duly incorporated, it would be sent to the White House for approval.

But this autumn, almost two years after they began work on the report, the authors were informed of a fresh requirement — that they be approved as governmental advisers under the terms of the Federal Advisory Committee Act. In theory, this extra layer of bureaucracy is meant to ensure the legitimacy of those who act as advisers. In practice, it meant that the climate scientists were fingerprinted and had their financial backgrounds checked. During this process, the report's authors were not supposed to speak to each other for several months, while their report languished.

Meanwhile, internal bickering broke out into the open. Group member Roger Pielke, a climatologist at Colorado State University, withdrew from the panel, claiming that his views that land-use changes contributed substantially to climate change were being suppressed (see *Nature* 437, 9; 2005).

Even under such conditions, science will out. Three papers based on the tropospheric temperature report have already been published in *Science* (doi:10.1126./science.1114772; doi:10.1126./science.1114867; doi:10.1126./science.1115640; 2005). The researchers are now obtaining clearance to act as governmental advisers. And on 16 November, the three lead authors of the *Science* papers were due to discuss the findings at a seminar being held for congressional staff by the American Meteorological Society in Washington DC.

One of the researchers, climate modeller Benjamin Santer of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, had not been on Capitol Hill for a decade. In 1995 he was subjected to severe and unjustified criticism for his participation in that year's report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — its first report to state that humans were having a discernible effect on the climate. Santer became the target at which climate sceptics took aim.

"One congressman summoned novelist Michael Crichton to testify as a 'scientific' witness on climate change."

Santer's willingness to return to the fray is commendable. Global-warming sceptics still hold far too much sway in Washington, where one congressman earlier this year summoned novelist Michael Crichton to testify as a 'scientific' witness on climate change because of his pseudoscientific novel *State of Fear*.

In the face of such attitudes, researchers must stay the course. The government needs to streamline and accelerate the flow of information through the climate-change programme. The Bush administration owes the US public that much at least. ■

Pulling together

Protests by Chinese students at Yale University are highlighting strains on a symbiotic relationship.

Chinese students and scientists are playing an increasingly important role in US laboratories. According to the New York-based Institute of International Education, US academic institutions are now home to some 80,000 Chinese nationals, many of them in the sciences.

They are attracted to the United States, in the main, because of its excellent research universities, which are delighted to recruit well-trained and hard-working Chinese nationals. But as our News Feature on page 278 demonstrates, reality doesn't always quite meet the visitors' expectations.

Xuemei Han, a Chinese national, was admitted by Yale University to study ecology on the basis of her strong academic background. But the language barrier, funding problems and bureaucratic tussles ultimately led to a public falling-out, which quickly escalated to become a focal point for major protests by a large number of Chinese students at Yale.

Thanks to Yale's academic reputation and its unusually well-organized graduate student body, this chain of events has won widespread attention. But it is hardly unprecedented, and enquiries by *Nature* reaffirm that many Chinese researchers feel out of step with their supervisors or their institutions.

Some supervisors may be tempted to dismiss these complaints as the usual belly-aching from the lower echelons of the laboratory. After all, it is certainly true that many of the problems encountered by Chinese graduate students are shared by their colleagues, both US-born and foreign.

But there are some issues that are particularly acute to Chinese graduate students — by far the largest such immigrant group in the United States. One of these is the language barrier, which can be formidable for students who have often received years of written language training at home but may speak English haltingly at first. Some students also come from an academic environment where dissent is rare, and may fail to assert themselves as readily as their US colleagues. Many Chinese students interviewed by *Nature*, for example, were reluctant to give an opinion, even privately, about how their laboratories ought to be run. Finally, Chinese students have faced strenuous visa restrictions that can complicate their travel arrangements and engender insecurity about their status in the United States. Taken together, these factors can leave them feeling more isolated and disaffected than their US-born counterparts.

The principal investigators who are directly responsible for supervising the students should be aware of these concerns, and, where necessary, take appropriate actions to address them. They should make sure that students have the resources available to improve their language skills. Obviously, they should encourage everybody in the laboratory to bring forward their own ideas. And they should be patient with people who face the logistical challenges of visas and international travel back home.

"Issues particularly acute to Chinese students leave them feeling more isolated and disaffected than their US-born counterparts."

Today's scientific workforce is highly mobile, and while many Chinese students and scientists will no doubt complete outstanding careers in the United States, many others will choose to return home and build up their own laboratories there. In the decades to come, these laboratories will become globally important. The experience of Chinese students and young scientists in the United States will set the tone for scientific relations between the world's only superpower and its emerging rival. ■