest list would be those areas where AID would decide it is unable or unwilling to take up research.

Perhaps an external peer review would be superimposed to help in the process. Minners suggested four factors which such an external group would examine: Merit, relevance, the cost of the research, and the management implications. A system is

needed, Minners said, to look at both a positive and a negative judgment on what is going on in other parts of the Agency, and equally so in the external peer review process where RAC would probably have a primary role.

Rossiter suggested that in order of importance merit and relevance perhaps should be reversed, given the very high (95 percent) rejection rate of excellent proposals. Perhaps AID would not receive quite so many were it known that certain fields are not relevant to AID operations.

Minners agreed that it was indeed important to list fields in which AID is not supporting research.

Conference on Research Progress Indicators

The Chairman reported on the conference, sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, to look at government and industry efforts in evaluating research. Government and industry representation converged on essentially the same conclusion: A key to success in research is strategic planning, with mileposts and indicators of success built in from the beginning.

Herting cautioned that if one does not back off and look at where the whole project is going, one might be heading down the wrong road. Rossiter agreed, particularly when embarking on very long-range research. He also noted the strong emphasis the RAC has placed on strategic planning. He suggested that the RAC might want to follow closely the strategic planning processes at the research level.

Eric Chetwynd, AID/R&D, reminded the group of the importance of social science research on global and national issues in development. Because AID's laboratory is the field, and it tends to take a problem-solving approach, it has had a lead role in the integration of social science with biological and physical research.

ITEM III. Agricultural Research Priorities

The Agency for International Development

Pat Peterson, AID/R&D, Office of Agriculture, prefaced his remarks by noting the efforts of the missions to carry out the focus-and-concentrate mandate while many of the central programs deal with global and cross-cutting issues. These sometimes conflicting relationships have been the subject of debate in the last few months. At present, the position is: Global issues and a long-term research agenda are important. However, missions cannot be required to use scarce resources and personnel for areas outside their focus-and-concentrate activities. Thus, the central programs will have to carry their own management and

logistical support with them.

Peterson then listed a number of areas important in considering strategic directions, a research agenda, and the agricultural research program over the next decade:

1) The AIDS epidemic, as it affects the population structure and as an agricultural research problem.

Peterson said there seems to be a clear indication that the dependency ratio in some societies is changing. If there is a dependency ratio of 1 to 1.5 now, it may be 1 to 3.5 in 10 years, because of AIDS--and in areas already overstressed. With the segment of the population most at risk also being the most economically active, the result would mean changes in how economies are organized and in production.

Where in the past, interventions and research were looked at in terms of labor-intensive crops and commodities, the question may become one of moving toward a more capital-intensive type of research program. The subject is raised to encourage thinking about AIDS as a development problem as well as a health problem, one that affects a number of areas, including agricultural research.

Rossiter asked about the population impact of AIDS relative to other impacts--birth rate, for example, or increasing life-expectancy.

Larry Saiers, AID/Directorate for Policy, said that demographically, for quite a while to come, given the huge number of young people, AIDS would not impact on overall growth rate. The numbers being born still outweigh it. There is debate within the Agency on this complex topic. He stressed the need to understand better the real nature of the eventual consequences.

Rossiter was interested in the dependency ratio and the fact that AIDS affects the most productive part of society. He found it amazing that of all the areas that could be discussed in agriculture, the AIDS issue has reached such magnitude.

Saiers said he did not want to underplay the issue, but most of the surveys from which figures are being quoted were relatively discrete, and presumably involved high at-risk populations. Care is needed in understanding them and quoting them. Larew said his office has funded a study with the R & D Office of Health to look at some of the projected non-health impacts.

2) Recurring famines in Africa.

Famines are happening so frequently in Africa that there

is not enough time for the population, the society and the country to recover from one before another occurs. The famines are caused not only by drought, but by military problems, governments, and policy issues. Underlying all these problems is an agricultural system that basically is not productive enough to support all of the other events in the African environment, both exogenous and endogenous.

Agriculture must be made more productive in Africa. However, the problem is not just food availability; it is also income availability and employment.

3) Water management issues as they relate to large-scale irrigation systems.

Peterson hypothesized that for the first time in history, simultaneously, large-scale irrigation systems are collapsing around the world. This is due partly to donor fatigue; partly, donors are no longer willing to make the large investments for the entire irrigation system and treat the symptoms of the lack of ready water rather than the problems themselves.

Problem areas include:

- * A straight-forward issue of operation and maintenance. There is not enough money to maintain the systems.

- * The complexity of the systems. Computer and satellite technology and communications need to be applied to larger-scale systems to integrate and manage data.

- * The need to look at systems as ways to increase agricultural production rather than delivering water. The challenge is to integrate the economics, the engineers, the agricultural scientists, the farmers and the public administrators in a more synergistic way.

4) Yield reductions in grain, especially the high-yielding rice and wheat varieties that came out of the Green Revolution.

