

lab," Samios explained in a memo to Brookhaven employees on 7 March. "It was also distressing, though not unexpected, to see my decision linked so often to the lab's current problems. My decision to return to research has no relation to the tritium plume." Samios said he will "actively work" with the HFBR upgrade and tritium remediation team "to chart a course that will solve this dilemma to the satisfaction of all local residents, political leaders and lab staff."

This year, the 50th anniversary of Brookhaven, was supposed to provide an opportunity for the lab to celebrate its scientific and medical research, past and present, and to boast about its four

Nobel Prize winners and its work in helping to develop such forefront technologies as faster computers and better treatments for Parkinson's disease.

"Now it's our credibility that's at stake," said Susan Davis, Brookhaven's associate director for reactor safety and security. "We're poking holes all over the place. Trust me, we're going to find more problems."

"There's no denying that this island would be a purer place today if Brookhaven National Laboratory had never been built," declared *Newsday* on 6 April. "It would also be a poorer place, in scientific eminence as well as economic status."

IRWIN GOODWIN

CERN Director Meets Science Board While on Collision Course in Congress

In the wake of the Superconducting Super Collider's demise in 1993, high-energy physicists proposed that the US should help finance CERN's efforts to build a Large Hadron Collider (LHC), a proton-proton machine that will be roughly one-third the size of the SSC. In the fiscal 1998 budget request, the Department of Energy is asking Congress to approve \$35 million out of the high-energy physics budget for the LHC and to provide an advance appropriation of \$394 million for the machine and its two detectors for the following six years, through 2004. In addition, the National Science Foundation plans to contribute about \$80 million for R&D on the detectors. On 28 March, Christopher Llewellyn Smith, CERN's director, appeared before NSF's National Science Board to plead the case for his new collider. The board is required to approve the funds before NSF sends its request for fiscal 1999 to the White House in September.

In his presentation, Llewellyn Smith sought to allay fears that the US would have little or no influence on CERN's decisions about the operation and management of the LHC. If the proposed DOE and NSF funds are directed to the LHC, the US would have only a 5% stake in the facility, said Llewellyn Smith. In return, he noted, the US would have a unique status on CERN's policy-making council—somewhat less than any of Europe's 19 associate members but greater than any of the six observer nations. Unlike the member countries, the US will not have to pay a share of the lab's operating costs, said Llewellyn Smith. While the US will have only one-half vote on the council, he stated, that isn't a cause for alarm. "We prefer to work by consensus, not by vote," he said. "We don't like shoot-

outs." The new relationship, he observed, reflects the larger role of non-Europeans at CERN. "I don't like running a lab where 45% of the users have no voice in its management." More than 1000 US particle physicists have already applied to work at the LHC.

But there is a gadfly in Llewellyn Smith's ointment. Representative Joe Barton, a fiery Republican, whose Texas district embraced the area where the SSC was to be built, vowed that he "will do everything in my power to keep one thin dime from being spent" on the LHC. Barton is a member of the House Science Committee but not of its energy subcommittee. Still, he appeared on 6 March at a subcommittee hearing at which Martha Krebs, director of DOE energy research, was testifying. "I'll be bleepity-bleep if I'll allow a half a billion dollars to go to Europe after they went out of their way to kill the SSC," Barton told Krebs. "I don't know how much support I'll have in the House or Senate, but one congressman can kick up a lot of sand." Then, somewhat enigmatically, he added: "I know where the bodies are buried, and I'll dig them up." Barton essentially blamed Europe and Japan for thwarting the SSC by refusing to contribute any funds to its construction.

Barton suggested that the US would need to obtain commitments from CERN's member nations that they "will help fund a more powerful particle accelerator in the United States"—presumably a next generation linear collider. "I want it to be known that if they help us, then we will help them," he said.

In her remarks to the House panel, Krebs said DOE plans to sign a funding agreement with CERN this summer and declared that the project is "extremely important" to the goals of the US high-

energy physics program. "It's the only game going and we need [it] to maintain our core competencies" in particle physics, she told the subcommittee. Some DOE officials put the best face on Barton's statements. He is alone in Congress, they said, waging a vendetta for the loss of the supercollider. It turns out, however, that Representative Tim Roemer of Indiana, another ardent advocate of the SSC, also had qualms about the LHC. Roemer, the subcommittee's senior Democrat, said the LHC had been touted by some CERN leaders as a less expensive and more effective collider than the SSC, even as the US was seeking foreign partners. "We have some legitimate questions to ask," he stated at the hearing.

How deep opposition runs on Capitol Hill to US contributions to the LHC worries Krebs and many in the scientific community. When DOE's research appropriation comes up on the House floor, Barton's scrappy dissent could rouse some like-minded colleagues to refuse to support LHC funding, especially in a session occupied with balancing the Federal budget.

IRWIN GOODWIN

Washington Ins & Outs

The announcement was not surprising, yet when it came it evoked a note of sincere regret for many scientists and politicians. **Charles B. Curtis**, deputy secretary and chief operating officer of the Department of Energy since August 1995, submitted his resignation on 9 April. He left the department at the end of the month and departed for a long vacation in Italy with his wife, Rochelle, a highly regarded cancer researcher at the National Institutes of Health. President Clinton nominated **Elizabeth Anne Moler**, chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), to replace Curtis as DOE's deputy secretary. Moler was all set to be named Energy Secretary when Clinton began his second term. But the evening before the announcement was to be made, Clinton changed his mind and nominated **Federico Peña**, who had been Secretary of Transportation, for the top job at Energy.

In a news release about Curtis's decision, Peña was effusive: "He has helped lead the department's national security programs out of a cold war environment into a reconfigured weapons complex focused on maintaining the weapons stockpile without testing and reducing the spread of nuclear materials worldwide."

Prior to joining FERC in 1988, Moler served as senior counsel to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. ■