mercial organization. Meanwhile, sources at DOE say James Decker, deputy director of the Office of Science, will fill in for Krebs on an acting basis, a role he played for months when Trivilpiece departed, and which he is most likely to have again in the remaining year of the Clinton administration.

IRWIN GOODWIN

Brown Eulogized as 'Mr. Science,' Even as Widow Loses Bid for Seat

Among the tributes to the late Congressman George E. Brown Jr (see PHYSICS TODAY, September, page 48), at a two-hour memorial, "Remembering Mr. Science," held in the auditorium of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on 27 September, was the reading of a little-known letter that certified his deft wit. The letter had been written by Brown to the *Ontario Daily Report*, a small newspaper in his California district, after the paper had published, on 20 September 1985, a scathing editorial headed "No Defending Brown's Stand on Defense." Brown decided to defend himself against the attack and refused any help from his staff in doing so. "The letter was George at his most derisive," said a former staffer. "For all his amiability and urbanity, George had another side best revealed in that letter."

Brown began his letter by thanking the newspaper for the editorial. Then he wrote:

> My first reason for expressing thanks is set forth in your first paragraph. You acknowledge that this is your first editorial about me in several months. Thanks for your restraint. My second reason . . . is your acknowledgement that I have been very active in exposing some of the president's military policies, particularly "Star Wars."
>
> You even acknowledge that I have become somewhat of a leader in this area. To quote you, '. . . not since his Vietnam protest years has he been so prominent as the leader of his own band.'
>
> I suppose it would be too much to expect you to mention that 'his own band' now includes a majority of the House of Representatives, to say nothing of a large majority of the National Academy of Sciences and the scientific community in general.
>
> You do raise a couple of points that might wound someone more sensitive than myself. You seem to hint, nay, almost assert, that I am not a dynamic, charismatic, and influential congressman, despite my national role in opposing the president. But in a spirit of true humility, I want to thank you for the reminder of my fallibility, and I will try in the future to become more dynamic, charismatic, and influential in opposing policies I consider detrimental to the future existence of society.
>
> The last point you make that I wish to respond to (you make several that I have refuted many times in the past, but you continue to insist on printing them) is your worry that people around the country may think that I represent 'the most left-leaning district in America.' Let me assure you that I always try to give my audiences a true picture of the political nature of my district. . . . I generally describe it as moderate to conservative, with large numbers of military, military retirees, and dependents, conservative Democrats, many of southern background, and increasing numbers of conservative Yuppies.
>
> I admit that many of my constituents don't agree with me on everything that I do, but most are willing to listen to me. I generally add that there are some rightwing kooks in my district and some extremely conservative editors (I generally mention your newspaper in this connection).
>
> However, even conservative editors have their use. I reprint a lot of their material, send it to my liberal mailing list, and beg for more money to defend myself against the kind of garbage which they write. It almost always works.
>
> So thanks again for making me the object of your attention.
>
> Sincerely, George E. Brown Jr,
> Member of Congress

Most politicians refrain from heckling, especially in print. But Brown wasn't like most politicians. Though he was the longest-serving member of Congress from California, in his 18th term at the time of his death, he had usually squeaked by in elections. His last election in 1998 was different. Brown's margin of victory was 15% over his Republican opponent, and almost all political pundits figured he could win again in 2000.

So, while still mourning the death of her husband, Marta Macias Brown followed the example of more than three dozen political widows by seeking election to his seat in Congress. In the past, virtually all congressional widows who ran for a husband's office have won. In recent years in California, Mary Bono and Lois Capps each replaced their late husbands in easy elections. Marta Brown, however, had a harder time. She was unable to win the endorsement of the state Democratic Party in the open primary on 21 September or to get the backing of labor unions in the gritty blue-collar heartland of the so-called Inland Empire, which runs from Ontario east to San Bernardino. The primary attracted ten candidates, including five Democrats—notably, Joe Baca, a state senator who had served three terms. With little time to campaign between George's death and the election, the candidate's party connections appeared to be a deciding factor at the polls. In the end, Baca won and Marta Brown ran second, 518 votes behind.