The International Rice Research Institute is seeing a topping-off, and in some cases a reduction, in the yields from their rice research plots. Applied to the wider rice production systems in southeast Asia, the problem becomes very serious. No means for dealing with the stabilizing or decreasing yields seems to be on the horizon--a problem the next decade will have to face more directly than is being done now.

5) Expanding the perspective of agriculturists in looking at the output of agriculture as producing income, employment, and consumption, not just food, fiber, and fuel.

Agriculture is the basic industry in much of the world and its success can be measured in terms of increased income and employment as well as in increasing agricultural produce. Agricultural research can tailor its research more to that aspect than the technical aspects of producing food and fiber, Peterson said.

Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

Ralph Cummings, AID/R&D/Office of Agriculture, described the CGIAR system and its exercise to establish research priorities for the total system. Reasons for the exercise: Contributions are leveling off; the system is emerging by working in new areas--forestry, agroforestry, fisheries.

The CGIAR's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of 17 professionals, half from developed countries, half from developing countries, has put together a three-part exercise covering priorities, strategy, and structure (organization and allocation). Priorities are being set by activities, regions and commodities. The initial approach is to allocate expenditures by base, reflecting concerns expressed in the CGIAR's mission statement to concentrate research on the basis of productivity, well-being of low-income people, and sustainability. In the case of agriculture, these three factors are represented by the value of production, the number of poor, and the amount of useable land.

Modifiers have been introduced to reflect other important factors; e.g., the need for research; potential for impact; capacity of national research systems to use the outputs of international research; and the advantages of the research being undertaken by the CGIAR. Some of the most convincing results of the analytical framework are in the regional allocations, Cummings said. The implications are that we have "overshot" in Africa and considerably overshot in West Asia, North Africa. There is concern about the long-run future of Asian agriculture, where most of the sources of growth--yield potential, fertilizer, water, price policy--seem to be reaching full exploitation.

In terms of commodities, one concern is the implied downsizing of research on the major food grains, especially rice and wheat. There is some question about putting barley and wheat together; if separated, wheat might have a better case.

While AID will make its own allocations to the Center based on its own criteria, the analysis offers the prospect of having objective criteria against which to compare, and justify if needed, the decisions.

Rossiter asked if the process used by the TAC in arriving at their numbers was a consensus approach.

Dana Dalrymple, AID/R&D/Office of Research, said a lot of number crunching came first; then discussions of whether the numbers made sense and were consistent; then some special pleading--all building from the basis of the analytical analysis.

Qualset thought it a potentially dangerous system. He referred to Peterson's comments on declining yields of cereal grains. TAC analysis suggests drastically reducing research for those commodities (which he was not objecting to), but he thought the question should be directed to how to reverse the trend. If considerable resources are going into those commodities, and something is going wrong, the issue is not the allocation of resources, but what is happening, what is the right research? He thought that would be far more valuable to worry about.

Cummings said he hoped that would be the case once past this exercise. He also noted that one of the modifiers is yield gap. Presumably the smaller the yield gap, the bigger the argument for strategic research, which is the CGIAR's specialty.

Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP)

Pat Barnes-McConnell, Bean/Cowpea CRSP/Michigan State, described the background of the CRSPs, which began in the late 1970s. They were seen as a way to engage the U.S. university system in long-term research topics with results applicable over a large geographical area. The efforts and investment are now beginning to pay off, Barnes-McConnell said, with achievements cascading out of the system.

Barnes-McConnell called attention to a concern by many that the Agency seems to be moving away from the importance of food production and food availability. There is concern that the long-term investment in the CRSPs should not be lost. Information being developed on new varieties, new species and other areas is important to U.S. agriculture as well as to developing countries. She made the plea that the RAC, in identifying research priorities, encourage AID to consider the considerable contributions the CRSPs now make and their impact on the total quality of life.

Program of Science and Technology Cooperation (PSTC); Report of the RAC Subcommittee

Committee Member Ostrom reported on a review of the PSTC by a RAC Subcommittee which she chaired. The members were impressed by the sustained quality of the program, and the continuing series of networks being built between U.S. and developing world scientific talent.

The Subcommittee recommended increased funding for the program, despite a difficult budget era. The decision was to

support what the Committee had found: An extremely well-carried out program that has achieved important gains in establishing research capability in LDCs and which needs a financial boost.

The Subcommittee suggested that AAAS fellows could be used to enhance the program substantially. They could be assigned to missions to provide some supervision and relieve the overburdened mission. The Subcommittee also recommended a regular review and prioritization of PSTC models through a science policy grant, perhaps for a dissertation project. It would be funded each year to evaluate past performance over perhaps the past five years and take a look at future possibilities of research in a particular module.

A ranking system was developed for the modules of highest, medium and lower priorities. Of new areas proposed, information technology and social sciences were recommended by the Subcommittee--not as new modules but as areas to which relatively more attention would be given.

Rossiter referred to the concern about how to reduce the number of applications in order to cut the rejection rate from 90 percent to perhaps 75 percent. He had suggested earlier using the relevance filter more liberally and restricting the grants to certain areas. He also recalled that the Committee had previously discussed having the awards viewed less as a fellowship and more as an honor, so that a high rejection rate would not be so discouraging.

