February, will be chaired by Brent Scowcroft, President Ford's national security adviser. It includes Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense in the Carter Administration, and Reagan's former Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Jr. Charles Townes, a physicist from the University of California who chaired two previous panels on the MX, has not been invited to serve on the new panel. He concluded about Dense Pack that "the Soviets may have appropriately modified their weapons—for an effective attack on it—almost as soon as it is fully deployed."

Once the experts have reported and the President has supplied Congress with additional details, Congress will have roughly 45 days to approve or disapprove a missile basing mode. If it approves, the Air Force will quickly begin test flights over the Pacific.

Some members of Congress anticipate that the MX will be strangled by the basing dilemma. They argue that any alternative to Dense Pack will require more money, and they note that even conservatives are beginning to be wary about spending billions and billions of dollars on a weapons system that contributes only marginally to the total number of U.S. warheads (the General Accounting Office recently said that by 1996 the MX would account for between 5 and 13 percent of U.S. strategic power). Representative Carroll Hubbard (D–Ky.), who is known as a defense hawk, told the House during the recent debate that "right or wrong, the words 'here come the Russians' nowadays do not scare Kentuckians half as much as 'here come the creditors.' "

Others in Congress predict that concern about the basing mode will greatly diminish if it appears that this issue could become an obstacle to building the MX at all. Overall, sentiment is in favor of the MX. Representative Joseph Addabbo (D–N.Y.) and Senator Ernest Hollings (D–S.C.) both campaigned against the MX last December. Yet they signed their names to the House-Senate conference report on the MX, which pledges "a firm commitment to modernization of our strategic forces." Three members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and several top White House advisers have indicated that they would be satisfied by deployment of the MX in existing, highly vulnerable Minuteman missile silos, arguing essentially that the missile's size and capability make it worth having at any cost. Selling this viewpoint on Capitol Hill may be essential to the survival of the MX in the next Pentagon budget.

—R. JEFFREY SMITH

A "Euro-Brookings" Enters the Lists

After an on-again-off-again start, a European version of an American-style think tank on economic and social policy has begun operations. The Belgium-based Center for European Policy Studies opened with an inaugural conference before Christmas.

The initiative for the center dates back to the mid-1970's when then Ford Foundation president McGeorge Bundy proselytized European officials on behalf of a think tank modeled on the Brookings Institution in Washington. The European Commission, the European Community (EC) executive, embraced the idea of a government-financed research institute (*Science*, 23 February 1979, p. 727), but intergovernmental negotiations dragged and the project foundered when the newly elected Thatcher government in Britain declined to participate after deciding that European cooperative activities were costing too much.

Proponents of a "Euro-Brookings" managed to revive the idea by proposing that startup funding come from nongovernmental sources. Some $500,000 was raised to establish the center, including a $225,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to be paid over 3 years, and grants from several European private foundations. The center will operate from offices in central Brussels and Louvain-la-Neuve—the site of the francophone segment of the bifurcated University of Louvain—outside the Belgian capital.

Originally conceived as comparable to Brookings in size, the center is expected to operate initially with a budget about a quarter that of Brookings' roughly $10-million-a-year funding. The center will have a small core staff and recruit researchers from European universities and research institutions to work on center projects.

Director of the center is Peter Ludlow, a University of London economic historian who also has been associated with the European University Institute, the EC-sponsored graduate school and research institute in Florence.

As in the original plan, the center will set its sights on problems common to all Western European countries with the idea of gaining the participation of other nations besides those in the EC and NATO. Although operating on a smaller scale than Brookings, the center proposes an agenda of studies on economic, social, environmental, and security problems similar in breadth to Brookings'. One center project is to be a periodic survey of European national budgets resembling the Brookings series on setting U.S. national priorities.

The center is committed to independence in choosing its own research topics and operating outside the structures and strictures of government. And it has taken the first successful steps toward becoming self-supporting. But European business and government are unaccustomed to such independence and the center will have to persuade potential clients of the value of supporting research projects they don't control.—JOHN WALSH

Princeton Physicists Meet Tokamak Deadline

It came down to a race with the calendar, a feverish attempt to beat the coming of the new year. And it worked. At 3:06 a.m. EST on Christmas Eve 1982, after 7 years of planning and construction and an expenditure of $314 million, researchers at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory successfully inserted a hydrogen plasma into the Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor (TFTR).

The event was immediately hailed as a milestone. TFTR is the first of a new generation of tokamak reactors. Along with its brethren now under construction in Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union, it is expected to attain the long-sought goals of energy breakeven and plasma ignition by the end of the decade. In practical terms, however, the Christmas Eve event was largely symbolic. Princeton's contract with the Department of Energy specified first plasma in 1982, so 1982 it was. The real physics will come at a more measured pace. The first plasma was hardly heated at all, for example, and as expected, it lasted only 50 milliseconds. Experiments with ohmic heating, the simplest method, will not begin until March: researchers will induce electrical currents in the plasma and allow the plasma's resistivity to