IRWIN GOODWIN

Washington Ins and Outs

Meserve Joins NRC; New Faces at State Department and NSF

On 1 October, a day after the latest nuclear accident at the Tokaimura uranium reprocessing plant in Japan, the US Senate unanimously confirmed President Clinton's nomination of **Richard A. Meserve** to be chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The president had named Meserve for the position on 6 August, and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works had held a hearing on the nomination on 23 September and reported its unanimous endorsement of the nominee to the full Senate only six days later. The speed of the Senate's action suggested to some that the Tokaimura incident had nuclear regulatory repercussions in Washington.

Meserve, a partner at the prestigious Washington law firm of Covington & Burling, has an impressive

record in taking on legal conundrums involving environmental litigation, nuclear licensing issues, and *pro bono* activities on committees of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering and the Department of Energy (DOE). He received his law degree from the Harvard Law School in 1975 and completed his PhD in applied physics from Stanford University a year later. He then served as a law clerk to Judge Benjamin Kaplan of the Massachusetts Supreme Court for one year, followed by another year as clerk to Justice Harry A. Blackmun of the US Supreme Court. With that apprenticeship, Meserve turned his scientific training to legal practice for the next four years as counsel at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, when Frank Press was President Carter's science adviser. In 1981, Meserve joined Covington & Burling, where his clients included AIP and APS.

In recent work with the academies, Meserve served as chairman of a committee that examined the protection of nuclear weapons materials in Russia. Prior to that study, in the wake of the world's worst nuclear accident, at Chernobyl in Ukraine in 1986, he had chaired a review of safety problems at DOE reactors. He chaired studies that reviewed cooperative threat reduction programs between the US and countries in the former Soviet Union and that advised DOE on declassifying government documents and data relating to nuclear weapons. Just days before the Senate confirmed him, Meserve turned in the report by a committee he chaired at the request of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board on the vexing subject of DOE's embattled fusion energy program.

The Tokaimura accident, which was designated by France's Nuclear Safety Institute as the world's 60th reported criticality incident since 1945, seemed to awaken the Senate to confirm Meserve quickly by voice vote. Meserve, who has known the Senate to dilly-dally for months over other presidential nominations, expressed "astonishment" at his rapid confirmation. But Rhode Island Senator John Chafee, chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said approving Meserve was "an easy call."

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is responsible for ensuring the protection of public health and safety and the environment in the use of nuclear materials and power reactors in the US. The agency's activities include licensing and regulating commercial nuclear power plants as well as safeguarding nonpower research, test, and training reactors, and fuel-cycle facilities. It also oversees medical, academic, and industrial uses of nuclear materials, and the transportation, storage, and disposal of nuclear materials and waste products.

In his testimony to the Senate committee, Meserve told the lawmakers he believes the commission's most important obligation is to demand the safe operation of nuclear plants. "The NRC must assure that the pressures to reduce costs do not become incentives to cut corners on safety," he said. Still, he added, "the NRC has a particular obligation to regulate efficiently, to regulate in a fashion that imposes a minimum degree of burden consistent with getting the job done. This implies a judicious approach to new regulatory initiatives—making sure that the benefits outweigh the costs—and a willingness to cast a cold, appraising eye on existing policies and programs. The fact that a given program may have made excellent sense in 1979 or even 1989 does not mean that it still makes sense in 1999. Moreover, managerial oversight is necessary to make sure that the policy decisions made in the agency's conference rooms are translated into practice at the operational level, so that the benefits of informed policy are actually achieved."

One of Meserve's first actions on becoming the agency's chairman this month is likely to translate his rhetoric into reality. On 7 October, a judge of the US Court of Appeals in Washington DC, accused the NRC of giving a "bum's rush" to a citizens group concerned with the safety of relicensing Maryland's Calvert Cliffs nuclear power plant, located on the shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The case tests a fast-track system the NRC has initiated for renewing licenses. Calvert Cliffs is the first of the 103 nuclear power plants in the nation to seek renewal of its operating license under the new procedure. The commission contends that the new system will shave one to three years off the old practice and still safely regulate the industry. But critics argue that the streamlining comes at a cost to public safety, because the NRC is not holding formal public hearings and has set an unreasonably fast timetable for decision making.