Rossiter asked Minners if a joint industrial/AID scholarship might be possible, working with the Industrial Research Institute? Minners said he thought it possible. The program had been able to leverage funds inside the Agency, but such activities outside the Agency could strengthen it much more. The attractiveness would be to match the fellowship up with the private enterprise side of mission activities.

Qualset emphasized that there are few opportunities for a scientist to try out an idea and to work with a developing country scientist. Scientists are happy with the program. The grants produce much good without a lot of organizational bureaucracy. He would like to see other bureaus contributing, too.

In response to a question on the geographic distribution of the grants, Minners said Asia has been the largest customer, a reflection in part of the interest of several missions there. While donors in general are interested in promoting more research in Africa, the limited number of investigators makes finding counterparts a problem.

ITEM IV. Private Enterprise and Asia Bureau Issues

Rossiter explained that this agenda item grew out of earlier discussions with the Bureau for Private Enterprise to apprise them of RAC's function, and to determine if there were areas in which it could be of help. This response is the first of two steps. A later decision will be made on whether RAC's assistance would be of value.

Mike Unger, AID/Bureau for Private Enterprise/Chief Economist, described activities by Assistant Administrator Henrietta Holsman Fore to be proactive in the Bureau's approach to the environment.

The management of scarce resources in rain forests is consistent with the first leg of the Bureau's strategy, which is a commercially viable impact on the environment. An example: support to a group working with indigenous populations in the Chilean rain forests to market products that help create jobs and sustain the people there. Loans are made close to market rates of interest.

In financing, the Bureau is looking at debt-for-nature swaps, environmental bonds, secondary commercial bond markets, user fees, and other ways to help pay for environmental infrastructure.

Policy reform aims at bringing together the finance and environmental ministers, in efforts to find an intersection that leads to positive dialogue.

In technology transfer and support for U.S. exports, the Bureau is working through its new Center for Development Opportunities.

The Private Sector and Urban Areas

Dave Leibson, AID/Bureau for Private Enterprise, described the Bureau's concerns with urban areas, and ways to approach governments in solving urban problems and involving the private sector. The private sector side includes working on the private provision of public services and on the structures that local authorities can set up to encourage the businesses to provide services.

The Bureau has looked to other parts of the Agency and elsewhere for research, but often needs a local analysis or study on a particular part of the problem.

Dissell said that AID's focus on industrial and city-based issues as opposed to the rural problems sounds fully justifiable if one takes the demographic approach and goes where the people

are going. Ninety percent of the demographic change shows people going to the cities. For AID to move strongly into this area, however, will mean a diversion from other things. Bissell said he wanted to make clear that it will not be a simple evolution away from where AID has been, but a shifting to accommodate work on such areas as industrial pollution and urban-based sources of pollution and addressing questions of how cities are going to expand, and how to develop the analytical capacity and tools for urban conglomerations.

Rossiter noted that the role of AID as a broker can bring experts together, and with a relatively small effort can leverage resources outside the Agency for a relatively large effect. He referred again to the Carnegie report, and its slighting of a role for AID. He thought expansion of the State Department for development was the wrong direction to take and suggested that someone ought to at least call it to someone's attention.

Environment

Tom Nicastro, AID/Asia Bureau/Technical Resources, distributed a brochure describing the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership. Over 20 U.S. governmental agencies are participating with AID in this initiative, with business, government and communities working together on a wide array of environmental activities. More than 30 countries in Asia are involved.

This fiscal year, about 100 designated fellows will begin training in the United States; a biodiversity grants project will be in place; and one or two selected technology cooperation sites will be selected in Asia. A secretariat has been established in the Bureau, and people from other governmental agencies will be detailed to help manage and lead the initiative. AID money will not be the majority source of funding but will redirect and attribute contributions from other government entities and the private sector. This fiscal year, \$15 million will be obligated to the activity; the estimate for the five years is between \$68 and \$100 million.

Rossiter pointed out that the Bureau's request of March 21, 1992 to RAC, referred to "pollution caused by the production of the private sector," and to the "pollution caused by private enterprises." He said such references do not set the proper tone for cooperation and suggested that the Bureau's approach should be changed so that the free enterprise sector is brought in as a partner rather than an adversary. Thomas strongly concurred with Rossiter's comments, saying that such statements create polarization and are picked up by others. Ostrom agreed.

Unger said the document would be revised.

An audience member suggested that given the resources AID is devoting to trade (an activity that takes place in large measure in urban areas and generates pollution), and the environmental issues that have been raised, there is strong justification for looking at these matters in conjunction with AID's current portfolio.

Rossiter said he assumed that industrial pollution was the area the Private Enterprise Bureau had identified as best for interaction with the RAC. He thought the challenge for Liedholm would be to see if a research agenda could be identified in which RAC might provide some assistance, both in identifying and helping set some of the planning.

Unger suggested that acquiring knowledge to solve problems or break bottlenecks, such as the intersection between finance ministers on the one hand and environmental ministers on the other, would be useful. Very little has been written in this area.

