ment was informed after the decision was made to enter discussions with the Soviets, and, as has been the case in the past, the department neither encouraged nor discouraged the effort by the quasi-public organization.

—JOHN WALSH

France Invites U.S. Participation on Breeders

Paris. The French government has formally invited the United States to collaborate in a joint program of research with several other European nations—including Great Britain and West Germany—into the next generation of commercial fast breeder reactors.

The invitation was made last week to U.S. energy secretary Donald P. Hodel during a visit to the United States by the French minister of state for energy Jean Auroux. Auroux also suggested that the United States should substantially increase its collaboration with European research groups in nuclear fusion and in coal research.

France has already been collaborating closely with several European countries, including West Germany, Italy, and Belgium, on the development and construction of its Superphénix fast reactor, the world's first commercial-scale fast breeder which is scheduled to come into operation early next year.

Last autumn, the British government, having decided to abandon its previous isolation in fast breeder research, agreed to joint its European allies in developing the next generation of fast breeders, rather than enter into a long-term research partnership with either the United States or Japan. An agreement envisaging the joint development and construction of three 1300-megawatt reactors—one each in France, Britain, and Germany—was signed in Paris at the beginning of January.

The French government offer to the United States to join the fast breeder "club" has been sweetened by its recent agreement to accept international safeguards on Superphénix, which is being built at Crays-Malville in the Rhône Valley.

The lack of any independent review of measures to prevent the diversion of civilian plutonium to military purposes has recently been a target of criticism, particularly from antinuclear activists in West Germany. These have been concerned that German utilities contributing to the cost of Superphénix might find that they were helping to finance the production of weapons-grade plutonium that was subsequently used to manufacture nuclear warheads for France's military forces (*Science*, 10 December 1982, p. 1095).

Although France is not a signatory of the nonproliferation treaty, it agreed 3 years ago to accept international safeguards, which are conducted under the auspices of the European Atomic Energy Organization, on all its commercial fission reactors. These safeguards have now been extended to Superphénix as well.

—DAVID DICKSON

Academy Roundtable Seeks Better Research Links

The National Academy of Sciences has put together a committee of luminaries to plan a series of efforts to improve communications between universities, government, and industry on science policy issues. Known as the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable Council, it will be chaired by Dale Corson, president emeritus of Cornell University.

The idea, which has been under consideration in the Academy for several months, is to provide a forum for discussing matters of mutual concern to funders, performers, and users of research. Topics will be selected by the council and they will be thrashed out in arenas such as discussion groups, working groups, and commissioned studies. The process is intended to be more flexible than the Academy's traditional report-generating procedures in dealing with actual or potential conflicts on matters such as information controls, budgetary trends, and indirect costs.

The council's members include the directors of the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Office of Energy Research; the President's science adviser; the under secretary of defense for research and engineering; the presidents of two universities; top officials from three major corporations; and several university researchers. It will hold its first meeting on 16 May to decide its agenda.—COLIN NORMAN

NASA Asks for Review of Space Science

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has asked the National Academy of Sciences' Space Science Board to undertake a major study of space science goals in the decades following 1995—the era in which NASA hopes to have an operational space station (*Science*, 24 February, p. 793).

"We are *not* being asked to do a space station science study," says board chairman Thomas M. Donahue of the University of Michigan. "It's much broader than that."

The effort will take at least 2 years, he says, starting with a 10-day summer study this August in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. There will be perhaps half-a-dozen task groups of 10 to 12 persons each, covering such areas as space astronomy, planetary science, earth observations, and the magnetosphere. The goal is to completely rethink NASA's space science strategy.

NASA has never asked for anything quite like this, says Donahue. The study will resemble somewhat the Academy's Astronomy Survey Committee reports, which regularly look at the needs of space- and ground-based astronomy over a 10-year span. But the report that NASA wants will leapfrog a decade and then look 20 years beyond that. "I have no illusions whatever about the difficulty of the task," notes Donahue.

The NASA request is in part a response to presidential science adviser George A. Keyworth, II, who has been urging the agency to define its long-range goals in space before it embarks on building its space station. And in part it is an olive branch to the space science community itself, which has tended to oppose the space station, and which remains deeply suspicious that the station may have the same adverse impact on science funding that the space shuttle did.

—M. MITCHELL WALDROP