American Academy to Be U.S. Member at IIASA

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences will take over on 1 January as the national member organization for the United States in the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) outside Vienna. The American Academy replaces the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, which opted to withdraw when the Reagan Administration decided to end federal funding of U.S. membership. The decision, reflecting a chilling of Soviet-U.S. relations, was attributed chiefly to the Administration view that the United States was deriving less benefit from membership than the Soviet Union and that IIASA operations posed some threat to U.S. security interests (*Science*, 2 April 1982, p. 35).

The American Academy's council fulfilled expectations by formally approving the proposal to assume membership on 3 November. Funds from private foundations and industry are being sought to finance U.S. participation next year. Backers say they are optimistic that a goal of $1.5 million will be achieved. The IIASA council has indicated it will allow reduced dues from the United States next year in view of the circumstances. In the decade since IIASA was founded, the Soviet Union and United States have each provided about a quarter of the IIASA's budget, with the rest split among the other member nations, now numbering 15. The Soviets are expected to continue to pay a $2.3 million share next year.

To direct its involvement in IIASA the American Academy has established a committee chaired by Professor Harvey Brooks of Harvard.

—JOHN WALSH

Aeronautics Is Not Like Synfuels, Keyworth Says

The Reagan Administration's oft-repeated policy of cutting out government R & D programs that private industry should be funding might be expected to put an end to much of the aeronautics work now supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). But last week, George A. Keyworth, II, Reagan's science adviser, announced that the Administration will continue to fund a major program of research and technology development in civilian aeronautics. It has been persuaded of the merits of such a program by a 6-month policy review headed by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).*

Keyworth announced the new policy in a speech to the Aero Club of Washington on 9 November. He said that the Administration was once "very close to substantially changing the federal role in aeronautics," by cutting back on nonmilitary research. But it has now decided not to wield the ax because the policy review concluded that continued federal investment in civilian aeronautics research will pay substantial technological dividends, he said.

Why is aeronautics being treated differently from, say, synfuels, which the Administration has decided should be left largely to private industry? One reason, according to the policy review, is that aeronautics research has military as well as civilian applications; the national security benefits of developing alternative energy resources are evidently considered less important. Another reason is that American leadership in aeronautics technology is under challenge from Europe and Japan, where governments directly underwrite a great deal of R & D. The U.S. electronics industry, which has long been arguing for more government incentives to counter a technological challenge from Japan, should find the latter reason interesting.

In declaring its future support for aeronautics R & D, the Administration is stepping out of a fight with Congress. The Office of Management and Budget has tried to trim NASA's aeronautics R & D budget in the past 2 years, but Congress has put some of the money back in, arguing, as the Administration now does, that the programs are important to keep the U.S. aircraft industry at the cutting edge of new technology.

In keeping with the Administration's concerns about technology transfer, the policy review urges NASA and the Department of Defense to review their policies for controlling the dissemination of unclassified information that could have military applications. At the same time, it suggests that NASA develop a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination to the U.S. government and industry of unclassified documents on aeronautics research carried out in other countries. In other words, while the United States clamps down on its own technology transfer, it should make maximum use of what's available abroad.

—COLIN NORMAN

NASA Looks for Thomas Edisons

As the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) tries to build a case for a permanent, manned space station, agency officials are anxious to protect themselves from a criticism often leveled at the space shuttle: that the hardware was designed and built before the agency really got around to consulting the shuttle users.

So this time NASA has commissioned the eight largest aerospace firms to identify user needs and architectural options for the space station; the agency's own science and applications offices are drawing up lists of what they could do on a station; and all of NASA's outside advisory committees have been asked to give advice. The traditional constituencies have been engaged. Now, who has been left out?

"The Thomas Edisons," says Stephen Holt, a member of NASA's space station task force. "The people with bright ideas, who follow the space program closely, but who are not in the traditional constituencies." Most of the people in the space establishment have been around a long time, he says. They talk to each other constantly, and their ideas tend to equilibrate. So there has been some concern among the NASA advisers themselves that a few truly innovative ideas for a space station are being missed.

With this in mind, the task force has

*Aeronautical Research and Technology Policy, OSTP, November 1982. Other agencies involved in the review were the Office of Management and Budget, the Council of Economic Advisors, the Department of Defense, NASA, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Commerce.

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