Rossiter said that part of what the RAC would do is embodied in the Bureau's request to the Committee; he thought the future RAC chairman would want to be involved.

Water and Sanitation

Dennis Long, AID/R&D/H, provided a packet of information for the committee on the sector, major issues, and activities.

Some 2.6 billion people today do not have access to safe drinking water. Approximately 70 to 80 percent of illness and disease in the developing world is associated with water supply and sanitation. Water is a constraint because of its health implications and associated human capital development, but also in terms of cultural, municipal and urban development.

Issues involved are:

- 1) Tremendous need in waste water management.
- 2) Design norms and standards; not an area that needs a lot of attention. But one example is the economic implications for those standards e.g., setting standards appropriate to meet basic public health needs and yet not be over-restrictive economically.
- 3) Risk assessment; There is a process for doing environmental assessment but not a corollary concept for health risk assessments, which is now a standard requirement in many states in the United States. How to look at irrigation and assess the potential downstream daily health impacts?
- 4) Water resources, work on the cross-cutting issues would

be very important.

5) Privatization and how to involve the private sector.

6) Conservation, reuse and desalinization are increasingly critical issues.

Long summarized by stating that one of the key issues is the intersection of cross-linkages around water resources.

Rossiter said the subject of water and sanitation is high on RAC's priority list. The issues cover large areas, with many places where research could enter. For example, research might look for the water equivalent of oral rehydration therapy--simple and inexpensive relative to its large impact. He cited the low-cost production of chlorine in advancing the chlorination and sanitation package in the United States. He asked if it would be possible to find major areas lacking that kind of water purification, where the geographical, economic and other considerations are favorable for a demonstration that would have a big impact.

Long said that AID has just signed a contract on the use of Landsat imagery in Ethiopia and Botswana to identify new ground water resources. But access to safe, clean sources of water is much more difficult in the urban sector, and water treatment becomes the issue.

Leibson said that the answer very often is not a magic pill but sound financial analysis and management in a cost effective approach.

Ostrom agreed that financing is a key aspect in thinking about privatization, and how accountability and the set of interests are related. One needs to think of non-national, small-scale, mixed public-private with communal financing arrangements rather than the large-scale projects mentioned earlier.

Rossiter thought some iteration is still needed on what the Bureau wants and what the actual research agenda would be. Carl Liedholm has been designated Chairman of the Subcommittee.

ITEM V. Intellectual Property Rights; Information on the NAS Conference

Rossiter said that given budgetary restrictions and attempts to focus, he had concluded AID ought not to get involved in any significant way in the intellectual property rights issue. Most countries, except the least developed, are moving in the direction of the harmonization of property rights as they enter joint ventures. He thought AID could play a major broker role in

getting industries and others together. As for initiating programs, such as conducting courses in developing countries on how to learn to harmonize their patent system with others, he thought that would be much too big a job for AID to undertake.

Gordon, who had also attended the conference, as had Qualset, said he had also written to Bissell agreeing with Rossiter's assessment. He added that he was concerned about plant pathogens and property rights as they relate to tropical trees and genetics programs, and as a vacuum that needs filling, but probably by somebody with greater depth of expertise in that area than AID.

Qualset thought the issue revolved around the question, "Will any of the projects AID is carrying out fail because of intellectual property rights, or the lack of them?" The projects need to be evaluated as to potential outcome, which involves monitoring and understanding how they work in each country. He agreed there are few areas of research for AID in intellectual property rights, but he asked how the committee should handle the request to look into the matter?

Daly reported that the request had been withdrawn. He also noted that AID had helped fund the conference, and that it would have been radically different without AID as a participant--perhaps without a spokesperson for a developing country, and focused on technologies with less orientation toward agriculture. Thus, one can argue that small amounts of money on issues such as this can be valuable. Rossiter thought that was true.

ITEM VI. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Harvey Hortik, AID/R&D/Office of Agriculture, provided an update on the status of the IPM CRSP. He referred to several projects in pest management that have been phased out over the past few years, and a decision made to move in the direction of a more global approach to IPM. The scope of work was developed in conjunction with the regional bureaus. It places a focus on key crops and domesticated animal species to improve nutritional quality, demonstrate economic rewards, look at research benefits, minimize management costs while maximizing outputs, and develop a global plan for broad application and extensive impact.

Qualset said that host plant resistance is a serious problem in this subject area, but he did not see a geneticist, agronomist or plant breeder listed in the scope of work. Hortik said there would be an agronomist on the core staff.

Barnes-McConnell asked if the new CRSP would be funded by

withdrawing funds from existing CRSPs that have IPM projects within them? Peterson said yes.

Barnes-McConnell asked if that was the intent of RAC, especially considering that IPM tends to be crop specific? She asked the RAC to address the issue more comprehensibly--to gain a sense of the range of possibilities and then choose among them for a substantive recommendation. People still might not agree with the decision but could appreciate how it was derived. The existing CRSPs are integrated, comprehensive programs that add up to something when focused on a crop, especially for regions where the crop is a particularly important one. She suggested that more homework was needed in identifying the resources that already exist and that could be built on to make an even stronger program than could be obtained by starting over. Qualset said those were good points.

