

February 21, 2002

Dr. Rita Colwell, Director
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. Colwell:

Concerning our recent filings with you and the National Science Board: I have recently learned from the Website of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council that they operate with public funds - under the purview of NSF - a Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT). The Committee was established in 1972 at the recommendation of the President's Commission on National Statistics. To cite the language on the Website:

Support for the Committee's general activities, including oversight of its panel studies and the conduct of some special studies, is provided by a consortium of federal agencies through a National Science Foundation grant.

The Committee was created to study and advise: what data and methodology are needed to improve our understanding of the economy . . . and other topics for which public policy decisions are made. It has the flexibility to select topics, and it also responds to requests from federal agencies or Congress.

I do not know what authority you, and the consortium of federal agencies, have over the work and standards of the Committee. However, it is operated by the same institutions and people who began in the late 1980s to compromise the integrity of their scientific role and work by political censorship. Today, CNSTAT is under Dr. Smelser, current chair of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, who co-signed the Luce-Smelser Report. Dr. Alberts, President of the NAS and NRC declined to reverse the earlier policies when they were reviewed in the 1990s; Dr. Sue Woolsey, Chief Operating

Officer of the Academy, held Dr. Smelser's position at the time of the 1990-1 appeal and the reaffirmed decision to kill data and methodology . . .to improve our understanding of the economy and . . . [inform] public policy decisions [to cite their own language.] A core group - fully informed of what they are doing - have used their gatekeeping roles to keep these doors nailed-shut for more than a decade judging that the new methods and evidence would be too informative and civically relevant.

This is not innocent behavior. They know the judgment of the Carnegie Commission, and about every 18 months during the past decade I have sent notes to Dr. Woolsey and/or Ms. Torrey (the current Executive Officer of DBASSE) reminding them of the agendas for rapid social science progress and well-informed public policy that they are wrongfully using the scientific prestige of the National Academy of Sciences/NRC to kill. (I do not know of any other area of science where this would be acceptable; I doubt that the members of the National Academy of Sciences agree with the policy.)

Our courts, operating with intellectual honesty and judicial integrity, sometimes decline (i.e., publicly and in writing) to become involved in certain cases if they lack jurisdiction or believe the issues are political rather than judicial. The continuing charge against Drs. Alberts, Smelser et al. is that they have not met a standard of intellectual honesty and scientific integrity in their position of public trust. I think it is likely that NSF and the consortium of government agencies you represent are being fooled into thinking that your (public) funds support good faith scientific advice, when you actually receive a self-censored, timid, and uninterpretable admixture.

I have not been able to find details of the consortium of government agencies who, through the NSF grant, rely upon CNSTAT to meet their responsibilities. In addition to NSF's oversight review, would you be kind enough to forward an appropriate summary of our current concerns and the relevant history to them?

Yours truly,

(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project

cc: Hon. David Walker, Comptroller-General of the United States
Dr. Norman Bradburn
Dr. Catherine Ball