

involved in the debate. "Ionising radiation is a prototype of other environmental agents which may be carcinogenic, even at low levels, so a resolution of this matter is therefore important" he said.

In a separate study published earlier in the week, another NAS study group looking at the risks associated with

nuclear power concluded that according to evidence in the scientific literature, exposure from routine operations of the nuclear industry increased the cancer risk of the most-exposed members of the public by 0.1%

If the nuclear industry was to expand along currently expected lines, there would be between 165 and 255

extra cancer deaths attributable to nuclear power operations up to the year 2000. The academy report says that production of an equivalent amount of electricity with coal-fired power stations would result in an estimated number of more than 3,000 associated deaths.

David Dickson

Weapons laboratories 'should retain links with university'

AN advisory committee last week recommended to the US Energy Secretary, James Schlesinger, that the University of California should continue to manage two laboratories which carry out the bulk of US research into nuclear weapons. However, the committee says that the university needs to improve the effectiveness of the "trusteeship" it has for the two laboratories, the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory outside San Francisco and the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory near Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The committee has also advised the department to make a close study of alternative ways of managing the laboratories—in particular it suggests a private, non-profit corporation—if opposition within the university to the current arrangement should grow to a point which makes it "undesirable or impossible for the university to continue the present relationship".

The university's links with the two laboratories, whose activities grew out of wartime research but recently expanded into energy and environmental research, has long been a source of controversy. Faculty and students have attacked the arrangement, some on the basis that the university's responsibility for classified research is unethical, others objecting more specifically to the weapons research.

The current arrangement under which the university manages the two laboratories for the Department of Energy comes up for review next year. Last December, Mr Schlesinger asked a working group of the Energy Research Advisory Board (ERAB) to review the current relationship and recommend how it should evolve "to best serve the needs of the nation and the laboratories". In its report, which was forwarded to Mr Schlesinger by the board last week, the working group says that the factors which have made the university beneficial to the country and the laboratories are "lasting and fundamental", and that the relationship should therefore be continued and improved, even though the university needed to discharge more fully its trusteeship. Referring to what it calls a small but vocal opposition to continued nuclear weapons R & D in any form, it says that protesters often complicate the laboratories' already

difficult public relations by instigating press coverage of "peripheral issues". "The laboratories need support in this area which the university could help provide" the working group says.

However it adds that more pressures may develop both within and outside the university, making it impossible for the university to continue the present relationship. "The DOE must be prepared for such possibilities, even though we believe them to be remote," the working group says.

The report generated controversy when it was discussed at a meeting of the full advisory board in Washington last Thursday. Mr Tom Cochran of the Natural Resources

Defense Council, said he felt the working group had not dealt fully with the criticisms that had been made of the current arrangements, and that it had narrowed its focus by discussing merely the university's ability and apparent willingness to manage the laboratories, ignoring broader issues.

After considerable debate, the board agreed by 13 votes to 4 to forward the working group's report to Secretary Schlesinger, with a covering note from the chairman, Dr Saul Buchsbaum, explaining why the working group had interpreted its brief in the way that it had. A minority report is being prepared by dissenting members.

David Dickson

Anti-vivisection demo hits Cambridge

LAST weekend about three hundred people gathered in Cambridge—the place described by their leaders as the Mecca of biological research in the UK—to voice their disapproval of the use of animals in scientific experiments. For more than an hour they marched through the streets shouting their protests at empty laboratories and Saturday afternoon shoppers. They carried placards bearing slogans claiming "Cambridge scientists torture animals" and "your taxes pay for laboratory sadists to mutilate animals with no anaesthesia". The odd one called for the banning of the seal hunt and an end to factory farming.

The demonstration, which had attracted protestors from as far afield as Lancashire, Gloucestershire and London, was organised by Jean Pink of Animal Aid, an organisation concerned with the rights of animals, whose aim is to achieve the abolition of all animal experiments. "Vivisection is the ultimate in animal abuse", said Mrs Pink. "We demand the total abolition of the use of animals in laboratories".

The protest also included the delivery of a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University expressing the group's concern and a talk by Hans Ruesch from Switzerland, whose book *Slaughter of the Innocents* has recently been published. There is total ignorance about vivisection said Hans Ruesch. He claimed

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that few know of the "complete and utter uselessness of medical research through experimentation". Movements to seek the abolition of animal experiments had recently started up in several countries, he said, in particular West Germany and Italy, and also Australia.

The meeting ended with a request that the new Home Secretary, Mr William Whitelaw, who has just taken up his appointment after the election of a Conservative government, should be bombarded with letters as soon as he gets to his new office.

Judy Redfearn

Michael Alcott