Hortik said the perception outside and within the Agency is that a lot of emphasis is placed on commodity research and very little placed on subject matter areas such as integrated pest management.

Peterson said that in talking about recommendations for new activities, it would be useful for the RAC to say what AID should decrease, given a straight line budget for the foreseeable future.

Rossiter said he considered the function of the RAC not to set priorities for the Agency but to determine if the machinery is in place whereby the priority-setting is done. When looking at research and strategic planning, for example, the RAC found that it was not being done, or when it was said it was being done, it really was not. In many cases, it is now happening.

The Chairman recessed the meeting, to reconvene the following morning at 8:30 a.m.

April 10, 1992

Meeting called to order by Dr. Rossiter

ITEM VII. Follow-up to RAC Reports on Forestry and Biodiversity

Rossiter introduced these sessions by saying that RAC had looked upon the two reports as models for approaching such studies. The Agency's response to the forestry report indicates some problems with it. However, Rossiter did not consider the response a negative one in that the report is to be a vehicle for making a sound decision.

Forestry

Committee Member Gordon prefaced his remarks by asking for clarification of a point in a memo from Daly indicating that the report was found to be "too partisan in its advocacy role for U.S. universities."

Daly said he had taken the quote from his notes of the meeting. The sense essentially was of RAC serving as an advocate rather than as a dispassionate, external commentator. Daly said he saw his own role as trying to be a fair reporter, and not representing his own ideas or positions.

Gordon said the RAC clearly advocates the strengthening of U.S. institutions in order to be able to do institutional strengthening overseas. If capacity is not going to be in AID and it isn't going to be in universities, someone has to decide where it is going to be. He also pointed out that the worry being expressed about integrating agriculture and forestry research is perhaps over-construed. The RAC is merely saying that production agriculture and forestry are closely linked, and until they are viewed that way scientifically, they will not be doing very efficient research.

Rossiter said the report was done for the Administrator and will require an administrative decision on his part. Rossiter thought the report was done well. All parties were in agreement on the terms of reference and that the right questions were being asked. They all also agreed that forestry is going through a unique period and a window of opportunity exists.

The NAS panel also concluded that forestry is in a unique period; that there are windows of opportunity to make change; that the U.S. has many reasons for its own benefit to be involved in tropical forestry; and that leadership is needed.

The report basically asks, "Who is going to lead the effort?" A caveat repeatedly put to the NAS by the RAC was, "If AID does not have a role, please make that very clear, because the RAC does not want to make recommendations that cannot or should not be implemented." On the other hand, if AID is in a position of leadership, the RAC wanted such a recommendation sufficiently strong so that it represents a third-party endorsement.

The report seems to say that AID ought to get in and exercise a leadership role or get out, Rossiter said. He thought the worst thing to do would be to fritter away resources on a number of projects, all of which may be important, but none of which is of critical size. He said, given the RAC's original goal to help the Agency do a better job, if the Committee can improve on the report, it would certainly want to do so.

Ian Morrison, AID/R&D, said the Agency considers that it is in a leading position within the United States for international forestry research. It has partnerships with USDA and other government agencies and can utilize the recommendations from RAC and others to take advantage of windows of opportunity. AID has become highly staffed in forestry in the last two years, Morrison said. The number of foresters is now over 1,000, some identified as natural resources advisers, in a network covering the globe. No other body has such an intensive coverage of issues, and AID is thus in a position to say, "We should be in forestry, we are in it, and what's more there is nobody else that can do it the way that we can."

Morrison said there was no argument at all with regard to RAC's recommendations. He distributed a paper responding to the NAS panel report, detailing some aspects that may need more thought. He did not think the study had to be revisited.

While issues had been raised regarding the proposed grants program, Morrison agreed with the NAS panel chairman (in recent discussions) that the emphasis was correct. The grants program is one mechanism that allows people to break into the field of international development. He thought the majority of his office also feels positive about it.

Rossiter said that the report can be viewed as a ringing endorsement for what AID is doing. A positive aspect of the NAS panel was the enthusiasm of its members, not only for the study but to help see it implemented, including working with other agencies to get funding for AID to carry out some of the activities. He asked if there were additional things RAC could do to make the report more useful.

Morrison said he was expressing the views of Twig Johnson, office director, in saying that the panel's work in pointing to

directions for the forestry office is quite clear. The office would like to step back, look at its resources, study the implications more carefully, and if additional support is needed, call on it. He suggested that perhaps in 12 months the panel could be reconvened or the office could make another presentation.

Thomas thought parts of the report should be widely distributed. He asked if the professional forestry associations could pick up some of the comments for Science magazine or elsewhere. Gordon agreed and suggested that Morrison and David Thorud, NAS/BOSTID, author an article based on the report. The report itself should also be put into shape and distributed.

