

NASA official discusses role of technology

BY EMILY R. SNOOKS
The Battalion

NASA administrator Dan Goldin said in upcoming years, NASA will be able to travel outside Earth's galaxy to seek biological and geographic features on other planets at the inaugural lecture of the Distinguished Lecture Series.

Goldin discussed how technology will bring the world into the future safer, faster and more environmentally sound to a crowd of 100 last night. He addressed the NASA vision, characteristics of the future system, the evolution of engineering and revolutionary changes in engineering.

"By 2001 we be landing on other planets, moons and comets and exploring black holes in other galaxies," he said.

"In about 10 to 20 years we will be able to land on Mars and live on the land."

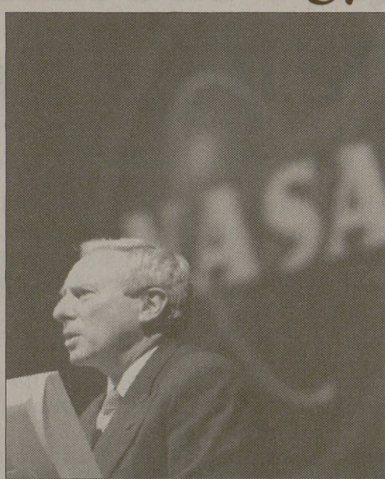
Goldin said by 2020, NASA will eliminate the space shuttle and replace it with rockets 100 times less expensive and 10,000 times more reliable.

Goldin began his career with NASA in 1962 as a research scientist at the Lewis Research Center in Cleveland. He is a fellow in both the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the Institute for the Advancement of Engineering.

In 1993, he received the John F. Kennedy Astronautics Award and the Spaces Pioneer Award. Goldin is one of nine NASA administrators and has occupied the position for seven years.

Jon T. Pitts, professor of mathematics and chair of the lecture series, introduced the presentation as the kick-off event of the series. He said the goal of the lecture series is to reflect the diversity in interests on this campus.

Guest speakers included Presi-



ERIC NEWMAN/THE BATTALION

Dan Goldin, NASA administrator, speaks Monday night as part of the Distinguished Lecture Series.

dent Ray M. Bowen, who gave a welcome address, and Aaron Cohen, mechanical engineering professor, who introduced Goldin.

Federal agencies unprepared for 'Y2K' problems

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal agencies are belatedly responding to the year 2000 computer problem, and some of the biggest departments, including Defense and State, are still lagging behind, a House expert said Monday.

Agencies, "are finally getting around in the last year to really putting some effort into this," Rep. Stephen Horn, R-Calif., said in releasing his seventh quarterly "report card" on the status of efforts to what is known as the "Y2K" problem.

Horn, who heads the House subcommittee on government management, information and technology, gave the 24 agencies he has followed an overall grade of "C+." That's up from the "D" grade handed down in his survey last November.

"At least we know there is recognition that Y2K is not a new cereal," said Rep. Constance Morella, R-Md., who has worked to draw attention to the problem.

President Clinton has given most federal agencies until March 31 to upgrade their computers so there will not be breakdowns in basic public services on Jan. 1, 2000. Most older computers use only two digits to mark what year it is and could confuse 2000 with the year 1900 at the turn of the century, causing malfunctions and shutdowns.

John Koskinen, head of the president's Year 2000 Council, said he was pleased by Horn's latest assessment. Horn, Koskinen said, "has complained I was overoptimistic, but when the dust gets settled we'll find that I was more right than he was, and I'm delighted with that."

Koskinen and Horn agreed that about 90 percent of federal computer systems will be ready by the March 31 deadline, and Koskinen said critical transportation, defense and benefits programs will be fixed well in advance of the year's end. "I think the public should be satisfied that the risk is not coming from federal systems," Koskinen said.

Horn gave 11 agencies, including the Social Security Administration and the Veterans Affairs Department, either an "A" or "A-" for installing software that is Y2K-compliant. He praised the Energy and Justice departments for making major strides since the last report.

He said three departments — Health and Human Services, Agriculture and Defense — were still in the "C" category and three others — State, Transportation and the Agency of International Development — got failing grades. Led by Defense, those six account for more than 50 percent of the mission-critical computer systems in the federal government.

