

C hairman's Statement

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as Chairman of the Technology Assessment Board for the 102d Congress. Because my involvement with OTA stretches back to the agency's earliest days, becoming chairman has had special meaning to me.

Public policy is more than ever being determined by technology. This poses a true challenge for the Congress, for the issues with a technology content are often the most complex and subtle; yet science and technology is a field in which the average Member of Congress is not well equipped.

As OTA has become a mature and respected source of advice on science and technology, it has been of enormous assistance helping the Congress meet that challenge. When OTA staff address an issue of enormous complexity, they have had great success in distilling the issue to a range of options based on fact instead of rhetoric, and in a form that Members of Congress can understand and use. While the political judgments are properly left to us, we make them on a foundation of reality and hard analysis, as opposed to guesswork.

Some examples will illustrate the serious role that OTA now plays in Congressional policy consideration. The OTA work, *Federally Funded Research: Decisions For A Decade*, has given the Congress a wholly new view about how to manage the federal civilian research enterprise. OTA'S work in energy, such as the studies addressing fuel economy and our vulnerability to disruptions in our imported fuel supply, have become benchmarks in Congress' consideration of energy policy. The study, *Exploring The Moon and Mars: Choices For A Nation*, is now being used as a textbook by the Committees charged with deciding the future of our program for space exploration. OTA continues to give the Congress sophisticated advice on issues ranging from the management of our global environment to the future of our defense structure.

OTA has become one of the Congress' success stories, which perhaps are in short supply. So I look forward with happiness to a continuing relationship with this unique agency.

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.