Daly said the way RAC's advice is injected into the Agency will be critical in how it affects the process. Writing a report and sending it to the Administrator is not enough. AID should take the advice, distribute it widely, and have the bureau chiefs conduct meetings, so that large numbers of people in the organization will read it and respond. That begins the process of dissemination but is only a small initial step in getting RAC advice more fully into policy choices made by the Agency.

Gordon said that whichever way the RAC input finds its way through the organization, it could result in an output that would make new resources available.

Barnes-McConnell urged the RAC to consider forging linkages among all relevant entities in a particular area. Issues tend to be fragmented, she said, to do forestry, or agriculture, or health, or population. But having to fund these things from scratch should force the Agency to look in a more integrated way at the issues and to provide incentives for people to work across traditional boundaries in the systems. She urged RAC to take the leadership in nudging the Agency more in that direction.

Rossiter said he did not think the RAC should get too deeply into the prerogatives of the Agency. The RAC produced the report; it is a mandate for leadership. His hope is that the forestry area will develop a strategic plan that will reflect its goals and how to approach them. A number of panel members might contribute to that effort. Regarding whether a strategic plan for forestry should await the strategic plan for the Agency, Rossiter said that if the long-range goals of the Agency have been set, he saw no reason why forestry could not proceed with its strategic plan. Criticism of the report is important to the RAC, Rossiter said, because the Committee tends to view it as a template for how it might proceed in other areas.

Biodiversity

Sy Sohmer, AID/R&D/ENR, began by stating that the Agency is pleased with the work and attention RAC members put into the report and finds it helpful in many ways. He then reviewed a written response to the report's recommendations for the Committee.

Qualset said it was not the goal of the RAC to make a detailed assessment of each new project in AID, but to look at the efforts on biological diversity scattered throughout the Agency, along with congressional mandates and earmarks. There was no organized program, making it vulnerable to earmarks. The RAC was interested in organizing and regularizing the program, to be able to respond to congressional mandates on biodiversity issues, so that rather than having them earmarked, the Agency could point to where they would fit in.

During the early stages, Qualset said, the RAC members had the feeling there was no interest in a strategic plan--that the staff thought it wasn't a good idea--but the members did not give up on it. Having some elements of the biodiversity report in the AID program can help it, Qualset said. The model approach, a strong recommendation, was taken directly from AID's request to BOSTID to work on Biodiversity Research for Development Agencies. There should be several models in areas representative of the kinds of diversity programs for research. Some are in place; some are inadequate; but they are another way of regularizing some of the efforts in biodiversity.

From the point of view of helping the Committee in its own processes, Rossiter asked what RAC could have done in both of the reports, biodiversity and forestry, that would have made them more useful to the Agency, and at the same time maintained the independence of the Committee, which gives the RAC's work credibility. What should RAC have done that it did not do, and what should RAC have not done that it did?

Morrison thought that the major terms of reference for forestry were apparently of not much interest to a number of the panel members, so that they were fairly quick to help other panel members who had their own agenda. The report contains pages and pages for certain recommendations and barely a paragraph for another, he said. It would have been more useful for AID had it been able to have seen or predicted the ways that the composition of the NAS panel would address each of the five areas in the work plan equally.

Rossiter said that RAC had addressed this question early on and was basically pleased with the composition of the panel. At the same time, RAC was told that it was not its business to appoint the panel members, and the Committee respected that. RAC

concentrated on trying to make sure that the terms of reference were understood and then let the panel take an arms-length approach to it. He thought Morrison's observation a useful one.

Morrison said there was a lot of good information in the publication, and it should be utilized and disseminated to a broad audience, as suggested earlier. He said AID should be deeply involved in forestry because of its strong bearing on agriculture, the environment and other sectors. He agreed with the Chairman that the next step would be the development of a strategic plan, based on the findings. As to whether AID should take a leadership role, the network of missions around the globe places the Agency in a position of strength to be effective over large regions and in country programs.

Rossiter thanked Morrison for the constructive comments, and asked Sohmer the same questions: What RAC might have done that it did not do, or that it should not have done that it did.

Sohmer said that those involved understood and appreciated the RAC's approach to the report. His only comment was that it might have been easier to follow and have provided more direct-line guidance to the Agency if the recommendations had been boiled down to fewer, more tightly conceived ones.

Thomas pointed to a statement in the biological diversity report that says environmentally benign development is a great challenge. Thomas said such development is impossible. The major area for research in biological diversity, he said, is to lay out and examine alternative approaches that have maximum impact on economic development and minimum impact on biological diversity.

Managing for a single species is many times away from diversity, Thomas said. In any case, there is no way to accept an increase in world population, and at the same time completely protect the environment. He thought these points should be brought out in both reports, and when RAC looks at a major area of research, it should look at the alternatives and evaluate those for the decision-makers.

