

Knapp denies that his clean sweep at NSF is a political move

Three of the Presidential appointees at the National Science Foundation have been forced to resign. A fourth position, left vacant following his promotion, leaves newly appointed NSF director Edward Knapp in the unprecedented position of being able to select all of the top management at NSF. Knapp announced 9 December that he will seek replacements for Donald Langenberg, deputy director of NSF, Francis Johnson, assistant director for astronomical, atmospheric, earth and ocean sciences, and Eloise Clark, assistant director for biological, behavioral, and social sciences. Langenberg and Johnson were appointed by President Carter; Clark was appointed by President Ford. As of this writing, Langenberg and Johnson have already left or plan to leave early in 1983; Clark's departure will be somewhat later.

Additionally, the position of assistant director for mathematical and physical sciences, which remained unfilled for a year following William Klemperer's resignation in 1981, is once again vacant. Knapp, who assumed that job in September (PHYSICS TODAY, October, page 51), was appointed to the directorship in November and now awaits Senate confirmation.

Why were these people let go? Johnson told us that "the action was essentially politically motivated." Knapp said, however, "I can assure you that

the politicization of the NSF is not a goal of this reorganization. The changes were made to improve the management operations of NSF."

Scientists we spoke to, while commenting favorably on Knapp's qualifications for the directorship, were concerned that political priorities might be given too much weight in making selections to fill the four positions now open. Knapp told us that the replacements will be selected by the President after a search run by himself and the National Science Board, which Knapp described to us as "a neutral organization."

Asked why Langenberg and Johnson, who were already planning to leave NSF, were asked to leave promptly, Knapp said, "There are two reasons. Both the search and the confirmation hearings for Presidential appointees are very time-consuming and can take up to six months. I also feel strongly that I need my team of people, a team that I have selected, to make some changes in the management of NSF which will be better for the long-term good of science."

Langenberg, who was one of the candidates for NSF director proposed by the National Science Board, resigned effective 31 December. He will become chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle on 1 February. According to Langenberg, he was

asked by Knapp to submit his resignation. Prior to coming to NSF, Langenberg had served as vice-provost for graduate studies and research and as professor of physics and of electrical engineering and science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Johnson told us that he was not asked to resign and has not submitted a resignation. He said, however, "Everyone knew that I planned to leave but it was made clear to me that if my plans had not been to leave I would have had to change them." Johnson now intends to return early in 1983 to the physics department at the University of Texas, Dallas, where he will resume his appointment as the Cecil H. and Ida Green Honors Professor of Natural Science.

Clark had no plans to leave NSF. Trained as a biochemist and biophysicist, she came to NSF in 1969 from Columbia University where she had been a professor of biology and biochemistry. While at NSF the positions she has held have ranged from serving as program director for the Developmental Biology Program, and holding various jobs in the biological sciences, to her current position as assistant director. At Knapp's request she submitted an open-ended resignation in December. She said her plans are not yet final; she anticipates leaving NSF this spring. —JC

Theorist Ne'eman becomes Israel's first minister for science

Yuval Ne'eman is Israel's first Minister of Science and Development. A prominent physicist, Ne'eman holds the Wolfson Chair Extraordinary in the School of Physics and Astronomy and is director of the Sackler Institute of Advanced Studies at Tel Aviv University. Simultaneously he represents the Tehiya Party in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, and he is co-director of the Center for Particle Theory at the University of Texas, Austin.

Ne'eman, who assumed the new Cabinet-level position in July, told us that he is now working to establish the

ministry properly. The primary functions of the science minister, he said, will be to advance the interests of science at the national level, to encourage the development of science, particularly in those areas of science that can contribute to the economic development of Israel, and to act as a science adviser to the Cabinet.

Expanding on his role, Ne'eman said, "If Israel officially wants to become a member of CERN, for example, or to upgrade the nuclear accelerator at the Weizmann Institute or the 40-inch telescope at Tel Aviv University, these

would be Cabinet-level decisions." He also told us of his plans to create the Israeli equivalent of NASA to advance space research. The newly created space authority, as well as the Atomic Energy Commission (which deals with nuclear science) and the National Council for Research and Development (which administers general science), will all be under his direction. Physicist Haim Harari (Weizmann Institute) now heads the University Grants Commission, set up in 1971 to channel funds to universities (following the model of the United Kingdom); the research