Overseas science shake-up in US

Malone goes, Law of Sea again in limbo

Washington

The US State Department is carrying out a shake-up of some of its top officials responsible for international scientific and technological affairs. Last week, the department confirmed that Mr James L. Buckley, a former Republican senator who is now Under-Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, will become a direct assistant to Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

Mr Buckley's move coincides with the news, also confirmed by the department, that Mr James Malone is being removed from his post as Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, although he will remain head of the US delegation to the Law of the Sea negotiations which reopened in New York last week.

No official reasons have been given for the reshuffle. In the case of Mr Malone, who was previously a lawyer in private practice and had been general counsel of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under the Nixon Administration, sources in Washington suggest that there had recently been criticism of some of his staff appointments. It is also felt that Mr Malone had lacked sufficient time to provide adequate attention to a range of controversial policy areas for which his post is responsible.

The moves are also part of a general reorganization of the State Department which has followed the promotion of Deputy Secretary of State William Clark to the President's National Security Advisor. One result is expected to be a more pragmatic and less ideological approach to decisions involving technology and foreign policy.

The contraction of Mr Malone's responsibilities seems, in part, to be related to his failure to secure congressional backing for the proposed relaxation of restrictions on the export of nuclear technology.

Mr Malone, whose nomination to the State Department was backed by members of the right wing of the Republican party, and who has contributed to reports published by the conservative Heritage Foundation, ran into strong opposition during his nomination hearings over his previous links with the nuclear industry.

At the time it was revealed that, as a private lawyer, he had represented the nuclear industries of both Taiwan and Japan in negotiations with the United

States over access to nuclear technology. He promised to distance himself from any policy decisions involving former clients, but his links with the industry raised questions about how far his efforts to reformulate the US position on nuclear non-proliferation reflected the views of the industry rather than the foreign policy interests of the nation as a whole.

Whether or not the charge was a fair one, it has limited the effectiveness with which Mr Malone has been able to argue the Administration's position. "Once his nomination had been approved, he did not help matters by producing position papers that clearly looked like industry documents," an aide to Senator John Glenn, one of the sharpest critics of Mr Reagan's efforts to boost the exports of the US nuclear industry, said last week.

Although no announcement has been

made about Mr Malone's successor, it is widely expected that several of his responsibilities for nuclear export policy will be transferred to Mr Richard Kennedy, Under-Secretary of State for Management as well as ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Authority.

Mr Kennedy was a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission between 1976 and 1980. Before that he served for five years on the staff of the National Security Council where he worked directly under Dr Henry Kissinger, and has therefore had wide experience of both nuclear and foreign policy.

Mr Malone's reassignment could also have an impact on the outcome of the Law of the Sea negotiations, where the United States is at the centre of two separate conflicts, on the one hand expressing its strong opposition to some of the provisions in the

European fusion sustained

Brussels

Funds to be devoted to Europe's research effort in controlled thermonuclear fusion were increased from 900 to about 1,400 million European Currency Units (1 ECU = £0.56) at a meeting of the EEC's science ministers in Brussels last week. JET, the Joint European Torus, which is being built at Culham in the United Kingdom will have a 319 million ECU budget for 1982-86 when the construction phase will be completed. European Community finance for other European fusion research has been set at 301 million ECU. This, with the contributions from national research budgets, will bring European fusion spending up to 1,400 million ECU over the next five years. The contribution from the EEC's budget for JET alone is thus increased from 195 to 319 million ECU.

In fact, most details of the fusion programme had been worked out well before the ministerial council; however, the British did their best to cut down support for general fusion research to 280 million ECU, a long way from the 325 million ECU originally requested by the European Commission, by arguing that the Commission had overestimated the speed of new developments. The European Commission calculated that 80 scientists would be needed to work on planning NET, the Next European Torus, and that accounted for much of the increased budget. But UK officials thought that because countries such as the United States or Japan were making do with 50 planners, the EEC could also do with fewer. The 301 million ECU finally agreed are supplemented by national contributions for projects involving tokamaks smaller than JET and other types of plasma confinement systems. The timetable for JET

foresees its tokamak in operation by the end of 1986.

At the press conference held by Philippe Maystadt, the Belgian science minister, who chaired the council, speculation was aroused by the omission of further international cooperation with the Soviet Union. Cooperation with Japan and the United States is to be strengthened during the new programme, he said. All four fusion "powers" are, however, cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna on the Intor project, a post-JET tokamak, originally proposed by the Soviet Union. Cooperation among the Western powers is taking place simultaneously within the International Energy Agency in Paris and this may now be strengthened. The European Commission refutes the idea that an iron curtain is to be drawn across fusion research as a result of the present political tensions, since it is a field which has traditionally been kept outside East-West politics.

The meeting also approved a research programme on raw materials for 54 million ECU which covers a wide variety of different research projects including research in metals and minerals, wood, the recycling of non-ferrous metals and ceramics.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to discussing two policy papers on the re-organisation of European research cooperation resulting from the meeting held last November. Among the ideas now being given serious consideration is the setting up of a Perception and Assessment Committee, which would bring together about twenty senior members to analyse the trends of science technology and guide EEC projects to counterbalance any deficiencies.

Jasper Becker