Bissell also responded to Rossiter's questions on the utility of the reports. The biodiversity report may be seen as more useful to the Agency because that field has been growing, prospering, cohering--allowing the Agency to take initiatives of the kind the Subcommittee presented in its report. There could be a useful confluence of recommendations and potential actions on the part of the Agency. On the other hand, international forestry is an area that has disintegrated in terms of coherence over the last several years. As a result, putting recommendations from the report into an environment where AID does not have a secure context gives the Agency significant

difficulty. The report probably would have been more useful to the Agency if it were seen as an effort to galvanize the political environment and not as a set of actionable recommendations for AID. He thought if the report gained attention in Washington on the international issues it raises, it would eventually come back and be useful to AID.

Rossiter said the Committee's work may not be completely done. Perhaps the Agency should be asking RAC how to build the constituency for a good set of recommendations and good strategic plan. If there is more RAC can do in that regard, Rossiter thought it should do it.

ITEM VIII. Update on Children's Vaccine Initiative (CVI)

Pamela Johnson, R&D/AID/Office of Health, introduced Michael White, who recently joined the Office of Health to handle the Children's Vaccine Initiative (CVI). Johnson provided a brief overview of activities at the global level. A standing committee of five international organizations is taking major management responsibilities for the CVI on a global basis. A secretariat has been established at WHO, to provide support for the Initiative. There is also an advisory committee; Richard Bissell serves on this committee. The first annual consultative meeting took place in December, and it was the first time there has been a large and active industrial participation in that forum.

Three product development groups have been established initially: a heat stable oral polio vaccine; a micro-encapsulated tetanus vaccine; and a measles vaccine. Task forces are also working on cross-cutting issues in vaccine development: Priority setting for vaccines; situation analysis of global vaccine supply; the role of national control authorities; technology transfer; epidemiological capacity; and vaccine storage and simplification of vaccine handling.

In terms of AID-funded activities, the Institute of Medicine Committee working on the CVI has just had their first meeting and are proceeding to work.

In AID, extensive discussions have taken place with a wide range of people from private industry, and a CVI project has been developed that will be formally reviewed next week. Johnson distributed a preliminary logical framework for the project.

A key constraint is the down-stream aspects of vaccine development and introduction, and the gap between research activities and the actual introduction into the field. There is a concentrated program to evaluate vaccines, to stimulate their production, and to address some of the financing questions that surround the introduction of new vaccines into developing world

countries.

White said that since AID's mandate from the Congress under the CVI is to reduce childhood mortality, new and improved vaccines need to be introduced. The focus will be on a limited number of vaccines and on those that are better developed and can be more easily introduced into the field. The focus is on field epidemiology and testing of the new vaccines because AID has health officers in many of the countries and can count on their involvement.

Under the new CVI, the Agency hopes to have more substantial involvement with the U.S. university community and to support a more intense involvement of private industry.

A Vaccine Independence Initiative should get underway in the near future. It is to be supported from a revolving fund under management by UNICEF. This initiative responds to the basic issue of sustainability. Traditional vaccines are becoming more and more expensive and there is less and less money available for social sector intervention. Under the initiative, a revolving fund will allow host countries to use local currencies at a time when they are short of hard currencies.

Rossiter said he would be meeting shortly with D.A. Henderson and Jim Mason. He asked what Johnson would like for him to say in support of the program. Johnson referred to a meeting with Henderson two weeks earlier, noting that he is aware of their plans. They will be meeting with Mason the following Wednesday to go over some of the specifics.

ITEM IX. RAC Business

Report on Meeting with AID Administrator

The Chairman and several members of the Committee met with Administrator Roskens last September to express the RAC's concern about the role of research and development within the Agency. The RAC members had met earlier with a number of Agency people and others who had held important administrative positions throughout the Agency in order to be well-informed on the issues.

In the meeting, the group expressed their concern about the perception that research and development was being downgraded within the Agency and about its place in the structure of the organization, many levels down from the Administrator. The meeting was a useful exchange of ideas--part of RAC's role in providing advice to the Administrator and expressing RAC's concerns.

Approval of the Minutes of the September 12-13, 1991 Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

New RAC Procedures

Daly reported that responsibility for support to the RAC was transferred to the Office of Research in the reorganization in October. Some administrative detail is being transferred to the Metrica contracts. For example, travel will now be directly handled by Metrica, which should simplify procedures.

Frank Campbell, Metrica, explained that the extension of the contract is still being negotiated, so Metrica has not yet been able to establish a routine for handling the services. However, they are continuing to work with the Office of Research to make administrative matters more efficient.

Rossiter said there had been concern earlier over the logistics, and in his own case, he had waited many months to get travel reimbursement for a significant amount of funds. This was when A.I.D. was making the reimbursements. He added that the offices had always tried to be responsive and were working under certain handicaps.

Briefing on Ethics

Jan Miller, AID/General Counsel, explained that because of the way advisory committees are chartered, the members serve in representative capacities, not in individual capacities, and thus are not subject to the regular conflict of interest statutes and regulations that apply to government employees. Furthermore, while serving in their representative capacities, the committee members can still give personal opinions and reflect whatever views they choose. By virtue of the consensual nature of an advisory committee, larger interests are represented.

Most of AID's committees deal with broad areas and do not look at specific contracts or grants or serve on review panels where appearance issues might jeopardize the integrity of the process. Basically, the Agency relies on the committee members' judgement to disclose any possible conflict.

