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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

The second session of the 109th Congress will convene later this month, with the Senate returning to session on Wednesday, January 18, and the House returning on Tuesday, January 31.

Along with consideration of the President’s FY07 budget when it is released in early February, the early agenda for the new session will include the expected final approval of the budget reconciliation package (S. 1932), consideration of tax cut legislation (H.R. 4297, S. 2020), and a long-term extension of the USA Patriot Act. The Senate also will consider the nomination of Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court.

The $39.7 billion budget reconciliation bill failed to pass last month when Senate Democrats successfully amended the bill through procedural actions, thus requiring House approval of the slightly altered version in order to become final. With House members already scattered to their districts, Democrats were able to block final passage. House GOP leaders decided to postpone the final vote rather than call Members back to Washington for a roll call vote.

On the tax reconciliation bill, the Senate approved its version of the package (S. 2020) on November 17 (see CFR Weekly Wrap-up, 11-18-05), while the House approved its version (H.R. 4297) on December 8. A conference to resolve differences between the two widely different measures was postponed to this year.

The reauthorization of the USA Patriot Act (H.R. 3199) also was held over to this year. Several provisions of the original law were set to expire at the end of December, but following the failure of a Senate cloture motion to force a vote on final passage of H.R. 3199, Congress approved a five-week extension. (See CFR Weekly Wrap-up, 12-22-05 for additional information.) Consideration of the measure may be complicated by the recent disclosure that the Administration has been wiretapping U.S. citizens without court permission.
President Bush told a group of college and university presidents meeting at the State Department yesterday that the Administration had developed a "National Security Language Initiative," designed to address the nation’s need for foreign language speakers. Speaking to the U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education, organized by the Departments of State and Education, the President discussed the need for a $114 million package of new programs and program expansions in the Departments of Defense, Education, and State aimed at encouraging more U.S. students to study foreign languages, particularly difficult languages important to national security.

In his remarks to the group, President Bush also stressed the importance of attracting foreign students to U.S. universities:

“We want young kids from around the world coming to our universities. It's in our national interest that we solve visa issues…We have been calibrating the proper balance after September the 11th, and I fully understand some of your frustrations, particularly when you say the balance wasn't actually calibrated well. But we're going to get it right, because the more youngsters who come to America to get educated, the more likely it is people in the world will understand the true nature of America.

In her opening remarks to the group, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice characterized the initiative this way:

“The language initiative that is being announced today, the Critical Languages Initiative, will give earlier instruction in language to our children, K through 12. It will encourage students in university and in graduate school to take on the hard and critical languages. And it will press forward to bring people into the Foreign Service and into the Defense Department and into our intelligence agencies, who are competent in those languages.

But this is a broader challenge and it is a challenge that the United States Government cannot meet alone. And the reason that we wanted you, the university presidents, to be here today is that we need partners in this intellectual exercise. We need universities to open their doors to people from around the world. We need universities to send their students around the world. So through that exchange and contact, we can learn more about each other because the truth of the matter is if we're engaged only in a monologue, we will not get very far. If we get to know each other better, it will be a dialogue.”

President Bush’s remarks are available at: [http://www.state.gov/r/summit/58734.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/summit/58734.htm)

Secretary Rice’s remarks are available at: [http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/58735.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/58735.htm)

Briefing on the National Security Language Initiative [http://www.state.gov/g/rls/rm/2005/58737.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/rls/rm/2005/58737.htm)

List of participants in the Presidents’ Summit [http://www.state.gov/r/summit/58668.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/summit/58668.htm)
NEW NATIONAL ACADEMIES PANEL ON SCIENCE AND SECURITY
TO MEET NEXT WEEK

The National Academies of Science ad hoc Committee on a New Government-University Partnership for Science and Security will convene next week to begin examining issues related to scientific communication and national security. Jacques Gansler, Vice President for Research at the University of Maryland, and Alice Gast, Vice President for Research and Associate Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will serve as co-chairs. The group will hold its initial meeting in Washington, D.C. January 12-13, 2006, to be followed by three regional meetings and a final convocation later in the year.

At next week’s session the panel will hear from academic, association, and government officials about such issues as dual-use life sciences research, sensitive but unclassified research, the application of the USA Patriot Act to universities, the impact of export controls on university research, and the national counterintelligence strategy. The program agenda and the list of committee members are attached.

Members of the CFR may wish to attend the public portions of the meeting, which will be January 12 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and January 13 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the National Academies Keck Center, Room 100, 500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. No RSVP is required.

The three regional meetings, to be organized by the panel, will bring together university faculty and research administrators, government officials, and Members of Congress to address four topics:

- Restrictive clauses in contracts and grants;
- Dissemination of scientific information;
- Sensitive but unclassified information; and
- Management of biological agents in academic research.

The committee will then hold a convocation in Washington, D.C. later this year to report on key issues raised in the regional meetings and the array of policy considerations to be considered.

A copy of the January 12-13 meeting agenda is available on the NAS Web site at: http://www4.nas.edu/webcr.nsf/MeetingDisplay1/STLP-Q-02-04-A.


FORMER UC BERKELEY CHANCELLOR ROBERT BERDAHL
TO BE NEXT AAU PRESIDENT

AAU announced yesterday the appointment of Robert M. Berdahl, former chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley and former president of the University of Texas at Austin, as the association’s new president. Dr. Berdahl will replace Nils Hasselmo, who announced his
retirement last September. Dr. Berdahl will take his new position this spring, upon completion of a teaching commitment at Berkeley.

A press release about Dr. Berdahl’s appointment is available on the AAU Web site at: http://www.aau.edu/education/Robert_Berdahl_named_new_AAU_President_1-5-2006.pdf.

WILLIAM BONVILLIAN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF MIT WASHINGTON OFFICE

NEW

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has announced that William B. Bonvillian will be the university’s new director of federal relations. He succeeds Jack Crowley. For the past 16 years, Mr. Bonvillian has served as legislative director and chief counsel for Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT). He previously served as a deputy assistant secretary in the Department of Transportation.

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