

Technological trade

Congress cool on new restrictions

Washington

PRESIDENT Reagan asked Congress last week for stronger powers to staunch what the Administration has described as a haemorrhage of American scientific and technological secrets to the Soviet Union. But the proposals, contained in new legislation drafted by the Department of Commerce to replace the expiring Export Administration Act, were given an unsympathetic reception on Capitol Hill.

The present act authorizes the government to control the flow of exports for political or national security reasons and was used last summer to enforce the president's embargo on machinery destined for the Soviet-European natural gas pipeline. It has also been used to prevent scientists from publishing or "exporting" sensitive research, most notoriously in 1980 when commerce officials made the American Vacuum Society exclude Soviet and East European experts invited to a symposium on magnetic bubble devices.

Exporters had hoped that expiration of the act next September would be used as an opportunity to relax some controls and

restore the sanctity of international contracts. Instead, Mr Lionel Olmer, under secretary for international trade administration, told a House of Representatives foreign affairs subcommittee that the administration would not allow the needs of exporters to overshadow the "high priority" of keeping sensitive Western technology out of the hands of the Soviet Union.

The new bill would change the language of the act to emphasize the overriding importance of national security, and proposes new statutory crimes for attempting to violate the export regulations. But the most significant change is a new emphasis on efforts to stop third countries passing Western technology to the Soviet Union.

One measure proposed in the bill, to strengthen the operations of COCOM, the Coordinating Committee of NATO nations (minus Iceland and plus Japan) responsible for regulating the transfer of technology to the Eastern bloc, has wide support in Congress. There is, however, strong opposition to a provision enabling the President to stop foreign companies

believed to have violated the act's national security regulations from importing their goods to the United States.

It was precisely this measure that caused disarray in the Western alliance last summer during the pipeline controversy, and its appearance in the draft legislation is expected to attract international criticism at the forthcoming economic summit at Williamsburg, Virginia. Representative Donald Bonker, the Washington state Republican who chairs the foreign affairs economic policy and trade panel, warned Mr Olmer last week that a zealous pursuit of foreign trade sanctions was likely to weaken rather than strengthen cooperation between the COCOM nations.

The bill does contain some concessions designed to pacify exporters. Existing contracts could be honoured within 270 days of the imposition of any new trade sanction imposed by the president. The Department of Defense has been asked to decontrol the export of scientific equipment containing microprocessors, which at present require a validated licence irrespective of their strategic significance.

The Administration may be forced to make further concessions. Representative Bonker described the draft bill as "a sad day for American exporters" and said it was unacceptable in its present form. He wants to close a loophole that would let the president override the 270 day contractual grace period without declaring war or national emergency. At least seven alternative bills have been generated.

There is no sign of parallel concessions on the horizon for the scientific community, however. A report on scientific communication and national security published last October by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) called for amendments in the existing act to exempt domestically available unclassified information and information not directly related to national security from the formal licensing procedure. These proposals have not been incorporated in the draft bill.

The omission may be simply a case of crossed bureaucratic wires. The NAS report was turned over to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) last year and a response was expected last month. But the OSTP review was in turn subsumed in a larger and as yet unfinished inter-agency review of technological export being conducted by the National Security Council. An OSTP spokesman was unable to say whether the office had advised the Commerce Department on the contents of the draft bill.

If there is a less benign reason for the omission, however, the academy may find it difficult to make a late entry into a debate which has been dominated by the impact of the act on exporters rather than scientists. An NAS spokesman said last week: "We are concerned about it still and intend to see that the views of the NAS panel are taken into account in the debate on the Hill".

Peter David

Professional chemists beat inflation

ON average, British professional chemists will earn 8 per cent more in 1983 than in 1982 against an inflation rate of 5 per cent. This compares with the previous rise of 10 per cent between 1981 and 1982. The figures are taken from a survey carried out by the British Royal Society of Chemistry on their professional members, and refer to fellows and members of the society. These may be taken to represent professional

graduate chemists and biochemists with more than three years working experience. The licentiate members of the society earn, on average, 75 per cent of the members' and fellows' income, although the differential is around 10 per cent for the 25-34 year old bracket and increases to almost 40 per cent by 60-64 years. Source: *The Remuneration Survey 1983*, The Royal Society of Chemistry, £35.

Class of employment		25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	Independent of age
		LQ	Med.	HQ	LQ	Med.	HQ	LQ	Med.	
Central government	LQ	7,400	9,130	10,920	11,650	14,290	14,280	14,290	—	10,970
	Med.	8,000	10,020	11,700	14,300	14,990	16,400	17,000	17,550	14,290
	HQ	9,370	11,200	13,210	16,010	18,500	19,930	19,730	—	17,080
UKAEA and associated Companies	LQ	—	9,810	11,750	—	—	13,000	—	—	11,440
	Med.	—	10,750	13,760	12,440	14,460	15,290	16,130	15,150	14,180
	HQ	—	13,430	15,650	—	—	18,340	—	—	16,120
Nationalized industry or public corporation	LQ	—	9,470	10,500	12,620	13,370	15,170	13,370	—	11,000
	Med.	9,390	11,000	12,880	14,200	15,950	17,300	18,190	17,810	13,910
	HQ	—	13,000	14,700	17,000	17,690	20,240	21,290	—	17,350
Local authority	LQ	7,650	8,700	10,000	10,920	12,140	11,540	11,950	12,160	10,400
	Med.	8,590	9,790	11,500	12,810	13,300	13,790	13,820	14,760	12,560
	HQ	9,400	11,020	12,810	14,110	15,490	15,730	16,000	18,870	14,680
University	LQ	7,470	8,500	11,550	13,500	14,940	15,970	16,180	16,180	13,500
	Med.	8,080	9,950	13,000	14,650	16,430	16,500	17,820	18,080	16,180
	HQ	8,730	11,500	14,150	17,100	17,740	18,500	21,500	23,000	17,830
Industry or commerce	LQ	8,000	9,280	10,700	11,700	13,000	13,250	13,700	13,040	10,600
	Med.	9,070	10,870	12,670	14,500	16,490	17,500	17,830	16,510	13,600
	HQ	10,510	12,850	15,450	18,000	20,330	22,950	24,000	21,000	17,800
Any other employer	LQ	—	8,340	9,800	10,210	11,240	10,170	11,750	—	9,860
	Med.	8,230	9,470	11,600	13,260	13,310	14,760	15,900	—	12,800
	HQ	—	10,480	13,100	18,080	17,850	19,810	21,500	—	15,500
Self-employed	LQ	—	—	—	13,500	9,000	12,000	8,000	10,000	11,000
	Med.	—	25,500	13,250	17,090	18,680	16,800	15,000	13,500	15,000
	HQ	—	—	—	41,340	29,000	23,650	26,000	22,000	25,000

LQ, Lower quartile average; Med., median; HQ, higher quartile average.