As for procurement integrity, from the time a scope of work begins until the time the contract is awarded, no one involved in the process can negotiate for future employment with any prospective contractors, and the contractors cannot approach any individual. This applies to any person involved in the process, whether a government employee or not. Miller thought the RAC was at too general a level to be involved, but conceivably could be. For most government employees there is also a post-employment provision, which means that after they work on a contract they cannot be employed under that contract in any way for two years.

Rossiter asked if there is a form to be executed when a new member comes on the Committee. Miller said there is not.

Regarding post employment or procurement integrity, Herting asked if a person could be employed by an institution in another capacity. Miller said that while the person is working on a scope of work, he or she cannot talk to a contractor about any employment and the contractor cannot approach the person. After the contract has been awarded, a contractor can offer employment. But another rule is, that if after the award the contractor offers employment, the person must disqualify himself from anything involving the contractor that he is working on at the time.

Herting asked about the rules or procedures for disclosure. Miller said questions could be resolved by discussion with the General Counsel's office. A final resolution would have to be reported only if it required some action, such as "I have been advised not to participate in this matter." Otherwise, it might involve simply disclosure, "I have such and such an interest, and the counsel has asked me to inform you that . . .", and the person would then be entitled to participate. That would be the most that would need to be captured in the minutes. Everything else would be confidential.

Report of Subcommittee on Nutrition

Committee Member Phills reported that the Subcommittee met initially on November 14, as the nutrition group was preparing to review the nutrition CRSP. That group subsequently reviewed the CRSP, and the Subcommittee now recommends that a BOSTID panel be established to review all aspects of the nutrition program, without going through the RAC.

Since a RAC Subcommittee on Nutrition would not be needed until after that report is issued, Rossiter suggested that RAC dissolve its Subcommittee, and that the subject be picked up in the Agency. If AID is going to go directly to BOSTID, that organization will be so notified.

Report on Discussion with Scott Spangler, AID/Directorate for Operations

Rossiter reported that Spangler has been given responsibility for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and in that capacity, had asked the RAC at a dinner meeting the previous evening to suggest areas of fruitful interaction for AID.

Among the areas discussed was the land grant college model, involving the close ties between research, extension, and

teaching. In previous development experience, Thomas said, it was found almost impossible to adapt the university model, because research and extension were centralized in separate government agencies. There may be an opportunity for the New Independent States to look at the land-grant approach as they restructure their central governments.

Other areas of discussion included the cooperative movement, particularly in the processing, distribution and marketing sectors; the importance of autonomous courts and autonomous local and regional governments; and the large number of able, world-class scientists in various disciplines. Rossiter thought the identification of these scientists, and forming ties with them, have a lot in common with what the PSTC is attempting to do.

Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

* Member DeGregori, Chair of the Subcommittee on Technologies of Opportunity, is currently in Indonesia. His committee needs to be supplemented. Rossiter suggested that people such as Lou Branscom, formerly chief scientist at IBM, and now at Harvard, would know what is over the horizon in areas such as information technologies, chemistry and physics.

* For those members leaving the RAC, Rossiter suggested that Bissell would appreciate having recommendations for new RAC members. Bissell agreed and said recommendations could be sent either to him or to Administrator Roskens.

* Bissell said that identifying specific follow-up items from the minutes of the last meeting for the next meeting's agenda is helpful. The nutrition issue will be discussed with BOSTID, and various nutrition experts in the Agency will be involved. Bissell agreed that the Private Enterprise Bureau proposal needs some refinement, and will be working with them. He also repeated that recommendations for RAC membership would be welcomed.

Bissell then commended Rossiter for his outstanding leadership as the Chairman of RAC, and expressed the Agency's appreciation for the time and dedication he has given to the Committee's work.

Thomas in a closing statement as a RAC member said he had enjoyed his association with the Agency as a charter member of BIFAD, as a member of RAC, and through other activities. He was impressed by the quality and sincerity of the people in AID and expressed his thanks to the Agency for the privilege of working with them.

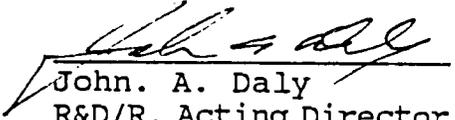
Chairman Rossiter closed the meeting by saying he had

enjoyed his more than six years of participation on RAC in large measure because of the dedication, sense of purpose, and technical abilities of the people with whom he had the opportunity to interact. He conveyed his appreciation and best wishes to those present and to the Agency for the courtesies extended to him and for the privilege of interacting with them.

Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

This is to certify that there was no meeting of the Research Advisory Committee subsequent to the April 9-10, 1992 meeting, and no opportunity for these minutes to be approved. The charter for the Research Advisory Committee expired in December 1992.

In the absence of approval of the minutes by the Research Advisory Committee, I, as Federal Officer for the Committee, certify that these minutes are a true record of the transactions of the Committee.


John. A. Daly
R&D/R, Acting Director

2/3/93
Date