

treatment. The cost of caring for a child with spina bifida can devastate a family.

The report concluded that there is inadequate evidence at this time to determine whether there may be an association to Agent Orange exposure and any other birth defects.

The Federal Government has a moral responsibility to help veterans whose children suffer from spina bifida and to meet their children's health care needs. This should include the provision of essential medical care and case management services to coordinate health and social services for the child.

But the Government's responsibility does not end there. American soldiers were exposed to Agent Orange, and some of their children are now paying a terrible price. The Federal Government also has a responsibility to compensate these families.

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Jesse Brown has said he will appoint a task force to review the findings of the new IOM-NAS report and make policy recommendations to him within 90 days. I applaud the Secretary for his aggressive pursuit of the scientific facts related to Agent Orange and am hopeful that the task force will help Congress and the Secretary identify appropriate measures to address this unprecedented situation.

Toward that end, I am asking Secretary Brown to direct the task force to consider the following several specific questions as part of their review:

First, what is the most appropriate way to provide health care to veterans' children with spina bifida—through the VA directly or through contracts with other providers?

Second, what kinds of case management services are needed to maximize the quality of life for these children, and their ability to function? And how can they be delivered most effectively?

Third, should veterans' children with other birth defects be provided those same services?

Finally, what is the most appropriate means of compensating the families of children who suffer from spina bifida as a result of their parent's exposure to Agent Orange?

I am also asking the Secretary to ensure that the task force, as it considers these questions, seeks the input of organizations and individuals familiar with the unique treatment and case management needs of children suffering from spina bifida and other birth defects. I also hope the panel will consult with experts in the field of injury compensation for children. Congress and the VA have an obligation to seek and heed the best advice these experts have to offer.

We need answers to these questions as soon as possible. The families of these children need help, and they have waited long enough.

Mr. President, the association between Agent Orange exposure and spina bifida was not the only new finding in this report. The IOM Committee

also updated its finding on skin cancer, moving it from category IV—"suggestive of no association with exposure"—to category III—diseases for which there is "insufficient evidence to make a determination."

This change underscores the fact that we still do not understand fully the long-term effects of Agent Orange exposure. To facilitate my colleagues' and the public's understanding of these findings, I ask that a table from today's report, which explains the four-tiered classification system and summarizes the results of this study, be printed at the close of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. DASCHLE. Until we have all the facts, Congress must continue, as we have done since 1981, to give veterans the benefit of the doubt and provide them free health care for conditions potentially related to their exposure.

The NAS is helping us compile an important scientific record that is instrumental to Congress' effort to address the health and compensation needs of veterans. I commend the Institute of Medicine for its excellent work. This report builds on our scientific knowledge of the long-term health consequences of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides. It recognizes that our understanding of these issues is still evolving. And it recommends additional work that should be done to further that understanding.

The NAS report also serves as a valuable reminder that the impact of war is felt decades beyond the final shots. This holds for the Persian Gulf war as well as the war in Vietnam. We must be prepared to learn from the scientific effort on Agent Orange and apply these lessons to the effort to discover the true health effects of environmental hazards on the men and women who served in the gulf and on their children.

I look forward to working with the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, veterans organizations, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the NAS, independent scientists, and others to address the issues raised in this report and to continue to search for the truth and a better understanding of the lasting health effects of military service.

EXHIBIT 1

Table 1-1. Updated summary of findings in occupational, environmental, and veterans studies regarding the association between specific health problems and exposure to herbicides.

SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF AN ASSOCIATION

Evidence is sufficient to conclude that there is a positive association. That is, a positive association has been observed between herbicides and the outcome in studies in which chance, bias, and confounding could be ruled out with reasonable confidence. For example, if several small studies that are free from bias and confounding show an association that is consistent in magnitude and direction, there may be sufficient evidence for an association. There is sufficient evidence of an association between exposure to

herbicides and the following health outcomes: Soft-tissue sarcoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease chloracne.

LIMITED/SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE OF AN ASSOCIATION

Evidence is suggestive of an association between herbicides and the outcome but is limited because chance, bias, and confounding could not be ruled out with confidence. For example, at least one high-quality study shows a positive association, but the results of other studies are inconsistent. There is limited/suggestive evidence of an association between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Respiratory cancers (lung, larynx, trachea), prostate cancer, multiple myeloma, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy (new disease category), spina bifida (new disease category), porphyria cutanea tarda (category change in 1996).

