

the NRC division of INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By Dwight E. Gray

Readers of these Washington Reports may have noticed that for the past several months we have been discussing agencies and activities which are somewhat interrelated and which are concerned in one way or another with the international aspects of science. This grouping has been deliberate with the series to date: The Fulbright Program (April), Science in the State Department (May), and the National Science Foundation (June). It is continued with the present paper which has to do with the Division of International Relations of the National Research Council (NRC).

This Division, the fundamental responsibilities of which include all activities of the NRC and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) that are concerned with international relations in science, always has been a part of the NRC structure. Until recently, however, it had no full-time staff members and so its activities necessarily were limited. This situation has been altered with the assumption of office of a full-time division Executive Secretary in the person of Dr. Wallace W. Atwood, Jr., formerly with the Committee on Geophysics and Geography of the Research and Development Board. Dr. Atwood's appointment makes it possible for the Division greatly to expand its program and permits it to serve as an important center of scientific liaison with the State Department Science Office.

Lists of committees and officers always present a dull and forbidding appearance in print; however, the information that they contain is essential to a full and accurate description of an organizational unit which carries on much of its work through the medium of committees. Perhaps, in this case, the optimum compromise between seductiveness of format and completeness of account can be achieved by presenting here—near the beginning of the discussion—a brief table of organization.

NRC Division of International Relations

<i>Chairman:</i>	Dr. Roger Adams, University of Illinois.
<i>Executive Secretary:</i>	Dr. Wallace W. Atwood, Jr. (Full time).
<i>Executive Committee:</i>	Composed of the President and Foreign Secretary of the NAS, the Chairman of the NRC, the State Department Science Adviser, and three members chosen at large.
<i>Advisory Board:</i>	Composed of 30 members, including chairmen of all NRC Divisions, with other members being selected from government agencies, scientific societies, and at large.
<i>Working Committees:</i>	(Chairmen)
1. On UNESCO	Dr. Morris Vissher, University of Minnesota
2. On International Scientific Unions	Dr. John Fleming, Carnegie Institution of Washington
3. On International Scientific Publications	Dr. Roger Adams, University of Illinois
4. On Scientific Equipment	William A. Wildhack, National Bureau of Standards
5. On Science Policy, Advisory to Department of State	Dr. Roger Adams, University of Illinois



The National Academy of Sciences' building at 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C., serves as the headquarters for the National Research Council.

The *Committee on UNESCO* acts in an advisory capacity in its relationship with the National Commission of UNESCO and frequently is called upon for counsel and assistance by the UNESCO Relations Staff of the State Department. Typical activities of the Committee include helping with the planning of the National Conference of UNESCO to be held in New York in September of this year, making recommendations or nominations for U. S. delegates to the UNESCO General Assembly, suggesting the individuals best fitted to represent given fields of science on UNESCO committees of experts, and so forth. To some extent also, the Committee can be said to be dedicated to correcting the misapprehension of that uninformed segment of the population which thinks the "S" in UNESCO stands for "Social" instead of "Scientific".

Much of the group's work can be done through mutual interchange of correspondence between the members and the Executive Secretary of the Division. Formal meetings are held, in general, only when there is a major UNESCO problem to be considered. An example of such a case is the consideration that was given to what the position of the United States should be with regard to certain proposals for international research laboratories in various fields of science.

The National Research Council is the adhering body for the United States to the International Council of Scientific Unions, and the U. S. A. national committees of the various international scientific unions are NRC committees. The chairmen of these groups constitute the *Committee on International Unions* of the NRC Division of International Relations. For physics, the world organization is the International Union for Pure and Applied Physics (usually abbreviated to IUPAP and

pronounced I-you-pap); the chairman of the U. S. Committee is Dr. Karl K. Darrow.

Typical matters falling within the area of cognizance of the Committee on International Scientific Unions include such problems as the manner in which the U. S. should participate in various international scientific organizations, the dues and budgets for the unions, the size and nature of U. S. delegations to meetings, the desirability of creating unions in fields not now covered, and so forth. At the moment, this group is helping to plan for the meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Council of Scientific Unions which will be held next October at the National Academy of Sciences.

