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Intergovernmental Science, Engineering, and Technology Advisory Panel

(ISETAP)

Annual Full Panel Meeting

December 15, 1978

New Executive Office Building
726 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

The meeting was convened at 10:00a.m. by Representative Thomas Anderson.

I. Development of Mechanisms to Coordinate Federal R&D Responses to State and Local Government Needs - Mr. Bertram Wakeley, National Science Foundation and Mr. Hal Wise, Office of Hal Wise, A.I.P. Planning Consultants

Mr. Wakeley and Mr. Wise discussed a project to develop a process by which State and local governments can work with a number of Federal agencies to coordinate R&D responses to address a specific problem. A subset of ISETAP members serves as an advisory group to them. They discussed the Catalog of Federal R&D Resources which is in preparation; a proposed guidebook for State and local officials on how to obtain Federal R&D assistance and a series of public conferences to discuss the draft handbook; and various mechanisms for consolidating Federal R&D assistance to address a specific problem. One or two more advisory meetings will be held in the coming six to eight months.

ISETAP members expressed concern about: lack of participation by OMB, how to institutionalize the process, and who will be responsible for making

sure that the process developed will be used. (Detailed minutes of the meeting are available from NSF or ISETAP.)

II. Ties Between the White House Intergovernmental Office and ISETAP - Dr. Eugene Eidenberg, Deputy Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Relations

The Office of the Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs is willing to actively support recommendations from ISETAP with the intergovernmental officials in various agencies and also through the cabinet officers. ISETAP needs to target recommendations to perhaps a half dozen specific problem areas. Dr. Eidenberg would like to sit down with the Panel and explore special opportunities and discuss some of the problems in more detail where his office can be helpful. He wondered about the extent to which elected officials would support R&D. R&D is rarely mentioned to him by them. It is a question of where these officials place their priorities and what the trade offs are between R&D activities and various categorical grant support programs. Dr. Eidenberg would like to use the influence of the office of Jack Watson and of the Federal Coordinating Mechanism to leverage Federal involvement in addressing some of the issues raised by ISETAP.

III. Landsat Follow-up - Dr. Press and Mr. Monaghan (representing Governor Lamm)

Dr. Press reported that the ISETAP Landsat study had been very useful. He had turned to it in a key meeting to help support his position. The President has just made a commitment during the budget cycle to provide Landsat type

data with reasonable guarantees for data continuity for the next ten years. (This action was consistent with the number one priority recommendation of the Landsat report.) It was pointed out that ISETAP needs a deliberate strategy for continuing involvement in the Landsat decision process as well as continuing involvement in other problem areas with which ISETAP gets involved. ISETAP members want to work with the Federal officials and establish an on-going conversation in addressing problems and determining what sorts of actions or policies need to be developed and, in developing such policies, ISETAP does not want to provide just one shot, one time advice. Dr. Press assured the Panel that the Natural Resource and Environment Task Force will be involved in some continuing way in the development of an integrated remote sensing plan. Someone associated with the Panel will be allowed to participate in some of the decisions and security clearances as appropriate will be obtained.

IV. ISETAP Problem Identification and Consolidation Process and the AAAS Workshops - Mr. William Carey, Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Mr. Carey briefly described the series of 10 NSF funded workshops AAAS is putting on in support of the ISETAP Problem Identification Process and he reported on the conclusion of a highly successful workshop on the problems of the aging. AAAS workshops are having difficulty with the problem statements. So far, they are often so broad that the science community has difficulty in identifying researchable issues and focusing on them. The time schedule for holding the briefings is much tight. Two general classes of problems in States and local governments were mentioned. (1) The general dilemmas of State and local governments where their major needs may be

additional capacity or additional funds, or where there may not even be solutions; and (2) the problems that can be solved or substantially resolved through S&T applications. The two types of problems need to be looked at differently and, generally, AAAS workshops should try to focus on the ones with the high S&T components. AAAS, ISETAP, and OSTP need to be concerned with how to feed the findings into the R&D process, how to mesh findings with existing R&D programs, how to create new R&D, and how to build R&D agendas based on the output of the workshops. Mr. Carey also noted that, "Science and technology needs to be woven into the intergovernmental fabric."

It was suggested that at the end of the ten AAAS workshops, that the output be reviewed to see if the process really addressed the problems of concern and also to identify how the process could be strengthened.

V. ISETAP Recommendations for Increasing the Use of Science and Technology to Help Solve Problems Encountered by State and Local Governments - Dr. Press

Dr. Press suggested that ISETAP address six to eight specific problems in areas where OSTP has substantial involvement and where there is a major technological component to the solution. OSTP will then be in a position to exert influence and get some resolutions to these problems. The office currently has little involvement in social science research and ISETAP activities in that area are less likely to be fruitful.

The meeting then turned to a consideration and adoption of specific recommendations. (Specific recommendations are available from ISETAP.)

Recommendations:

1. The Federal government should systematically involve State and local governments in each R&D program designed to benefit State or local governments or that has substantial impacts on State and local governments.

Dr. Press will approach Mr. McIntyre, Director of OMB, to try to develop some joint communication to the agencies to bring about State and local government participation in setting R&D agendas. The Panel asked the staff to provide suggestions for different approaches for the communication.

2. ISETAP should continue to develop a consolidated list of priority problems facing State and local governments and make recommendations to the Federal government on actions to address these problems.

Workshops will be continued and will be assessed at the end of the process.

3. Federal, State, and local governments should collaborate on activities to increase the ability of State and local government to use science and technology in solving problems and delivering services.

Panel members felt this was a particularly key issue and responsibility of the individual Panel members, rather than the staff. ISETAP staff will provide suggestions to the Panel on how this activity could be carried out.

4. Federal R&D programs that produce results of potential use to State and local governments should establish active utilization strategies.

The need for better lateral transfer mechanisms was discussed. ISETAP staff will identify some concepts for lateral transfer and will work with OSTP which

has a special ad hoc interagency group on S&T information transfer.

5. The Federal government should establish an organization focal point for general and continuing support of activities intended to strengthen the capability of State and local governments to use scientific and technical resources.

6. ISETAP should pursue projects on specific issues of special interest to OSTP and the Panel.

Recommendations 5 and 6 were adopted without detailed discussion.

Professor Irwin Feller of Pennsylvania State University summarized the principal findings from his paper prepared for ISETAP. (Paper available from ISETAP)

V. General Issues

Panel members identified a number of issues and needs.

1. Communications with the Congress and how ISETAP should interact in the legislative process - ISETAP staff will work with Senate Commerce Committee staff to identify some possible approaches.

2. Improved communications with ISETAP members - There is a need for better communications on what ISETAP is doing, keeping all informed. Also, there is a need to keep ISETAP members informed on what OSTP is doing.

3. New appointments - Members want to be consulted on new appointments to ISETAP and on any reorganization of ISETAP.

4. Surpluses in State and local governments - Federal officials sometimes claim that State and local governments have such large surpluses (the figure of $30 billion was mentioned) that they can afford to conduct research. Panel members wanted it pointed out that, by law, almost all States and local governments are required to present balanced budgets and the surplus figures are generally misleading, they are not substantial surpluses. It was requested that the National Governors' Association statement on State fiscal conditions be appended to the final minutes.

The meeting was concluded at 3:30p.m.