

Dr. Astin, we are pleased to have you here. As always we overestimate our ability to hear the number of witnesses we had planned because what you have to say is of such importance to us.

Dr. ASTIN. It is always a pleasure to appear before you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO DR. ALLAN V. ASTIN BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*Question 1. Are contractor operated laboratories represented on the Laboratory Committee? If not, why? Is the work done by the Laboratory Committee in-applicable to contractor operated laboratories?*

Answer: Contractor operated laboratories are not represented on the Committee on Federal Laboratories. The Committee on Federal Laboratories is concerned with the management and staffing of the Government's in-house laboratories and with the rules, policies and procedures that affect their operation. Contract operated laboratories are not bound by the same laws and regulations as in-house laboratories, and their employees are not under the civil service system. However, if and when some of the management principles or problems dealt with by the Committee on Federal Laboratories would appear to be of interest and concern to contract laboratories, the Committee would not hesitate to seek the participation of contract laboratories in pertinent studies. This has been done in at least one instance.

*Question 2. You state that the "inevitable tendency is for officials responsible for new programs to let new contracts or start new facilities" because of certain problems you mention in connection with the Civil Service laws and regulations. Can you illustrate specifically what the problems are and what you believe should be done to correct them?*

Answer: When an agency is made responsible for a program requiring a significantly new or different R&D capability, or when a new agency with an R&D need is created, the key consideration usually is how can this need be met within the pressing time requirements that generally prevail. In this context, unless one can readily expand and/or restructure existing Federal R&D staffs and facilities, agencies are prone to establish a new laboratory for several reasons.

The need for greater flexibility in providing for something new, frequently leads to the formation of a federally financed or related laboratory outside of the civil service system. This is due to the fact that appointments can be made easier and faster; prospective appointees can be paid for their travel for pre-employment interviews; more competitive salaries can be paid—particularly at the critical higher levels; procurement of supplies, equipment and facilities can be accomplished quickly with less red tape; etc.

Establishment of new laboratories within the Federal structure occurs in part because of the time consuming and difficult problems involved in reorienting or reshaping existing staffs. These may include difficulties in terminating marginal people or those with no longer needed skills, in transferring civil service personnel to other units, in retiring non-productive employees, and in getting sufficient manpower ceiling or travel and training allocations to retrain significant portions of the present staff.

A second reason for the formation of new in-house laboratories is the human tendency of many people to want to have the work for which they are responsible performed under their immediate control rather than through some other organization. Other persons may have an empire building tendency.

A third reason for the formation of new laboratories is the simple fact that the person involved may not be aware of the existence elsewhere of a suitable existing Federal competence that could do the work.

Specific management actions that would facilitate redirection of effort would be the maximum delegation of authority for consummating personnel, training, and procurement actions to the laboratory director level. Legislative and regulatory actions that would help would be to increase the ability of laboratory managers to hire the necessary professional talent. Some current examples of such legislative action would be passage of the bill to permit the reimbursement of selected professional applicants for preemployment interview travel, and the attainment of truly competitive salaries for top scientific positions. Federal laboratories need the capability to hire outstanding experts for limited