WASHINGTON, D.C.

Speaking at his first news conference since joining the Bush administration as science advisor, Harold Varmus, the Nobel laureate for research on cell transformation, said that he is determined to "get Washington and the laboratories talking again." The institute's director general, Michael Ashburner, said Varmus was "looking for ways in which we can work together more productively." Varmus has made it clear that he is not afraid to be a critic of science inside and outside the government. He has been critical of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which he will now oversee as director of the National Cancer Institute, and has praised the National Science Foundation (NSF) for making grants to young scientists.

Varmus, who has been a vocal critic of the NIH, said that he was pleased with the new director's vision. "I think he's going to be a strong leader," Varmus said. "He's going to do a good job, and I think he's going to do it well." Varmus has also been a strong advocate for the NSF, which he believes is underfunded. He has been a vocal supporter of the NSF's program to support research on the genetics of disease.

Varmus's new job is a significant departure from his previous role as director of the National Cancer Institute. He has been a strong advocate for the NIH, which he believes is underfunded. He has been a vocal supporter of the NSF's program to support research on the genetics of disease.
Resistance genes are widely used to control plant diseases caused by bacteria, fungi, viruses, and nematodes. A single gene, Pto, encoding a protein kinase, confers resistance in tomato to the bacterial pathogen Pseudomonas syringae pv. tomato, as shown by the healthy leaves from genetically modified plants (diseased leaves are from susceptible, wild-type plants). The presence of Pto homologs in many crop species may expedite the isolation of other plant resistance genes. See page 1432. [Photo: Gregory B. Martin]