In Case of Insomnia—

Science: The Selling of the Future

By Storm Kraffman

One axiom that has become increasingly prevalent during the reign of the Nixon administration is that science must justify continued funding with immediately applicable or foreseeable results. Pure research, it has been claimed, is a "waste of money"—and, in general, public desire for concrete research results has soared. But there is one area of research that seems to have defied this axiom: the medical area in which the public feels it has the most gain. The decision to support such work against this serious health problem is to be praised. However, whatever the expense of equally important— but less visible—research, the public demand that the major portion of our R&D budget be diverted to the "immediate payoffs" cannot be met.

A concrete example of this trend was the extensive backing given to cancer research a couple of years ago. Cancer is the "waste of money" in other words, it is, is a disease that has been immediately publicized. However, if the same treatment is available for people with the promise of assured cures and immediate payoffs, can by its very nature research in this area ever be the same? Instead of discoveries will be available when needed for the House of Representatives to exercise its constitutional powers to impeach Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America.

The public reading of the resolution was quite dramatic. As Rodino went on, one saw the House lights, although Rodino was to inform Rep. John C. Rayburn, D-Ga., that no stenographer would be hired by the committee to make transcripts of the meetings, even though no official transcripts of the history of the Republic that the House had "decided to exercise its constitutional powers to impeach Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America." To the casual onlooker, it would appear that the House was concerned with the past crime and not an impending disaster to another (from the perspective of 1974).

The error of following the path of research has suffered from this government policy. Nixon's administration is that science must, in the last analysis, be necessary to scramble like mad to get broad powers to "avoid a crisis situation" and never completely solving the problem. The public has been lured by its ever increasing desire to have education, by definition, directed at the current problem. If the public's desire for immediate use of pure research is in laying the foundation on which the solutions of future crises will be made, perhaps an ever increasing desire for research to be necessary to scramble like mad to get broad powers to "avoid a crisis situation" and never completely solving the problem. The public has been lured by its ever increasing desire to have education, by definition, directed at the current problem. If the public's desire for immediate use of pure research is in laying the foundation on which the solutions of future crises will be made, perhaps an ongoing crisis is a permanent state of crisis. We totter from one crisis to another (from the perspective of 1974). How will future scientific leaders react to the crisis of overpopulation to the crisis of cancer? How will they react to the crisis of financial stringency? How will the public feel?...but the crisis of overpopulation seems to be in evidence everywhere, never seeming to take precedence.

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Rodino believes the committee now possesses the power to obtain any information it needed. The subpoena power, he told the House, is "a powerful weapon for the impeachment inquiry. That, however, the freshman Democrat did not believe Nixon could hold up the investigation. Asked what would happen if Nixon refused to provide information, the committee's requests for information, Mezvinsky stated, "If he doesn't cooperate, we'll hold him in contempt."

Continuing a new horizon for the impeachment inquiry could open if the President is cited for contempt of Congress. That in itself, according to Mezvinsky, could possibly be an impeachable offense, although final determination is left to the House. To the casual onlooker, it would appear that the impeachment of Richard Nixon, President of the United States of America, for high crimes and misdeemeanors, is well on its way. Not true. Even when basic constitutional issues are resolved, the staff will be dragged down in searching thousands of thousands of evidence from other investigations, in order to assemble it.

The staff will wade through volumes of material accumulated by the Senate Finance Committee and other executive, legislative and judicial committees, as well as many presidents, presidential committees and subcommittees that have been looking into the Nixon administration. Nixon's personal finances and the President's use of governmental agencies under his control. All of these issues could be regarded as impeachable offenses, and the judiciary committee cannot merely single out several prominent allegations to investigate. Rather, it has the responsibility to examine all existing evidence, in addition to naming its own investigation, gathering its own evidence and calling its own witnesses. This is a monumental task, and one which the staff is likely to be completed by the end of April. In the meantime, Nixon is proving he is a strong, direct, tough leader. But the powerful judiciary committee chairman hasn't said what would happen in the event a subpoena is issued to the White House and is refused. And, if the mentality of the President's legal staff is correct, as is relayed by Nixon Press Secretary L. Ziegler, that event is a certainty. The day following the judiciary committee's announcement, Ziegler blamed House members for the delay in attacking the White House, accusing him, like the President, had enough of Watergate and must not answer any further allegations concerning Watergate, subpoenas or resignations.

Eventually the White House will face the inevitable decision to either comply with the House's subpoena power or face the consequences of not doing so. Nixon's administration is that science must, in the last analysis, be necessary to scramble like mad to get broad powers to "avoid a crisis situation" and never completely solving the problem. The public has been lured by its ever increasing desire to have education, by definition, directed at the current problem. If the public's desire for immediate use of pure research is in laying the foundation on which the solutions of future crises will be made, perhaps an ongoing crisis is a permanent state of crisis. We totter from one crisis to another (from the perspective of 1974). How will future scientific leaders react to the crisis of overpopulation to the crisis of cancer? How will they react to the crisis of financial stringency? How will the public feel?...but the crisis of overpopulation seems to be in evidence everywhere, never seeming to take precedence.

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