When Meserve becomes chairman sometime this month, **Greta Dicus**, who had been designated chairman in June by President Clinton (PHYSICS TODAY, August, page 52), will step down and become one of the NRC commissioners. The letter nominating Dicus had not made it clear that she would serve as interim chair after **Shirley Ann Jackson** left the post and became president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Instititute (PHYSICS TODAY, February, page 55).

On 28 September, President Clinton nominated **Avis Thayer Bohlen**, former US ambassador to Bulgaria, to be assistant secretary of the Bureau of Arms Control at the Department of State. If confirmed by the Senate, Bohlen will plan and carry out department policies on nuclear arms control and disarmament issues.

A graduate of Radcliffe College in 1961 and Columbia University in 1965, she is the eldest daughter of Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen, a career diplomat who held senior posts in the US foreign service in tempestuous times. He served in Moscow in the 1930s during Josef Stalin's grotesque "show trials" and as ambassador there in the mid-1950s when Nikita Khrushchev was in his unpredictable prime. Bohlen provided advice to President Franklin Roosevelt at the Crimea Conference in 1945 and to President Eisenhower on how to deal with Khrushchev. In 1962–68, Bohlen was ambassador to France, at a period when diplomatic relations with France were often strained.

Avis Bohlen joined the State Department in 1977 and has held various posts there, including deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Paris, deputy assistant secretary for European and Canadian affairs, director of the Office of Western European Affairs, and chief of the arms control and strategic affairs unit in the Office of European and Regional Security Affairs.

Margaret Leinen, a highly regarded researcher in paleo-oceanography and paleo-climatology at the University of Rhode Island, has been chosen to head the National Science Foundation's geosciences directorate. She will assume her new position in January, succeeding **Robert W. Corell**, who has held the post of assistant director for geosciences since 1987.

Leinen earned her PhD in oceanography at the University of Rhode Island and has spent her entire career there. Among her achievements, she spearheaded the university's efforts to construct a cohesive interdisciplinary focus on marine and environmental sciences. Leinen is now dean of the Graduate School of Oceanography and vice provost for marine and environmental programs. She also is interim dean of the College of the Environment and Life Sciences.

A past president of the Oceanography Society, Leinen also serves on the board of governors of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions and on the Ocean Research Advisory Council. She has served in the past as vice chair of the International Geosphere Biosphere Program and was on the Board on Global Change of the National Research Council of the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering.

As head of NSF's geosciences directorate, Leinen will manage a budget of about $470 million annually. Her selection followed a national search led by Susan Solomon, senior scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder, Colorado.

By contrast with Leinen, Corell has had an exceedingly diverse career. After receiving a PhD in engineering from Case Institute of Technology in 1964, he joined the University of New Hampshire and soon became chairman of the mechanical engineering department. In 1973, he was named the first director of the university's Marine Systems Engineering Laboratory. In that post, he organized the university's marine and sea grant programs, which over the next few years resulted in the formation of the Coastal Marine Laboratory and the commissioning of several research vessels and the expansion of the Shoals Marine Laboratory (operated jointly with Cornell University) and the Jackson Marine Laboratory. He also helped establish the university's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, now recognized as a world-class research center, with an annual budget of around $30 million. At NSF, Corell oversaw the agency's atmospheric, Earth, and ocean sciences programs and participated in wider government activities, such as chairing the Interagency Global Ocean Science Program and the Interagency Committee for the US Global Change Research Program, which operates within the National Council for Science and Technology (formerly the Federal Coordinating Council for Science, Engineering, and Technology.

