

IMAGE  
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REASONS

C. OMEARA/WP

Podesta, is a key Democratic strategist who served as chief of staff when Bill Clinton was president of the United States.

"There's a need to re-establish the scientific voice as a voice of fact and reason in the public dialogue," claims Podesta.

But even he isn't sure whether bioethical issues are important enough to sway the votes of Americans. That, he says, "is a political question that will work itself out over the next couple of years".

Erika Check

time to continue its work in Iran, but fears that its inspections may be curtailed because of US demands to refer Iran to the United Nations security council.

"This year's prize is clearly intended as a signal of support for multilateral diplomacy and inspections, rather than the use of military force," says Rebecca Johnson, director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy in London.

The award was also a major boost for IAEA scientists who inspect nuclear facilities. Spokeswoman Melissa Fleming says that staff at the agency's Vienna headquarters were shocked and then jubilant on hearing of the award. ElBaradei had taken the day off, but hurried into the office after hearing of his prize on television news.

Is the award likely to result in anything more permanent than a glow of pride? Fleming is cautious, but says that

the prize will at least make it harder for countries to ignore ElBaradei's pleas for more funding. The agency has what ElBaradei calls a "shoestring" inspection budget of US\$100 million a year.

Others suggest that the award could strengthen the IAEA's position in arguments about whether inspections, or tougher measures such as sanctions or military force, are the best way to deal with countries with alleged nuclear-weapons ambitions. But that is wishful thinking given the current US government's antipathy towards ElBaradei, says Michael Levi, an arms-control expert at King's College London. "The award is not going to change the credibility of the IAEA in the United States," he says. "The people who don't like the agency don't like the Nobel Peace Prize."

Jim Giles

See Editorial, page 927.

## ON THE RECORD

**"We're uplifted. But they told us there were going to be free drinks, and there aren't any."**

A member of staff at the International Atomic Energy Agency reacts after the organization wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

**"My discoveries are 40 years old, and I am an old man."**

Chemist Yves Chauvin describes why he felt "embarrassment, not joy" on winning the Nobel prize.

Source: *Nature*, *Der Spiegel*

## SCORECARD

**Adult stem cells**  
The Catholic Church in South Korea has found a way to avoid controversy over embryonic stem-cell research. It is planning to spend US\$10 million on adult stem-cell studies.

**Bird flu**  
A San Diego entrepreneur may ruffle feathers with a line of avian flu-themed clothing. Among the offerings: a 'Bird Flu Tour' T-shirt and baseball caps sporting the logo 'Pandemic Fever — Catch It!'

## OVERHYPED

**Abstinence-only education**  
US health officials in the Bush administration say avoiding sex is good, but Representative Henry Waxman (Democrat, California) isn't convinced by their reasoning. Last week, Waxman charged that the National Abstinence Clearinghouse — the main group set up to evaluate abstinence-promoting programmes — is scientifically unsound. He cited several of the group's official statements, including:

"Sex therapists consider masturbation the first stage of sexual addiction for sex addicts."

"Pictures of external genitalia in any form, whether diseased or healthy, can be detrimental to the health of young men and women's minds."

The clearinghouse's stated goal is to "promote the appreciation for and practice of sexual abstinence".