INADEQUATE/INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO DETERMINE WHETHER AN ASSOCIATION EXISTS

The available studies are of insufficient quality, consistency, or statistical power to permit a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of an association. For example, studies fail to control for confounding, have inadequate exposure assessment, or fail to address latency. There is inadequate or insufficient evidence to determine whether an association exists between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Hepatobiliary cancers, nasal/nasopharyngeal cancer, bone cancer, female reproductive cancers (cervical, uterine, ovarian), breast cancer, renal cancer, testicular cancer, leukemia, spontaneous abortion, birth defects (other than spina bifida), neonatal/infant death and stillbirths, low birthweight, childhood cancer in offspring, abnormal sperm parameters and infertility, cognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders, motor/coordination dysfunction, chronic peripheral nervous system disorders, metabolic and digestive disorders (diabetes, changes in liver enzymes, lipid abnormalities, ulcers), immune system disorders (immune suppression and autoimmunity), circulatory disorders, respiratory disorders, skin cancer (category change in 1996).

LIMITED/SUGGESTIVE EVIDENCE OF NO ASSOCIATION

Several adequate studies, covering the full range of levels of exposure that human beings are known to encounter, are mutually consistent in not showing a positive association between exposure to herbicides and the outcome at any level of exposure. A conclusion of "no association" is inevitably limited to the conditions, level of exposure, and length of observation covered by the available studies. In addition, the possibility of a very small elevation in risk at the levels of exposure studied can never be excluded. There is limited/suggestive evidence of no association between exposure to herbicides and the following health outcomes: Gastrointestinal tumors (stomach cancer, pancreatic cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer), bladder cancer, brain tumors.

Note.—"Herbicides" refers to the major herbicides used in Vietnam: 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid); 2,4,5-T (2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid) and its contaminant TCDD (2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin); cacodylic acid; and picloram. The evidence regarding association is drawn from occupational and other studies in which subjects were exposed to a variety of herbicides and herbicide components.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to

the Senate by Mr. Thomas, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT CONCERNING PROPOSED RESCISSIONS OF BUDGETARY RESOURCES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT RECEIVED DURING RECESS—PM 131

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 4, 1995, the Secretary of the Senate, on March 13, 1996, during the recess of the Senate, received the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 1986, was referred jointly to the Committee on Appropriations, Committee on the Budget, and the Committee on Armed Services:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report five proposed rescissions of budgetary resources, totaling \$50 million. These rescission proposals affect the Department of Defense.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 13, 1996.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:59 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker appoints Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts as a conferee in the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 956) to establish legal standards and procedures for product liability litigation, and for other purposes, to replace Mr. WYDEN of Oregon.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 45. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Rotunda on May 2, 1996, for the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to Reverend and Mrs. Billy Graham.

At 2:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, and it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

H. J. Res. 163. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1996, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 7:11 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by

Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2036. An act to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to make certain adjustments in the land disposal program to provide the needed flexibility, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1618. A bill to provide uniform standards for the award of punitive damages for volunteer services.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-2127. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the cumulative report on rescissions and deferrals dated March 1, 1996; referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986, to the Committee on Appropriations and to the Committee on Budget.

EC-2128. A communication from the Executive Director of the Thrift Depositor Protection Oversight Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of real estate asset inventory; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2129. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila, Philippines; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2130. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Land Minerals Management), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to natural gas and oil leases; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-2131. A communication from the Deputy Associate Director for Compliance, Royalty Management Program, Minerals Management Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the notice of the intention to make refunds of offshore lease revenues where a refund or recoupment is appropriate; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-2132. A communication from the Executive Director of the Northeast Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-2133. A communication from the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report entitled "Progress on Superfund Implementation in Fiscal Year 1995"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2134. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on the national Intelligent Transportation Systems program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2135. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the report on countries with which the U.S. has an eco-

nomie or trade relationship; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2136. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, the report of the texts of international agreements, other than treaties, and background statements; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2137. A communication from the Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Government in the Sunshine Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2138. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, copies of D.C. Act 11-221 adopted by the Council on February 6, 1996; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2139. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Child Victimizers: Violent Offenders and Their Victims"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2140. A communication from the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2141. A communication from the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2142. A communication from the Director of Selective Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2143. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2144. A communication from the Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2145. A communication from the Administrator of the Panama Canal Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2146. A communication from the Chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2147. A communication from the Staff Director of the U.S. Commission On Civil Rights, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report under the Freedom of Information Act for calendar year 1995; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2148. A communication from the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, notice relative to the report of the auditability of its financial statements and systems; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

EC-2149. A communication from the Secretary of Labor and Chairman of the Board, and the Executive Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting jointly, pursuant to law, the report of its financial statements for fiscal year 1995; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.