Study finds chemotherapy with radiation reduces risk of death from cervical cancer

BOSTON (AP) — In the first breakthrough in the treatment of spreading cervical cancer since the 1950s, a series of studies found that adding chemotherapy to radiation can cut the risk of death in half.

The five studies, made public Monday, proved so convincing that the National Cancer Institute took the unusual step of mailing letters to thousands of doctors urging them to adopt the new approach immediately.

"We think the data are so compelling that this should change the way women are treated all over the country and indeed around the world," said Dr. Edward Trimble, head of surgery in the institute's therapy evaluation program.

Currently, doctors routinely offer surgery for early-stage cervical cancer and radiation alone for cancer that has spread nearby.

Radiation has been the standard treatment since the 1950s for cervical cancer that has spread nearby, and the five-year survival

rate for these women is now about 50 percent.

The new approach involves giving radiation and chemotherapy simultaneously.

The five studies, all sponsored by the cancer institute, tested various combinations of chemotherapy and radiation against radiation alone. The victims' cancer had begun to spread beyond the cervix but was still confined to the pelvis.

The studies showed that the drug and radiation combinations reduced the risk of death between 30 percent and 50 percent compared with radiation alone during follow-up periods ranging from three to eight years. The combinations involving the drug cisplatin, a common kind of chemotherapy, appeared to work best.

"While many have previously been cured by radiotherapy, we believe that the opportunity to substantially increase the cure rate for these women has really been demonstrated through this collec-

tion of studies," said Dr. Walter Curran Jr. of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, who did not take part in the research.

All of the studies involved several hundred women at hospitals around the country. None of the reports have been published yet.

Three will appear in the April 15 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine. One will be published in the spring in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, while the fifth will be presented March 22 in San Francisco at a meeting of the Society of Gynecologic Oncologists.

Dr. Mitchell Morris of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer in Houston, who directed one of the studies, noted how unusual it is to have five studies on a single subject come to light at one time with similar results.

"It means we can definitely make a change in treatment that will save lives," he said. "We don't have to do more studies. We know this is the way to go."

Peace talks in Kosovo continue

RAMBOUILLET, France (AP) — With a new deadline imminent and the Serbs refusing to budge, ethnic Albanians met Monday night to decide whether to accept a self-rule plan for Kosovo designed to end their long conflict.

They were told beforehand by Gen. Wesley Clark, the NATO commander, that a NATO peacekeeping force would ensure their security in event an agreement is reached.

New fighting, meanwhile, broke out between Serb forces and ethnic Albanians.

The threat of NATO airstrikes against Serbian targets hung over the talks, although Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said that NATO would not carry out the threatened bombing strikes against Serbs if the ethnic Albanians continued to object to provisions of the agreement.

Albright shuttled between the two sides Monday, and Clark flew in unannounced from NATO headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, for a meeting with Hashim Thaci, the political director of the Kosovo Liberation Army, which

has fought a bloody war for independence with Serb troops.

Some 2,000 people have died and about 300,000 more have been left homeless in the conflict.

Diplomatic sources in Europe, declining to be identified, disclosed the meeting without providing any details.

U.S. and European mediators have pushed the ethnic Albanians to give their final approval to a Kosovo settlement.

"We have tried very hard to explain the benefits of the agreement," said a senior U.S. official. "These are wrenching decisions."

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Albright hopes to get "a true sense" of the ethnic Albanians' stance when she meets with them again on Tuesday.

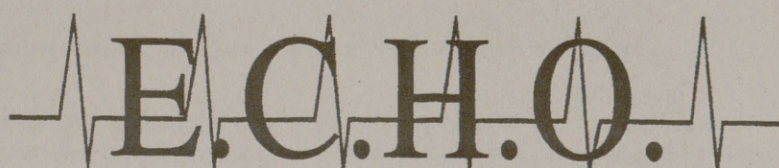
Albright met separately with Serbian leader Milan Milutinovic, but without making any apparent headway in breaking down Serb resistance to the use of NATO peacekeepers to enforce a settlement.

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