In 1990, Corell directed the White House Conference on Scientific Research and Economics in Global Change, which attracted official delegations from 20 countries to discuss coordinated actions to cope with global climate problems. A tireless organizer of government committees and conferences, Corell was founding chairman of the International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Research, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, and the International Arctic Science Committee. He also served as deputy head of the US delegation to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and was leader of the delegation in 1990–92.

IRWIN GOODWIN ■

WASHINGTON BRIEFINGS

CIA's Indebtedness to James Bond The irony is irresistible: The Central Intelligence Agency has decided that it needs to adopt the imaginative devices used by spies and their pursuers in fictional gambits. It's another example of life imitating art, and this time "the company," as the agency is called by insiders, is forming a company so that it can stay on top of cutting-edge advances and capabilities in information and communications technologies. CIA Director George J. Tenet announced on 27 September that the agency would ante up $28.5 million as seed money to open a venture capital company this month in California's Silicon Valley.

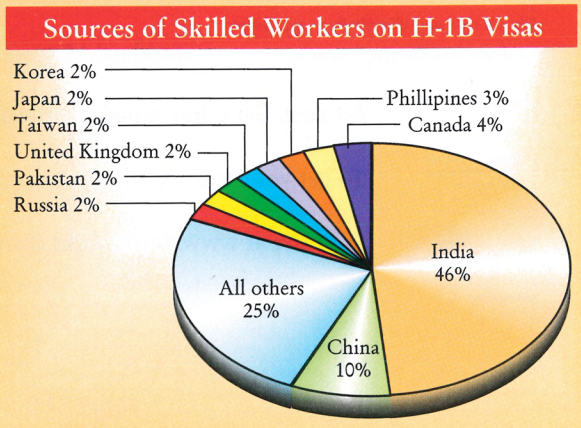
The new company, to be known as In-Q-It, will be a nongovernment, nonprofit to develop the technologies the CIA requires and to establish connections with the best and brightest innovators in the region. "We know we're losing out," says Gary Smith, the CIA's deputy director for science and technology, "We can't offer stock options. We simply can't compete for brilliant minds like those at Intel and Microsoft."

All the work will be unclassified, and the agency will wield no direct control over corporate management or operations. In-Q-It's chief executive, Gilman Louie, was most recently "chief creative officer" of a division of Hasbro Inc, a leading toymaker in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He designed a popular flight-simulation game for Hasbro in the 1980s. Louie said the new firm won't be working on cloak-and-dagger gadgets to hack into computer files, adding that one of the company's goals is to spin off its products to commercial firms.

That seems anomalous in the CIA's game, but Louie argues that whatever is developed will soon fall into other hands anyway. And the company name? "In" stands for intelligence, "It" for information technology, and "Q" for the brainy chap who worked up those neat devices that appeared in the James Bond books and films.

More Visas for Skilled Foreigners Put Off As the rambunctious US economy expanded in the 1990s, the demand for highly skilled workers has increased, especially in the high-technology sector. The government hastened to resolve this situation by granting special H-1B visas to talented foreign-born electrical engineers, physicists, computer scientists, and software programmers to augment the job market. Since 1992, nearly 1 million of these skilled workers have joined companies in information technology. In the first six months of this year, for instance, 46% of the workers on H-1B visas came from India, a 4% increase over the whole of 1998.

The percentages shown on the pie chart below are for the first half of 1999. According to a recent Commerce Department report, the high-tech sector in the US is likely to require at least 1.3 million more information-technology workers in the next decade.



In July, Senator Phil Gramm, a Texas Republican, introduced the New Workers for Economic Growth Act (S. 1440), which would have temporarily increased the number of H-1B visas from the current 115 000 to 200 000 annually. That would be a great leap from the annual 65 000 cap that had been in place before the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act was passed in September 1998, when the limit was enlarged.

But Senate Republicans decided to postpone any action on Gramm's bill in this session. The bill encountered fierce opposition from labor unions and from an influential House subcommittee chairman, Lamar Smith, another Texas Republican. Gramm, is steaming about the position taken by the Republican leadership and has promised to reintroduce his bill early in the next session.

IRWIN GOODWIN