The *Committee on International Scientific Publication* was organized in March 1951 to continue, on a world-wide scale, work which had been going on in the inter-American field since 1941. It functions under a contract with the State Department and its operation has been considered one of the most successful ventures in the government's broad program of the dissemination of scientific information. The Committee's work consists primarily in the distribution of a series of nine technical news letters in as many scientific fields. The news letters consist principally of abstracts (or complete papers if they are short) of the best articles being published in the particular subject. United States organizations which cooperate actively in the selection of materials for dissemination under the auspices of this committee include the American Chemical So-

This is the seventh of a series of articles reporting events in the national scene which are likely to be of particular interest to physicists. A physicist by training, *Dwight E. Gray* is a member of the Science Division in the Library of Congress.

ciety, the American Dental Association, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Medical Association, the American Pharmaceutical Association, the Engineers' Joint Council, the Geological Society of America, and the Nutrition Foundation. As would be expected, a natural by-product of this activity is the stimulation of the flow to this country, through exchange and other arrangements, of important scientific material being published abroad.

Personnel of the Committee varies from time to time as the particular subject field being considered changes; continuity of operation is maintained, however, through the office of Mrs. Christina M. Buechner who serves as Executive Secretary of the Committee. Official Committee headquarters are located in the building of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 28 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

The function of the *Committee on Scientific Equipment* originally was limited rather closely to the working out of ways and means for getting scientific equipment to research laboratories in the devastated areas following World War II. Much of this work has been completed and it now is planned to expand the group's responsibilities immediately to include consideration of all the technical assistance aspects of the Point 4 program including, in addition to problems related directly to equipment, those which concern personnel, selection of projects, and so forth. In this assignment the Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to those government agencies responsible for administering the technical assistance programs.

The *Advisory Committee on Science Policy* is supported under a contract with the State Department which requests the NRC to establish a group of pre-eminent U. S. scientists "to act as a top-level board in advising the Department concerning scientific and technological questions and the implications thereof as they relate to important aspects of foreign policy." This function, to which reference was made in a previous Washington Report (*Physics Today*, May 1951, p. 15), is expected to prove one of the most important phases of the work of the NRC Division of International Relations.

In addition to the specific Committee-related activities described above, there are a number of functions of the Division of International Relations as a whole which should be mentioned. Among the most important contemplated for the immediate future is a plan to evaluate carefully all international organizations of a scientific or technical nature. There are more than 200 such organizations represented in the NRC.

It is believed that such an evaluation will be of great value in providing reliable information upon which the U. S. can base its decisions regarding the organizations to which it should or should not adhere and the conferences and congresses in which it should or should not participate. It is expected that a senior scientist will be retained to direct this survey working

in close cooperation with the Division of International Conferences of the State Department. An activity closely related to the evaluation, and in a sense a by-product of it, will be establishment at the NRC of an information file on international scientific and technical organizations which will give for each, its name, headquarters location, officer roster, meeting schedule, and list of publications. Also, it is planned to maintain in the library of the NAS copies of the official publications of all the international organizations to which the NRC adheres.

One of the ways in which the NRC Division of International Relations is now rendering valuable service is by facilitating the travel of U. S. scientists abroad. When it knows the whereabouts of such individuals, the Division may be able to bring them into contact with foreign scientists of similar interests and might upon occasion wish to have them represent the U. S. at foreign conferences in which this country should participate. Also, as the foreign science program of the State Department is increasingly activated, the Division will be able to bring scientists abroad into touch with its science attachés in various parts of the world. Therefore, it is urged that U. S. scientists who are travelling in foreign countries keep the NRC Division of International Relations informed regarding their itineraries. The Division also would like to know about foreign scientists who are in this country since it might wish to extend to them invitations to attend conferences or deliver lectures.

A third major Division activity concerns a move to work out means for providing the Council of the NAS with private funds which can be used to send U. S. scientists abroad as delegates to scientific conferences, meetings, and congresses. Essentially all such travel today is carried out on government funds. It is the feeling of the NAS that while such support is excellent and the government is to be highly commended for having made it available so generously, there are times when it would be preferable to have as a delegate someone who represents strictly the NRC or a scientific society rather than a branch of the Department of Defense or other government agency. Attempts are under way at present to work out some such program with one of the Foundations on the basis that the selection of candidates for such support and the administration of the funds would be handled by the National Research Council.

Other functions performed by the Division as a whole include recommending whether or not the U. S. should be represented at various international congresses and conferences, and, if so, who the delegates should be; advising with regard to the implications for science of proposed government programs not basically scientific in nature; and making surveys which it believes will provide information of importance to the general progress of science in the area of international relationships.